

## 3U – Interruption of Study: Procedure

### 1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This procedure is for Bournemouth University (BU) staff and students of all taught programmes of study.
- 1.2 This must be followed when assessing individual requests from students to interrupt their studies during the course of their taught programme.
- 1.3 The form associated with this procedure must be used by individual students whenever a request to interrupt studies is submitted. The procedure ensures that any justified individual situation is taken into account and allows for fair and equitable management of student's circumstances.

### 2 KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 **Students:** to submit any request to which the procedure may be applied and to ensure that the request is submitted on the correct Request Form which must be fully completed and signed and where appropriate accompanied by independently verified medical or other supporting evidence.
- 2.2 **Programme Leaders:** to assist and support students who may need to interrupt their studies and consider formal requests for interruption in line with BU's procedure.
- 2.3 **Programme Support Officers (or Partner equivalent):** to assist and support students who may need to interrupt their studies. To direct students to the interruption webpages and to relevant departments for advice on the practical impact of interrupting.
- 2.4 **Assessment Board:** to consider student assessment outcomes and profiles including those of students who have interrupted their studies over the period of time under consideration. To confirm unit marks and/or identify and confirm units where further work is required, and to ratify student outcomes.

### 3 ACCESSING OTHER RELEVANT BU DOCUMENTS

- 3.1 All documents can be accessed [here](#)
- 3.2 Other documents with direct relevance to this are:

- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Undergraduate
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Postgraduate
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Foundation Degree
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Higher National
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations GradCert GradDip
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Postgraduate Research Degrees
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations Integrated Masters

- *6J - Exceptional Circumstances: Policy and Procedure*
- *3K - Engagement Monitoring and Withdrawal: Procedure*
- *3Q - Movement of Students between Programmes: Procedure*
- *11A - Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards*
- *11F - Student Complaints: Policy and Procedure*
- *11J - Support to Study: Policy & Procedure*
- Key Finance Documentation including the Student Fees Policy at: [Important Information \(Student-facing Policies and Procedures\)](#)

## Procedure

### 4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 On occasion, a student may need to request permission to interrupt their studies for a period of time. Students need to demonstrate a clear and valid reason for their request supported by relevant documentary evidence. The University is not obliged to offer an interruption of studies to any student and students are normally allowed only one period of interruption during their programme.
- 4.2 When deciding whether a student should be permitted to interrupt their studies, consideration should be given to the duration of the programme and the registration period remaining to the student. Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements should also be taken into account. The Faculty needs to be confident that by extending the registration period, the student's experience and the award that they will eventually receive will still be relevant to the workplace. In cases where the time remaining would not allow the student to complete their studies within the period of registration if the student were to interrupt, the decision on whether to permit the student a period of interruption and to extend the registration period accordingly must be taken by the Programme Leader (or equivalent) in consultation with an Assessment Board Chair (see section 4.8iii).
- 4.3 A period of interruption might mean that the Faculty would have to deliver units that are no longer running or the student may be required to take units that were not part of their original degree structure. These situations should be managed by the Faculty and care should be taken to ensure broad equivalence of intended learning outcomes. Students should be made aware that it may not always be possible to permit a period of interruption.
- 4.4 Students seeking a period of interruption cannot opt to start a level from the beginning if full units have already been passed, or to repeat a unit which they have already successfully completed.
- 4.5 Students should be supported to continue their studies without interruption wherever possible. Consideration should be given to the student's circumstances and whether support can be offered to enable the student to continue studies with their current cohort. For example:
- student circumstances may justify an extension under *6J Exceptional Circumstances: Policy and Procedure*;
  - a student may be able to continue their studies with ALS support;
  - a student may be able to apply for financial support.
- 4.6 When a student is permitted a period of interruption, they would normally resume their studies at the same stage of their programme (normally the following year, or with the following cohort). Students should normally be required to complete units before interrupting their study, although it is accepted that there will occasionally be instances when interruption mid-unit is unavoidable. However, where a student has completed the taught part of a unit(s), the student should normally be required to complete the unit assessment(s) (by extension if necessary). This is to ensure parity and equity for all students and avoid any student gaining an unfair advantage by interrupting their studies before major pieces of assessment. The academic (normally the Programme Leader) making the interruption decision has the right to grant extensions based on the valid reasons documented and evidenced on the interruption request form (which may

or may not align with the definition of Exceptional Circumstances within 6J Exceptional Circumstances Policy and Procedure).

