

SECTION G — TAKING A FORMAL BREAK FROM YOUR STUDIES: INTERMISSION, INCLUDING HOW WE REVIEW YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY

This section explains how you can apply to take a formal break from your studies at the University, and also what happens if we require you to take a break. In both cases, this process is called intermission.

Student Support is available to discuss your engagement with the University and provides advice, guidance and initial information on taking a formal break from your studies. You can contact Student Support by going to a Drop-in during term-time, sending them a message through <https://our.norwichuni.ac.uk>, or by emailing support@norwichuni.ac.uk.

The Academic Support Office in the Academic Registry processes intermissions for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students and can offer further advice about intermission: email aso@norwichuni.ac.uk for more information. Make sure that you also talk to your Course Leader (or equivalent), your Year Tutor or the Year 0 Pathways Leader as appropriate if you're thinking about taking intermission.

If you're a research degree student, the intermission process is managed jointly by our Research Office staff and staff at the University of the Arts London, and different regulations apply. Email research@norwichuni.ac.uk for more information.

- There are **two types of intermission** at the University:
 - **intermission that you apply for**, which is when you tell us you need a break from your studies, perhaps for health or financial reasons. We call this **voluntary intermission**; and
 - **intermission that we need you to take**. This could be because you have passed only part of your year of study and need to wait until you can rejoin your course at the same point the following year. We can also insist that you take intermission if we don't think you're in a position to make the most of your academic opportunities at University – for example, if you became very ill. We call this **compulsory intermission**.
- **We guarantee your place at the University while you are on intermission**, as long as you meet any conditions we set for you to return to your studies.
- We know that taking a break from University can have all sorts of **implications – both for you and your studies**. We try to provide as much information as we can before a student goes on intermission and we aim to ensure that returning to the University is as straightforward as possible. If you want or need to take intermission, make sure you understand all the consequences and ask Student Support if you're not sure about anything.
- **We don't usually ask students to submit work during a period of intermission**, unless we agree that to do so would be beneficial to their academic progress and it

would not have a negative impact on their health and wellbeing. For example, we could consider giving you the opportunity to complete an outstanding resubmission task before you were due to return to your studies.

- **If you're studying at the University on a Student visa and we approve intermission for you, you won't be able to stay in the UK during your intermission.** We'll give you more information about this when we confirm the details of your intermission to you in writing.
- In the final part of this section of the *Student Regulations and Procedures*, we set out **the decisions concerning intermission which you could challenge** if you were unhappy with them, and how you could ask us to review these decisions. If you're unhappy with the outcome after we have carried out a review of this type, you may be able to ask the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)** to review your case. The OIA runs an independent scheme to review student complaints and appeals, and the University is a member of this scheme.

You can find more information about taking your case to the OIA, what it can and can't look at, and what it can do to put things right here:

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>

You normally need to have completed the one-stage review process described in this section of the *Regulations* before you can take your case to the OIA. We'll send you a **Completion of Procedures letter** after the review process. If we don't uphold the review, we'll issue you with a Completion of Procedures letter automatically. If we uphold or partially uphold your review, you can ask for a Completion of Procedures letter if you'd like one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures letters and when you can expect to receive one here:

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters/>

1 General information about intermission

- 1.1 When a student goes on intermission, either because they've asked to or because we require them to, we usually approve time away from their course for them for up to a year in the first instance. If we believe there is a case for a student to be away from their course for more than a year in the first instance, the Academic Support Office will refer the matter to the Academic Registrar for consideration.

If you only need to be away from your course for up to 10 working days (two weeks), you don't need to intermit. But if you are likely to be away for more than 10 working days (two weeks) we may ask you to intermit.

See section C for more about how to tell us if you are away from your course for up to 10 working days.

