

Student Interruption and Withdrawal Procedure

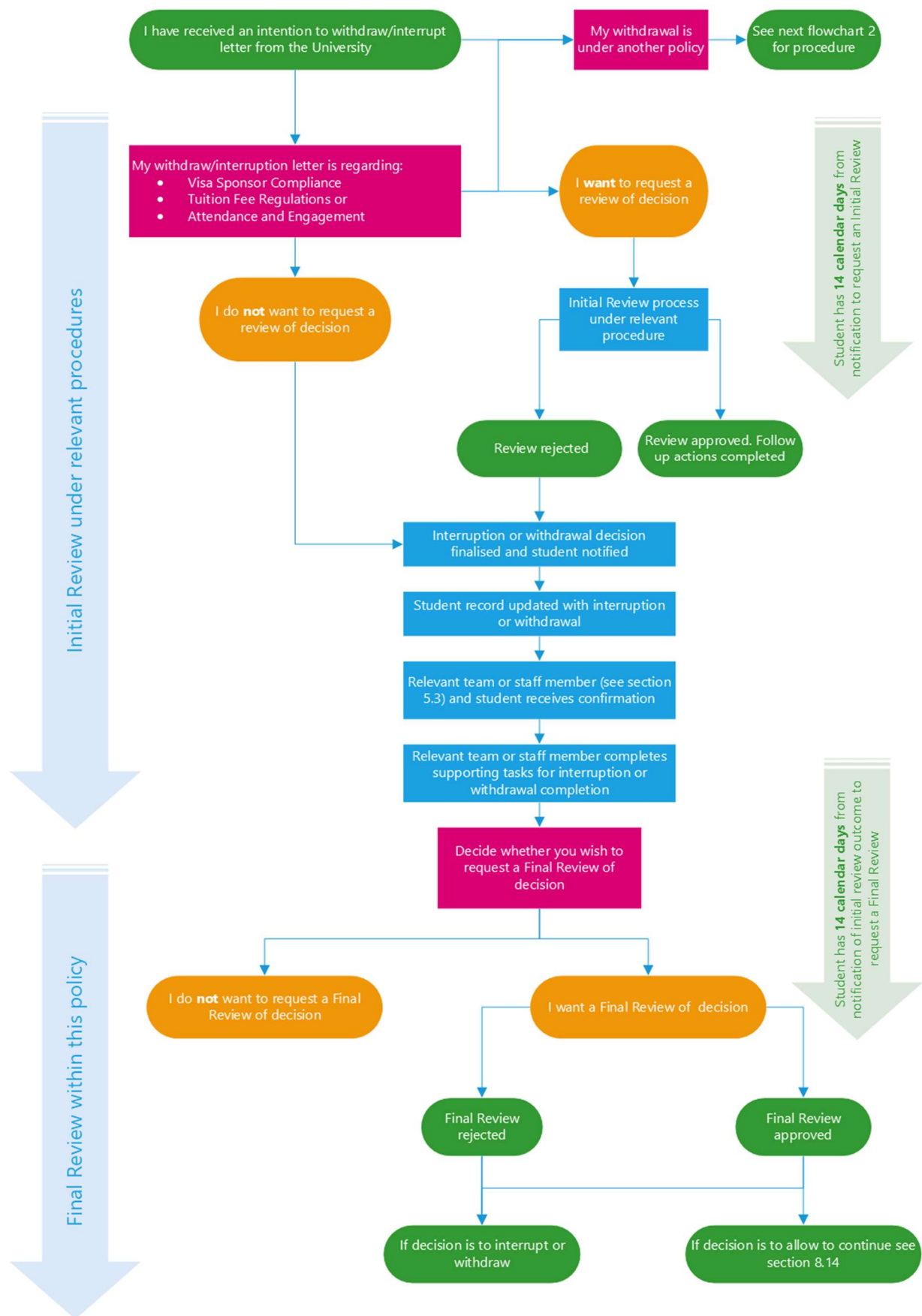
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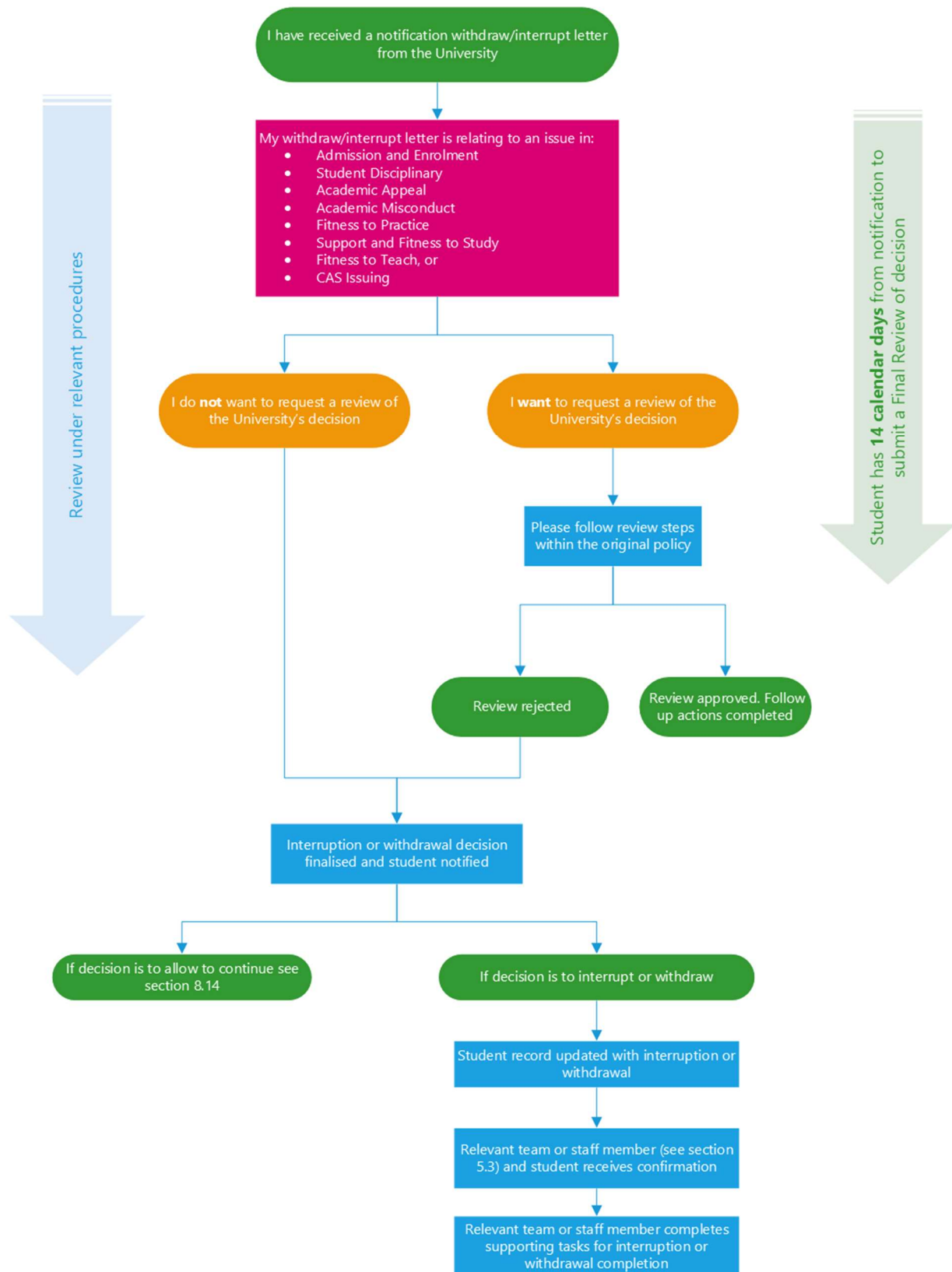
