

INTERMISSION POLICY

1 The Intermission Policy sits under The University of Law's Enabling Student Development and Achievement Policy, which has been informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically the Advice and Guidance on Enabling Student Achievement. The QAA's Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education institutions and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities are assured and enhanced. This policy sits within The University of Law's Quality and Standards Code which provides a suite of policies designed to safeguard the academic standards of the University of Law and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the Code.

Introduction

2 The University of Law ("the University") recognises that central to this policy is the University's responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name and the quality of learning opportunities for students. This policy outlines the principles and sets out the procedure to be followed where a student might want to take a break from those studies.

3 The University believes that, wherever possible, it is beneficial for students to complete their original programme of study.

4 It also recognises, however, that where a student is experiencing disruption to the programme due to ill health, personal, financial or other reasons, the student may benefit from being allowed to take a break from their studies. There will be academic and financial implications associated with taking a break from study; a decision to apply to take a break should be made by the student only after diligent research and careful consideration of academic and pastoral advice from University staff.

Responsibility for this policy

5 Responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures associated with intermission lies with the Academic Standards and Quality Committee, but their implementation is mainly the responsibility of Student Journey team staff.

Expectation

6 The University has in place arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential, and monitors and evaluates them.

Key aims and principles

- 7 The University ensures that:
- 7.1 students are appropriately supported in their academic, personal and professional development to encourage them to achieve their full potential;
 - 7.2 students are appropriately supported in programme transitions, including where they need to leave one course and join another;
 - 7.3 students are aware of and have easy access to relevant information about the support and learning opportunities available to them;
 - 7.4 students are in a position to understand the expectations placed on them by the University and the need to take responsibility for their own learning and development;
 - 7.5 students have an opportunity to give their input into the nature of the University's support provision;
 - 7.6 staff have full access to relevant information about the support and learning opportunities available to students and are encouraged to be proactive in recognising student issues and giving advice;
 - 7.7 in supporting students, staff are briefed to identify students who are encountering difficulties on a course and relevant staff are assigned to discuss all options available to them on a non-judgmental basis;
 - 7.8 procedures are in place to ensure that decisions on intermissions (including permission to intermit, and re-admission to a new course) are taken speedily and with due regard to the needs of the student.
 - 7.9 In enabling student development and achievement the University applies the principles of fairness, inclusion and accessibility, taking into account the differing individual requirements of students, and the diversity of the student body.

Procedural Approach

- 8 Students may come to a decision to intermit of their own volition or they may intermit under the University's Support to Study Policy. Students will be counselled by University staff as to the academic and financial implications associated with taking a break from study.
- 9 Students who decide to apply to intermit after diligent research and careful consideration of academic and pastoral advice from University staff will sign an intermission form confirming the reasons for the break from study and that they understand the academic and financial consequences of their intermission. Reasons for the break from study will be reported to the Academic Board on an annual basis. Intermission requests are subject to approval by the Student Journey Team and/or the appropriate Programme Student Lead.
- 10 The Student Journey Team/Programme Student Lead will consider each case individually; however, will take the following into account as part of the review process:
 - Previous attendance/engagement record
 - Any supporting evidence provided
 - Whether the situation resulting in the request is likely to be improved should a period of intermission be granted
- 11 Intermission will only be agreed in the event that a student has met all liabilities under the University's terms and conditions, including payment of fees. In exceptional circumstances, the University may, in its absolute discretion, agree a payment plan with the student for any outstanding fees whereby all liability will be cleared prior to the students return to the course. Failure to comply with any agreed payment plan will result in immediate withdrawal from the course.
- 12 In the event that a student is currently in receipt of funding, the student acknowledges that any finalisation of intermission will result in the university notifying any funding providers that the student is intermitting. The student acknowledges that this may impact several aspects of their funding including, but not limited to, funding entitlement and loan repayment. It is the responsibility of the student to discuss the implications of intermitting with any and all of their loan providers prior to intermitting.
- 13 Students are subject to the University policies, procedures, protocols and all regulations (including assessment) that are applicable to the course they intermit on to.
- 14 Students may only intermit onto other courses of different length or mode of study in exceptional circumstances agreed by the University.

