Policy on and procedures for suspensions

[Introduced by the University Board for Teaching and Learning on 30 April 2012 to take effect from the 2012-13 Academic Session. Amended and approved by UBTL 20 May 2013.]

Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to outline the procedure to be followed for students seeking suspension, to clarify the entitlement of suspended students to access services and to outline the rights of, and procedure to be followed by, students returning from suspension.

2. The section on Return from suspension should be read in conjunction with the Policy on and procedures for students returning to or repeating study.

What is meant by ‘suspension’?

3. A suspension of study is an interruption to a period of study that prevents a student from continuing with their programme for a specified period of time.

4. A student may apply for a period of suspension through submission of a Change of Status - Suspension Request Form. While all such requests will be considered by the University, it should be noted that suspension is not an inherent right of students; suspensions are granted at the University’s discretion.

5. The University considers the following examples, with appropriate supporting evidence, may be reasonable grounds for a student seeking suspension:
   - Health issues (mental or physical);
   - Impairment of ability to attend or engage with academic commitments;
   - Maternity leave;
   - Jury service or compulsory military service;
   - Compassionate reasons (including serious domestic difficulties);
   - Financial reasons;
   - Undertaking a placement or employment opportunity, including a term as a sabbatical officer;
   - Other substantive reasons.

6. Weak academic performance in itself is not reasonable grounds for suspension. Any student who suspends should normally be in good academic standing.

7. In certain circumstances, the University may require a student to suspend their studies for a period of time. These circumstances may include:
   - Non-payment of tuition fees;
• Disciplinary reasons (on the recommendation of the Standing Disciplinary Committee);
• Non-engagement with study (in accordance with the Policy on and procedures relating to student academic engagement and fitness to study);
• Reasons relating to fitness to practise (in accordance with the Fitness to Practise procedures);
• Suspension pending re-assessment (where the student does not wish to repeat any teaching but must pass an assessment(s) before progressing. He/she is referred to as suspended ‘assessment only’).

8. The maximum period, over the course of a programme, for which a student may suspend their studies should normally be two years, excluding periods of suspension ‘for assessment only’.

Procedure for suspensions

9. If a student is considering suspension, he/she should in the first instance discuss this option with their Personal Tutor. If suspension appears to be a reasonable course of action, the student should be referred to the Faculty Director of Administration (HBS) or the Student Services Centre in Carrington (all non-HBS students).

10. The Faculty Director of Administration/personal tutor will consult with and direct the student to the Advisory Team in the Student Services Centre in order to discuss the financial implications of suspension. If the student wishes to proceed, they will be required to put the request in writing by submitting a Change of Status - Suspension Request Form to the Student Services Centre.

11. Following formal agreement of the suspension by the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) or Senior Student Adviser, the Advisory Team in the Student Services Centre will send the student a Letter of Permission to Suspend. Conditions may be imposed which the student will have to meet before re-entry will be permitted. Changes may also be required to the student’s programme of studies following return from suspension and these will be included in any agreement to suspension.

12. Any academic condition agreed by the Faculty should state the date by which the student must meet the condition if the student is to return to study; this requires monitoring of conditions (and time limits) at Faculty level. The Advisory Team in the Student Services Centre must be informed of the condition (and time limits for compliance).

13. The Advisory Team in the Student Services Centre must also be informed of any non-academic condition agreed by the Faculty (and time limits for compliance). The Advisory Team will monitor compliance with the condition and, where necessary, contact the student to request evidence enabling a decision on fitness to return to be made.

14. A period of suspension is normally granted for one academic year, although permission may sometimes be granted for shorter periods. The maximum period of suspension should not normally exceed two academic years.

15. The student will normally return at the beginning of the next academic year (autumn term), or he/she may be given permission to re-join the programme at the start of the term in which the suspension occurred during the previous academic
year. Return to study will be subject to the requirements set out below and in the Policy on and procedures for students returning to or repeating study.

Return from suspension

Please note: The following procedures do not apply for students suspended for disciplinary reasons or debt.

16. A student who has not been suspended ‘assessment only’ and on whom no conditions are placed in respect of his or her return to study at the time of suspension is entitled to resume his or her course provided the return to study is within 12 months of the date of suspension but not thereafter other than with the agreement of the relevant School and the Associate Director (Teaching and Learning) (or nominee). It is recommended that a student who has been suspended for more than 12 months should not normally be permitted to return without repeating a period of study.