1.2 If you take intermission before you've completed the assessment requirements for a unit, you can't usually pass that unit in the same academic year. Where this happens, we'll ask you to return the following year, normally at the start of the incomplete unit so that you can repeat it in full as a first attempt. Please remember though that we can't guarantee that a unit we run in one year will automatically run in the future. If a change in units affects your intermission, the Academic Support Office will write to you with the details.

1.3 Taking intermission may mean that you need more time to complete your degree than our maximum registration periods allow. If this is the case, the Academic Registrar will consider the extension to your registration period before we approve your intermission, and will approve the extension if appropriate.

See section B for more about maximum registration periods.

1.4 There are limits to the number of times an individual student can go on intermission during their course of study:

Mode of study and level of course	Maximum number of intermissions (either voluntary, compulsory, or both)
Full-time undergraduate students	2
Full-time postgraduate taught students	1
Part-time postgraduate taught students	3

If we believe there are exceptional grounds for you to take more than the maximum number of intermissions, we'll refer the case to the Academic Registrar for consideration.

1.5 If you need a Student visa to study in the UK and you take a period of intermission, please note the following:

- the University will stop sponsoring you while you are on intermission and you will have to return to your home country;
- you will need to provide us with evidence that you have left the UK at the start of your intermission; and
- you will need to apply for a new Student visa before you can come back to your course.

2 Voluntary intermission

2.1 There are several reasons why you might want to apply for voluntary intermission, such as:

- because of your health;
- for financial reasons;
- for maternity or paternity leave;
- because of family or care commitments;
- for a period of compassionate leave;
- because of work commitments, or because you have a fixed-term job opportunity; or
- because of a combination of these reasons.

2.2 If you are thinking about intermission because you're not sure you're on the right course, we would normally ask you to speak to your Course Leader (or equivalent), Year Tutor or the Year 0 Pathways Leader as appropriate in the first instance to see if there are other ways to support you.

See section E for more about what happens if you fail a unit.

2.3 To apply for intermission:

- complete the form at <https://our.norwichuni.ac.uk>;
- include a personal statement as to why you want to have a formal break from your studies;
- include evidence to support your application; and
- submit the application, statement and evidence online.

[Click here for a link to the form](#), or search the intranet for 'Application for Intermission from Studies'.

The type of evidence we are looking for to support your application will depend on why you want to take intermission: if it's because of your health, for example, please provide independent medical evidence from your doctor or other qualified practitioner. If you're not sure what evidence we need to see, ask Student Support. We will always need to see evidence of some kind before we can approve intermission for you.

Please remember:

- it's your responsibility to obtain evidence to support your application – staff at the University won't do this for you. This also means that if there's a charge to obtain the evidence, for example for a doctor's note, you will need to pay for it; and
- don't provide personal evidence about a third party as part of your evidence unless you have their permission to give this to us. We can give you advice on this when you apply for intermission.

2.4 While you are waiting for our decision about your intermission application, we would expect you to keep attending on your course unless the reason for your application stops you doing so. For example, you might have to stop attending because you are very ill. But if you are well enough to attend and choose not to during the period of your application, your course area may record you as absent, or if we believe we have no other choice, we may withdraw you from your studies at the University.

See section C for more about the consequences of unauthorised absence from your course.

2.5 If you want to take intermission in the current academic year, the latest dates we can consider an intermission application from you are as follows:

- for undergraduates and MArch students, the end of the first day of term immediately after the student Easter vacation;
- for all other postgraduate taught students, the end of the first week of Teaching Block 3.

If you submit an application to intermit after these dates, we may be able to approve it in exceptional circumstances but we can't guarantee this. If we can't approve a late application from you, the relevant assessment board will make a decision on your academic progress.

2.6 You can also apply for intermission if you plan to complete your current academic year and then have a break from your studies for the whole of the following year. If you do this, the Academic Support Office would only look at your application after the relevant assessment board has met to confirm your academic progress. This means that if you haven't completed any of your units at the end of the year, the assessment board can decide if or how it may want to give you the opportunity to complete them. Where this happens, the Academic Support Office will write to you after the assessment board has met, to let you know the outcome of your intermission application and the details of any outstanding submission requirements.

