



Student  
Services

Funding & Advice



# The Funding Guide to Interrupting Your Studies



Everything you need to know about  
how this impacts your funding.

## Intro to Interruption

An Authorised Interruption of Study means you temporarily suspend your study for an agreed period of time. It's different from withdrawing as you will resume your studies on the date agreed with the University. It's a more formal and pro-active approach to taking time away from your studies that makes sure you aren't negatively impacted by non-attendance or missing assessments.

## Length

There can be some flexibility around the length of an interruption, and this can often be impacted by your circumstances, the stage of your studies when you are planning to start the interruption, and when you are able to return. Periods of absence for a few weeks should be managed within your Schools authorised absence process.

According to the University regulations, an interruption will not normally exceed one academic session, and the total period of Authorised Interruption of Study throughout an entire programme of study, will not normally exceed two academic sessions.

An interruption may be for a full term, or a full academic year, which can make your return smoother. For example, if you complete Term 1 of your 3rd year and interrupt for Term 2, you would only need to return in the following academic year to complete Term 2 of your 3rd year.

However, there can be some flexibility around this as not everyone will need to begin an interruption in line with term dates. This is why it is important to discuss your situation with your Personal Tutor/Programme Leader and work out a plan that best supports you.

## Reasons

An authorised interruption will only be considered where the circumstances are exceptional, most commonly for medical, health or care issues, unforeseen family circumstances and bereavement. It could also include activities that would have a positive impact on your course or future career such as internships or opportunities to work abroad etc.

## Impact

Taking an Authorised Interruption of Study may have an impact on your student funding for the current academic year, but you will also need to consider your entitlement for student funding when you are ready to return. This guidance document will explain this in detail, but you can also ask the **Funding & Advice Team** for tailored guidance to ensure that you make an informed decision.

## Application Process

You should discuss your circumstances with your Personal Tutor/Programme Leader and get any advice you need before making your decision. This includes considering the impact this might have on your student funding entitlements (see section below).

An application for an Authorised Interruption of Study is made through your Personal Tutor/Programme Leader. They will ensure any paperwork is completed and will support you through the process. You should try and arrange this in advance where possible, or as soon as practical after any problem has emerged.

Your School will then share this change in your student status with Student Administration who will update your student record and inform your student funding body. It is therefore important the information is accurate.

## Returning to university

You will usually agree a return date when you arrange an interruption, but it's a good idea to liaise with your Personal Tutor/Programme Leader in advance to ensure this happens smoothly. Your Personal Tutor/Programme Leader will need to complete a recommencement form, which leads to Student Administration updating your student record to allow you to enrol. It's also important to apply for any student funding in advance of your return, so this is in place for you without any delay.

## What this means for your student funding

Any change in your student status can impact your eligibility for student funding, including payment of tuition fees and living cost support. While the university does treat an interruption and withdrawal differently, student funding bodies (i.e. SAAS, SFE, SFNI and SFW) do not, and will consider any student not attending to be withdrawn. As a result, you may find it helpful to [read our guidance](#) on how leaving a course impacts your funding.

As you are not attending, all of your funding will stop unless you meet the criteria for the exceptions noted below. When your income changes in this way, it is always a good idea to review your budget and you can use [our online resources](#) to help you do this.

**Interrupting for medical, health or care issues** may be treated differently by your student funding body. This can often be interpreted broadly to include mental wellbeing issues, bereavement etc.

If you are funded by SAAS they refer to this as an approved absence and you may be able to retain your student funding for the remainder of the academic year. You will be required to provide medical (or other) evidence\* when going through the application process for the Authorised Interruption of Study. The University will then inform SAAS that you are taking an approved absence and your funding will continue. Students are only eligible to receive funding for one approved absence.

The timing of your interruption can also impact on your future students funding entitlement. If your approved absence begins prior to 1st December, SAAS will not pay your tuition fees for that session. However, whether SAAS pay your fees or not, if you receive bursary funding during the approved absence, SAAS will include this year of study when looking at your entitlement to future funding.

Remember, any funding you continue to receive that is in the form of a student loan will be repaid under the normal repayment terms. While you might be eligible to retain your funding during a period of interruption, you do not have to – the decision is yours.

**NB:** If you are on an approved absence and retaining student funding from SAAS, they have an expectation that, as you are unable to attend your course, you are also unable to work in paid employment.

If you are funded by SFE, SFNI or SFW they refer to this as suspending your studies. In some instances these funding bodies may allow you to receive an element of your funding if you are suspending due to illness or bereavement. While the University will report the change in your student status, you will need to contact your funding body directly to claim any funding you might be eligible for as this will not happen automatically. You will likely need to provide supporting evidence.\*

Your funding body will reassess your award based on your new circumstances. This will result in a new award letter, showing your reduced entitlement and any overpayment that you might

need to repay. In the case of over-payments, these are not subject to the original terms of your loan agreement and must be repaid as soon as possible or they are deducted from future entitlements. The same is true of grant over-payments. It is therefore very important that you contact your funding body with your plans and ensure that any overpayment is repaid as soon as possible.

\*We recommend you keep a copy of any evidence for you own records.

## **Impact on your future student funding entitlement**

While your reasons for interrupting might be due to extenuating circumstances, it doesn't mean that you will be eligible for additional student funding. Unless you are interrupting your studies for a full academic session, you will likely be returning to the same level of study so will need to consider your eligibility for student funding to repeat a period of study.

We have separate [guidance to help you understand your eligibility for student funding when repeating a period of study](#). Our funding body can help you understand your remaining entitlement to all aspects of student funding.





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