



# Higher Education Student Suspension of Studies Policy

Policy Details	
Policy Owner	Head of Higher Education
Date produced	August 2021
Approved by	Policies & Procedures Committee
Date approved	23 September 2021
To be reviewed	September 2022
Publication	4Policies, Website
Version	V2.0

## **1. Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 This policy aims to inform readers of the USP College (the 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 v4.0 (Student Loans Company, 2019).
- 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.
- 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 a number of reasons including but not limited to:
- a. Maternity-related leave
  - b. Illness
  - c. Disability
  - d. Family issues
  - e. 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, 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 via <https://www.uspcollege.ac.uk/courses-apprenticeships/our-offer/higher-education/higher-education-student-suspension-of-studies/>. Approval for the request will be given by the Head of Higher Education (or nominee).
- 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 is responsible for passing the form to the Head of Higher Education.
- 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.
- 4.10** The HE Administrator will email the student to inform them of the outcome of the decision. This email will include the date you re expected to return, and the return to study process.
- 4.11** All students who have suspended their studies are contacted by the HE administrator 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 the Head of Foundation Learning and 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, please see the USP College Higher Education Suspension of Studies web page for details on the full process.*

**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			
<p>I have read the guidance notes available on the USP College Suspension of Studies web page and I confirm that I understand the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the implications of suspending from my studies at the College</li> <li>that I have discussed suspending my studies with my Course Leader</li> <li>that completion of this form does not release me from any accommodation contract I may have signed</li> <li>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</li> <li>that I will be notified by email once my request has been processed</li> <li>I have full intentions of returning to my studies on the intended date</li> </ul>			
Student Signature:		Date: Click or tap to enter a date.	
<p><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></p>			

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

<b>Date received</b>		<b>Last Date of Engagement</b>		<b>Evidence used (to confirm engagement)</b>	
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<b>Date suspension from</b>	Click or tap to enter a date.	<b>Date of return</b>	Click or tap to enter a date.
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<b>Will the student be able to complete within their registration period?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No* *If no please contact MIS to confirm eligibility
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**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.

<b>Name</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click or tap to enter a date.
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<b>Role</b>	
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<b>Course Leader Signature</b>	
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**SECTION C: (to be completed by the Head of HE)**

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

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

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

## Appendix 2 IAG Web page information

### **Suspending your studies**

If you are a USP higher education student you can suspend your studies for several reasons, including:

- Maternity-related leave
- Illness
- Disability
- Family issues
- Financial issues

### **Getting advice about suspension**

Important! Please read our Guide on Suspending Study.

If you are thinking about suspending your studies, you can talk about your options in confidence with:

The HE student Advisor

Your Programme Leader

Your Personal Tutor

### **How to request a suspension**

You must meet with your Programme Leader to request suspending your studies.

Your Programme Leader will also need to complete and authorise the suspension of studies form and send this to the head of higher education for approval.

You will then get an email confirming the decision. This email will also include the date when we expect you to resume your studies and information on the Return to Study process. Student Services and your Programme Leader

will also be informed.

### **Staying registered as a student**

You must remain registered as a student while you are away from the college. Maintaining your registration is free and allows you to keep your college email account and access to the college computer network. This will help you communicate with your department and Student Services.

## **Disability Service users**

If you are suspending your studies or leaving the college and are in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) or other-funded support from a Specialist Study Skills Tutor, Specialist Mentor, Note taker or Study Assistant you should contact the Disability Service so that they are aware.

## **Extending your suspension**

If you can no longer return on the agreed date, you must contact your Programme Leader to discuss.

## **Resuming your studies**

Before the agreed date when you will resume your course, you should contact your Programme Leader to confirm that you will return.

The HE Administrator will write to you three to four months prior to your expected return date. You will be asked to complete a self-assessment form and depending on the reason for your suspension, and the feedback you provide, we may need your permission to be in contact with your doctor/health practitioner. We will only request information from them which is relevant, and we will hold this information confidentially. Read our confidentiality guidelines

The information you provide will help you start to think and plan for a successful return. Your answers will also help Student Services identify if you might be entitled to extra support or funding. Student Services will contact you, and in most cases your Programme Leader, to detail the outcome of the Return to Study review.

If there are significant concerns about your fitness to study, the decision will be referred by the Head of Higher Education for consideration under the colleges Fitness to Study policy.

If you use the Disability Service and are in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) or other-funded support from a Specialist Study Skills Tutor, Specialist Mentor, Note taker or Study Assistant you should contact Learning Support to arrange for your support to resume.

Student Services can help you assess your needs and talk to you about any ongoing support.