2.7 As part of processing your application, we'll summarise your grounds for intermission to your Course Leader (or equivalent), Year Tutor or the Year 0

Pathways Leader as appropriate and they will be informed of the outcome. But please note that we won't send these individuals your application, your statement or your supporting evidence, so these documents remain confidential to those staff dealing directly with your application.

- 2.8 The Academic Support Office processes and approves all intermission applications. Staff involved in the approval process always try and make decisions on intermission applications promptly, and which are fair, sympathetic and appropriate in light of the personal statement and evidence the student has presented.
- 2.9 If we approve your application for intermission, the Academic Support Office will write to you with the details, including any conditions for your return to the University. For example, we might ask you to provide up-to-date medical information confirming that you are well enough to return to your studies at the end of the period of intermission. If necessary we will also tell external organisations that we have confirmed your intermission, such as Student Finance England or, if you're studying at the University on a Student visa, the UK Home Office.
- 2.10 In most cases, we will also be able to include in our letter to you confirming your intermission the date we expect you to return to your studies. But if there are unresolved issues concerning incomplete or failed units or other matters affecting your academic progress, the Academic Support Office may ask an assessment board to confirm this date and the terms of submission for any outstanding units. If this happens, a Course Administrator will write to you with the details after the assessment board has met.
- 2.11 Your intermission formally begins when the Academic Support Office writes to confirm the details to you. This letter also includes the official start date of your intermission, which would usually be the date we received your intermission application. Please note that we would only backdate a period of intermission to a date prior to our receiving the application in exceptional circumstances. Once we have approved your intermission, our Finance department will write to you with information about your tuition fees for the current year and the year when you are due back from intermission.
- 2.12 If the Academic Support Office can't approve your intermission, they will tell you why in writing. Some, but not all, of the reasons we would turn down an application are:
- an incomplete application;
 - no information – or not enough – about why you want to take intermission;
 - no supporting evidence; or
 - because you submitted your application too late in the academic year for us to look at it.

If you leave out any information when you apply for intermission we will contact you, but we won't leave your application open indefinitely. The Academic Support Office will tell you in writing if they decide to close or refuse your application and will let you know why. See below for more information about how to challenge a decision on your intermission application.

3 Extending your intermission

- 3.1 During your intermission, if you think you need more time away from your studies than we have approved for you, you can apply to extend the intermission. To do this, you would need to write to the Academic Support Office with a personal statement as to why you believe you need a longer period of intermission and provide us with up-to-date supporting evidence. We wouldn't look at an application to extend your intermission more than three months before you were due to come back to the University.
- 3.2 Once the Academic Support Office receives your request for extended intermission, they would first of all seek input from your Course Leader (or equivalent) or the Year 0 Pathways Leader as appropriate. The Academic Support Office would then send your request to the Academic Registrar for final approval. As well as looking at the reasons for your request, the Academic Registrar will consider issues of **academic continuity**. By academic continuity, we mean the impact on your studies that an extended period of time away from your course may have.
- 3.3 The Academic Support Office will write to you with full details of the University's decision about your request to extend intermission. If we are not able to approve the extended period of intermission for you, we will explain why and we may ask you to withdraw from your studies. If you have achieved enough academic credit during your studies, we will make the appropriate award to you at the first opportunity – in other words, when the relevant award board can formally confirm the award for you.

See below for more about how to challenge a decision on a request to extend intermission.

See section H for more about academic awards.

- 3.4 We can also make the decision to extend your intermission compulsorily, where we believe the available evidence supports this. If we do this, the Academic Support Office will write to you to confirm the details of our decision.
- 3.5 Please be aware that if we approve an extended period of intermission for you, we wouldn't normally approve any further extensions to the intermission. This means that if you weren't able to return to your studies at the end of your extended intermission, we would need to withdraw you from your studies. But if

you are withdrawn from your course because you can't return from intermission, you may still apply to rejoin your course at a later date when you are able to return to study. Readmission will depend on you meeting any entry criteria in place for the course at the point you reapply, as well as there being places available.

