

Authorised Interruption of Studies Procedure

The College is committed to supporting students who are unable to engage with their studies and who may wish to request a period of time away from the College

1. An Authorised Interruption of Studies is available for Full-Time or Part-Time students who require an extended period of authorised absence from their studies and plan to resume at a future date. Common grounds for Authorised Interruption of Studies include, but are not limited to:
 - Health reasons (mental or physical health problems)
 - Extracurricular pursuits e.g. elite sports
 - Employment opportunities/internships which may benefit the academic interests of the student.
 - Financial circumstances
 - Personal reasons
 - Military service
2. This procedure document applies to students registered on taught and research programmes. Students registered on research programmes who are considering an Interruption of Study should also refer to the College's [Guidelines for Interruption of Studies for PhD, MPhil, MD\(Res\) and EngD students](#).
3. The College has a separate policy on [Maternity, Adoptive and Paternity Leave Provision for Students](#).
4. Students do not have an automatic right to an interruption. The College expects that students will normally complete their studies in a single continuous period. An Authorised Interruption of Studies is generally made at the request of the student, but the College reserves the right to enforce an Authorised Interruption of Studies. Any enforced Authorised Interruption of Studies must be approved by the Academic Registrar (or nominee).
5. During a period of interruption, students should not undertake any studies at the College. On resumption of their studies, students are expected to fulfil the same progression criteria for their programme of studies.
6. The College's [Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure](#) may provide alternative options to an Authorised Interruption of Studies.
7. The length of an Authorised Interruption of Studies granted to students following taught programmes will normally be for a period of 12-months. In some cases, students may be allowed to return to their studies within a shorter timeframe,

which may result in a period of repeat teaching (which will require the appropriate tuition fee to be paid). Authorised Interruption of Studies of less than 12-months for taught students are generally exceptional cases where it can be demonstrated that the circumstances leading up to the period of interruption affected the student's learning and engagement prior to the interruption start date. The minimum period for an Authorised Interruption of Studies will normally be 1 month.

8. The start date of an Authorised Interruption of Studies cannot normally be backdated by more than one-month from the date that the interruption was requested. If the student holds a Tier 4 / Student Route visa, it is not possible to backdate the start of the period of interruption, as the College is legally required to report any interruption of study to the UKVI within 10 days of the commencement date.
9. Any single period of interruption of study will not exceed 12 months, unless authorised by the College due to exceptional circumstances. Students may not normally take more than a total of two years as an Authorised Interruption of Studies, as this would exceed the stated maximum period of registration for the programme they are registered on, as set out in the Academic Regulations.

Requesting an Authorised Interruption of Studies

10. A student who wishes to take an Authorised Interruption of Studies should initially contact their Personal Tutor, Senior Tutor, Director of Studies or other authorised member of department staff to discuss their needs. Each request for interruption must be considered individually, taking into account the particular circumstances of the student.
11. A request for an Authorised Interruption of Studies must be made by the student, via the student portal (My Imperial). A request can be made by a representative of the student where the student is unable to undertake this themselves, such requests should be made directly to the Student Records Team in Registry. Students (and their representative) should be aware that they may be required to submit supporting documents, such as medical evidence or other documentation.
12. It is the responsibility of the student to confirm that they have understood the impact that an Authorised Interruption of Studies may have on any funding support that they are receiving in respect of their studies.
13. Any change to student status such as an Authorised Interruption of Studies will impact immigration status in the UK for those that this applies to. The College is required to report any changes in status to the Home Office. International Student Support team provides advice and guidance to visa-holding students who are seeking an Authorised Interruption of Studies.

Consideration and Approval

14. Departments should take a supportive approach when considering applications for an Authorised Interruption of Studies. Departments should approve applications where the student has provided a good reason for the interruption as long as the interruption will be compatible with the student completing their studies subsequently and would not cause the student to exceed the maximum period of registration for their award.
15. The Senior Tutor, Director of Undergraduate Studies or Director of Postgraduate Studies (or equivalent) will determine whether or not the request for an interruption can be granted and will inform the student of their decision, normally within five working days. The College's Registry must also be informed of the period of the interruption so that this can be recorded on the student record.
16. Where a request for interruption is refused, the Department must provide a clear explanation for the decision to the student and provide one further opportunity for a student to resubmit their request.
17. An Authorised Interruption of Studies granted to a student on a taught programme will normally impact module registration for the period affected. The start date of the interruption period will be used to determine any module management updates required, based on enrolment and the module teaching period.

There are three main scenarios to highlight, noting that module registrations are specific to an academic year:

- a) Modules where the student has completed the learning and assessment for the module before the period of interruption begins;
- b) Modules for which the student is enrolled but which have yet to begin (they are due to start later in the academic year);
- c) Modules where the student has started the module, but the period of interruption begins mid-way through the delivery period of the module, so they cannot complete it as originally intended. Typically this applies to 'long-thin' modules that span multiple terms, or where the interruption begins in the middle of a term. This includes modules where the learning for the module has been completed but not all the assessment(s).