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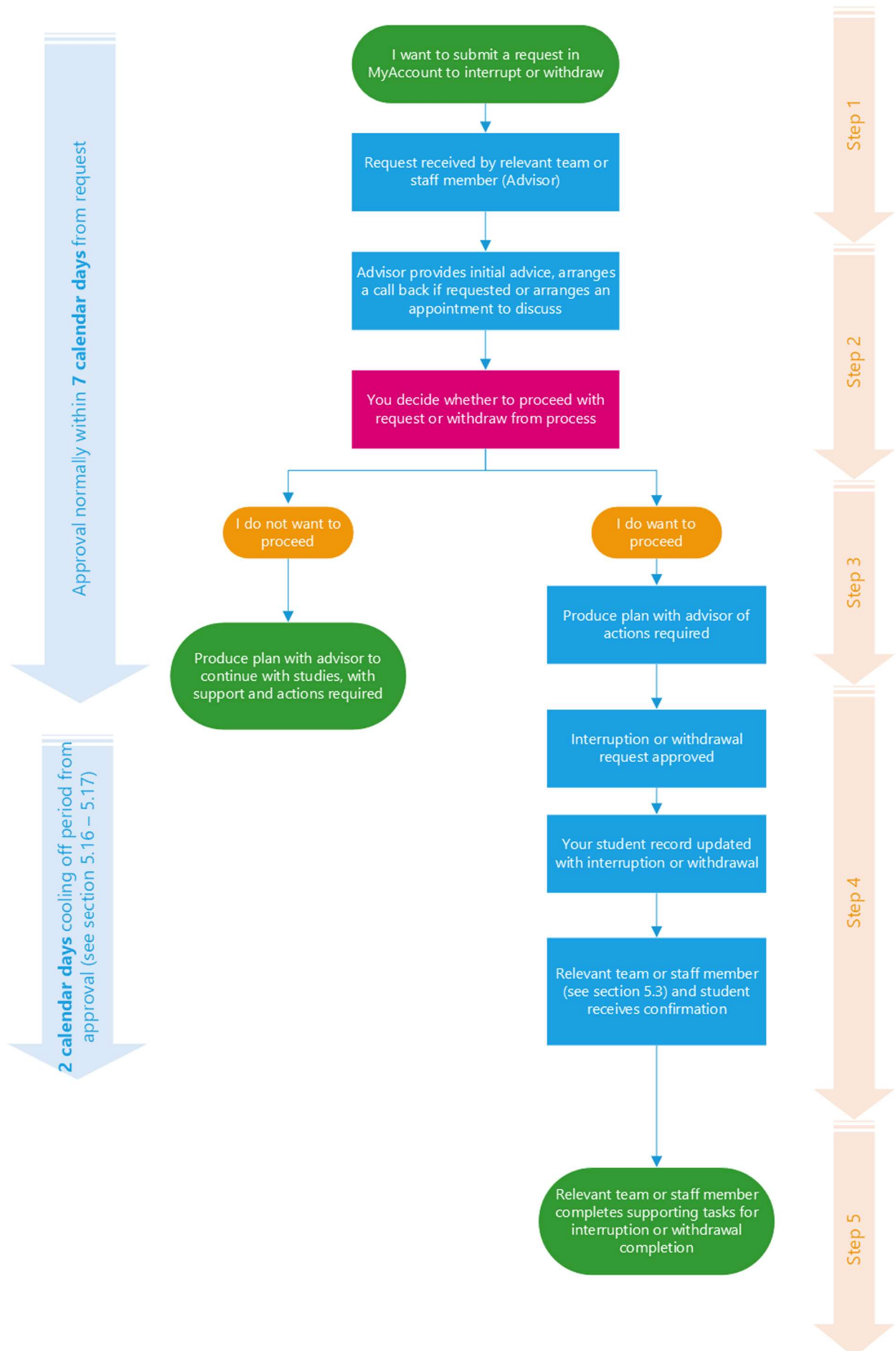
University Led Withdrawal/Interruption Flowchart 1