4 Compulsory intermission, including how we review your engagement with the University

4.1 There are some occasions when we might need you to take intermission. For example:

- if you have failed a unit and we need you to repeat it the following year; or
- because we have approved a change of course for you or (if you're a postgraduate taught student) your mode of study and you need to return to your studies at the next convenient point; or
- if you have significant health or other issues which affect your attendance on and engagement with your course, and/or your own safety and wellbeing or that of other people; or
- because of disciplinary reasons.

This is called **compulsory intermission**.

See section B for more about changing courses and modes of study.
See section C for more about attendance on and engagement with your course.

4.2 An assessment board makes decisions about compulsory intermission for students who have failed units and who need to resubmit or repeat them. Where this happens, a Course Administrator will write to you with the details of the intermission after the assessment board has made its decision.

4.3 If you need to take a period of intermission because of a course change or change to your mode of study, the Academic Support Office will write to you with the details.

4.4 We can put you on compulsory intermission if we think you have health or wellbeing issues which are stopping you making the most of your course. This is because for courses at the University, it's very difficult to catch up if you can't attend taught sessions, and absence also means you can't contribute to coursework in groups or teams. We can also put you on compulsory intermission if we think your health is significantly affecting your own safety and wellbeing, or that of the University community, including in University-managed accommodation.

Where we consider your circumstances because we think you may need to take a period of intermission, we call this process **reviewing your engagement with the University**. At other higher education institutions, part of this process is sometimes called reviewing a student's fitness to study. When we carry out a review of this nature, we believe that it's appropriate to take a broader view of a student's engagement with all aspects of their life at University.

- 4.5 If we need to consider putting you on compulsory intermission for health or wellbeing reasons, staff in several areas of the University may discuss the matter initially. These include:
- staff in the Academic Support Office;
 - the Mental Health and Safeguarding Manager;
 - the Accommodation Manager;
 - the Course Leader (or equivalent), your Year Tutor or the Year 0 Pathways Leader as appropriate; and
 - the Director responsible for your course.
- 4.6 To help us review your engagement with the University and agree on the most appropriate next steps, we'll usually ask you to attend a meeting organised by the Academic Support Office. This meeting will normally be held with the Mental Health and Safeguarding Manager, a member of your course team, and a member of the Academic Support Office. When we invite you to this meeting, we'll tell you in advance why we want to talk to you and will confirm which members of our staff will be present. You can bring a friend or other supporter to this meeting too, such as a representative from the Students' Union – email su.advice@norwichuni.ac.uk for more information.
- 4.7 If you are able to come to a meeting, we'll tell you why we're concerned about your health and wellbeing and give you the opportunity to talk to us about your circumstances and the impact that these might be having. You can also tell us about any medical or other support you are receiving.
- 4.8 If you are not in a position to come to a meeting, we may choose to make a decision about whether you can continue with your studies and/or in University-managed accommodation based on the information we have available to us.
- 4.9 After the meeting, we'll write to you with a summary of what we've talked about, and what will happen next. There are several possible outcomes to this meeting:
- we may decide that you are able to continue with your studies, and/or in University-managed accommodation, and that we'll take no further action; or
 - we may ask you to provide medical or other appropriate evidence which gives us more information about your circumstances, and which we will then review; or
 - we may decide that we need to put you on compulsory intermission because on the basis of the evidence available to us, you are not able to

continue with your studies and/or in University-managed accommodation for the time being.

We can expand or adjust these decisions if we think it's necessary. For example, we might be happy for you to continue with your studies, but ask you to attend regular meetings with Student Support so that we can be sure you're continuing to manage your health and circumstances. If as a consequence of the meeting and/or the information we have available to us we remain concerned about your engagement with the University and we do not feel that there is any possibility of you completing your studies successfully, however, we can also terminate your place on the course and withdraw you from the University.