17. A student who is suspended ‘assessment only’ prima facie has the right to return to undertake the assessment at the next scheduled assessment opportunity, and, if successful, resume his or her programme of study. It should be noted that a student shall not normally be eligible to be Deemed Not to have Sat on more than two occasions within a Part (for undergraduates) or within a one-year postgraduate programme (or within any year of study for postgraduate programmes which are longer than one-year in duration).

18. A student who is suspended ‘assessment only’ may also be subject to a condition which must be satisfied before the student can undertake the assessment (see paragraphs 20-22).

19. When a student is ready to apply for return from suspension, he or she must write to the Advisory Team in the Student Services Centre, providing any required evidence of fitness to return (see paragraph 21). Once the Advisory Team is satisfied, following consultation with the relevant parties, that all conditions for return have been met, they will write to the student and send copies to the Faculty Director of Administration (HBS students) Senior Tutor of the relevant School (all non-HBS students) and the student’s Personal Tutor.

Academic conditions to return

20. Where a suspension imposed an academic condition on the student’s ability to return (supplementary to passing the relevant assessment), a decision on whether the condition has been met should be made by the Chair of the relevant Faculty Examiners’ meeting (or nominee) in discussion with the student’s School (the same rights of appeal apply as are applicable to a student submitting a case for extenuating circumstances). Where the Faculty determines that the condition has been met, it will inform the Advisory Team in the Student Services Centre who will re-activate the student’s record.

Non-academic conditions to return

21. Where a suspension imposed a non-academic condition on the student’s ability to return, a similar process should apply, i.e. decision at Faculty level in conjunction with the School. The decision may need to take into account evidence supplied by a counsellor, a medical practitioner or other professional person. The decision on fitness to return is that of the relevant Faculty. However, in accordance with custom
and practice, the power to determine if a condition has been met may, in straightforward cases, be exercised by the Student Services Centre.

22. Further details on the procedure to be followed for a student returning to his or her studies after a period of suspension on health/medical grounds is contained in the Policy on and procedures for Students returning to or repeating study.

Coding of suspended students

23. RISIS Codes which are applied to suspended students will indicate if a student has been suspended:
   - for debt;
   - for disciplinary reasons (including temporary suspensions pending investigation);
   - under Calendar provisions – essentially a risk to themselves or others;
   - ‘assessment-only’ i.e. cannot progress to the next stage of the programme until an assessment is passed;
   - for personal reasons affecting the student (sub-categories may be recorded).
   These categories are not mutually exclusive and some students fall into more than one category.

Entitlement of suspended students to access services

24. The following table does NOT apply to students suspended for disciplinary reasons (including debt). Students suspended for debt or disciplinary reasons are unable to access most University facilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to</th>
<th>Entitlement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Revision classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic staff (especially ST)</td>
<td>By agreement with the School DTL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Advice</td>
<td>Yes (limited)¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>Yes (limited)²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Advisory Service</td>
<td>Yes (limited)³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers, Placement and Experience Centre</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Yes⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISIS</td>
<td>Yes (limited)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Where attendance is a condition of suspension or to facilitate return to study.
² Where attendance is a condition of suspension, or to facilitate return to study, or to assess fitness to return to study, or until alternative support is arranged.
³ Where attendance is a condition of suspension or to facilitate return to study.
⁴ Should be reminded to check University email regularly.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Access Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard</td>
<td>Subject to licence issues should be able to access historic and CURRENT version of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library - entry/book borrowing</td>
<td>Yes (limited)(^5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library - e-resources</td>
<td>Yes if granted Student Visitor status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On campus</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services Centre</td>
<td>Transcripts, Helpdesk, Advisory (limited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services Centre - Financial Support</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services Centre - Bursary/NSP entitlement</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services Centre - Accommodation</td>
<td>Cannot normally live in University accommodation  Can apply for accommodation for period post-suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Office</td>
<td>When related to suspension, return or transfer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^5\) A suspended student may be granted Student Visitor status if the student (or his or her tutor) requests continued access AND the Head of School sponsors the student’s registration - in part so that the Library gets permission to use the School’s book fund to reimburse any items that the student does not return – AND the student is in ‘good standing’ with the Library. A Head of Department should not refuse to sponsor a suspended student’ application for Student Visitor status without good cause.

Student Visitor Status permits the student to:
- borrow up to 10 items - this global allowance, besides standard loan items, can include up to 2 x 7-day loans; 5 x 1-day loans (eg Periodicals) and 2 x 6-hour loans. The standard loan period is for 3 weeks unless recalled earlier because another user has placed a hold on an item.
- request Inter-library loans
- access licensed e-resources on campus.

Student Visitors are NOT eligible to join the SCONUL Access Scheme.