University Led Withdrawal/Interruption Flowchart 2



Student Led Withdrawal/Interruption Flowchart



Student Interruption and Withdrawal Procedure

1. Introduction – what are interruption and withdrawal?

- 1.1. **Interruption** is where students decide that for personal reasons, e.g. ill health or pregnancy/maternity, they wish to take a break from their studies.
- 1.2. **Withdrawal** is where students decide that they no longer wish to continue as a student at the University and permanently withdraw from their course.
- 1.3. Students may also be interrupted or withdrawn from their studies by the University at any time in the following circumstances (the below is an indicative list, but not exhaustive):
 - 1.3.1. interruption or withdrawal due to concerns about their physical or mental health in accordance with the Fitness to Study Procedure;
 - 1.3.2. interruption or withdrawal for reasons of academic failure as set out in the Academic Regulations, including withdrawal as a penalty for academic misconduct under the University's Academic Misconduct Procedure;
 - 1.3.3. interruption or withdrawal for failure to attend or engage with their studies as per the Attendance and Engagement Policy;
 - 1.3.4. withdrawal for failure to comply with Home Office visa requirements, including requirements about academic engagement for visa sponsored students at the University;
 - 1.3.5. for apprentices, withdrawal because they have lost their job or changed employer and are therefore no longer able to continue the apprenticeship;
 - 1.3.6. for apprentices, withdrawal because they have not met off-the-job requirements as stated in their training plan;
 - 1.3.7. withdrawal for failure to comply with the enrolment terms, which includes compliance with the Tuition Fee regulations.
- 1.4. Undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) courses normally only allow a return to teaching at the start of the following academic year. It is expected that students will return to the start of the semester in which they interrupted, any other decision would be considered by the Pro Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience (or their nominee) by exception and on a case by case basis.
- 1.5. Where an interruption has taken place for a postgraduate research (PGR) student, most courses allow for a partial academic year interruption, returning to study at three points in the academic year: September, January and April; these dates are aligned with our current re-enrolment periods.

