

UCO Policy and Procedure

HE Suspension, Transfer and Withdrawal Procedure

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1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF PROCEDURE

This procedure sets out the University Campus Oldham (UCO), Higher Education at Oldham College, approach for handling a range of circumstances through which a student may leave their study with us, either temporarily or permanently. This includes a student:

- choosing to suspend their studies temporarily;
- choosing to transfer to another course, either within UCO, or externally;
- choosing to withdraw permanently from their studies at UCO;
- being required to suspend temporarily from their studies by UCO;
- being required to withdraw permanently from their studies by UCO.

This procedure applies to all students enrolled on a higher education course at University Campus Oldham.

All students who are choosing to suspend or withdraw from UCO or wish to transfer to another course should be referred to speak to their Personal Tutor in the first instance. Further Information can be found in Section 3 - Student-Led Withdrawal, Suspension or Transfer.

Students who are being required by UCO to suspend or withdraw are covered in Section 4 - UCO-Led Withdrawal or Suspension.

2. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

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

Transfer is a change from one course to another. Transfers can be internal (between courses within UCO) or external (to another institution, which is treated as a withdrawal). Internal transfers may also include a change in study mode, e.g., Full-Time to Part-Time.

Withdrawal is where a student agrees or is required to leave their course permanently, 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 Academic Regulations of their awarding Partner Institution. When a student who has withdrawn from UCO wishes at a later point to return, they will be required to re-apply through the standard UCO admissions process.

3. STUDENT-LED WITHDRAWAL, SUSPENSION OR TRANSFER

All students who are considering transferring, suspending their studies, or withdrawing from UCO (but who have not been required to do so by UCO), are advised to talk to their Personal Tutor or Course Leader in the first instance. This will enable them to look at what other options may be available and seek academic approval. This is particularly important for students wishing to transfer as they will need to check if there are any vacancies on other courses and if they meet the entry requirements. The Personal Tutor or Course Leader may also signpost the student to relevant support available at UCO through the Support and Wellbeing Services team.

Once students have made a decision to leave their course, or that they wish to transfer, they should be advised to send their intention in writing to info@uco.oldham.ac.uk. They will then be advised on the next steps.

3.1. Withdrawal From UCO at the Request of The Student

If a student is considering withdrawing from their studies, they should be directed to discuss the implications with their Personal Tutor or Course Leader in the first instance. Part of this discussion will be to determine whether a suspension of studies, or internal transfer, may be more appropriate.

Where a student concludes that they wish to withdraw from UCO, they will be advised to send their intention in writing to info@uco.oldham.ac.uk.

They should be made aware of the financial implications of withdrawing as outlined in Section 5.

Once the student has formally informed UCO of their intention to withdraw, the HE Student Services team 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. Student Finance England will also be informed of the student's withdrawal from study, and the email received from the student notifying us of their intention to withdraw will be taken as their last date enrolled.

3.2. Suspension Of Studies at the Request of The Student

If a student is considering suspending their studies, they should discuss the implications and options available with their Personal Tutor or Course Leader in the first instance. In cases where the student concludes that they still wish to suspend their studies, they will be advised to send their intention in writing to info@uco.oldham.ac.uk.

The relevant Course Leader will be asked to consider all student-led suspension requests and will agree the duration of suspension (usually one calendar year). The duration for any approved suspension must take account of any implications for the student's capacity to re-engage with their studies at a later date and with all required assessment or reassessment points.

Students requesting suspension on health grounds must provide medical evidence.

Students considering suspension on the grounds of pregnancy, adoption or a parental order should first consult the HE Student Maternity Policy.

Where a suspension of studies is for a full calendar year, the expectation is that the student will return to their course at the same point in the next academic year. Students will bank any marks they have already received (including any 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 Extenuating Circumstances.

If the student returns at an earlier point in the next academic session, additional tuition fees will be due unless approved by the College's Director of Finance. 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). Students are advised to consult the Academic Regulations of their awarding Partner Institution for further information. Returning from suspension at the start of the next academic year could have serious financial implications (see Section 5).

