



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

Considering leaving
your course?

Considering leaving your course?

From time to time you may feel uncertain about whether or not you want to continue with your course or even university life in general. This is perfectly normal and you're not alone in feeling this way. There are many reasons why you might feel like this, you may be struggling with your course, encountering money problems, feeling homesick and isolated or finding it difficult to cope with personal problems. There are staff at MMU who are available to support you with these issues.

There may be an alternative solution that you hadn't thought of before so it's a good idea to take time to think and discuss things with the right people before making your final decision.

Leaving university or changing your course can seem like a quick and easy solution to whatever the problem might be. But before making such a decision it is important that you have considered all your options and understand the implications leaving might have.

This leaflet contains information about the problems you may be experiencing and where to go for help. You will also find information about the implications leaving your course might have and other options for continuing your study.

Tackling the problem

Have you been able to pinpoint why you have started thinking about making this decision? There are many reasons why you might come to consider leaving or changing your course - but have you tried to identify what the problem might be...?

Money problems

If you are experiencing money problems that are making you consider leaving your course, it may be worthwhile checking that you are receiving all the statutory support that you are entitled to. The Students' Union Advice Centre, or the Student Financial Support Unit can help you with this (see Useful Contacts). They can check that you are receiving the correct loans and grant and whether you may be eligible for any benefits. They will also be able to help you develop a budget to manage your income more effectively and provide information about the implications of withdrawing and how it may affect your entitlement to funding in the future. If you are experiencing difficulties with debts it is worth remembering that the Students' Union Advice Centre offer a debt management service.

Study issues

If you're struggling with study at degree level, finding it hard to manage your studies or think that you may need extra support for a disability, contact your Faculty Student Support Officer or Learner Development for help and support with developing your study skills.

There maybe additional support available to assist you on your current course. Speak to your Faculty Student Support Officer, Personal Tutor or Programme Leader to discuss the kinds of support which could be available. This could involve changes to your modules, seeking study skills advice or organising support regarding a disability or health issue.

Personal issues

Making new friends and developing new interests is one of the most enjoyable and valuable aspects of university life, but it can be daunting to take the first steps. The Students' Union has lots of clubs and societies that welcome new members. Also volunteering is a great way to meet new people, build confidence and give something back to the community (see useful contacts).

It's not unusual to feel homesick or lonely when at university. You may feel out of your depth, or find it difficult to balance commitments, e.g. travelling to university or part-time work. If these, or any other personal problems, are affecting your decision to leave or transfer, speak to a member of staff who you feel comfortable with. This may be your Personal Tutor, Programme Leader, Faculty Student Support Officer or a Counsellor. The University has a free, confidential Counselling Service staffed by professionally trained counsellors who you can talk to about any personal problems you may have (see useful contacts).

What are your options?

It may be that after serious consideration you have decided that changing, withdrawing or taking time away from your course is what you want to do. Each option has different implications so it is important that you have considered these before making your final decision.

Changing course

If you want to change your subject of study, it's essential that you research your options to get as detailed a picture as possible.

Consider the following:

- Do you have a clear and accurate idea of what you want to study?
- Do you know what you might enjoy?
- Do you know what you're good at?
- Do you know what options exist?
- Are you certain you're transferring for the right reasons?

Gather as much detailed information about the course as possible before making an application: read prospectuses carefully, visit university websites, talk to tutors and careers staff and check you have the right tariff points. You may be able to make an internal transfer application, in which case you need to pick up a form from the Student Information Point, the Student Life Office or from your Faculty Student Support Officer.

The admissions tutor for any new course will need to be satisfied that you have the academic ability, so you will need to contact the admissions tutor for the course you are interested in to discuss the possibility of a transfer. You can get details of admission tutors from your Faculty Student Support Officer or the Student Information Point.

Suspending your studies

Suspending (this can also be known as deferring or intercalating) is essentially freezing your registration at university and coming back at a later date. This might be appropriate if you are experiencing personal or health problems and need to take some time out to consider your options. In the first instance you would need to discuss this with your Personal Tutor or Programme Leader. If, having consulted with your tutors, you decide suspending is the best option you should contact your Programme Office. You must confirm the date of your suspension in writing with your Programme Office, please ensure you keep a copy of this letter. Depending on your circumstances your financial support package will also be suspended for the same period - so it is important you follow the correct procedure, let the relevant bodies know and get advice about the funding implications.