## **Preparing to return to the College**

Contact your Programme Leader about how you should prepare for your course.

You should also talk to the HE advisor about how resuming your course will affect your fees and finances.

## **Permanently withdrawing from your course**

If you have decided to leave your course, you must speak to your Programme Leader.

If you have already suspended your studies and no longer want to return, you will still need to contact your Programme Leader.

### **Getting advice on what to do after College**

The Careers team can advise you about your options, including career choices and transferring to another university or college. You can book a meeting with a Careers Adviser.

Student Services can also give you confidential advice and support.

### **How suspending will affect your fees and finances**

Suspending your studies can affect your fees, grants and loans. How this affects you will depend on your circumstances and how far into your course you are.

The HE Student Advisor can tell you how suspending your studies or leaving the college will affect your finances and what actions you need to take.

If you are suspending or withdrawing, book an appointment with the team to talk about your finances and any scholarships you have.

The HE Student Advisor can also help you with any negotiations with the College Finance office and other funding bodies.

The Finance Office can advise you on tuition fees. Information is also available on the Gov.uk website.

If the Student Loans Company (SLC) funds your studies:

The amount of fees you must pay depends on when you suspend from your course.

If you suspend after 30 September 2021, you must pay 25% of the fee for the year (returning students)

If you suspend after 23 September 2021, you must pay 25% of the fee for the year (new first-year students)

If you suspend after 6 January 2022, you must pay 50% of the fee for the year

If you suspend after 20 April 2022, you must pay 100% of the fee for the year

You will need to pay the relevant proportion of tuition fee whether you complete the semester or not.

### **How suspending affects your tuition fee loan entitlement**

As a student, you can receive SLC funding for the normal duration of your course, plus one year. If you suspend or withdraw from your studies, even after only a few days, this will use up the additional year. This may affect your flexibility to make changes to your studies in the future.

## **How suspending affects your maintenance loan or grant**

You are only entitled to a maintenance loan or grant for the time you are registered as an attending student.

If you suspend or withdraw from your studies, you will probably have to pay some money back. Your awarding authority will adjust your entitlement based on your last date of attendance. If you have been overpaid, your awarding authority and the Student Loans Company will contact you.

If you are suspending or withdrawing because of your health, make sure your department is aware of your circumstances and has seen the relevant medical evidence. If your department records this as your reason for suspending on the Change of Circumstance form, the SLC can extend your maintenance loan or grant beyond your last date of attendance.

If you are suspending or withdrawing for other reasons, you may still be able to extend your maintenance loan or grant. Contact HE Student Advisor for more information.

## 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.

### 4. The Impact

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

- a. **Positive Impact** - Where the policy might have a positive impact on a particular protected characteristic.
- b. **None or Little Impact** – Where you think a policy does not disadvantage any of the protected characteristics
- c. **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.
- d. **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:

- e. Does policy outcomes and service take up differ between people with different protected characteristics?
- f. 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?
- g. If the policy is likely to have a negative impact on individuals, sharing particular characteristics what steps can be taken to mitigate these effects?
- h. Will the policy deliver practical benefits for certain groups?
- i. Does the policy miss opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good understanding/relationships between groups?
- j. Do other policies need to change to make this policy more effective?
- k. Is there any elements of the policy that could be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010?

Use the guidance provided above and complete the following table: **(Please Tick ✓)**

<b>Gender/Age</b>	Positive Impact	No or Little Impact	Some Adverse Impact	Substantial Adverse Impact
Gender		✓		
Age		✓		
<b>Disability</b>	Positive Impact	No or Little Impact	Some Adverse Impact	Substantial Adverse Impact
Visually Impaired		✓		
Hearing impaired		✓		
Physical Disability		✓		
Specific Learning Difficulties		✓		
Global Learning Difficulties		✓		
Autistic Spectrum Disorder		✓		
Any other disability – Various		✓		
<b>Other Factors</b>	Positive Impact	No or Little Impact	Some Adverse Impact	Substantial Adverse Impact
Race		✓		
Culture		✓		
Religious Belief		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Gender Reassignment		✓		
Marriage/Civil Partnership		✓		
Pregnancy /Maternity /Paternity		✓		

Please comment on any areas where some or substantial impact is indicated. Any resulting actions must be added to the below action plan.

**5. Is there anything that cannot be changed?**

What cannot be changed?	Can this be justified?	If so, how?
Not applicable		
E.g., Disabled people can be treated more favorably under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. If a policy appears to treat disabled people more favorably than other equality groups, the disadvantage may be justifiable		

Please list the main actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment in your area of responsibility. (Continue on separate sheets as necessary)

<p><b>Action Plan:</b></p>
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