

Change in Circumstances Policy and Guidance for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students and Apprentices

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Introduction

1. It is understood that students can experience a change in their personal circumstances that can make it difficult or impossible for them to continue on their programme of study as planned. Northeastern University London (the University) has policies in place to enable students to change their programme of study, take a break in study / break in learning (apprentices), or withdraw from the University.
2. There may also be circumstances where a Progression and Award Board, Academic Misconduct Panel, Student Discipline Panel, Attendance Panel or Support to Study Panel considers that it is not appropriate or not in the student's best interest to continue on their programme. The procedure for these actions is set out in the relevant [AQF Chapter](#) or University policy and is separate from this policy. In these circumstances, this policy and its corresponding procedures are not utilised.

Purpose

3. This document aims to clarify the four main types of changes in circumstances and offers guidance for students who may wish to transfer to another programme, change their mode of attendance, take a break in study/learning, or withdraw from their programme.
4. For the purpose of this document, undergraduate and postgraduate students will be referred to as students. Degree apprenticeship learners will be referred to as learners.

Resources and Contact Information

5. [Student Support](#)
6. [Academic Advising](#)
7. [Success Managers](#)
8. [Visa Compliance Team](#)

Procedures

Transfer of Programme

9. Students and learners may request to transfer their programme of study during their registration at the University, subject to the requirements set out below.
10. Following receipt of a Programme Transfer Form signed by the relevant parties, Registry will confirm to the student in writing that the change has been processed, in addition to updating the relevant internal teams.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

11. Students who wish to transfer programme must contact [Academic Advising](#), who will advise on the feasibility of the requested transfer and direct students to contact faculty and the Visa, Student Support, and Finance teams as appropriate. Academic Advising will oversee the completion of the form before it is sent to Registry.
12. International students on a Student Visa must comply with the requirements of their visa and any relevant regulations and guidance published by UK Visas & Immigration. Such students must obtain advice on whether a proposed transfer would be permitted by speaking to the University's [Visa Compliance Team](#).
13. Students wishing to transfer programme within the current academic year must normally submit a completed form to [Academic Advising](#) by the Friday of the second week of the semester in which they start their programme of study. Requests to change after this deadline will only be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Registrar.
14. Students and learners wishing to change programme for the next academic year should do so after completing their current year and before the start of their next year of study. Students transferring programme must undertake all courses as set out in the specification for the new programme or demonstrate all course learning outcomes through recognition of prior learning (see [Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy](#)).
15. Students and learners will not normally be permitted to transfer programme if, by doing so, they would be required to undertake an unusual pattern of study, such as taking a large number of courses within a semester or having a semester in which they did not take any courses.
16. A transfer of programme can only be approved where the student/learner meets the entry requirements for the new programme.

Degree Apprenticeship Learners

17. Learners must contact their Success Manager, who will guide and support them through how to change apprenticeship programmes before submitting a completed form to Registry.
18. Learners who need to change their programme due to a change of job role, employer or career will have their applications assessed by the Academic Registrar, Success Manager and Employer who will determine if and when the requested change can be enabled.

Change Mode of Attendance

19. Students on postgraduate taught programmes (excluding learners) may request to change their mode of attendance (full-time to part-time or vice versa). The University does not offer a part-time mode of attendance to undergraduate students.
20. Students who wish to change their mode of attendance must contact [Academic Advising](#), who will advise on the feasibility of the suggested change and direct students to contact faculty and the [Visa Compliance Team](#), Student Support and Finance teams as appropriate. Academic Advising will oversee the completion of the form before it is sent to Registry.
21. Students wishing to change mode of attendance must normally submit a completed form to Academic Advising by the Friday of the second week of the semester in which they start their programme of study. Requests to change after this deadline will only be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Registrar.
22. International students on a Student Visa must comply with the requirements of their visa and any relevant regulations and guidance published by UK Visas & Immigration. Such students must obtain advice on whether a proposed change would be permitted by speaking to the University's Visa Compliance Team.
23. Students will normally only be permitted to change mode of attendance once during their registration at the University.
24. Following receipt of a Change of Mode of Attendance Form signed by the relevant parties, Registry will confirm to the student in writing that the change has been processed, in addition to updating the relevant internal teams.

