

The Courtauld

Information for students intending to Withdraw or Interrupt their Studies

The Process

It may happen that a personal emergency or other circumstance arises, e.g. health, financial or personal issues, that means you need to take a temporary break from your studies. At The Courtauld this is called an Interruption of Studies and requires approval firstly at the appropriate level within your department/Wellbeing and then by the Academic Registrar. Before you make a decision about interrupting your studies, you are advised to discuss your circumstances with your Personal Tutor/Course Tutor/Supervisor and The Courtauld Wellbeing Service as they are required to write a statement in support of your request. You may also find Wellbeing facilities available to you helpful in making your decision. Your Personal Tutor/Course Tutor/Supervisor will also be able to assist with completing the appropriate form.

If you decide that you would like to leave The Courtauld altogether without completing your degree and your department agrees to your request, Student and Academic Services (SAS@courtauld.ac.uk) will process this. You should note that you may be asked to pay fees for the period up to the end of your registration.

Please note that if you chose to withdraw from your studies you will not be permitted to recommence your studies at The Courtauld.

Where an interruption of studies is requested on health grounds, a condition of it being granted is that you will be required to provide a letter from a qualified medical professional as evidence of your fitness to return to your studies. The letter should confirm your fitness to successfully undertake the following:

- a) study for the equivalent of a 35-hour working week. 'Study' includes all activities, including private study (e.g., reading or writing).
- b) attend seminars or lectures of up to 2 hours; sometimes more than one of these each day. In some cases, study trips may involve up to 8 hours of study/visits per day. Conservation students may be required to work on site for up to 8 hours per day.
- c) prepare presentations to deadlines
- d) prepare formative and/or summative assessments to deadlines
- e) sit multiple exams of up to 3 hours in length
- f) interact with Courtauld staff, students and facilities in an appropriate manner

What kind of medical evidence is accepted?

Your medical evidence needs to be accurate, recent (produced within the last 3 months) and provided by a qualified medical practitioner. Normally we would expect that your medical practitioner is based in the UK. We may consider medical evidence provided by a practitioner outside of the UK but this should always be accompanied by a certified translation if in a foreign language. We would not normally accept medical evidence which is produced by a close relative even if s/he is medically qualified.

We would expect your medical practitioner to comment on the following:

- *How the problem has improved since your interruption – what support you have received*

- *The chances that resuming your studies might be detrimental to your health*
- *The extent to which your health difficulties might impede your studies*
- *The possibility of a relapse of the problem*
- *The arrangements for on-going support if these are needed (e.g. ongoing psychiatric support outside of the university)*
- *Your personal support network*

It is possible that not all of the points mentioned above will be relevant to your health condition. In order to help your health practitioner produce medical evidence which is as thorough and accurate as possible, you may wish to share this information with them.

Confidentiality

Any information disclosed as a part of your medical evidence is treated confidentially. Where information needs to be shared with other members of the Courtauld in order to facilitate our support for you, this will be done only with your consent and on a 'need-to-know' basis.

The normal maximum period of interruption of studies that may be granted is two years, with initial period of 12 months as standard. If you are not able to return to your studies after two years, you will be normally automatically withdrawn from your course. In exceptional circumstances application may be made for a longer period of interruption.

Both you and your Personal Tutor/Course Tutor/Supervisor/Wellbeing should complete the appropriate paperwork, and email it to Student and Academic Services. Once your request is processed, your access to your Courtauld email account, the VLE and swipe card building access will be deactivated for the period of your suspension. While on a temporary break, your home email address will be given to your Personal Tutor/Course Tutor/Supervisor /Wellbeing on request should they need to contact you with course information. If you do not wish to be contacted, please indicate this on the Application for an Interruption of Study.

Students on interruption of studies will be contacted by Student and Academic Services, approx. one term prior to the scheduled return to studies date, with regards to the re-enrolment arrangements, including arrangements for your medical evidence and meeting with the professional medical advisor if you have interrupted for medical reasons. Wherever possible, returning students will be allocated the same Personal Tutor they had before taking a break from their studies.

General Advice

If you chose to interrupt your studies, you should consider the impact this could have on your studies and assessments. You will normally be expected to take the same assessments as your current cohort, but where the course you attended is no longer running when you re-enroll an alternative assessment will be arranged.

If you live in student accommodation or halls of residence you should check the terms and conditions of your lease with your accommodation manager prior to interrupting or withdrawing. Depending on when you interrupt or withdraw you may be liable for the remainder of your rent even if you no longer occupy your room. If you rent privately you should also consider the impact interrupting or withdrawing may have on your housing and seek appropriate advice.

You should consider the financial implications of interrupting or withdrawing. If you are in receipt of a loan to cover the cost of your studies or cost of living you should check with your loan provider what will happen with your loan whilst you are not studying. Some loan repayments are due to begin the moment you cease being a student, others are payable once you enter work.

Undergraduates

If you are an undergraduate and in receipt of student support funding (payment of tuition fees and/or a student loan), your change of circumstances will be reported to the Student Loans Company by The Courtauld.

It is your responsibility to contact Student Finance England (or relevant loan provider, such as US Loans), especially if you intend to return to Higher Education, either at The Courtauld or elsewhere, as an interruption may affect your loan entitlement. If you enter work, depending on your salary, you may have to start repaying your student loan. If you are in receipt of an American or Canadian loan, you will begin to repay the loan once you cease to be a student.

Please be sure to include the name and address of your Local Authority and your Student Support Number when you complete the Application for an Interruption of Study. If you fail to provide this information we will assume that you are not in receipt of a student loan and will not report a change of circumstance which could cause problems if you are planning on returning to your studies.

Postgraduates

If you have taken a career development loan, you will begin to repay the loan once you cease to be a student. If you are in receipt of an American or Canadian loan, you will begin to repay the loan once you cease to be a student. You should consider this when deciding whether to interrupt or withdraw. **It is your responsibility to contact the US or Canadian Loan Company, Career Development Loan Company or other loan provider when you interrupt or withdraw.** A relevant form might need to be signed by the Staff and Student Services Centre on behalf of The Courtauld.

If you have received a Courtauld Scholarship or other scholarship (paid in termly instalments), your payments will cease as soon as you withdraw or interrupt. If you interrupt your studies you will not ordinarily be required to pay back this money back, but any student in receipt of a scholarship should check the precise terms and conditions of their scholarship with the Records and Assessment Officer prior to interrupting. If you withdraw from your studies, you will be expected to pay back your scholarship.

If you have received a Studentship (Payment of Fees), you will not be required to pay it back.

If you received funding from the AHRC, please ensure you notify the Records and Assessment Officer when you interrupt or withdraw.

Pregnant Students

We advise pregnant students to interrupt their studies to **cover the period of late pregnancy and early maternity** (likely to be a full academic year).

We advise any student who falls pregnant to inform the Registry as soon as possible. The Courtauld can only make provision for pregnant students (such as alternative examination arrangements if necessary, or authorise absence from classes to attend antenatal appointments) if the student lets us know that she is pregnant. Students may inform the Registry at any point during their pregnancy but we ask that this be no later than 15 weeks prior to the due date. If the Registry is informed of pregnancies after this point we may not be able to make arrangements.

Pregnant students in the Conservation department should seek advice on handling materials or substances that are potentially hazardous during pregnancy from their course leader as soon as possible, as well as informing the Registry.

Pregnant students should follow the normal interruption of studies and/or Mitigating Circumstances procedures as necessary.