1.6. PGR courses normally offer a maximum of two years of interruption. Therefore, interruption could extend over different academic years and may trigger a “third year of interruption” on the University’s systems. If the timeframe is within the 2-year period, the LSBU Doctoral College Manager will confirm that the interruption has not exceeded 2 years in total.

1.7. Apprenticeship students may be allowed to return to study after “breaks in learning” which are slightly different from interruptions, during alternative points during the academic year. Please see Annex A for further details.

1.8. This procedure will be applied in a way that is consistent with the University’s statutory duty to uphold lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. Students will not be subject to interruption or withdrawal solely on the basis of expressing lawful views, including political, philosophical, or religious opinions, even where those views may be unpopular or controversial.

1.9. Further details about interruption are set out at Annex A.

1.10. Further details about withdrawal are set out at Annex B.

2. Scope – who is covered by this procedure?

2.1. The Interruption and Withdrawal Procedure applies to every student enrolled and/or registered with the University, including apprentices and students on programmes delivered in partnership with other providers, unless otherwise stated in the course specification.

2.2. This procedure does not cover suspension or exclusion from the University on disciplinary grounds, which are covered by the Student Disciplinary Procedure, or under the School of Health and Social Care Fitness to Practice Procedure.

3. Who is responsible for this procedure?

3.1. The Pro Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience (**PVC ESE**) has overall responsibility for this procedure but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the staff identified in this procedure. All relevant members of staff have been made aware of the procedure and have received appropriate training.

3.2. This procedure will be reviewed from time to time (and at least every two years) by the Student Operations Team, and the University Solicitor to ensure that its provisions continue to meet our legal obligations and reflect best practice.

3.3. The Quality Standards Committee approves this procedure.

4. Support for students

4.1. Support and advice regarding this procedure is available from the Student Life Helpdesk, LSBU Students’ Union Advisory Service, the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Team and/or the Course Support and Enquiry Team.

- 4.2. The University will make reasonable adjustments to this procedure where it is reasonable to do so to prevent students from suffering substantial disadvantage as a result of their disability.

5. How do students interrupt or withdraw from their studies?

Step 1: Log onto MyAccount and submit a request to interrupt or withdraw

- 5.1. Once an application has been submitted, it will be forwarded to the appropriate team for review and approval.
- 5.2. Where appropriate and/or requested, the relevant team/member of staff will make an appointment to meet with the student and discuss the application.
- 5.3. Requests will be forwarded as follows:
- 5.3.1. Apprentices to the Apprenticeship Team, with final approval by the Director of Apprenticeship.
 - 5.3.2. International students to the International Student Advisor in the UKVI Compliance Team.
 - 5.3.3. Health students to their course leader.
 - 5.3.4. PGR students to their supervisor, with final approval by the Director of PGR.
 - 5.3.5. All other students through to the Student Life Helpdesk/Student Advice Team and Course Support and Enquiry Team within Student Administration.
- 5.4. The University will aim to ensure that applications are considered within seven calendar days of a request to interrupt or withdraw.

Step 2: Speaking to an appropriate adviser

- 5.5. For students in group 5.3.1 to 5.3.4, the adviser/course lead/member of appropriate staff will offer a mutually convenient time to discuss the student's decision.
- 5.6. Students in group 5.3.5 will be provided with initial advice from the Student Life Helpdesk, and in some circumstances the Student Advice Team will arrange a callback, including where students have indicated they would like a call back.
- 5.7. In all scenarios the appointment/callback is a confidential space to discuss the circumstances and ask questions to ensure that students feel supported through any decision they take. The adviser will help students consider if there is anything the University can do to support them to stay, they will also talk them through the full process of interruption or withdrawal, including tuition fee liability and how this may impact future funding from Student Finance England (if appropriate). They will also discuss the implications to enable students to make an informed decision, such as financial, accommodation, visa implications and future study options.

- 5.8. The aim of this appointment is to support students in coming to the right decision for them.

Step 3: Making a plan

- 5.9. If the student decides not to proceed with their initial request and continue with their studies at the University, they and their adviser will draft a plan together that enables them to stay. This plan may include arranging support from other services such as wellbeing, debt advice or study skills, or actions to complete such as submitting extenuating circumstances claims or contacting their personal tutor.