Break in Study/Learning

25. A break in study/learning permits a student/learner who is experiencing serious short-term issues to halt their studies.
26. Breaks in study/learning are counted as part of a students' registration period as set out in [AQF7 Part B](#). A break will not be approved where it would result in the student being unable to complete their programme within the maximum registration period.
27. Students/learners who take a break in study/learning due to health, medical or mental health reasons will usually be required to provide the University with evidence that they are fit to return to study prior to their restarting.

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28. Students/learners returning from a break due to health, medical or mental health reasons will be contacted by the Student Support Team prior to their return to discuss the requirement for proof of fitness to study and to make arrangements for any reasonable support or adjustments they may need. Students unable to evidence fitness to study may not be permitted to return to study and may be required to apply to extend their break in study/learning if they have sufficient period of registration remaining, or to withdraw from the University if not.
29. Following receipt of a Break in Study Form signed by the relevant parties, Registry will confirm to the student in writing that the change has been processed. Apprenticeships Operations will confirm a break in learning. Students/learners will be advised of the agreed return date and a date by which they must confirm to the University their intention to return.

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30. Students may request a break in study by contacting [Academic Advising](#).
31. In most cases for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, the break will be for a year, with the planned point of re-entry being the same point in the following academic year.
32. Students wishing to extend their break in study beyond one calendar year must contact their Academic Advisor no later than one month before their agreed return date. Students will not be permitted a break of more than two consecutive years and, where such a request is made, they will normally be required to withdraw from their programme and apply for readmission when they are able to return.
33. In line with the [Terms and Conditions](#) and [Cancellation, Withdrawal, Refund and Compensation Policy](#), a break in study may have a fee liability. Students should arrange a meeting with a Student Wellbeing Advisor to discuss this.
34. Students on a Student Visa must arrange a meeting with the [Visa Compliance Team](#) to discuss the visa implications of a break in study.

Degree Apprenticeship Learners

35. Learners may request a break in learning by contacting their Success Manager.
36. Learners may take a break in learning and rejoin at an agreed future point, in line with the requirements of their apprenticeship, which may not be longer than one year.
37. Learners may have particular requirements within their apprenticeship and should seek advice from their Success Manager as soon as possible

should they wish to extend their break in learning. This should be no later than one month before their agreed return date.

Withdrawal

38. Students/learners may withdraw from the University at any point during their registration should they wish to end their studies.
39. Students seeking to withdraw from the University should contact [Academic Advising](#), who will provide advice and guidance and direct students to contact faculty and the Visa Compliance Team, Student Support, and Finance teams as appropriate. Students on a Student Visa must arrange a meeting with the [Visa Compliance Team](#) to discuss the visa implications of withdrawal
40. Learners seeking to withdraw from the University should contact their Success Manager.
41. Following receipt of a Withdrawal Form signed by the relevant parties, Registry will confirm to the student in writing that the change has been processed and the effective date of withdrawal, in addition to updating the relevant internal teams
42. The effective date of withdrawal from the University is the date on which the completed form is received by Registry. As it is not possible to back-date withdrawals, students are strongly encouraged to submit their request as soon as is practical for them to do so.
43. After the point of withdrawal, students will retain any credits awarded by previous Progression & Award Boards and will be awarded credits for any courses completed since then. Withdrawn students/apprentices may be considered for an exit award and will receive an academic transcript from Registry.
44. Once a withdrawal request has been approved and processed, a student may only re-join the University through a fresh application for admission.

Guidance and Implications to Consider

Financial

45. For fees paid to the University, students should refer to the [Terms and Conditions](#) and [Cancellation, Withdrawal, Refund and Compensation Policy](#) under which they accepted an offer of a place to study at the University. A Student Wellbeing Advisor can offer guidance, but students should note that they may still be liable for fees to the University if they decide to take a break or withdraw.