4.10 If we ask you to provide evidence about your circumstances, we may decide that you can't attend your course unless and until we receive this evidence. This would mean that:

- you'd still be a 'live' student on our record system, but you wouldn't be able to attend taught or other timetabled sessions and you wouldn't be able to use our facilities on our campus; but
- you'd still have access to the University's electronic resources and your email account during this period, and you could continue to access independent advice and support from the Students' Union. Email su.advice@norwichuni.ac.uk for more information.

4.11 Once we have received and considered your evidence, we'll write to you with our decision. If we have to put you on compulsory intermission because of your health or wellbeing, the Academic Support Office will write to you with full details. If we put you on intermission specifically because of your health, we will ask you to provide medical evidence confirming you are able to start your studies again before you come back to the University.

4.12 Please note also that the Vice-Chancellor or a senior member of staff acting on the Vice-Chancellor's behalf may choose to suspend you while we review your engagement with the University using the process described above if we believe your health or behaviour:

- is presenting an exceptional level of concern to us; or
- is disrupting the day-to-day work and life of the University community, including in University-managed accommodation.

This is part of our **duty of care** towards you and other members of the University. By duty of care, we mean our obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone at the University. The period of suspension would be for a maximum of 10 working days (two weeks) up to the point at which we review your engagement with your studies. Once we have completed this review, we may:

- choose to put you on a period of compulsory intermission; or

- allow you back on to your course; or
- extend your suspension – for example, if we needed more information about your health and circumstances. If we extend your suspension, we'll tell you how long the period of suspension would be for and the point at which we would review it.

4.13 We can also put you on compulsory intermission as the result of a decision by the Student Conduct Committee about a disciplinary matter.

See section M for more about our disciplinary procedures.

5 Your status at the University during intermission

5.1 Your student status at the University changes during a period of intermission. Instead of recording you as a 'live' student, we record you as an intermitting student. While you're on intermission, you keep your physical access to the campus, including limited borrowing rights from the Library, but you won't be able to access tutorial support or use the workshops. To help you keep in touch with activity at the University, you also keep your University email account and access to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). You can ask for independent advice and support from the Students' Union while you are on intermission as well. Email su.advice@norwichuni.ac.uk for more information.

5.2 If you're a member of staff at the University and you intermit from the MA in Creative Education (or the PGCertHE), you'll continue to have access to resources only as they relate to your work responsibilities.

5.3 For all intermitting students, your full access to the University's resources starts again when you return to your studies and your status changes back to that of a live student.

6 Returning to, or withdrawing from, the University after intermission

6.1 Towards the end of your intermission, the Academic Support Office will write to ask if you intend to return to your studies at the University. We will usually write to you about eight weeks before you are due back, or earlier in the case of students on the BA (Hons) in Acting so that we can discuss any suggested preparation and training in advance of your return.

6.2 If we have set conditions for your return, such as asking you to provide written medical evidence that you are able to come back to your course, the Academic Support Office will remind you of this and will ask you to provide the necessary information to us as soon as possible. You must provide this information to us for you to return to your studies. The Academic Support Office will review any

information you send to us about your return to studies and may seek further advice from the Mental Health and Safeguarding Manager.