The expectation is that most suspensions of studies requests will be approved, except where there are clear reasons for not doing so (e.g., an attempt to avoid a disciplinary process, payment towards tuition fees etc.). Where a request from a student for a suspension of studies is rejected, the student will be invited to continue with their studies. In such instances, the student will have the right to submit an appeal (see section 6).

The HE Student Services team will email the outcome of the suspension request to the student and confirm their last date of engagement. The student record will be updated to reflect the date of suspension and reason. Student Finance England will also be informed of the student's suspension from study.

If a student fails to return to UCO at the end of their agreed suspension, and does not engage in contact with us, they will be withdrawn.

3.3. Transfer Of Study at the Request of The Student

3.3.1. Internal Transfer

If a student is considering transferring to another course at UCO, they should discuss the options available with their current Personal Tutor or Course Leader in the first instance. A meeting will then be arranged with the Course Leader of the course that the student wishes to transfer to. The new Course Leader will consider the student's request which will result in one of the following outcomes:

- a) unconditional offer** - Any previously undertaken credits for units that are valid on the new course will be transferred to their new student profile. This change will be reflected in the student's timetable and VLE access with immediate effect and as soon as systems have updated;
- b) 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 course will be transferred to their new student profile. This change will be reflected in the student's timetable and VLE access upon confirmation that all conditions have been met. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the new Course Leader once these conditions have been met;

- c) **reject** – details of the reasons for not granting the transfer should be communicated to the student within 7 calendar days of the meeting from the new Course Leader. In such instances, the student will have the right to submit an appeal (see section 6).

Once a transfer is agreed, the HE Student Services team will amend the student record to reflect the transfer.

If the internal transfer is not due to take effect until the start of the next academic year, and the student is not continuing with their current studies, the student will be suspended. Returning from suspension at the start of the next academic year could have serious financial implications (see Section 5).

3.3.2. Internal Transfers Where the Student Has Not Yet Fully Enrolled

Where a student record is still provisional, (i.e., prior to completion of enrolment) any transfer request should be dealt with via the HE Student Services team through the HE Admissions Policy.

3.3.3. External Transfer

If the student wishes to leave their course and transfer to another institution this should be treated as a withdrawal.

3.4. Return to Study

Once a student has withdrawn from their studies, their enrolment as a student will end, and they may be entitled to an exit award, as defined in the Academic Regulations of their awarding Partner Institution.

If a student wishes to return to study in future, they must re-apply via the standard admissions process. Applications will be subject to the HE Admissions Policy and standard admissions criteria.

4. UCO-LED WITHDRAWAL OR SUSPENSION

There are some circumstances in which we may withdraw or suspend you from your studies at UCO. In these circumstances, your official leaving date for refund purposes and for informing external agencies will be the date the decision to withdraw/suspend is made. These circumstances include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

4.1. Withdrawal for Non-Attendance and/or Engagement

The HE Attendance & Engagement Policy explains that we reserve the right to cancel your enrolment and withdraw you from your course where concerns about your attendance and/or engagement have been raised but not satisfactorily addressed.

4.2. Withdrawal Due to Incapacity to Study

In instances where concerns about academic performance may be linked to underlying health-related issues, the HE Capacity to Study Policy informs and guides our response to situations where there are concerns that a student is not well enough to study.

4.3. Withdrawal for Non-Academic Misconduct

The HE Student Disciplinary Procedure states that a Formal Stage 2 Disciplinary may incur a penalty or penalties up to and including expulsion, which means that a student may be withdrawn from UCO and not permitted to re-enrol.

4.4. Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct or Unfair Means is defined as any conduct by a student which enables them to gain an illegitimate advantage, whether deliberate or unintentionally, which creates an advantage over others. This could include, but is not limited to; plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, cheating, contract cheating, and false authorship (including the use of generative Artificial Intelligence software). The Academic Regulations of your awarding Partner Institution will outline how you may be sanctioned or withdrawn as an outcome of an Academic Misconduct investigation.

