



Higher Education Student Suspension of Studies Policy

Policy Details	
Policy Owner	Head of Higher Education & Access
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Approved by	Policies & Procedures Committee
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1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1** This policy aims to inform readers of the USP College approach to suspending studies for Higher Education (HE) students.

2. Introduction and Purpose

- 2.1** This policy applies to all higher education students studying on a recognised higher education programme who may wish to suspend or take a break from their programme of study. This is sometimes referred to as deferment of studies, suspension of studies, interruption of studies or taking a break from studies.
- 2.2** Suspension of studies, for the purposes of this document includes:
- a. Voluntary Suspension and,
 - b. Compulsory suspension.

3. Linked Policies & External Guidance

- 3.1** Attendance Management Service Definition v5.0 (Student Loans Company, 2021).
- 3.2** Fees and Refund Policy
- 3.3** Adult and Higher Education Loans Policy
- 3.4** Student Disciplinary Policy

4. Voluntary Suspension

- 4.1** Suspension is taking a break from studies. Students may request a period of suspension at any time during their studies. Approval will only be given for suspension of a student's studies for up to one academic year. In exceptional circumstances this may be extended at the sole discretion of the Head of Higher Education & Access.
- 4.2** Suspension is expected to be applied for in advance or at the start of any issues affecting a student's studies.
- 4.3** Students may request a period of suspension for several reasons including but not limited to:
- a. Maternity-related leave
 - b. Physical illness
 - c. Mental health
 - d. Disability
 - e. Family issues
 - f. Financial issues
- 4.4** The rationale as to why the suspension is required should be clearly detailed, as this is used by the college to inform statistical returns.
- 4.5** Students should discuss their wish to suspend with their Programme Leader and Higher Education Student Advisor, as soon as possible, in advance of making a formal request.

- 4.6** Students must apply in writing, using the 'Suspension of Studies' form which can be accessed by contacting the HE Student Advisor. Approval for the request will be given by the Head of Higher Education & Access.
- 4.7** Documentary evidence of the reason for the request should be supplied and the form must be signed by the Programme Leader (or nominee). Once signed, the Programme Leader and Higher Education Student Advisor is responsible for passing the form to the Head of Higher Education & Access.
- 4.8** There may be specific implications in relation to student fees & funding. All students are advised to seek advice from both the Student Finance England and the HE Student Advisor before submitting their suspension form to their Programme Leader.
- 4.9** On approval the form is passed to Management Information Systems (MIS) to update the student registry and Student Loans Company Portal. Upon completion of this, MIS should inform the HE Student Advisor and Head of HE and Access.
- 4.10** The HE Student Advisor will email the student to inform them of the outcome of the decision. This email will include the date you of expected return, and the return to study process.
- 4.11** All students who have suspended their studies are contacted by the HE Student Advisor prior to their return to study, to clarify their intention to return.
- 4.12** The college reserves the right to withdraw any students who do not return to their studies within one academic year

5. Compulsory Suspension

- 5.1** There are also circumstances in which the college may suspend students from their programme of study (USP Student Disciplinary Policy, 2019).

6. Academic Issues Regarding Suspension

- 6.1** Students who suspend their studies are defined as taking a break from studies, as such they are not entitled to receive any tuition, supervision, or financial support.
- 6.2** If the student has outstanding assessments or examinations, they may request to take those assessments during their period of suspension. No students will be compelled to undertake assessments whilst on a period of suspension, and this issue must be discussed at the time of the suspension request. The final decision as to whether the student is permitted to take outstanding assessments rests with the Programme Leader.
- 6.3** Students who normally have alternative arrangements for their assessments, may have those arrangements affected by the suspension of their studies, particularly, if those arrangements rely on the availability of Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) funding. Students in this position must discuss this with their Programme Leader before suspending their studies.

7. Status of Suspended Students

- 7.1** In all circumstances, students are encouraged to seek advice from either their Programme Leader, or HE student advisor, prior to suspending their studies.

- 7.2** Once a student has suspended their studies formally, access to college services may be restricted. This includes but is not limited to:
- a. completing or submitting assessments,
 - b. learning resources,
 - c. social spaces and,
 - d. disability services.
- 7.3** Whilst on a period of suspension, students retain access to the virtual learning environment and their student ID cards. In certain circumstances such as, but not limited to, academic and non-academic misconduct, this access may be removed.

Suspension of Studies Form

This form is to be used by students wanting to temporarily suspend their Higher Education studies at USP College.

