

STUDENT TRANSFER, SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY 2020

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About this Policy

The Student Suspension, Transfer and Withdrawal Policy articulates the mechanisms that Manchester Met uses to facilitate a student's change of status within a range of circumstances.

1. Introduction

The University is committed to supporting students, and seeks to develop a positive and safe environment that enables them to engage with their studies and achieve to the best of their ability. This Policy is intended to inform and guide the University's response to situations where there are concerns a student is unable to continue with their studies and/or may not have the capacity to participate fully as a student in relation to their academic studies and/or in the University community in general.

1.1 This Policy sets out the University's approach for handling a range of circumstances through which students may:

- temporarily suspend their registration with the University;
- transfer to another Programme;
- withdraw from, or be withdrawn from their studies.

1.2 The Policy identifies a range of circumstances or events, which may act as entry points to the procedures outlined within this document. Entry points are categorised into three areas:

- at the request of the student;
- on academic grounds;
- referral under another University Policy, Procedure or Regulation (e.g. [Fitness to Study Policy](#), [Regulations for the Payment of University Fees](#), [Student Pregnancy and Maternity Guidelines](#), [Visa & Immigration](#))

1.3 This Policy applies to all students on Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught Programmes. Separate procedures exist for postgraduate research students; these procedures can be found in the [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#).

1.4 In addition, specific procedures apply to international students wishing to temporarily suspend their registration with the University, transfer to another Programme, withdraw from, or be withdrawn from their studies. These are identified in Section 11 of this Policy.

1.5 There may be particular instances where entry points overlap (e.g. concerns around academic performance linking to underlying health-related issues). The [Fitness to Study Policy](#) informs and guides the University's response to situations where there are concerns that a student is not well enough to study. Staff handling student cases through this Policy should be aware of this and consider the guidance they provide to students accordingly.

2. Definitions

A **Programme Transfer** is a change from one Programme of study to another. Transfers may be internal (from one Programme at Manchester Met to a different Programme at Manchester Met) or external (where a student transfers from Manchester Met to another University and vice versa). Internal transfers may also include a change in study mode (e.g. Full-Time to Part-Time, Full-Time to Full-Time with Sandwich year). External transfers will be treated as a withdrawal from the University.

Student Suspension is where a student agrees or is required to take time out from their studies with the intention of normally returning to the same Programme within a time limited period (usually returning at the same point in the following academic year).

Student Withdrawal is where a student agrees or is required to leave their Programme completely, with no intention of returning at a later date. Depending on a student's academic progress at the point of withdrawal they may be entitled to an exit award, as defined in the approved Programme Specification. Where a student wishes at a later point to return to the University, they will be required to re-apply through the standard admissions process.

3. Student is thinking of leaving their Programme or taking time out from their studies

3.1 There may be occasions where a student wishes to take time out from their studies, change their Programme of study or leave the University for personal, financial, time-limited health or other reasons, but have not been prompted to do so by the University.

3.2 Students who indicate that they are considering transferring to a different Programme, suspending their studies or withdrawing from the University should be directed to discuss the implications with a Student Adviser in a Student Hub before they make a final decision. The Student Adviser will advise on action to take and refer to specialist support as required, including advice from the Student's Union. Students and the Student Financial Support team should normally be encouraged to consider a time-limited suspension rather than withdrawal in the first instance. The student record for possible leavers will be updated with a 'Possible leaver's flag' to alert Finance or the International Office that there are formal concerns for students. The flag will be removed if the student does not leave their course.

3.3 Where a student is in receipt of disability support, they should make the Student Adviser at the Student Hub aware of this so that they can arrange for the Disability Service to discuss any resource implications.

3.4 All students need to fully understand the financial implications regarding leaving their Programme as outlined in Section 4, Implications for Student Fees/Funding and discuss this with the Student Financial Support Team directly.

4. Implications for Student Fees/Funding

4.1 The Regulations for the Payment of University Fees include details of how fees are adjusted in the event of suspension of studies, internal transfer to another Programme or withdrawal from the University, along with any sanctions that may result from failure to make payment of University fees. Any academic action taken under this Policy will take precedence (i.e. a student suspended for non-payment of fees may still be withdrawn over academic concerns).

4.2 Transfer

Transfers can impact on fees charged which may be overall higher depending on the Programme type and Regulations for the Payment of University Fees assigned. Transfers may also have an impact on Student Finance funding and Manchester Met Student Support Packages.

