

Study Break Policy

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 This Policy provides further information on study breaks and should be read alongside the Academic and Student Regulations.
- 1.2 Existing procedures are in place for circumstances where a student has difficulty in submitting items of assessment, in particular those set out in the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. Study Breaks should be considered where such procedures are not appropriate.
- 1.3 The University also has a policy regarding actions that may be appropriate where there are concerns regarding a student's health, wellbeing and fitness to study.

2. Purpose and scope

- 2.1 This policy seeks to provide a study break option for students who wish to take time away from studies, including those with long-term medical problems or illnesses, or students whose personal circumstances result in their temporary inability to continue on their programme of study.
- 2.2 It applies to all taught students studying for an award of the University of Northampton, including those who are studying at Partnership Institutions.

3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy, where an individual role is named this refers to that role or a nominee.

4.0 Key principles

- 4.1 A student enrolled on a programme of study is entitled to request a break from study for reasons of ill-health, maternity or paternity leave, financial reasons or in order to pursue career interests. If circumstances such as illness or personal circumstances are causing severe disruption to a student's studies then a study break may be recommended.
- 4.2 Study breaks cannot be used in order to gain additional time to complete dissertations or any other outstanding assessments/placements.

- 4.3 Study break periods count towards the maximum registration period a student has to complete his/her programme, as defined in the Regulations.
- 4.4 Evidence of extenuating circumstances is required in order for a break from studies to be approved for Postgraduate students who have enrolled on their principle module.
- 4.5 A study break is normally for a maximum period of one year. If students are not able to return at the end of this time they will be required to withdraw. Return to study may be facilitated at a later date via the Admissions Team, subject to meeting the requirement stated above (4.3) and subject course availability. Where a course has been discontinued during the break, all efforts will be made to identify a viable alternative programme of study.
- 4.6 Students are encouraged to return at the start of the semester within which they took the study break, subject to confirmation from any bodies providing bursaries or funding that this is acceptable.
- 4.7 All credit and grades including pass, failure and non-submissions up to the start of the study break will be carried forward to the point of return to study.
- 4.8 During a study break a student will not engage with their studies, for example will not receive academic support and will not have access to any University facilities. However, immediately prior to return from a study break students are encouraged to engage with the University's Student Support and Advice Team and their Personal Academic Tutor to facilitate a smooth return to study.
- 4.9 An application for a study break must be made in advance and prior to the relevant academic year end-date. Normally, applications will not be considered retrospectively. This may be waived for certain types of circumstances on agreement of the Academic Registrar. Responsibility for this is devolved to the Academic Advisers.
- 4.10 Normally only one study break per programme of study can be taken. This may be waived for certain types of circumstances on agreement of the Academic Registrar. Responsibility for this is devolved to the Academic Advisers.
- 4.11 Students requesting a study break should obtain approval from their Programme Leader. A 'Change to My Studies' request must be submitted via the Student Portal. Final details will be confirmed only once a study break has been approved.
- 4.12 International students on a Student Visa who wish to take a study break must first consult with the International Student Support Services team so that the impact of such a move on their visa terms and conditions can be considered and discussed.

- 4.13 Students who take a study break are responsible for managing the financial implications of this; students are advised to seek guidance on the financial implications prior to finalising the study break.

5.0 Key responsibilities

- 5.1 Students – apply for a study break using the appropriate application in the required timescales. Engage with Programme Leader and Student Support and Advice Team in the run-up to return from a study break, including completing pre-enrolment.
- 5.2 Programme Leader – provides guidance on feasibility of study break from an academic perspective. Including, but not limited to, module enrolment upon return from study break.
- 5.3 Academic Adviser – provides guidance on a student’s options, including options other than a study break, and advises on the impact of a study break. Makes final decision on study break request.
- 5.4 International Student Support Team – provides guidance/approval for the study break to students on a Student Visa. Guidance covers the impact of a study break on Student Visa and any other options.

6.0 Links to related UON Policies/Guidance/Regulations

- 6.1 [Academic and Student Regulations](#)
- 6.2 [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#)
- 6.3 [Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy](#)

7.0 Links to related external documents (e.g. QAA)

- 7.1 N/a

8.0 Appendices

- 8.1 Summary Sheet

Summary Sheet:

Policy Title:	
Study Break Policy	
Purpose of Policy and to whom it applies (please specify cohorts):	
<p>To provide a study break option for students with long-term medical problems or illnesses, including those that develop during studies, or students whose personal circumstances result in their temporary inability to continue on their programme of study.</p> <p>This policy applies to all taught students studying on an award of the University of Northampton, including those studying via Education with Others</p>	
Owner and Department:	
Academic Registrar (Academic Registry)	
Principal contact:	
Laura Henriksen- Student Support and Advice Manager	
Dissemination and implementation plan:	
Student Experience Forum Faculty Student Experience Forum Via Web	
Date of initial committee approval (state committee name):	SEC (June 2014)
Date of Senate approval:	August 2024
Date for implementation and cohorts to which it applies:	September 2024 to all new and continuing students
Proposed date of annual update:	May 2025
Date of last annual update:	July 2024
Proposed date of full review:	May 2025
Date of last full review:	June 2023
Version number and date:	2.0