5.9.1. Their application on the system will be rejected to close it off.

- 5.10. The adviser will follow up to see how they are coping with their studies and their plan at an appropriate time.

5.10.1. For apprentices this will be their Training Plan and where there are major changes this will be amended and shared with their employer. Apprentices tripartite meetings will continue as per previous arrangements.

- 5.11. If the student decides that interruption or withdrawal is right for them, they and their adviser will draft a plan together for the student to make sure they have completed all the actions required to interrupt or withdraw. This may include actions such as informing student finance or accommodation.

- 5.12. Students are expected to take responsibility for completing the actions outlined in their plan.

Step 4: Completing the interruption or withdrawal process

- 5.13. If their decision is to proceed with the interruption or withdrawal their application will be considered and, where approved, passed on to the Course Support and Enquiry Team for action.

- 5.14. The date of interruption or withdrawal will be the date that the request was approved by the appropriate team, which would normally be within 7 calendar days of the request. If there is a significant delay then for the purposes of calculating the tuition fee liability, this will be the date of the original request plus 14 calendar days (maximum). Please see the Tuition Fee Policy for Fee Liability information.

- 5.15. For visa sponsored students (previously Tier 4), we will report the interruption or withdrawal to the Home Office. This will result in the visa being curtailed and students will need to leave the UK within the period prescribed by the Home Office. The Immigration Compliance Team will send an official notification which outlines the next steps which must be complied with in line with the students visa responsibilities. Students will be asked and expected to provide confirmation that they have left the country.

- 5.16. Students will have a two calendar days cooling off period from the date of their application approval. If they wish to retract their interruption/withdrawal request

from the University, students should contact the Course Support and Enquiry Team within that time to discuss if their return to study is possible.

5.17. Where students have decided they wish to return to their studies this may involve:

- 5.17.1. A possible delayed return due to the amount of teaching missed.
- 5.17.2. A possible delayed return due to the student route visa being curtailed, as a result of the University reporting their change of circumstances and needing a new CAS and visa.
- 5.17.3. The availability of a new placements/re-instated placement for apprenticeship and health students.

5.18. If students decide to withdraw they must return their ID card, as directed by the adviser.

Step 5: Communications

5.19. Once the interruption or withdrawal has been approved it will be processed on the Student Record System. Students will receive an email notification that their record has been changed and the start date of interruption will be the date approval was given.

5.20. Communications will then be sent to a number of departments to complete necessary tasks to support the interruption or withdrawal. Communications will be sent to:

- 5.20.1. The student.
- 5.20.2. Fees Team.
- 5.20.3. Course leader (for information).
- 5.20.4. UKVI Team– if a visa sponsored student.
- 5.20.5. Apprenticeship Team – if an apprentice.
- 5.20.6. Professional Practice Team – if a health student.
- 5.20.7. Director of PGR – if a PGR student.
- 5.20.8. Accommodation – if appropriate.

6. What is the process for University led interruptions and withdrawals?

6.1. In determining whether a University-led interruption or withdrawal is necessary, LSBU will take care to ensure that no student is penalised or removed from study on the basis of their lawful speech. Any concerns about conduct or engagement must be distinguished from protected expression under the University's free speech obligations.

6.2. A decision to interrupt or withdraw will be passed to the Course Support and Enquiry Team to action.

6.3. The date of interruption and withdrawal in University led decisions will be the date

of the final decision. This is also the date that would be used to calculate the tuition fee liability. Please see the Tuition Fee Regulations for further details.

- 6.4. The Student Record System will be amended, and communications will be sent to the student and relevant teams as stated in section 5.20 of the student-led interruption/withdrawal above.