SECTION A: (to be completed by the student)

STUDENT DETAILS			
Surname:		Forename(s):	
Student Number:			
Programme:			
Year of Study (e.g. 1/2/3):			
Course Leader:			
PRIMARY REASON FOR SUSPENSION (select one only)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Medical <input type="checkbox"/> Personal/Family <input type="checkbox"/> Parental/Maternity/Adoption		<input type="checkbox"/> Employment difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Internship/Placement <input type="checkbox"/> Other reason – please give details:	
Brief explanation:			
Last Date of Engagement		Click or tap to enter a date.	
Have you suspended before?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, when?	
Date you wish to suspend from?	DD/MM/YY	Date you intend to return?	DD/MM/YY
STUDENT DECLARATION			
I have read the guidance notes available on the USP College Suspension of Studies web page and I confirm that I understand the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the implications of suspending from my studies at the College that I have discussed suspending my studies with my Course Leader that completion of this form does not release me from any accommodation contract I may have signed that I may be liable for a proportion of my tuition fees and that the College will inform Student Finance England/Home Office (where appropriate) of my change in circumstances and that this may have implications for my finances and/or immigration status that I will be notified by email once my request has been processed I have full intentions of returning to my studies on the intended date 			
Student Signature:		Date: Click or tap to enter a date.	
<i>If you are completing the form electronically and emailing it to us from your College email account, you can type your name and email address in the Signature section.</i>			

SECTION B: (to be completed by the Course Leader)

Date received		Last Date of Engagement		Evidence used (to confirm engagement)		
Date suspension from	Click or tap to enter a date.		Date of return	Click or tap to enter a date.		
Will the student be able to complete within their registration period?			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No* *If no please contact MIS to confirm eligibility			
If a mid-year suspension please detail modules/assessment to be completed upon student's return						
Module Code	Assessment outstanding			Action to be taken		
	Sequence (e.g. 001, 002 etc.)	Title	Deadline date	Close off	Carry Over	Other (please provide details)
Course Leader Declaration						
I have discussed the implications of suspension with the student and confirm the dates of suspension as above. Where a student is suspending mid-year we have confirmed with the student the details of the modules/assessments to be completed upon their return and genuinely believe the student will return to complete their qualification.						
Name			Date	Click or tap to enter a date.		
Role						
Course Leader Signature						



SECTION C: (to be completed by the Head of HE)

Head of HE Declaration			
I support this student's request to suspend their studies and have completed the needed oversight.			
Head of HE Signature		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No*	
		*If no please provide details:	
Head of HE Declaration		Date	Click or tap to enter a date.

SECTION D: (to be completed by the USP College MIS Team)

MIS Declaration			
The following tasks have been completed and actioned			
Task List		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Head of HE Declaration		Date	Click or tap to enter a date.

Equality and Diversity Statement & Impact Assessment

USP College is committed to equality of opportunity. The aim is to create an environment in which people treat each other with mutual respect, regardless of: age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender identity, transgender, sexual orientation, trade union activity or unrelated criminal convictions.

This form should be used by managers and policy owners within their area of responsibility to carry out Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments (EDIAs) in relation to protected characteristics including, but not limited to: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and belief, Sex, Sexual orientation. The word 'policy' is taken to include strategies, policies, procedures and guidance notes; both formal and informal, internal and external.

1. Name of Policy

HE Student Suspension of Studies Policy

2. Which of the following groups could be affected by this policy?

(Tick all that apply)

Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wider Community	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Complaints

Have complaints been received from anyone with one or more protected characteristic about the service provided? If yes then please give details.

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4. The Impact

Four possible impacts should be considered as part of the assessment:

- Positive Impact** - Where the policy might have a positive impact on a particular protected characteristic.
- None or Little Impact** – Where you think a policy does not disadvantage any of the protected characteristics
- Some Impact** – Where a policy might disadvantage any of the protected characteristics groups to some extent. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals with protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.
- Substantial Impact** – Where you think that the policy could have a negative impact on any or all of the protected characteristics. This disadvantage may be also differential in the sense that the negative impact on one particular protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.

Thought-provoking questions, which might help come to a decision about the impact of a policy on individuals with protected characteristics:

- Does policy outcomes and service take up differ between people with different protected characteristics?
- What key information do we have? Does data or engagement with people with protected characteristics give insights into areas of disadvantage, which relate to the policy area?
- If the policy is likely to have a negative impact on individuals, sharing particular characteristics what steps can be taken to mitigate these effects?
- Will the policy deliver practical benefits for certain groups?
- Does the policy miss opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good understanding/relationships between groups?
- Do other policies need to change to make this policy more effective?
- Is there any elements of the policy that could be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