Changing university

You might feel you want to be closer to home, or you might want to do a course which is not available at MMU. You will need to research courses at the new university and check you have the correct UCAS tariff points. You may need to apply through UCAS or the university may allow a direct application. For advice see your Faculty Student Support Officer.

Changing career

It may be that you have a career in mind but are unsure if your current course is the most appropriate. Or you maybe unsure about the careers implications of changing course. You can discuss this with a Careers and Employability Adviser.

Withdrawing from university

Sometimes withdrawing may be the best option, but *make sure you discuss this with your personal tutor or programme leader before making the final decision. Withdrawing from your course will have implications for your student funding depending on when you decide to withdraw, so it is very important that you agree a date for withdrawal.* Inform your programme team in writing that you wish to withdraw (keep a copy of this letter), include the date you have agreed as your withdrawal date and your student number. Inform the Student Loans Company, your Local Authority or Student Finance England immediately.

It's important that you gain credit for what you've achieved so far, in case you decide to continue your degree at a later stage. Successful completion of any units will entitle you to a Certificate of Credit. Successful completion of a full academic year may entitle you to a University Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education. Although this is not perhaps the qualification you set out to achieve, it may be useful if you decide to resume your studies again in the future. It is also valued by employers if you choose to find work instead of pursuing further study.

Withdrawing/deferring during the year

If you withdraw or defer part way through the academic year your student support will be stopped from the agreed deferral date. Your entitlement will be recalculated based on the number of days you have been attending university. However, if you defer because of illness you can continue to receive your student financial support for up to 60 days. When your support is recalculated it may result in an overpayment from the Student Loan Company or your MMU Bursary so it's important you seek advice as soon as you're thinking about

deferring or withdrawing. Student Finance England can use their discretion to continue paying your student support whilst you're deferred if you've been affected by health problems or personal issues. The Students' Union Advice Centre can advise you further about this and can help you write to Student Finance England. Most students aren't able to claim benefits whilst they are deferred - please seek advice about your entitlement.

Withdrawing at the end of the academic year

You will only start to repay your maintenance loan and tuition fee loan after leaving university. If you decide to withdraw from your course after the last day of term your loans will be repayable from the start of the next tax year. Tax years run from 6th April to 5th April. For example: If you withdraw in July 2009 then you would be liable for repayments from April 2010. You will have to start making repayments once you're earning above £15,000 per year. Please contact the Students' Union Advice Centre or visit **www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk** for more information. Please note that any overpayment of grant becomes repayable immediately.

Future study

You are usually entitled to student support for the length of your course plus one additional year (eg: If you are studying a 3 year degree you may receive funding for 4 years).

If you have been affected by personal problems and this has prevented you from completing an academic year then you may be able to receive an additional

year of funding. You should write to Student Finance England to explain your circumstances, and include supporting evidence.

Please be aware, if you are transferring or starting a new course this will affect your entitlement to funding.

Contact the Advice Centre for further information on all of the above.

Tuition fees

You may be charged tuition fees depending on when you withdraw from the University. It is important therefore that you agree the date of your withdrawal with your programme team and put this in writing, and keep a copy of your letter.

SLC funded students: The Student Loans Company require universities to confirm attendance of students in order for fees to be paid. This date is 1 December. If you withdraw after this date you will be charged tuition fees for the full year irrespective of when you withdraw. If you withdraw before this date you will not be charged any tuition fees.

Self-funded students: If you are self funding and responsible for the payment of your tuition fees your fees will be charged on a termly basis. If you have paid your fees and withdraw you must request your refund in writing. Please see **www.finance.mmu.ac.uk/students** for full details. Any queries relating to the payment of your fees should be directed to Financial & Legal Services on **0161 247 2937** or by email **tuitionfeeq@mmu.ac.uk**. You should also check here for the tuition fee implications if you suspend your studies and if you wish to transfer to another university.

Useful Contacts

Faculty Student Support Officers

Foundation students can speak to the Faculty Student Support Officer in the faculty of their linked degree. Combined Honours Students can contact the Faculty Student Support Officer in the faculty related to their principal subject or study location.