4.5. Fitness to Practise

If you are enrolled on a course which leads to a professional qualification where there are statutory, professional or regulatory body requirements relating to health and attitude, the Academic Regulations of your awarding Partner Institution will outline how you may be sanctioned or withdrawn as an outcome of a Fitness to Practise investigation.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT FEES/FUNDING

5.1. Implications for Student Fees/Funding Overview

Any decision around transfer, suspension, or withdrawal can have serious financial implications. Students are advised to contact Student Finance England as soon as possible to discuss their intentions and to minimise the risk of being overpaid student finance. In the instance of a student wishing to withdraw or suspend, the date of the email received notifying us of their intention will be taken as their last date of engagement/attendance, and Student Finance England will be informed of this date.

HE Students who are required to pay tuition fees and withdraw from or suspend their studies during the year will be charged a proportion of the fee for their course as set out below:

- Leaving within three weeks – no charge;
- Leaving within Term 1 – 25% charge;
- Leaving within Term 2 – 50% charge;
- Leaving within Term 3 – 100% charge.

Further detail can be found in the Oldham College Fees Policy.

Where we are attempting to re-engage a student but are receiving no response to contact, we may temporarily suspend the student's payments with the Student Loans Company to minimise the risk of the student being overpaid student finance.

5.2. Transfer - Implications for Student Fees/Funding

Transfers can impact on fees charged, UCO financial support eligibility, and eligibility for funding from Student Finance. The fees charged may be overall higher or lower depending on the course and the type of study a student moves to. Students are advised to contact Student Finance

England as soon as possible to discuss their intention to transfer and the financial implications this could have.

5.3. Suspension - Implications for Student Fees/Funding

Student Finance funding is not available during periods of suspension. If the date of suspension is in the third term, students will be charged 100% tuition fees and Student Finance may require repayment of any overpaid Maintenance Loan, or deduct any overpayments from your next entitlement of Student Finance upon your return. This means you are entitled to Student Finance funding up to the point of your suspension. As the agreement for the Maintenance Loan is a direct agreement between you and Student Finance, UCO does not have access to this information and cannot advise an exact amount. We recommend that you contact Student Finance England at the earliest possible opportunity so they can advise you of the full financial consequences of your suspension.

5.4. Withdrawal - Implications for Student Fees/Funding

Depending on a student's engagement and/or the point within the academic year a student withdraws from UCO, 100% fees may still be charged. Student Loan eligibility may also be affected and any Maintenance Loan received from Student Finance after the withdrawal date may also be recalled with immediate effect. If a withdrawal is in the third term, students will be charged 100% tuition fees, and Student Finance may require repayment of any overpaid Maintenance Loan or deduct any overpayments from your next entitlement of Student Finance upon your return. This means you are entitled to Student Finance funding up to the point of your withdrawal. As the agreement for the Maintenance Loan is a direct agreement between you and Student Finance, UCO does not have access to this information and cannot advise an exact amount. We recommend that you contact Student Finance England at the earliest possible opportunity so they can advise you of the full financial consequences of your withdrawal.

6. APPEAL

6.1. Right of Appeal – Student-Led Suspension and Transfer

Where the student has a right of appeal this must be submitted in writing to the Oldham College Deputy Principal, within 7 days of the notification of a decision.

Where a student requests for an internal transfer or a suspension of studies and the request is rejected, the student will be invited to continue on their current course. The student can only appeal the rejection on the basis that:

- a) the decision was not reasonable; or;
- b) procedural irregularity occurred; or;
- c) new material evidence is now available which was not disclosed at an earlier stage of the process.

6.2. Right of Appeal – UCO-Led Suspension and Withdrawal

The Appeal section of the relevant Regulation, Policy, Procedure, or Process should be consulted for information and guidance on a student’s right of appeal. A copy of the relevant Regulation, Policy, Procedure, or Process will be provided at the time of UCO-Led suspension or withdrawal.

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