7. Returning after an interruption

- 7.1. If students have interrupted their studies, as per section 1.4, they will normally be expected to re-enrol at the start of the next academic year following the interruption and come back to studies. This could be at the beginning of Semester 1 or Semester 2 and will be agreed as part of the interruption request.
- 7.2. The University will contact the student to invite them to re-enrol at the appropriate time.
- 7.2.1. All apprentices will need to complete additional paperwork with the Apprenticeship Team.
- 7.2.2. Students on Health courses will need to meet with their course leaders to verify there are placement opportunities available.
- 7.2.3. Visa sponsored students must email the tier4compliance@lsbu.ac.uk team to request a CAS to return to the UK. This should be done at least 3 months in advance of the next start date. Students must be able to provide supporting evidence for their CAS.
- 7.3. If students are not ready to come back to their studies by re-enrolling in the academic year following the interruption, they need to reply to the communications sent from the University or log a request via MyAccount. **It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed.**
- 7.4. If students have been interrupted by the University in accordance with the Fitness to Study Procedure, they will need to present appropriate evidence to show that they are now able to return to study, before they can re-enrol. The process to be followed is set out in the Fitness to Study Procedure. For apprentices the employer will need to complete additional paperwork and confirm they are happy for them to resume.
- 7.5. During the summer, the Student Advice team normally host 'Ready to Return' appointments, to help students get back into study mode. Students will be contacted via personal email address to arrange a confidential callback.
- 7.6. If students need further advice and information whilst interrupted from their studies, they should contact the Student Life Helpdesk by emailing: studentlife@lsbu.ac.uk or by calling: 020 7815 6454.

All returning students will be subject to enrolment right to study checks to evidence they have the correct immigration permission to study for the duration of their course.

8. Interruption/Withdrawal Reviews

- 8.1. If students are interrupted or withdrawn by the University in accordance with the [Fitness to Study Procedure](#), they have a right to request a Review of that decision in accordance with that procedure.
- 8.2. For visa sponsored students that are withdrawn by the University, in accordance with the [Student Sponsorship and the issuing of Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies \(CAS\) Policy](#), they have a right to request a Review in accordance with and as part of that policy.
- 8.3. If students are withdrawn by the exam board for reasons of academic failure, they will need to submit an academic appeal under the [Student Academic Appeal Procedure](#).
- 8.4. If students are interrupted or withdrawn because of breaches of the [Tuition Fee Regulations](#) and the [Attendance and Engagement Procedure](#) they will be able to request an Initial Review through those procedures.
- 8.5. If students have been interrupted or withdrawn in the procedures detailed in paragraph 8.4 or through another University procedure (except those detailed in 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3), they have a right to request a Final Review of any decision to interrupt or withdraw them to the Pro Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience (PVC ESE). They should submit their request for a Final Review within 14 calendar days of being notified of the decision by using this form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/HzMYhAnCXY>

- 8.6. Requests for an interruption/withdrawal Final Review will be granted on limited grounds, namely:
 - 8.6.1. There was a procedural irregularity when making the decision (e.g., there was a material failure by the University to follow its processes, or obvious reasons were not provided for the decision).
 - 8.6.2. The outcome or decision was unreasonable and could not be justified by the evidence.
 - 8.6.3. New material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
- 8.7. In the case of interruptions or withdrawals due to Attendance and Engagement Procedure, Tuition Fee Regulations, any evidence provided at the Final Review request cannot have already been considered as part of the in-procedure Initial Review.
- 8.8. To submit a request for a Final Review students should submit this using the link [HERE](#).
- 8.9. Students should set out their concerns clearly and succinctly and provide evidence in support (where possible). They must explain how the decision that they are appealing falls within one or more of the grounds set out above.

8.10. If the Final Review request is incomplete, for example does not include the relevant evidence or does not meet the specified grounds outlined above in section 8.5 or 8.6, it will be rejected.

8.11. If the Final Review request is accepted for consideration, the PVC ESE or their nominee, where there is no conflict of interest, will consider all information collated for the original decision, together with any new evidence presented (but may contact the student and/or anyone else involved in the matter if they consider it necessary). In complex cases, the Final Review request may be referred to a panel (normally consisting of at least two members of staff, either an academic or from professional services, and at least one member of the Student Affairs Team) who will make a recommendation to the PVC ESE.

8.12. If the request for a Final Review is based on previously undisclosed extenuating circumstances, the PVC ESE or nominee will work with the Student Engagement Team to reach a decision. The Student Engagement Team will liaise with the student and course leader or adviser in relation to the outcome of the case.

8.13. The PVC ESE or their nominee/nominated panel will notify the student of their decision within 28 calendar days of receiving the request for a Final Review. The decision taken at the Final Review stage is final.

8.14. If the outcome is favourable to the student, their return to study might include:

8.14.1. A possible delayed return due to the amount of teaching missed.

8.14.2. A possible delayed return due to the student route visa being curtailed as a result of the University reporting the change of circumstances and needing a new CAS and visa.

8.14.3. A possible delayed return due to the availability of new placements/re-instated placement for apprenticeship and Health students.