4.3 Suspension

Student Finance funding is not available during periods of suspension. The exception to this is if an undergraduate suspension relates to health reasons (and Student Billings are notified), the student maintenance loan is extended for an additional 60 days providing medical evidence has been provided. Postgraduate taught students suspending on health grounds must provide medical evidence and, if in financial hardship, should be directed to the Student Financial Support team.

4.4 Withdrawal

Depending on a student's engagement and/or the point within the academic year a student withdraws from the University, 100% fees may still be charged even for students exiting with a lesser award. Student Loan eligibility may also be affected and any maintenance loan for living costs received from Student Finance after the withdrawal date may also be recalled with immediate effect. Following withdrawal from the University, students are required to inform Student Finance immediately to discuss implications to fee payment or any maintenance loans. Student Billings will also update Student Finance for any relevant students.

4.5 Student Billings need to be notified of postgraduate taught students who receive an exit award suspend, withdraw or transfer courses. Postgraduate taught students will be charged for credits commenced, if they have commenced their dissertation 100% fees are charged. Undergraduate students will be charged based on fee liability dates. There are a limited number of Postgraduate taught Programmes where the fee structure is different to this as detailed in the [Regulations for the Payment of University Fees](#).

5. Student Engagement

5.1 The University considers that student academic success depends very heavily upon their engagement with their Programme. The University defines engagement as comprising of:

- attending timetabled teaching sessions, which include lectures, seminars and academic or personal tutorials;
- other forms of contact with academic and professional services staff that relate

to academic study;

- attending examinations, tests and other assessment activities;
- submitting coursework;
- accessing University facilities, including the Virtual Learning Environment(s) (including Moodle), the University Library, and Programme materials;
- participating in field trips and other activities that are a compulsory part of a Programme.

5.2 For the purposes of this Policy, the University focuses on three aspects of engagement that are particularly relevant: attending timetabled teaching sessions; accessing Moodle (or equivalent) for academic study; and submitting work for assessment (including exams/tests, regardless of whether a pass mark is achieved).

5.3 Further information regarding student engagement can be found in the [Engagement Policy](#).

6. Programme transfer at the request of the student

6.1 Students should be directed to discuss the implications with a Student Adviser in a Student Hub. Where they conclude that they wish to transfer to another Programme in the University, they should complete a 'Request to transfer from my Programme' form online (see 6.2). If the internal transfer does not take effect until the start of the next academic year, and they are not continuing with their current study, the student will be suspended (students are not eligible for maintenance or Postgraduate Loan funding during periods of suspension) until their transfer takes effect. If the student wishes to leave their Programme and transfer to another institution this should be treated as a withdrawal.

Internal Programme transfers for fully enrolled students

6.2 This Policy applies to internal Programme transfers where:

- i. the new Programme is at a higher academic level (e.g. Foundation year to a different linked degree)
- ii. the transfer will take place during the current academic session and the current Programme is significantly similar to the content of the new Programme as determined by the Programme Leader (or delegated staff member).

6.3 The Programme Leader (or delegated staff member) for the new Programme will consider the student's request which will result in one of the following outcomes. These will be emailed by Programmes Management to the student's Manchester Met account and any other email addresses held for the student on the student records system :

- **unconditional offer** - Any previously undertaken credits for units that are valid on the new Programme will be transferred to their new student profile. This change will be reflected in the student's timetable and Moodle access with immediate effect and as soon as systems have updated;
- **conditional offer** – The student is required to meet certain conditions before they can transfer (e.g. successful completion of current year). Any previously

undertaken credits for units that are valid on the new Programme will be transferred to their new student profile. This change will be reflected in the student's timetable and Moodle access upon confirmation that all conditions have been met. It is the responsibility of the student to notify Programmes Management when these conditions have been met;

- **reject** – details of the reasons for not granting the transfer should be communicated to the student within 7 calendar days of receiving the decision from the Programme Leader (or equivalent).

6.4 Students should inform Student Finance (if applicable) when a transfer is agreed. Student Billings will also update Student Finance for any relevant students.

6.5 Students wishing to transfer from single honours to an integrated Master's degree (or vice versa) should make a request to the Programme Leader (or delegated staff member) before the end of year assessment board meet.

6.6 In the case of transfers to sandwich routes, if a suitable placement is not found by an agreed cut-off date then the student should revert to their original route, or request a suspension.