- 4.7 If a student has interrupted their studies due to health reasons (physical or mental), or on the grounds that they have personal issues that have significantly impacted on their ability to engage with their studies, a Return to Study meeting should be held before they are allowed to resume their studies. This will allow the Faculty or Partner to ensure that the student is indeed fit to return, and to discuss any reasonable adjustments that may be needed (academically or practically). For students on practical courses an up to date risk assessment will also need to be completed. Please refer to *11J - Support to Study: Policy & Procedure* for information about how Support to Study is arranged.
- 4.8 In all cases of interruption, including where interruption mid-unit is unavoidable, the following principles should be adhered to:
- i. Students need to demonstrate a clear and valid reason for their request supported by relevant documentary evidence.
  - ii. Each student's situation will be different and should be dealt with on an individual basis.
  - iii. Any student wishing to interrupt their studies is required to complete the interruption request form (3U Appendix 1). The form needs to be completed and signed by the Programme Leader (or equivalent) and the student. In situations where the period of registration may need to be extended, the decision on whether to permit the student a period of interruption should be made in consultation with an Assessment Board Chair.
  - iv. Where possible students should be required to complete units before interruption (by extension if necessary). Where this is not possible, each student should be advised on their individual position and the interruption request form updated accordingly.
  - v. There may need to be a mixed solution if more than one unit is affected, dependent upon the types of unit involved and the assessment schedule for the programme as well as the situation of the student. For instance, a period of interruption may be granted but the student may be able to complete some but not all units through extension arrangements.
  - vi. Staff should be careful to ensure that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by the decision as compared with students who are continuing with their study.
  - vii. If a period of interruption is agreed upon mid-unit, then the student should be clear at the point of interruption what their position will be at the planned point of return to study. The student should be advised that the situation may be different if they were to return at a different time than originally intended.
  - viii. If assessment has taken place, or there is a record of achieved practice competencies (where relevant), or substantial work has taken place within a unit, an academic judgement will be made as to whether the student is able to return to complete the unit at a later point, or whether the student will be required to start the unit again. If there is any doubt a second academic opinion should be sought. In addition, the student must be advised that all assessment outcomes are subject to ratification by the next Assessment Board.
  - ix. The student profile should be considered by the next Assessment Board for ratification and noted on the student record, to ensure clarity in terms of the student's position at the point of return to study (and marks are ratified if there is a mark involved). Where there is a possibility that the student's registration period on the programme might be exceeded, the guidelines in section 4.2 should be followed.
  - x. The Faculty Programme Support Team must direct students to the interruption web pages and the relevant support team so that the student has full information about the impact of interrupting before reaching a final decision.
  - xi. When the faculty processes the interruption on MyHub, an automated email will be sent by SITS to notify [AskBU@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:AskBU@bournemouth.ac.uk).
- 4.9 If someone studying on a Student Visa wishes to interrupt their studies, they **must** seek advice from the Immigration Advice and Compliance Team (IACT) at AskBU, as there may be implications for their visa conditions. Nobody on a Student Visa should be advised to interrupt and remain in the UK without seeking advice from the IACT first. If the interruption is agreed,

the interrupt details need to be reported to [migrantreporting@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:migrantreporting@bournemouth.ac.uk). For further guidance, see the *Immigration 60 day Non-Engagement Procedure*.

**NB:** this is not applicable for students studying on a visa at a Partner College. They must seek advice directly from the Partner.

- 4.10 Students may sometimes request permission to interrupt their studies and wish to join a different programme on their return in the following academic year. In these circumstances, *3Q Movement of Students between Programmes Procedure* will apply.

In permitting a student to interrupt their studies and join a different programme in the following academic year, the Faculty must ensure that:

- The student meets all relevant entry requirements
- They are happy to make an unconditional offer
- Follow up with the student occurs in the spring term before arrival (as it would with deferred students)

## 5. FEES

- 5.1 If a student interrupts their studies but returns the following academic year, the University will deduct any tuition fees that were paid for the interrupted year's study from the following year's tuition fees. Students who are required to repeat units on their return to study will be charged an additional fee for repeated units.

## General

## 6. DATA PROTECTION

- 6.1 As required by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, BU will not normally disclose personal information to a third party other than with the data subject's explicit permission; except where there is a legal obligation to do so. Likewise, it is not possible for BU to obtain information about a student from a third party (such as a doctor) without the student's prior explicit consent.

## 7. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- 7.1 If a student is not satisfied with a decision concerning a request to interrupt their studies, they may address this through the University's complaints process as outlined in *11F – Student Complaints: Policy and Procedure*. If a student wishes to lodge an appeal against the decision of the Assessment Board, they may do so in accordance with *11A – Academic Appeals for Taught Awards: Policy and Procedure*. All appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the date of publication of results.
- 7.2 Further guidance, advice and information can be obtained from AskBU (telephone 01202 969696 or email [AskBU@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:AskBU@bournemouth.ac.uk)) or [SUBU Advice](#) (email [subuadvice@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:subuadvice@bournemouth.ac.uk) or telephone 01202 965779).
- 7.3 This policy was reviewed according to the University's [Equality Analysis Procedure](#) in May 2018.

## 8. APPENDICES AND FORMS

Appendix 1 [Interruption of Studies Request Form](#)