8.15. If the outcome of the Review is not favourable to the student, or it is rejected, the student will automatically receive a Completion of Procedures letter ("COP") as soon as possible and no later than 28 calendar days. If the Review is favorable, they can request the University to provide them with a COP letter within 30 calendar days of the date of the outcome letter. Where such a request is made, a COP will be provided within 14 calendar days of the request. We will issue a COP as soon as possible and in any event within 28 calendar days.

9. Independent external review

9.1. If students are not satisfied with the outcome of this process, they may make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education provided they have been issued with a COP. That letter will explain how they can submit a complaint and the deadline for doing so is 12 months from the date of the letter.

10. Use of data

10.1. The University collects data on student interruptions and withdrawals, and uses the data:

- 10.1.1. internally for reporting, evaluation, learning and training; and
- 10.1.2. externally for discussion with regulators in the higher education sector.

The data used by the University for the purposes set out in sections 10.1 will be anonymised. For further information about how the University uses your personal data please see our Student Privacy notice.

Annex A Interruption

1. All students can interrupt their studies, except for students studying Continuous Professional Development (CPD) modules.
2. You can apply to interrupt your course at any time. Interruption usually means that you stop attending your course and re-enrol at the beginning of the next academic year and resuming your attendance at the beginning of the equivalent semester in which your interruption began.
3. The maximum period of interruption is two academic years, unless in exceptional circumstances the University agrees to extend this period. 'Exceptional circumstances' means circumstances beyond your control which have a severe impact on your ability to return to study.
4. A decision regarding an extension of the maximum period of interruption will also take into account, where relevant, the requirements of a regulatory body and/or the University's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 which include the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students and to ensure that its policies do not without justification disadvantage students because of a protected characteristic, for example pregnancy/maternity (for more information please see LSBU Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption policy).
5. Decisions to extend the maximum period of interruption will be made on a case-by-case basis with your Head of School with approval from the Academic Registrar or nominee.
6. As per section 7 of this policy, all students would be expected to engage at the end of the academic year to confirm their decision to return or request a further year of interruption.
7. Where no communication is received from students, then the assumption will be made that you wish to withdraw and processes will be completed to exit you from the institution and provide you with any passed credits/awards where applicable.
8. If you are enrolled on a course which is subject to professional body regulation, you should note that the regulation may define your maximum period of enrolment.
9. Apprenticeship students can also request or be asked to take a "break in learning". Please refer to the Funding Rules for apprenticeships for further information. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>) relating to your year of study.
 - 9.1. Decisions regarding breaks in learning will be taken in conjunction with the Apprenticeship Team.
 - 9.2. When a break in learning is a calendar month or less the student will remain enrolled at the University and will not be changed on the student record system to interrupted.

- 9.2.1. The Apprenticeship Team will need to inform the Course Support and Enquiry Team in such instances to ensure that communications are sent to the appropriate teams. Including but not limited to the Student Engagement Team and Fees Team.
- 9.3. Where the break in learning is over 1 calendar month, the student record will be amended on the Student Records System to reflect the interruption.
- 9.4. In the case of apprenticeship students, they will be allowed to return at an appropriate time during the academic year to support their learning and in line with Apprenticeship guidelines and with approval from their School.
- 10. In line with the Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy, students are allowed to take a short period away from their course for maternity. Please see Section 6.7 of the [Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy](#).
 - 10.1. For students who are on maternity as per the Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy, where the break in learning is a calendar month or less then the student will remain enrolled at the University and will not be changed on the Student Record System to interrupted.
 - 10.2. Where the break in learning is over 1 calendar month, the student record will be amended to reflect the interruption.
 - 10.2.1. In either 10.1 or 10.2 the relevant School/College team will recommend an appropriate expected return date detailing what assessments/modules the student would be expected to undertake upon their return.
 - 10.2.2. The return date will need to be approved by the Course Leader or the Associate Dean for Student Experience.
 - 10.2.3. The Course Leader will be required to inform the Course Support and Enquiry Team for either scenario to ensure that communications are sent to the appropriate teams, including but not limited to the Student Engagement Team, Immigration Compliance Team and Fees Team.
 - 10.3. In the case of students on a maternity break, they will be allowed to return at an appropriate time during the academic year to support their learning.
 - 10.4. Apprenticeship students also need to refer to the Funding rules around maternity leave. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>)
- 11. To request an interruption, please submit your request to MyAccount and follow the steps set out in section 5 of the procedure (How do students interrupt or withdraw from their studies).

