

Break in Learning Procedures

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process for agreeing and recording a Break in Learning.

This is to enable the College to submit accurate and timely data returns and ensure appropriate information, advice and guidance is provided to the learner to enable them to access this process.

2. Scope

This procedure is used when a FE student needs to be temporarily put on hold from their programme. Breaks in learning for HE students are covered in the HE Tuition Fee, Break in Learning and Refunds Procedure.

3. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this procedure lies with the Director of MIS, supported by the MIS Manager.

4. Definitions

A break in learning means a formal break from study for a specific period of time with the intention to resume study at a future date that has been agreed by the College.

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

5. Procedure

A break in learning 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, this list is not definitive and even if a circumstance is listed, it does not mean that a request for a break in learning will be approved:

- Significant health or wellbeing issues of a student;
- Significant illness of a close family member;
- The death of a close family member or friend;
- Caring responsibilities;
- Extreme family or financial circumstances which have had a significant impact on a student;
- Jury service;
- Maternity or adoption leave;

Before a break in learning is agreed, careful consideration and advice must be given to the student in regards to any expected Awarding Organisation and/or college changes regarding the course specification and delivery which may impact on their return to learning and the length of break possible.

5.1 Recording a Break in Learning

- An email is required from the student from a recognised email address stating their request to go on a break in learning. This must include their reason for the break in learning and the date the student intends to return. The maximum duration for a break in learning is 18 months. If the student fails to return within 18 months, the break in learning will be amended to a withdrawal.
- The tutor completes the Break in Learning form online with student email as supporting evidence.
- The break in learning is authorised by the Curriculum Director.
- The authorised Break in Learning is submitted to MIS who update the student's record on EBS.

5.2 Tuition fee liability for a break in learning

If a break in learning is approved, the student is put on hold until they return to continue their studies, suspending any costs/student loans. When the student returns, which could be the following academic year, they are enrolled and applicable tuition fees charged. It is at the discretion of the relevant Curriculum Director, depending on the circumstances, as to whether they charge any increased tuition fee (if applicable) or the original fee on their return.

If a student applies for a break in learning with no mitigating circumstances and therefore not approved, the student will be withdrawn and therefore liable for the tuition fees as stated in the Tuition & Fees Appeals Procedure:

If a break in learning is agreed, the student remains responsible for any outstanding fees to the college, including payments not covered from the Student Loans Company.

On return, the student is liable for the full tuition fee amount remaining at the time of re-enrolment onto the course.

How a break in learning or withdrawing affects tuition fee loan entitlement

Students can receive SLC funding. If a student takes a break in learning, this may use up a year's entitlement which may affect their eligibility for finance to complete their studies in the future.

How a break in learning or withdrawing affects maintenance loans or grants

Students are only entitled to a maintenance loan for the time they are registered as an attending student.

If a student takes a break in learning or withdraws from their studies, they will probably have to pay some money back to the Student Loans Company. The

Student Loans Company will adjust the entitlement based on the student's last date of attendance and contact them if they have been overpaid.

6. Response to coronavirus (COVID-19)

In response to coronavirus a break in learning can be requested for the following reasons:

- The student is self-isolating, or caring for others affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) and is unable to continue by distance learning and/or an online offer.
- The college are unable to deliver learning because of the impact of COVID-19 and there is no reasonable way to achieve appropriate delivery by distance learning and/or online learning.