

Student Interruptions and Withdrawals

1.0 Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and regulations governing interruptions to study and withdrawals from study.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all students who are registered on taught or research programmes at The King's Foundation, School of Traditional Arts.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Attendance and Participation

Student attendance and participation are important and contribute to student success. If circumstances arise which prevent students from attending and participating, it may be appropriate for students to consider an interruption of study to resolve issues affecting attending and participation.

In exceptional circumstances, students may decide that they do not wish to either return to studies or continue with studies.

3.2 Definitions

An interruption of study means a formal break from study for a specific period of time with the intention to resume study at a future date which has been agreed by the School and been approved by UWTSD.

Withdrawal from study means that a student has decided to discontinue study at the School with no intention of returning.

3.3 Advice and Support

Before submitting a formal application for an interruption of study or withdrawal from study, students must seek advice and support. Advice and support is available from the following:

- MA Director of Studies
- MA Senior Tutors
- Director of Research
- Director of Educational Development
- Director of the School
- Registrar

3.4 Interruptions of Study

During a period of interruption, a student's registration on the programme shall change and they shall not have the same entitlements as fully registered students.

The School is required to notify the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) of interruptions for students sponsored under Tier 4 of the Points Based Immigration System where the School has issued Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). Tier 4 students who interrupt their studies will be required to leave the UK, even if interrupting because of personal or medical reasons, if their interruption is for a period of 60 days or more

3.5 Access to Services During a Period of Interruption

Students on a period of interruption will be able to access advice from MA staff and library services to facilitate return to study.

During a period of interruption, students will not be able to attend classes, access tutorial support or supervision, continue with research, take assessments or remain in the UK if they are a Tier 4 student and the period of interruption is for 60 days or more.

3.6 Process to Request an Interruption of Studies

The student should discuss his/her intention to interrupt his/her studies with his/her Tutor and relevant members of staff. International students are strongly advised to consult with the UK visa office before making a final decision, as this may have implications with regards to immigration status. The student should complete an Interruption of Studies Form (SC01 document). The student must complete all relevant sections of the form and make sure that the grounds for interruption are clearly marked and that independent supporting evidence is provided.

The MA Director of Studies must provide a statement on the UWTSD SC01 form indicating whether or not the School supports the request and provide details of the plans and any conditions for return to studies (which must, in the case of a student seeking to interrupt studies partway through a level of study, include a clear indication of whether any partial or full credit already gained will be carried forward or forfeited). The completed form should be sent to the UWTSD Academic Office for final consideration and determination of actual dates of interruption of studies in cases where the request is approved. Applications which are not full completed or which are not supported by the School will not be approved.

The UWTSD Academic Office will inform the student of the final decision by means of an Interruption of Studies letter (which may take the form of an electronic communication).

3.7 Period of Interruption

The period of interruption for full time students is up to one year and for part time research students two years.

3.8 Process to Consider and Confirm an Interruption Request

UWTSD will consider and confirm requests for an interruption of studies. An interruption of studies is a serious step for any student so all requests are considered on an individual basis. The following are examples of circumstances which may be acceptable circumstances for an interruption.

This list is not definitive and even if a circumstance is listed, it does not mean that a request for interruption will be approved:

- Health or medical;
- Significant illness of a close family member;
- Compassionate (including bereavement and serious domestic difficulties);
- Caring responsibilities;
- Extreme family or financial circumstances which have had a significant impact on a student;
- Maternity leave, paternity or adoption leave;
- Exceptional Professional Commitments;
- Opportunities which contribute to academic development;
- Exceptional circumstances outside the control of the student that seriously compromises his/her ability to continue with his/her studies (including the impact of a situation in relation to learning differences/neurodiversity).

Interruptions would not normally be approved in the following circumstances:

- If a programme is being withdrawn and there is no future cohorts for a student to join upon return from an interruption;
- Where an interruption is requested immediately before the start of examinations or submission of assessments, simply as a means of avoiding failure in or postponing assessments, as this would provide these students with an unmerited advantage, if there is a genuine reason why a student cannot complete an assessment, it may be appropriate to use the Extenuating Circumstances Procedure;
- Vacations;
- Employment that does not contribute significantly towards the student's programme of study;
- Poor planning and time management.

UWTSD will confirm the outcome of the request in writing, including the start and end date of the period of interruption.

3.9 Last Date of Attendance for Students on an Interruption of Studies and Funding

Students are required to pay any outstanding tuition fees up to the point of taking an interruption of studies.

3.10 Tier 4 Students

If a student who is sponsored under Tier 4 interrupts their studies for 60 days or more, the School must inform the Home Office and their visa will be curtailed. This means the student will need to return home and apply for another Tier 4 visa to come back when they are ready to return from their interruption of studies.

If a student who is sponsored under Tier 4 interrupts their studies for less than 60 days, the student does not need to surrender their visa, however, the student forfeits the right to an extension to their programme.

Further advice is available from the Home Office Compliance team.

3.11 Communication with Students during the Interruption of Studies

During a period of interruption of studies, the School will, at periodic intervals, communicate with students via email to provide relevant information. In addition, the School will also communicate with students in advance of their return to studies to make arrangements to return following the period of interruption of studies. This may include a return to study meeting or appropriate contact from relevant tutors. The research students will need to complete a UWTSD Request to Return to Studies RET1 form prior to their return. This form will be sent to the UWTSD RDC for approval. Students on the MA programme will be required to confirm their intention to return one month before the expected return date. If a student does not confirm intention to return and subsequently re-register, they will be withdrawn from the programme.

3.12 Process to Request and Confirm a Withdrawal from Studies

A student who wishes to request a withdrawal from their programme must in the first instance seek advice and guidance. If they still wish to withdraw, the taught programme students will need to formally complete the UWTSD GA16 form and the research students will complete the PG24 notification of withdrawal from studies. UWTSD will then confirm that withdrawal has been processed.

3.13 Intermediate Terminating Qualifications

If a student has withdrawn, the School will review a student's academic profile to determine the exit award which has been achieved in line with the Academic Regulations (although these could be withheld if there is a tuition fee debt).

3.14 Last Date of Attendance for Withdrawn Students and Financial Implications

The School will use the late date of attendance/engagement to determine tuition fee balances.