12. Whilst your study is interrupted, you will not have access to University resources and facilities, including any support that may have been accessed from the Student Services Team, except at the discretion of the University.
13. The University cannot guarantee that you will be able to return to the same course or same University campus location after a period of interruption, particularly where this lasts longer than one academic year. Changes may be made to the course and individual modules may not run in future years.
14. During a period of interruption, the University will normally:
- a) refuse to deal with applications for any other government funding;
 - b) inform the Student Loans Company or its equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland;
 - c) inform the Department of Health bursary authorities (for relevant students on health programmes);
 - d) inform the Home Office (in the case of visa sponsored students in the UK);
 - e) inform Transport for London because your student oyster card will no longer be valid;
 - f) inform any other relevant funding or accrediting bodies.
15. Students who have interrupted their studies can still access support for employment through the Employability Team by email to careershub@lsbu.ac.uk
16. The impact of interruption on your obligation to pay tuition fees is set out in the Tuition Fee Regulations. You should note that you will normally be charged tuition fees at the prevailing rate for new students in the year that you resume your studies.
17. If you are a visa sponsored student, and you interrupt, you should note that the University is required to inform the Home Office by reporting your visa. This will result in the cancellation of your immigration permission. Cancellation of your visa will affect your ability to remain in the UK. LSBU will notify you of the cancellation via your student email. You must make plans to exit the UK within 60 calendar days of receiving that notification. In addition, the Home Office will confirm the cancellation to you via the email you provided in your visa application or if you have updated your email address here [Update your UK Visas and Immigration account details: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/update-your-uk-visas-and-immigration-account-details). If you do not leave the UK, the University may not be able to issue you with a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) in the future when you wish to return to study, and this may lead to you being withdrawn by the University.
18. If you are living in University accommodation when you interrupt, your Accommodation Agreement will automatically come to an end and you will be required to move out. The University cannot guarantee you a place in University accommodation on your return to your course.

Annex B Withdrawal

1. Withdrawal means permanently leaving your course before successful completion.
2. Once you have withdrawn or been withdrawn from a course you cannot normally re-enrol on that course again. However, in certain circumstances a decision can be taken, on a case-by-case basis, to allow you to enrol on the same course from which you have withdrawn or been deemed withdrawn, or a course that leads to a similar qualification.
3. You may re-apply to the University onto other courses if you withdrew in the past.
4. If you are withdrawn by the University because of a 'Fail-Terminated' judgement from an exam board, normally you would not be allowed to re-enrol to your course or a course that leads to a similar qualification. You can apply to a different course at the University, but you cannot normally be admitted to the same course or another course leading to an award at the same level in a related subject area of the course from which you have been withdrawn. The University retains the right not to make you an offer even if you would otherwise meet the criteria for an offer to be made.
5. The University may withdraw you from your course if you have stopped engaging with it. The Associate Dean Education and Student Experience in your School will make this determination by reviewing your attendance records (including placements), use of University systems, and submission of assessed work. If we consider that your engagement is low, then this may have triggered the interventions detailed in the Attendance and Engagement Policy. As part of this process, you will be invited to work with the Student Engagement Team to remove barriers to engagement or explain your absences and give information to the Case Management Panel. This process is detailed in the University's [Attendance and Engagement Procedure](#)
6. If you are a visa sponsored student, you may be withdrawn from your course if you fail to comply with the requirements of your visa as listed on the [Policies](#) page of the website. You should note that the University is required to inform the Home Office by reporting your visa. This will result in the cancellation of your immigration permission. Cancellation of your visa will affect your ability to remain in the UK. LSBU will notify you of the cancellation via your student email. You must make plans to exit the UK within 60 calendar days of receiving that notification. If you do not exit the UK within this time period, you may be considered an overstayer which may affect any future immigration applications. In addition, the Home Office will confirm the cancellation to you via the email you provided in your visa application or if you have updated your email address here [Update your UK Visas and Immigration account details: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
7. Withdrawal means that you will cease to be a student of the University.
8. Once you have withdrawn the University will normally:
 - a. refuse to deal with applications for any other government funding;

- b. inform the Student Loans Company or their equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland;
 - c. inform the Department of Health bursary authorities (for relevant students on health programmes);
 - d. inform the Home Office (in the case of visa sponsored students);
 - e. inform Transport for London because your student oyster card will no longer be valid;
 - f. inform any other relevant funding or accrediting bodies.
9. You must return your student ID card and any other University materials (such as library books) which may be in your possession.
10. If you are living in University accommodation when you withdraw, your student Accommodation Agreement will automatically come to an end, and you will be required to move out.
11. Students who have withdrawn can still access support for employment through the Employability Team by email to careershub@lsbu.ac.uk