6.7 If this change will not take effect until the start of the next academic year, and the student is not continuing with their current year, they would normally be suspended or withdrawn from their current Programme once the new student record is created.

6.8 If the transfer is at the same or lower academic level than the current Programme and will occur in the next academic session this should be dealt with via the Recruitment and Admissions team.

Internal Programme transfers where the student has not yet for fully enrolled

6.9 Where a student record is still provisional, (i.e. prior to completion of enrolment) any transfer should be dealt with via Recruitment and Admissions.

7. Suspension of studies at the request of the student

7.1 Students should be directed to discuss the implications with a Student Adviser in a Student Hub. Where they conclude that they wish to suspend their studies, they should complete a '*Request to suspend study*' form online.

7.2 The relevant Programme Leader (or delegated staff member) will be asked to consider all student-led suspension requests. Where they consider the reasons for the request are valid, a suspension generally for up to one calendar year may be approved. The timeframe and duration for any approved suspension must take account of any implications for the student's capacity to re-engage with the Programme (for example, where provision is being taught-out) and with all required assessment or reassessment points. Medical evidence will be required for all health-related suspensions.

7.3 Students considering suspension on the grounds of pregnancy, adoption or a parental order should first consult the [Student Pregnancy and Maternity Guidelines](#).

7.4 Where a suspension of studies is for a full calendar year, the expectation is that the student will return to their Programme at the same point in the next academic year. Students will bank any marks they have already received (incl. fails) and their (re)assessment status on units previously undertaken will be identical to that prior to the start of the suspension. This will include any penalties applied or unspent approved Exceptional Factors.

7.5 If the student returns at an earlier point in the next academic session, additional tuition fees will be due unless approved by the Student Billings Manager. Exceptionally, if the student is allowed to return from suspension at the start of the next academic session to retake the year, they will not bank previously achieved marks, although penalties (such as academic misconduct) may still apply (e.g. 40% capped penalty would be applied to work submitted for that unit in a retake year). Returning from suspension at the start of the next academic year could have serious financial implications.

7.6 The expectation is that first requests for suspensions of studies will be approved, except where there are clear reasons for not doing so (e.g. an attempt to avoid a University disciplinary process, the academic expulsion procedure, payment towards tuition fees). Suspension should not be granted to allow a student to defer submission of assessment in the final term where all teaching or placement elements have already been completed.

7.7 In all instances, requests for a second or a subsequent suspension of studies must be approved by the relevant Head of Department (or delegated staff member) with any decision based on the likelihood of the student returning to, and successfully completing, the Programme.

7.8 Where a request from a student for a suspension of studies is rejected, the student will be invited to continue on the Programme. In such instances, the student will have the right to submit an appeal against the decision under the [Academic Appeals Procedures](#) (see section 12).

7.9 The Programmes Management team will email students the outcome of all suspension requests to their Manchester Met account and any other email addresses held for the student on the student records system.

7.10 The effective date of suspension noted in the email must reflect the student's last date of engagement, and must not be the date when the formal suspension process commenced.

7.11 Students should inform Student Finance (if applicable) when they suspend. Student Billings will also update Student Finance for any relevant students. If a student fails to return to the University at the end of their agreed suspension, they may be withdrawn from their Programme.

8 Suspension of studies by the University

8.1 A Head of Department with overall Programme responsibility may suspend a student's studies for a period of up to one calendar year if they determine that they are unable to complete the academic work to a sufficient standard to secure a pass at the end of the academic year or equivalent session. This may be where urgent action is required (such as ill health, adverse personal circumstances or for other reasons that temporarily prevent the student from giving the necessary attention to their academic work), or where agreement with a student on an appropriate course of action has not been reached at a Case Review Panel through the [Fitness to Study Policy](#).

8.2 The student must be informed in writing of the reasons for any such proposed suspension of studies and must be given an opportunity to respond. This communication will be emailed to their Manchester Met account, and any other email addresses held for the student on the student records system. Students should be directed to discuss the implications with a Student Adviser in a Student Hub.

8.3 The Head of Department may proceed to suspend the student's studies even if the student disagrees with this course of action. The letter will inform the student that they may appeal under the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#) (see section 12).

8.4 Failure to make payment of University fees in accordance with the [Regulations for the Payment of University Fees](#) may lead to a student's suspension of studies during an academic year where teaching or placements are still ongoing. In order to return to their Programme, the student would first need to get agreement from the Collections and Recovery team before discussing the possibility with their Programme Leader.

