

Name of Policy: Suspension of Status Policy (Undergraduates)

RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE: Educational Policy Committee

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: Senior Tutor

LINKED DOCUMENTS: College: Fitness to Study Policy (Undergraduates), Academic Disciplinary Policy (Undergraduates)

LINKED DOCUMENTS: Other: University Fitness to Study Policy and associated Statute

Annual Review date: First meeting of Trinity Term

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PURPOSE OF POLICY

- I) This policy sets out the principles and processes the College follows when making provision for undergraduate students who request permission to take a temporary break from their studies, or when an undergraduate student is required by the College to interrupt their studies.
- II) The College's intention is to provide a collaborative structure in which students are treated with compassion and supported to the successful completion of their degree. Students are therefore strongly encouraged to view this procedure as supportive and inclusive.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- III) This policy uses the following definitions:
 - i. **Rustication:** Rustication is another term for suspension which is only used when imposed as a result of College disciplinary proceedings. It is not used to describe students who, with the agreement of the College, suspend their studies on medical, welfare, or personal grounds.
 - ii. **Student:** For the purposes of this policy, 'Student' should be used to refer to undergraduate students for whom this policy applies and not graduate students.
 - iii. **Suspension of Status:** 'Suspension of Status' or 'Suspension' within the University stops the clock for all elements of a student's degree, including residence, fees, and terms for which a particular status may be held. Students who are suspended will not be considered as being on-course, and will not be registered as enrolled.
 - iv. **Withdrawal:** Withdrawal is where a student ceases to be a member of the College and University without having completed their studies.

POLICY

Grounds for suspensions of status

- IV) Suspensions may be initiated by the below methods:
- i. Where a student requests permission to suspend their status.
 - ii. Where the College may deem it necessary to suspend a student.
- V) Students may request permission to suspend their status on the below grounds:
- i. Medical grounds, on the advice of a medical professional;
 - ii. Other personal / welfare grounds, such as bereavement, parenthood, the need to care for others, etc.;
 - iii. Exceptional opportunities such as internships, other academic activities, or representing their country in a sport.
- VI) The College may deem it necessary to suspend a student on the below grounds:
- i. Where there are severe concerns about a student's fitness to study;
 - ii. On disciplinary grounds, which may be academic or non-academic.
- Where appropriate, suspension may therefore follow action taken under the Undergraduate Fitness to Study Procedure, the Academic Disciplinary Procedure for Undergraduate Students, or the College's Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedure.
- VII) Students do not have the right to suspend status, and permission to suspend can only be granted by the College. The College will sympathetically consider requests made on the grounds in Clause V. The College will not consider requests made on the below grounds:
- i. Where a student is or feels unprepared for examinations;
 - ii. Where a student is underperforming or has underperformed on course, or feels this to be the case;
 - iii. Where a student is seeking a break or gap year.

Procedure for suspending status

- VIII) The College expects that a request to suspend status will have been preceded by a period of discussion and on-course support. A student whose situation is or may be covered by this Policy on Suspension of Status is encouraged in the first instance to consult their Subject Tutor(s), and can also consult the relevant sources of support available to them in College. These include the Senior Tutor, the Head of Student Welfare and Wellbeing, the Fellow for Welfare, the Fellow for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, the College Doctor, the College Nurse, the Counselling Service, and JCR Welfare Officers. Within the limits of confidentiality, the College will keep relevant parties, including tutors, informed to ensure that advice to students is properly coordinated.
- IX) A student wishing to suspend their status should request a meeting with the Senior Tutor and are advised to consult their subject tutors at an early stage to explore their academic options. The Senior Tutor will ensure that the student understands the process of applying for, and returning from, a period of suspension from their studies and that the student receives support throughout this process.
- X) The Senior Tutor will consider the case for suspension on an individual basis, taking into account all relevant information. The College will do all it reasonably can to assist an undergraduate to remain on course, and the Senior Tutor will consider whether or not a suspension of status is the most appropriate course of action.
- XI) The duration of the proposed period of suspension and the proposed date of return will be considered. The student will be made aware of any fee and visa implications that will apply to the proposed period of suspension.
- XII) The Senior Tutor may require evidence before deciding whether or not to approve a suspension of status. Where a request is being made on medical grounds, a medical certificate from the College Doctor (or other appropriate source by agreement) will be required.
- XIII) Where suspension of status has been decided on academic disciplinary grounds the College will normally set academic conditions of return (which may include one or more Collections to be sat shortly before or at the point of return).
- XIV) Decisions will be made as quickly as possible so as to prevent delays aggravating any difficulties the student may be facing.
- XV) Once a suspension has been agreed, the student's record will be updated with the University and a letter will be issued to the student with further details.

- XVI) If a student is dissatisfied with a decision made by the College in regards suspension of status, they should follow the appeals procedure as set out in the College's Student Handbook.

Duration of suspensions

- XVII) Suspensions will usually be for one year, but may be extended at the discretion of the Senior Tutor and in most cases will require additional evidence.
- XVIII) The College itself does not set out specific rules covering the length of time a student may take to complete their course but follows those set out in the University Examination Regulations. Where the College agrees to an exceptional period of suspension beyond the time permitted by the Examination Regulations, the suspension will be processed only where the College successfully applies to the University's Education Committee for a dispensation from the regulations. As such, students will not normally suspend for more than a total of two years across their course.
- XIX) Students who suspend partway through a period of examinations will usually return for assessment only, and will not re-enrol if they are not due to undertake any further tuition.

