

The University of Edinburgh

## Procedure for Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

These procedures apply to undergraduate students. Separate procedures apply to postgraduate research students - refer to the [Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#)

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the procedures covering all forms of withdrawal and exclusion from the University for academic reasons, together with procedures for appeal and for re-admission where this is allowed. They should be read in conjunction with the University's [Assessment Regulations](#).

1.2 Exclusion should not be invoked without appropriate consideration of the possibility of withdrawal. The right to exclude a student from further study rests with the *Senatus Academicus*. This authority is exercised through the College but the student has the right to appeal to the *Senatus* through the University Secretary. The appeal is heard by the Appeals Committee on behalf of the *Senatus*

1.3 These procedures make reference to the College and to the Head of College. It is for Colleges and their Heads to determine local arrangements for the delegation of their authority on these matters to sub-committees or officers of the College

1.4 It should be clearly stated in the degree regulations of all Colleges the progress expected of students in a given period and that failure to achieve this will result in the student being offered the possibility of withdrawal (permanent or temporary) and/or considered for exclusion.

1.5 Depending on the arrangements of the College and the requirements of the degree programme, a student who makes unsatisfactory progress with his/her studies may either be allowed to repeat a year of study; or to progress to a subsequent year with conditions (for instance carrying a failed subject for a resit at the next opportunity); or withdraw temporarily and resit examinations; or be advised to withdraw permanently; or may be excluded from study. The student withdrawing/suspending studies must obtain College approval for this, including arrangements for return to study.

1.6 The terms "temporary withdrawal from studies", "taking authorised leave of absence", and "suspension of studies" are synonymous.

1.7 A student who has failed to make contact with the University five weeks after the expected enrolment date will be deemed to have permanently withdrawn.

1.8 Students who apply for or receive US Federal Aid at the University of Edinburgh must progress satisfactorily towards completion of a chosen academic programme. To receive US Federal funds students must adhere to the University's regulations regarding satisfactory academic progress. Information is available on this and funding withdrawal requirements: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-funding/financial-support/student-loans/usa/policy](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-funding/financial-support/student-loans/usa/policy)

### 2. Definitions

2.1 **Permanent withdrawal.** Any student may withdraw permanently from his/her programme of study at any point in the year. A student is strongly advised to consult beforehand with his/her Director of Studies in order to consider the implications of withdrawal on matters such

as re-admission, eligibility for the award of a Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education, transfer to another degree programme or institution, and financial support.

**2.2 Temporary withdrawal/suspension of studies.** A student who wishes to withdraw temporarily (suspend studies) for a period, whether for illness or for other reasons, must obtain the authority of the Head of College or his/her appointed nominee. Details are set out in the University's **Assessment Regulations**, but a student should seek the advice of his/her College Office (Director of Studies in the College of Science and Engineering) on the procedures which apply to that College.

**2.3 Exclusion.** A student may be excluded from continuing his/her studies if the Head of College or his/her nominee considers that s/he has failed to make satisfactory progress. The student has the right to appeal to the Senatus through the University Secretary. The appeal is heard by the Appeals Committee on behalf of the Senatus

### **3. Failure to make satisfactory progress**

**3.1** A student who has failed to make satisfactory progress is regarded as liable for exclusion and will not normally be allowed to continue to the next year of his/her degree programme. The requirements for satisfactory progress should be explicit in the degree regulations of all Colleges. Students and Directors of Studies should discuss difficulties with progress as soon as they become evident, as early in the academic year as possible. A Director of Studies should report to the Head of College on the case of any student who has made unsatisfactory progress as soon as possible. The student should be given due notice in writing of his/her failure to make satisfactory progress and be advised by the College of his/her rights and options, specifically that s/he has the right to withdraw before exclusion. (The letter should also explain that the student will be deemed to have withdrawn permanently if, by 5 weeks after the expected enrolment date for the next academic year, s/he has failed to respond to the letter). The student will be invited by the College Office to attend an interview with the Head of College or his/her appointed nominee and may at that point make a case for continuation. Directors of Studies should be asked to give evidence of special circumstances and recommendations for action to the Head of College or his/her appointed nominee in advance of the interview.

**3.2** At the interview, the Head of College or his/her appointed nominee will explore with the student the options which are available. Details of some options are set out below in section 3.3, but a student should recognise that the full range of options does not apply to every degree programme and that ultimately, if s/he has failed to make satisfactory progress with his/her studies, the College can recommend him/her for exclusion from study. The student should also be reminded that s/he has the right to withdraw before exclusion.