9. Withdrawal at the request of the student

9.1 Students should be directed to discuss the implications with a Student Adviser in a Student Hub as a suspension of studies, or internal transfer may be more appropriate. Where they conclude that they wish to withdraw from the University, they should complete a '*Notification of withdrawal from my Programme*' form online. They should be made aware of the financial implications of withdrawing from the Programme as outlined in Section 4 above.

9.2 Once the student has formally informed the University of their intention to withdraw, Programmes Management will email them to confirm the withdrawal and their last date of engagement. The student record will be updated to reflect the leave date, reason for withdrawal and, where appropriate, issue an exit award.

10. Withdrawal of a Student by the University

10.1 The University has in place a range of mechanisms for supporting student success and managing engagement with Programmes of study. However, there may be occasions where a student is judged to be at risk of being unable to

complete the required academic work to a sufficient standard to secure a pass at the end of the academic year or equivalent session.

10.2 Action under this Policy may be initiated as a result of evidence of one or more of the following as outlined in the University's [Engagement Policy](#):

- failure to attend lectures and / or other timetabled elements of a Programme;
- failure to submit work for summative assessment;
- failure to attend examinations, tests or other assessment activities;
- failure to attend a meeting regarding student engagement.
- failure to engage in other ways with the requirements of a Programme (e.g. through Moodle, participating in field trips).

10.3 Students may also be withdrawn following referral from the following procedures:

- Formal Stage of the [Fitness to Study Policy](#).
- the Collections and Recovery team under the [Regulations for the Payment of University Fees](#);
- the Student Case Management under [guidance for exceptional factors](#). Cases referred from these teams or procedures will proceed directly to 10.10.

10.4 If a student, who is repeating without attendance, submits a further claim for elements already considered by the Student Case Management team in the previous academic period they may be referred to the Head of Department under section 10.10.

10.5 For Programmes that are part of the University's central student engagement scheme, there will be some initial informal intervention. If this informal approach does not result in a satisfactory improvement in engagement, the student may be referred for escalation to the formal action outlined below.

10.6 For Programmes that are not in the central student engagement scheme, academic colleagues will coordinate the support for the student and then contact the Programmes Management team for guidance and support on the appropriate processes. Formal action for academic related issues should only commence after careful consideration by the appropriate staff. Initial emphasis should be placed on supporting the student and recognise that in many cases barriers to full engagement can be resolved without the need for formal institutional action. Programmes Management will carry out the formal stages of action.

10.7 Following referral, the Programmes Management team will issue a First Academic Warning letter. This will be emailed to the student's Manchester Met account and any other email addresses held for the student on the student records system. The warning letter will ask the student to make contact to arrange a meeting or request they use the drop in facility at the Student Hub to meet with a Student Adviser within 14 calendar days. The letter will make it clear that if the student does not address the issues raised within the specified timeframe they may receive a Final Academic Warning, and subsequently may be withdrawn from the University. The student record will be updated with a 'Possible leaver's flag (poor engagement)' to alert colleagues in Finance or the International Office that there are formal concerns. If the student does engage with this process, the 'Possible leaver's flag (poor engagement)' will be removed from their record.

10.8 If, at the end of the 14 calendar days (or applicable period), the student does not attend the meeting, or the Programme Leader (or delegated staff member) considers that the student has not responded adequately to the concerns of the First Academic Warning letter, the Programmes Management team will issue a Final Academic Warning letter. This will be emailed to their Manchester Met account and any other email addresses held for the student on the student records system.

10.9 The Final Academic Warning letter will set out the matters to which the student has not adequately responded and will either inform them of an appointment to attend a meeting or request they make contact with the Programme Leader (or delegated staff member) within 14 calendar days. If the student does not attend an arranged appointment, they will immediately be referred to the Head of Department. The Final Academic Warning letter will make it clear that if the student does not address the issues raised within the specified timeframe they will be withdrawn from the University.

10.10 At the end of 14 calendar days from the Final Academic Warning letter (or following a missed appointment, referral from the [Fitness to Study Policy](#), the Collections and Recovery team or Student Case Management), referral will be made to the Head of Department. If the Head of Department does not consider that the student is in a position to complete academic work to a sufficient standard to secure a pass at the end of the academic year or equivalent session, they can either authorise the student's withdrawal (or suspend the student under Section 8 above). In cases of withdrawal, the Programmes Management team will email the student on behalf of the Head of Department confirming their withdrawal from the University. The letter will inform the student of their right to appeal under the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#) (see section 12).