- 15 Students will be liable for the fee of the course that they intermit on to, less any fees paid to date.
- 16 Where approved, intermission will be allowed for **one year only**. Where there are exceptional evidenced circumstances, a different duration may be approved at senior management level. Where a further intermission is requested, the case is reviewed by a panel of three staff at Manager level or above. This panel meets at a number of points during the year. The outcome of this review is normally notified to the student in writing within seven calendar days of the review meeting.
- 17 Students will return at an agreed set point during the course that they intermit on to.
- 18 Students will have access to learning materials via the University's virtual learning environment during their period of intermission and hence will be able to optimise their chance of success on return.
- 19 Students may re-sit outstanding assessments during their period of intermission with agreement at senior management level.
- 20 Where intermission is granted on medical grounds, the University may (in its absolute discretion) require evidence that a student is fit to return to their studies. In cases where this is not provided or is deemed to be insufficient, the University may require a second medical opinion. In this case a student may be asked to submit themselves for examination by a medical practitioner nominated by the University (with the associated cost to be covered by the University).
- 21 If the student is requested to seek a medical assessment they will be asked to authorise full disclosure to the University of the results of the assessment. It is recognised that this would constitute "special category data" under the Data Protection Act 2018 and as such, will be handled in accordance with the higher levels of protection afforded to such information under that Act.
- 22 Students will only be permitted to return if the University is satisfied that the student is fit to study and engage with student life.
- 23 If a student decides not to return to their studies following a period of intermission or is unable to return due to long-term illness, they will usually be withdrawn from their course. In such cases, students will generally remain liable for any fees incurred prior to their period of intermission however students can submit a request in accordance with our fee appeals policy if their circumstances fall within the parameters outlined in the policy.

- 24 A student may appeal against a decision that:
- (i) their intermission request has been refused under paragraph 9;
 - (ii) a further intermission request has been refused under paragraph 16;
 - (iii) their studies are to be brought to an end following an intermission from studies under paragraph 21.
- 25 More details on these procedures can be found in the Intermission Guidance Notes.

Responsibility for the provision

- 26 Responsibility for the implementation of this provision lies with the University's Operations Function.

Monitoring and evaluation of the provision

- 27 Formal responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of this provision lies with the Academic Board.

Version history:

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
V1.0	Academic Registrar	Initial draft	13/11/13
V1.1	Learning Support	Quality assurance review	03/12/13
V1.2	VP (AGQS) and Academic Registrar	Incorporate input from CFO and in house counsel	08/07/14
V1.3	External QA Review	External review	04/08/14
V1.4	Review group: VP (AGQS), Academic Registrar, Head of Quality Assurance	Incorporate feedback from External QA Review.	06/08/14
V1.5	Executive management Board	Approval	13/08/14
V1.6	Proof Reader	Proofing	11/09/14

V1.7	Academic Board	Approval	16/09/14
V1.8	Head of Student Services	Annual review/update	14/10/15
V1.9	Head of Student Services	Incorporate input from Group Legal Counsel and Director of Operational Services	22/12/15
V1.10	Head of Student Services	Incorporate input following review by Senior Tutor	18/04/16
V1.11	Head of Student Support Services	Biannual review/update	25/09/18
V1.12	Head of Student Support Services	Incorporate input from Director of Operational Services	03/10/18
V1.13	Head of Student Support Services	Removal of Intermission Fee	09/07/19
V1.14	Head of Student Support Services	Amendment re; paragraph 22, fee details, and other minor elements.	13/08/19
V1.15	Registry Officer	Change to coding convention	23/03/20
V1.16	Senior Quality Officer	Further naming convention clarifications	26/03/20
V1.17	Head of Student Information and Administration – Quality	Amendment to department names.	August 2020
V1.18	Head of Student Journey	Amendment to department names	August 2022
V1.18	Registry Assistant	Action Approved by AB	October 2022