During a period of suspension

- XX) Students who have suspended status are required to read their University emails at least once a week and respond where appropriate. This may include:
- i. Completing examination entries
 - ii. Liaising with the College ahead of their return
- XXI) Students in residence when a suspension is approved will be granted until the end of the weekend following the decision to vacate their room. This deadline may be extended at the discretion of the Senior Tutor.
- XXII) Students who have suspended may not be present in College without prior permission from the Senior Tutor. Permission will usually be granted for meetings with Tutors, occasional visits to the Library, and subject dinners.
- XXIII) Student will retain an active University Card and Single Sign On, which will enable access to online facilities and resources, access to University Libraries, and an email address. Students who are suspended by the University for non-payment of fees will have all services withdrawn.
- XXIV) Students will not be liable for course fees while suspended.
- i. Where a student suspends partway through a term, they shall be liable for fees for that term where a suspension takes effect after Friday of 3rd Week of the term.
 - ii. An application for a fee waiver for any term which will be repeated may be submitted to the University with the agreement of the Senior Tutor where a student has not been able to effectively engage with their studies. Fee waivers are subject to approval by the University and are not guaranteed.
 - iii. The University will notify UK student funding bodies where a suspension is agreed and the student is in receipt of a loan. Students are encouraged to contact their funding bodies to discuss arrangements for funding.
 - iv. Students returning for assessment only do not enrol for the term in which their examinations take place and are not liable for fees for that period.
- XXV) Students will not be liable for College charges (battels) while suspended. Where they suspend partway through a term, they will usually be liable for charges incurred while enrolled. Where permission is granted for a student to be in College overnight while suspended, charges will apply.

- XXVI) Students in the UK on a student visa will be contacted by the University's Student Immigration team when their suspension has been processed as their visa will usually be cancelled.

Resuming study

- XXVII) The College will contact students ahead of their return to confirm their intent to return, and to advise on procedure.
- XXVIII) Where a student has suspended on medical grounds, a medical certificate from the College Doctor confirming their fitness to return must be received no earlier than 14 weeks and no later than 4 weeks ahead of the agreed date of return.
- XXIX) The College will liaise with students who require a student visa ahead of their return to issue a new Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number to enable them to apply for a new visa. Students must obtain their new visas before returning to the UK; it is not possible to enter on a Visitor visa and switch to a Student visa.
- XXX) Students may usually return to College one week in advance of the start of term in order to acclimatise. Permission is required from the Senior Tutor for students to return more than a week in advance, and the total will not normally exceed a fortnight in advance of the start of term.
- i. Students returning for assessment only may return a week in advance of the start of the term they will be sitting their examinations, but cannot receive any further tuition. Permission is required from the Senior Tutor for an earlier return.
- XXXI) The College will make all reasonable attempts to contact students ahead of their return, which will usually be via their University email address. Where the College does not receive a response from the student, the College may deem that student to have withdrawn from their studies.
- XXXII) If an undergraduate is on a disciplinary or academic monitoring process at the point of suspension they would normally return at the same point in that disciplinary or monitoring process, unless it was decided prior to, or at the point of, suspension that their medical condition provided sufficient mitigation for them to be removed from that process, or for that process to be adjusted.
- XXXIII) Students may be asked to meet with the Senior Tutor and/or their subject Tutor(s) and/or the Head of Student Welfare and Wellbeing prior to their return to discuss progress made and readiness for return.

Welfare

- XXXIV) The College cannot offer significant welfare support or treatment to suspended students. Students are encouraged to consider how to ensure they will have sufficient support in advance of suspending.
- XXXV) Students resident in the UK may request a welfare check from the College at the beginning and end of each term of suspension.
- XXXVI) Students may find it helpful to contact the College's [Head of Student Welfare and Wellbeing](#) before returning to explore what support will be available to them to help re-engage with academic work and college life after their return. Student may also contact the Academic Skills Team in advance of their return to College.
- XXXVII) Students whose status is suspended will normally have access to certain University welfare services as set out by the University; however, this support is not a substitute for specialist support for the relevant medical condition.
- XXXVIII) The University's Counselling Service may also provide students whose status is suspended with help on the same basis as students on course; that is, on a short-term basis. The Counselling Service will not be able to substitute for NHS (or overseas) support at home, but can assist in helping students to think about the services they will need, and can offer online appointments to students who have already left residence.
- XXXIX) OUSU's Student Advice Service can provide both advice and support to undergraduates considering and returning from suspension.
- XL) The University's Careers Service is also available to students whose status is suspended.

POLICY HISTORY

<i>Date of GB approval</i>	<i>Brief summary of changes</i>	<i>Confirmation that linked documents have updated if necessary</i>	<i>College policy register updated</i>
16/02/22	Update of existing policy to reflect new Conference of Colleges template.	Confirmed	05/05/23
Unknown	Update to reflect appointment of Head of Student Wellbeing		30/08/23
22/05/24	Update to confirm that students may be deemed to have withdrawn from course if no response is received to communications from the College about arrangements for their return, or if any required confirmation of fitness to study is not provided in good time. Update to remind students who are required to obtain a student visa of Home Office requirements that they must obtain their visa before coming to the UK.		12/08/24
23/06/26	Reformatting and rewording for clarity and to reduce prose.		23/06/26