10.11 The effective date of withdrawal (or suspension) noted in the letter must reflect the student's last date of engagement, and must not be the date when the formal withdrawal process commenced. In most cases, the last date of engagement should be no later than the day before the first day of the Summer Term (or the equivalent for Programmes that do not follow a conventional academic year pattern).

10.12 Where a student initially responds adequately to an Academic Warning letter but then, within the same academic period gives further cause for concern on academic grounds, the Programmes Management team will alert the Programme Leader (or delegated staff member) who may request the issue of a Final Academic Warning letter.

10.13 In cases where a period of at least 21 calendar days has elapsed since the beginning of an academic year and there is no evidence that a student has either attended any classes or engaged in any other way with their Programme, the matter will be progressed directly to the Final Academic Warning stage.

10.14 Failure to make payment of University fees in accordance with the

[Regulations for the Payment of University Fees](#) may result in a student's withdrawal of studies during the final term where all teaching or placement elements have been completed, prevention of re-enrolment or the prevention of a University award being issued.

11. International Students

11.1 The University, through the [International Office](#), monitors the immigration status of overseas students at the start of each term, through pre-enrolment and re-registration activities. Where a student has intentionally overstayed and does not have permission to remain in the UK, the student will be withdrawn by the International Office, on the authority of the Academic Registrar. There will be no right of appeal.

In the case of international students who are subject to Home Office requirements, action will also be initiated following failure to attend a termly re-registration session.

11.2 Where an international student has overstayed but is in a position to successfully extend their immigration permission within 14 calendar days of the overstay the [International Office](#) will consult the student's Programme Leader and the Programmes Management team. If appropriate they will agree a temporary suspension of studies. A new Certificate of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) will then be issued, in accordance with University [CAS Policy](#).

11.3 **Transfer.** The University is required to report transfer of Programmes of Tier 4 students to the Home Office. If a Tier 4 student is moving up or down the Regulated Qualification Framework and to a different Programme, this would usually lead to withdrawal of immigration sponsorship by the University and the Tier 4 students would be required to submit a new application to the University's Recruitment and Admissions team. For more information, refer to the [Your Visa, Your Responsibility](#) guide and the University's [CAS Policy](#).

11.4 **Suspension.** The University is required to report a suspension of Programme by a Tier 4 student to the Home Office. This would usually lead to withdrawal of immigration sponsorship by the University and affect their stay in the UK. For more information refer to the [Your Visa, Your Responsibility](#) guide.

11.5 **Withdrawal.** The University is required to report a withdrawal of Programme by a Tier 4 student to the Home Office. This would usually lead to withdrawal of immigration sponsorship by the University and affect their stay in the UK. For more information, refer to the [Your Visa, Your Responsibility](#) guide.

12. Right of appeal

12.1 Where the student has a right of appeal these must be submitted in writing to the [Student Case Management Team](#) within 7 days of the notification.

12.2 Where a **student request** for an internal Programme transfer or a suspension of studies is rejected, the student will be invited to continue on their current Programme.

The student can only appeal the rejection on the basis that:

- the decision was not reasonable; or;
- new material evidence is now available which was not disclosed at an earlier stage of the process.

12.3 Students who are suspended or withdrawn from their Programme **by a Head of Department** against their wishes may appeal on the basis that:

- new material evidence is now available which was not disclosed at an earlier stage of the process.
- there was a material irregularity in the conduct of the process that was such a nature to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome might have been different had the error not occurred; or;
- they are able to demonstrate that they are not yet at a stage of not being able to complete the academic work required to secure a pass at the end of the current academic session and that they would be able to secure a pass if they engaged with the Programme as normally timetabled.

12.4 Where a student appeals, it will be dealt with under the Academic Appeals Procedure. The normal outcomes of an appeal will be one of the following:

- to confirm the student's suspension or withdrawal;
- to allow a student to continue on the course;
- to change the withdrawal to a suspension for the remainder of the current academic year.

Where an Appeal is upheld and the Panel agrees that a student can continue on a course, but the student does not then engage fully with the course, the student will be withdrawn by their Head of Department with no further right of Appeal. A 'Completion of Procedures' letter will be issued by Student Case Management.

VERSION CONTROL STATMENT

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