Case (a). The module registration will remain on the students record as the module has been completed. Module marks and outcomes for completed modules will be reviewed and confirmed by the relevant Board of Examiners, as per the usual process.

Case (b). These module registrations will be removed from the student's record. When they return from the period of interruption the appropriate module registrations will be made in that academic year for the equivalent or other modules.

Case (c). The registrations for these modules will be amended on the student's record to a module status code of RN. This will allow the student to audit the teaching and learning materials in connected EdTech systems, but no assessment will be able to be submitted and this module registration will not appear on their transcript. This arrangement acknowledges that the student has completed some of the learning for the module, so maintains their access to content in connected systems in the same way that access to completed modules is maintained when a student commences a period of interruption.

A specific re-registration requirement for equivalent or other modules will be set out in the return to study plan. When the student re-enrols, the module (or equivalent thereof) is re-added to the record in the subsequent academic year, with a module status code of RE. This will allow access to the current teaching and learning materials, and submission of assessments and this module registration will be listed on the transcript. The overall module marks will be returned against this module. Note that in this case the start term of the module may be before the end date of the interruption.

An example is given in Appendix A.

18. Students commencing an interruption of study period prior to the end of the academic year will not normally have their academic progression considered by the College's Examiners' Progression and Award Board. A decision on progression will be made on academic grounds once the student is considered to have been enrolled and attempted all aspects of the programme year under consideration.

Student Status during an Authorised Interruption of Studies

19. Students taking an Authorised Interruption of Studies will continue to be registered as students of the College during their period of interruption but they will not be enrolled for study. Access to any College facilities and resources (physical and virtual) during the Authorised Interruption of Studies will be agreed with the student and communicated to them. The status of any module registrations (see paragraph 17) determines whether a student can access some virtual learning systems.
20. Departments should ensure that a designated and named point of contact is provided to the student who will be available to advise them regarding their return to study whilst they are interrupted.

Return to Study

21. Students who have taken an Authorised Interruption of Studies who wish to return earlier than originally agreed should submit a written request through their named contact for consideration. Requests will be considered on an individual basis and in the context of the particular circumstances of the student.
22. The Departmental point of contact will contact the interrupted student before their scheduled return to study date in order to confirm the student's programme of

study upon their return and, regardless of the reason for their interruption, to identify and facilitate any support which may be required upon their return. Departments should make suitable arrangements to accommodate a student's return to study where there have been significant changes to the programme during the period of interruption to enable the student to complete their programme of study.

23. Where a student has interrupted their studies on medical grounds, the Department will generally require evidence confirming their fitness to return to study. The Department will advise the student what is required when they contact them in line with paragraph 22. Where the Department has concerns about a student's ability to return to study, they may refer a student for consideration under the [Fitness to Study Policy](#). No equivalent evidence or approval from the Department is required for non-medical interruptions.

Request for an extension of an Authorised Interruption of Studies

24. Students who are unable to return to study following a period of interruption may request an additional period of Authorised Interruption of Studies, provided that this does not exceed the maximum allowable total period of interruption, as set out in paragraph 9. The student should make a submission to extend the interruption via the student portal (My Imperial) if the reason for the interruption remains the same, submitting additional documentation to support their extension request if required. Should the reason for the extension request be different to the initial Authorised Interruption of Studies the student should make a new submission via the student portal (My Imperial).
25. Requests for an extension to an Authorised Interruption of Studies which will take the student beyond the maximum period of registration for the programme of study will be considered by the Academic Registrar (or nominee).
26. Students should be aware that in exceptional circumstances, if their programme of study is to be withdrawn, it may not be possible to grant or extend an Authorised Interruption of Study.

Appendix A: Example of module management

Assume the student has the following module enrolments for the 2019/20 academic year, when they start the year all with registration code RE:

- Module A starting in term 201910 and lasting for just the autumn term 2019/20
- Module B starting in term 201910 and lasting for just the autumn term 2019/20
- Module C starting in term 201910 and lasting for just the whole of the 2019/20 academic year
- Module D starting in term 201910 and lasting for just the whole of the 2019/20 academic year
- Module E starting in term 201920 and lasting for just the spring term 2019/20
- Module F starting in term 201920 and lasting for just the spring term 2019/20

The student commences an Authorised Interruption of Studies beginning on 1 January 2020 and returns on 31 December 2020.

The modules for the 2019/20 academic year are amended to:

- Modules A and B – no change, these remain on the students record with code RE
- Modules C & D – the code for these modules is changed to RN
- Modules E & F – these modules are removed from the student's record

When the student returns from the period of interruption modules C, D, E & F are added to the 2020/21 academic year, all with code RE.