Faculty	Student Support Officer	Telephone	Email
Art and Design	Helen Bowman	0161 247 1711	h.bowman@mmu.ac.uk
MMUBS (Business)	Emma Flynn	0161 247 3857	e.flynn@mmu.ac.uk
Hollings	Juliette Leeks	0161 247 2500	j.leeks@mmu.ac.uk
MMU Cheshire	Mike McGarry	0161 247 5237	m.mcgarry@mmu.ac.uk
Health, Psychology & Social Care, and The Institute of Education	Hetal Patel	0161 247 2040 (Mon, Thurs & Fri) 0161 247 2535 (Tues & Wed)	h.patel@mmu.ac.uk
Humanities, law and Social Science (HLSS)	David Peters	0161 247 6459	d.peters@mmu.ac.uk
Science and Engineering	Emma Rayner	0161 247 1513	e.rayner@mmu.ac.uk

Student Financial Support

The Student Financial Support Unit is based within Student Services and provides information and advice on financial matters to students. We administer discretionary funds including the Access to Learning Fund, we are a contact point for the Student Loans Company and can provide information on alternative sources of funding. We run a drop in service for both telephone and face to face enquiries at the All Saints Student Information Point.

All Saints Building, All Saints Manchester, M15 6BH	Telephone	0161 247 3636
	Website	www.mmu.ac.uk/studentfinance
	Email	studentfinance@mmu.ac.uk

Learner Development Service

Advisers within the Learner Development Service act as a contact within the University for students, and potential students who have disabilities or specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia. The role of the Learning Development Adviser is to provide information, advice and support to students about the resources which are available to them, both within the University and from other external agencies.

All Saints Building, All Saints Manchester, M15 6BH	Telephone	0161 247 3491 (Man)/5725 (Crewe)/5326 (Alsager)
	Website	www.mmu.ac.uk/learnerdevelopment

Careers and Employability Services

If, having sought advice, you have decided that leaving university is your best option the Careers and Employability Services can help by:

- Supporting you with your CV and Application Forms
- Advice on interview techniques
- Advice on Job Search Skills and vacancy sources
- Referral to other agencies where appropriate

Support is also available in the form of:

- Assessing your strengths and interests
- Pulling together a new career strategy
- Supporting your application for another course
- Giving advice on job search techniques and vacancy sources

Ground floor, All Saints Building, All Saints, Manchester, M15 6BH	Telephone	0161 247 3483 (Man)/5725 (Crewe)/5326 (Alsager)
	Website	www.mmu.ac.uk/careers
	Email	careers@mmu.ac.uk

Counselling Service

The Counselling Service offers you the chance to talk to a professionally trained counsellor, in confidence, about any personal problems you may have. Both individual and group counselling is available free to all students registered with the University. This service also runs workshops and courses, including 'Thinking of Leaving University?', 'Confidence' and 'Stress Management'.

Ground floor, All Saints Building All Saints, Manchester, M15 6BH	Telephone	0161 247 3493 (Man)/5725 (Crewe)/5326 (Alsager)
	Website	www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/studserv/counselling
	Email	counselling@mmu.ac.uk

Students' Union Advice Centre

The Student Union Advice Centre offer free, independent, impartial advice about the financial implications of withdrawing from or suspending your studies.

MMUnion, 99 Oxford Road Manchester, M1 7EL	Telephone	0161 247 6533
	Website	www.mmunion.co.uk/advice
	Email	s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk

Awards and Conferments

For information on entitlement to transcripts, certificates, diplomas and confirmation of attendance letters contact the Awards and Conferments Team.

Telephone	0161 247 6888
Email	awards@mmu.ac.uk

Volunteering MMU

Volunteering MMU offers information and advice on how to access a wide range of opportunities aimed at students. Sharing new experiences with new people can give you the confidence to face new challenges in other areas of your life, and is an excellent way to make new friends.

Ground Floor, MMUnioun 99 Oxford Road, Manchester M1 7EL	Telephone	0161 247 2211/2536
	Website	volunteering@mmu.ac.uk
	Email	www.mmu.ac.uk/volunteering

Societies and Sports Clubs

You may find it difficult to settle into University life and would like to find a way of making friends. There are over 100 different sports clubs and societies on offer at the Students' Union, which all MMU students are welcome to join. If there isn't a society that you're interested in then you can start one yourself and find other like minded students to share your interests. Visit www.mmunion.co.uk to find out more.

This publication is available on the
University website www.mmu.ac.uk
in pdf and Word documents.

This publication is available in alternative formats.
Please telephone 0161 247 1065