**3.3** Options to be explored at interview include:

**3.3.1 Continuing in full-time study.** In some cases a repeat year may be permitted. Transfer to another degree programme may also be possible. In some cases, but rarely outside first or second years, a student may be permitted to continue to the next year of study and take a further resit in any failed subject at the first available diet or to take an additional alternative subject.

**3.3.2 Temporary withdrawal with permission to take further resits.** In some cases temporary withdrawal for a year may be permitted, with permission to take a further resit in any failed subject at the first available diet.

**3.3.3 Permanent withdrawal.** A student may be advised to withdraw permanently. In such cases, the student's eligibility for an Undergraduate Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education will be explored.

**3.3.4 Exclusion from studies.** If the student does not withdraw, s/he may be excluded from studies (see section 4 below).

3.4 The student should be told the decision as soon as possible after the interview. This information should normally be communicated within a few hours and no later than two working days after the interview. The student should receive a letter from the Head of College or his/her appointed nominee setting out clearly the decision reached and any terms attached. Students should be asked to confirm receipt of the letter. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Director of Studies who will normally be expected to advise the Registry of any temporary or permanent withdrawal from studies using the Offline Amendment to Student Record - Withdrawal/Interruption Form.

## **4. Exclusion and appeals against exclusion**

4.1 Following the process described in section 3, the Head of College or his nominee may decide to recommend that the student be excluded from continuing his/her programme of study at the University. As detailed in section 3.4, the student will normally be informed of this decision within a few hours of the interview and no later than two working days after the interview. The student should be given details of the grounds on which an appeal against this decision may be lodged and specifically be informed that the College is regarded as the judge of the academic grounds for exclusion.

4.2 Appeals against exclusion are lodged through the University Secretary and are considered by the Appeals Committee on behalf of the Senatus. All appeals must be submitted to the University Secretary within two weeks of the College's decision to exclude the candidate. (Refer to section 16 of the University's Assessment Regulations).

4.3 If the student does not submit an appeal against the proposed exclusion to the University Secretary by the specified deadline, then the exclusion will be deemed to have been sustained. The College may now send an exclusion letter to the student. Such a letter should be sent either if the student does not submit a letter of appeal, or if the appeal has been heard by the Appeals Committee (see 4.4 below) and not sustained. The letter should be signed by the appropriate officer of the College, usually the College Registrar or a nominee of the Head of College and copied to the Registry.

4.4 If the student appeals against the exclusion, then this will be handled in a similar way to any other undergraduate academic appeal. An appeal can be considered by the Appeals Committee only if the student produces substantial evidence which, for good reason, was not made available to the College, or on the grounds of improper conduct of the process on the part of the College. The student should be notified of a specific time (usually at least 10 working days) after despatch of the letter by which an appeal may be submitted. This letter to the student should be copied to the secretary of the Appeals Committee for information. Information on the appeal will be collected from the student's Director of Studies and from the Head of College by the secretary of the Appeals Committee.

4.5 The normal procedures of the Appeals Committee will be followed to establish whether there is a prima facie case for submission to the Appeals Committee. If it is submitted to the full Committee, it will be for that body to determine whether any appeal submitted to it shall be sustained or rejected. The appellant may present his or her case in person or may nominate another member of the University of Edinburgh community to do so on his/her behalf. S/he should be strongly advised to seek representation by a member of the academic staff or of the EUSA staff at the Advice Place. Detailed guidance on the appeals procedure is available within the University's assessment regulations.

## **5. Re-admission following withdrawal.**

5.1 If a student has withdrawn from study, s/he may at some later date apply for re-admission to the same College or for admission to a different College. Advice on how to do this should be sought by the student from the College because the arrangements vary according to the student's length of absence, and whether or not the student is applying for entry to the same

course, to a different course in the same College, or to a different College. It also depends on whether the withdrawal was temporary or permanent.

5.2 As a rough guide, if a student is applying for re-entry to the same course within less than 12 months of temporary withdrawal, the application would normally take the form of a written communication to the Head of College. If the student is applying for re-entry to the same course after more than a 12 month period of temporary withdrawal, it might be possible to have this extended by the University (on application in writing to the Head of College from which the student withdrew), but it might also be the case that the College would wish the student to re-apply through UCAS. Students are advised to seek the advice of the College in considering the appropriate route for re-entry.

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