46. For students requesting a transfer to another programme at the University, please be aware that programme fees and award amounts may differ between programmes. For further information regarding fees and award amounts, consult the [Admissions Team](#).
47. For students in receipt of financial support from Student Finance England (SFE), the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS), or Student Finance Wales (SFW), a withdrawal from studies has a number of consequences for entitlement to support.
 - 47.1. Should withdrawn students return to Higher Education in the future, they will be treated as a new student and will be assessed for the student support package available in the year of re-entry into education; this will include the relevant new entrant fee.
 - 47.2. Furthermore, such students will be assessed as already having utilised some of their student support entitlement, which could affect the level of support you receive in the future.
48. Students will not be eligible for student loans during a break in study and, in some circumstances, may be required to repay funds. Changing mode of attendance will also impact on loan eligibility. Student Wellbeing Advisors will be able to provide advice on how a break in study or withdrawal may impact on student finance.
49. The University will inform the Student Loans Company when a withdrawal, transfer or break in study has been processed, but students should also contact SFE, SAAS or SFW to inform them of a change in circumstances.
50. To speak with SFE directly, contact them on 0300 100 0607. To speak with the SAAS directly, contact them on 0300 555 0505. To speak with SFW directly, contact them on 0300 200 4050 (undergraduates) or 0300 100 0494 (postgraduates).
51. For more information please click [here](#) for SLC or [here](#) for SAAS.
52. Students who withdraw or take a break in study in receipt of University bursaries should refer to the [Bursary Policy](#) regarding changes to payment and/or requirements for repayment.

Student Visa Students

53. The University is required to report to the United Kingdom Visa & Immigration (UKVI) if a Student Visa student interrupts or withdraws from their studies. The UKVI will curtail the visa to 60 days and students will be required to return home. To ensure the break in study or withdrawal complies with the University and the UKVI regulations students are strongly advised to make an appointment with a member of the Visa Compliance Team before submitting a Change in Circumstances Form.

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54. Student Visa students who started their programme before September 2020 are not eligible to transfer to another programme from within the UK. They will need to leave the UK and make a new visa application from their home country for the new programme. Please contact the [Visa Compliance Team](#) for further details.
55. Student Visa students who started their programme from September 2020 and onwards may be able to transfer to another programme within the UK. They can only change their programme after receiving permission from the University to start their new programme if all of the following apply:
 - 55.1. The new programme is at degree level or above.
 - 55.2. The new programme is not at a lower level than the current programme.
 - 55.3. The student will be able to complete the new programme within the current period of leave.
56. A senior member of faculty confirms either of the following:
 - 56.1. The new programme is related to the previous programme for which leave was granted as a Student Visa student, meaning that it is either connected to the previous programme, part of the same subject group, or involves deeper specialisation, OR
 - 56.2. The previous programme and the new programme in combination support the student's genuine career aspirations.
57. Please note that, following a transfer of programme, students must complete the new programme within their existing visa period.

Accommodation

58. Students living in halls of residence or private rented accommodation should refer to their tenancy agreement and adhere to its procedures, as they may need to notify the provider immediately that they are withdrawing from the University or taking a break from studies. They may need to move out of the accommodation and may be liable for the remaining rent due on a tenancy agreement. Students may also need to supply the accommodation provider with a copy of the email from Registry confirming the change in circumstances.
59. For the purposes of Council Tax, students must inform the local authority that they are no longer studying if they take a break in study/learning or withdraw.

Email

60. Following withdrawal, access to the University email account and IT platforms will be removed, so students should arrange to save any emails

and documents that may be needed elsewhere before this happens should arrange to save any emails and documents that may be needed elsewhere before this happens.

61. Student email accounts will remain active during a break in study/learning.

Student Oyster Card

62. Students with a discounted Oyster card who take a break in study/learning or withdraw from the University will no longer have access to the discounted rates. Transport for London (TFL) will be informed of the change, and the card will be made invalid by TFL, and the card will be made invalid by TFL.

Version History

Title: Change in Circumstances Policy and Guidance				
Approved by: Academic Board				
Location: Academic Handbook/ Policies and Procedures/ General/ Student Welfare				
Version Number	Date Approved	Date Published	Owner	Proposed Next Review Date
24.8.0	February 2025	March 2025	Academic Registrar	March 2026
24.7.0	July 2024	August 2024	Academic Registrar	March 2025
23.6.0	September 2023	September 2023	Academic Registrar	March 2025
<i>Version numbering system revised March 2023</i>				
5.1	January 2023	January 2023	Head of Registry	March 2024
5.0	July 2022	July 2022	Head of Registry	March 2024
4.0	September 2020	September 2020	Registrar	January 2022
3.0	January 2020	January 2020	LASO	January 2021
2.1	April 2019	April 2019	LASO	January 2021
2.0	January 2019	January 2019	SWC	January 2021
Referenced documents	Change in Circumstances: Break in Study / Break in Learning Form; Change in Circumstances: Transfer of Mode of Attendance Form; Change in Circumstances: Transfer of Programme Form; Change in Circumstances: Withdrawal Form.			
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code Theme: Enabling Student Achievement			