# Authorised Interruption of Study

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

**Purpose of Policy**

The policy seeks to provide a consistent framework for consideration of requests from students to interrupt their studies for a period.

**Overview**

The policy provides a definition of Authorised Interruption of Study, and explains where authority rests for making decisions regarding students' requests for interruption. It also provides information on the status of students whilst they are interrupted and the return to study process.

**Scope: Mandatory Policy**

The policy is relevant to all undergraduate and postgraduate students requesting or taking an Authorised Interruption of Study. The policy also applies to staff who are involved in supporting, considering and approving requests for students wishing to interrupt their study.

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## Document control

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| **Section responsible for policy maintenance & review** | Academic Services |
| **Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations** | Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Regulations: http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/<br>Laigh Year Regulations: https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/laigh_year_regulations.pdf |
| **UK Quality Code** | UK Quality Code Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement |
| **Policies superseded by this policy** | Authorised Interruption of Study or Extension of Study – Postgraduate Research |
| **Alternative format** | If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4490. |
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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to supporting students who require time away from their studies, where this will assist them in gaining the best possible outcome in their studies, or support their career aspirations.

## 2. Definition of Authorised Interruption of Study

2.1 Where a student is temporarily unable to engage with their studies, they may apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study. Common reasons for authorised interruption include, but are not limited to:

- Health reasons (mental or physical health problems)
- Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Family Leave
- Extra-curricular pursuits e.g. elite sport, art/music related opportunities
- Employment Opportunities/Internships
- Financial circumstances
- Personal reasons
- Military Service

2.2 During a period of interruption, students do not undertake studies at the University.

2.3 Interruptions of study will not be applied retrospectively. Any one period of interruption of study will not exceed 12 months, unless authorised by the College due to exceptional circumstances. The total period of Authorised Interruption of Study permitted for an individual student is the same for full-time and part-time students and will not exceed 100% of the prescribed period of full-time study for the relevant programme (for example, a maximum of four years' Authorised Interruption of Study for a four year undergraduate Honours degree).

2.4 Students should note that there are separate regulations relating to students taking up positions as sabbatical officers in the Edinburgh University Students' Association and the Edinburgh University Sports Union, which allow them to matriculate as students of the University without having to fulfil the normal academic requirements of their programme of study. The relevant regulations are available at:

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/laigh_year_regulations.pdf

## 3. Initial Considerations

3.1 Students should be aware that taking an Authorised Interruption of Study may have financial and visa implications.

3.2 The Edinburgh University Students' Association Advice Place provides independent advice to students regarding requests for Authorised Interruption of Study and the potential implications. Further information is available at:
https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/

3.3 The International Student Advisory Service provides advice and guidance to students in relation to any visa implications which may arise as a consequence of taking an authorised interruption of study. Further information is available at: https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/student-advisory-service

3.4 The University's Scholarships and Student Funding department provides advice and information to students in relation to any finance and funding issues which may arise as a result of taking an Authorised Interruption of Study. Further information is available at: https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding

3.5 Postgraduate Research students funded by a Research Council should contact their School to clarify and confirm the implications of taking an Authorised Interruption of Study upon their funding and to ensure that they are abiding by the terms and conditions of the relevant funding body. Students funded by any other body should contact their funder directly for advice and information.

## 4. Requesting an Authorised Interruption of Study

4.1 Students are expected to liaise with their Personal Tutor, Programme Director or Supervisor about taking an Authorised Interruption of Study and to discuss a proposed return to study plan before completing an application for an Authorised Interruption of Study.

4.2 In order to apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study, a student should complete the relevant form and submit this to their College/School. Colleges/Schools will ensure that they publish details about whom the form should be submitted to.

## 5. Evidence

5.1 Students may be required to submit evidence to support applications for Authorised Interruption of Study. The relevant College or School will advise students where this is the case.

## 6. Confidentiality

6.1 All requests will be treated as confidential in accordance with the Privacy Notice, and information will only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate reason for being informed.

## 7. Consideration and Approval

7.1 Colleges/Schools should take a permissive approach when considering applications for Authorised Interruption of Study. Colleges/Schools should approve applications where the student has provided a good reason for the interruption, provided that an interruption will be compatible with the student completing their studies subsequently, and would not exceed the maximum allowable total period for Authorised Interruption of Study (see section 2.3).

7.2 The relevant Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will determine whether or not an Authorised Interruption of Study will be granted, and will inform the student of their decision. Colleges may routinely delegated consideration of applications for Authorised Interruption of Study to Schools where appropriate.

7.3 Colleges/Schools considering applications provide information regarding processes for students to request reconsideration of an application for Authorised Interruption of Study, where the application has been refused.

## 8. Student Status/Rights and Responsibilities

8.1 Students taking an Authorised Interruption of Study continue to be regarded as students of the University during the period of interruption. During an interruption, students have the right to access relevant campus facilities, e-mail and student support services including the Students' Association, Library Services, Chaplaincy, Student Counselling and Student Disability Services.

8.2 Schools will ensure that a point of contact is available to advise a student regarding their return to study whilst they are interrupted.

8.3 Students remain subject to the Code of Student Conduct during an Authorised Interruption of Study.

## 9. Return to Study

9.1 Students wishing to return to their studies earlier than originally planned should submit a request via the relevant School or College Office for consideration. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

9.2 The relevant School will make contact with an interrupted student before their scheduled return to study in order to confirm the student's programme of study and to facilitate any support which may be required upon return.

9.3 The University has a responsibility to ensure that students are able to engage safely with their studies following a period of interruption. Where a student has interrupted their studies for medical reasons, the relevant School or College may require evidence confirming their fitness to return to study, e.g. students who are enrolled on professional degree programmes, or those who are required to work within a high risk environment, handling dangerous materials or substances. The relevant School or College will be able to advise on whether evidence will be required in a particular case.

9.4 Students who are unable to return to study after a period of authorised interruption may request an additional Authorised Interruption of Study, provided that this does not exceed the maximum allowable total period of interruption (see section 2.3). Requests will be considered in line with normal approval processes.

## 10. Changes to Programme

10.1 Students taking an Authorised Interruption of Study should be aware that courses and programmes may be subject to change while they are interrupted and that they may return to an altered programme structure.

10.2 In interrupting their studies students consent to any programme or course changes which may occur while they are interrupted.

10.3 Students should be aware that in exceptional circumstances if their programme is to be discontinued, it may not be possible to grant an Authorised Interruption of Study.

## 11. Further Guidance

11.1 Further guidance on Authorised Interruption of Study and the relevant application form is available on the following webpages:

Student guidance and application form
https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/study-interruption

Staff guidance
https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/academic-procedures/interruption-study

For further information on the use of personal data, please see the relevant privacy notice which is available on the following webpage:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/specialcircumstancesaisconcessionsloaprivacynotice.pdf

**03 October 2019**