- 6.3 Please be aware that we may offer to extend your intermission or decide to terminate your place on your course if:
- you don't provide the information we have asked you for to enable you to return to your studies; or
 - you provide the information after our deadline for you to send it to us has passed; or
 - the Academic Support Office, in consultation as appropriate with the Mental Health and Safeguarding Manager, considers that the information you have provided is not sufficient or raises serious concerns about your ability to continue with your studies.
- 6.4 If the Academic Support Office contacts you about returning from intermission but you don't reply, or you don't provide satisfactory information about your intentions to return, we may also terminate your place on your course. A Course Administrator will write to you to confirm this if we withdraw you in these circumstances.
- 6.5 If you decide not to return to your studies while you are on intermission or before you are due back, and you wish to withdraw from the University instead, please confirm your decision by email to the Academic Support Office, aso@norwichuni.ac.uk. We won't ask you to speak to academic staff on your course about your decision and you won't need to complete a Student Withdrawal Form, but a Course Administrator will write to you to confirm your withdrawal.
- 6.6 If you decide during your period of intermission that you want to change to another course at the University when you resume your studies, you'll need to follow our standard course transfer process while also meeting any conditions of your return from intermission. Please note that we can't guarantee any change of course.

See section B for more about changing course.

- 6.7 When the Academic Support Office confirms your return to your studies, they will send you written information to help you plan for your return. Course Administration will also organise a supportive mentoring session with Student Support on your return and we may also arrange a series of further sessions in the first four weeks of your return, if appropriate. These sessions are put in place to support your academic progress, so make sure you attend them.

See section C for more about supportive monitoring.

- 6.8 When a student returns from intermission, we:

- confirm the details with other departments in the University; and
- confirm the details with external agencies as necessary, such as Student Finance England.

6.9 When you come back from intermission, the regulations and policies in place at the time you return apply to your studies, not the regulations and policies in place when you began your intermission. This includes the regulations confirming how we calculate degree classifications and awards.

See section H for more about degree classifications and awards.

7 Challenging our decisions

7.1 You can challenge any of the following decisions:

- you have applied for intermission, or you have asked us to extend your existing period of intermission, but we have refused or closed your application;
- we have reviewed your engagement with the University and you don't agree with the outcome – for example, because we have put you on compulsory intermission; and
- you have not met the conditions we set to allow you to return from a period of intermission – for example, because you have not provided the medical or other evidence we requested in advance of your return.

7.2 We have a single-stage review process if you wish to challenge these decisions, and if you are unhappy with the outcome, you can pursue the matter with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), which runs an independent scheme to review student appeals and complaints.

7.3 You can ask us to carry out a review of our decision for one or both of the reasons below.

- Because you believe there have been procedural irregularities in the way we made our decision about you.
- Because you have new evidence which didn't exist or wasn't available when we took the original decision about you.

7.4 You have 10 working days (two weeks) to ask for a review after we have written to you to confirm the decision you wish to challenge. We would only extend this deadline in exceptional circumstances. Please note too that if you wish to provide evidence to support your request, it is your responsibility to obtain it and, if necessary, to pay for it if there is a charge – the University won't do this for you.

7.5 To ask us to review our decision:

- email or write to the Academic Support Office, aso@norwichuni.ac.uk, explaining your reasons for requesting a review;
- tell us what outcome you are seeking by asking for a review; and
- provide any evidence you'd like us to consider which supports your request. Remember that you must provide any supporting evidence within 10 working days (two weeks) of our original decision about you.

- 7.6 When the Academic Support Office has received your request for a review and any supporting evidence, they will pass it to the Academic Registrar who will carry out the review. If the Academic Support Office identifies any conflict of interest in the Academic Registrar carrying out the review, they will seek advice on finding another senior member of staff to consider the matter.
- 7.7 The Academic Registrar (or other member of staff as appropriate) will consider the review and will write to you with their decision, including the reasons for that decision, within 10 working days (two weeks) of receiving the case.
- 7.8 If the Academic Registrar upholds your case – in other words, if they consider that there is good reason for us to change our original decision – they will explain what this means for your studies.
- 7.9 If the Academic Registrar does not uphold your case – in other words, if they do not consider that you have presented a case for us to change our original decision – the Academic Support Office will send you a **Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter** within 10 working days (two weeks) of the Academic Registrar's decision. This is the letter you will need if you wish to take your case to the OIA, and explains how you can ask the OIA to pursue the matter for you.