



## **Voluntary suspension of studies for undergraduate students**

**If you have any queries about suspension, please contact the Academic Registrar, Freyja Madsen, at [tuition@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tuition@new.ox.ac.uk), on 018656 279596, or drop in to her office (Tuition Office, 4OB5) between 9am-12.30pm, or 1.30-5pm.**

### **What is voluntary suspension?**

Sometimes, an undergraduate student may decide that, for example for the sake of their health, they wish to take a break from their studies; this is known as suspension. When an undergraduate suspends their studies, they cease for a period to be provided with tuition by New College, or to have use of New College facilities. During the period of suspension, the student remains registered for their course of study, and is required to resume it at the end of the period of suspension, subject to meeting any requirements specified at the start of the suspension process.

A suspended student will still be able to access University and Departmental libraries and online resources, as well as central University specialist services including Counselling and Careers; with the Dean's explicit permission, they may also arrange to visit College.

Voluntary suspension most frequently occurs when students make a request on medical or other welfare grounds. The College receives these requests sympathetically but there are specific procedures that must be followed and there are consequences that follow on from the decision. These are outlined below.

### **Framework for voluntary suspension**

Undergraduates do not have an automatic right to suspend study. For example, the College will not grant suspension solely on the grounds that the student feels ill-prepared for examinations.

The College will be sympathetic when considering requests on medical or other welfare grounds. Suspensions on medical grounds require medical evidence in support of the request, which should be supplied by the College Doctors, or medical specialists familiar with the student's case.

The student remains registered for their course of study, and is required to resume it at the end of the period of suspension, subject to meeting any requirements specified at the start of the suspension process.

### **How do I suspend?**

If at all possible, you should first discuss your request to suspend with your Tutor(s), so that they can establish a plausible timeline for returning to study, and determine whether any teaching time needs to be repeated. You can, if necessary and with the support of your tutors, repeat a term in which you were unable to work to the best of your abilities.

This document is a summary of the College's Suspension policy, together with answers to some common questions; however, if there are any differences between information here and in the College *Handbook*, then the *Handbook* is the sovereign document. You are advised to consult the College *Handbook* and if you are in doubt as to how suspension works in practice, should discuss the matter with the Dean.

If suspending on health or welfare grounds, you are also strongly encouraged to contact the Welfare Team, via the Cox and

Salvesen Fellows.

You should then write to the Senior Tutor (via the Academic Registrar at [tuition@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tuition@new.ox.ac.uk)) to formally request permission to suspend your studies. This request need not be over-long; you need to state how long you wish to suspend for, and on what grounds. Requests made on medical grounds should be accompanied or shortly followed up with medical evidence. If you are unsure about how to word this request, or would like to discuss the process, you should contact the Academic Registrar at [tuition@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tuition@new.ox.ac.uk).

Requests will first be considered confidentially by the Senior Tutor, with the involvement of the subject tutors and, if appropriate, the Tutor for Welfare. Once approved, the Senior Tutor will circulate the request (without any medical or personal details) to the College's Warden and Tutors Committee to approve within three working days. If the request is approved, the Senior Tutor will write to you confirming the full details of your suspension and outlining the support available to you during your period of suspension. A further letter from the Dean will follow, outlining the terms of your suspension in relation to the College, and giving you information explaining how and when you might enter the site.

Please note that if you request suspension before Monday of 4<sup>th</sup> week, then your fees for that term will be refunded.

### **What happens when I return from suspension?**

After an approved suspension on medical grounds and before you are permitted to resume study, the College must receive a medical assessment from the College Doctor or a medical specialist stating whether or not, in their opinion, you are fit to resume study.

The Senior Tutor and the Tutor for Welfare shall be responsible for determining, in light of the medical assessment, whether you are fit to study and whether any other conditions for return have also been met.

If the Senior Tutor and Tutor for Welfare are of the view that you are fit to return to study and all other conditions for return have been met, the Academic Registrar will write to you to confirm this. A further letter from the Dean giving you formal permission to return will then follow.

If you are not considered fit to return to study or other conditions have not been met, and if no alternative arrangements have been agreed with you, the College's Fitness to Study Procedure may be invoked. The Procedure is available to view in full on the College's website:

<http://www.new.ox.ac.uk/policy-documents>

Before your return to College, you will be contacted by the Cox or Salvesen Fellow, so that they can discuss any apprehensions or concerns that you may have about returning. You are encouraged to contact the Academic Registrar (via [tuition@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tuition@new.ox.ac.uk)) if you have any queries before or during the suspension process, and subsequent period of suspension.

### **Practical Matters**

#### **College Rooms**

If you have a room in college, you will normally be expected to vacate the room as soon as practicable but no longer than a week after suspension has been granted. If there are extenuating circumstances where a week is insufficient, you are encouraged to discuss this as soon as possible with the Home Bursar. Please note that if you are living out of college in private accommodation, you will be responsible for your contract with your landlord.

#### **Council Tax**

You will not be eligible for Council Tax exemption from Oxford

City Council during the period of your suspension. If while suspended you find yourself in financial hardship you may be able to apply for a discretionary discount, via the Academic Registrar ([tuition@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tuition@new.ox.ac.uk)).

#### **Fees and Funding**

If you suspend your studies before Monday of 4<sup>th</sup> week, you will not be charged fees for that term. If you receive a loan from the UK's Student Loans Company, the University will notify the SLC of your suspension, and will notify them again once you return to your studies. If you have any queries about fees or funding during the period of your suspension, please contact our Fees Officer at

[linda.goodsell@new.ox.ac.uk](mailto:linda.goodsell@new.ox.ac.uk)

#### **Student visas**

Suspending your studies may have an impact on your Tier 4 Student Visa (if you have one). The University's Tier 4 Compliance Office will contact you directly to discuss the potential impact of a suspension on your visa, but you can seek their advice in advance by emailing [tier4compliance@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tier4compliance@admin.ox.ac.uk).

#### **"Carrying forward" marks for assessments**

If you have already submitted some examined work or completed a block of examinations (such as oral exams in languages, or examined lab work in sciences) during the year in which you suspend your studies, you can apply for these marks to be "carried forward" into the next academic year, so that you do not have to repeat the work. Permission to carry forward marks is granted by the University's Education Committee. At your request, the Academic Registrar will submit the relevant application to Education Committee.

#### **Changes to Exam Regulations**

Sometimes the Exam Regulations for a course change. If this happens during the period of your suspension, you can either sit the relevant papers under the new set of regulations, or apply

to Education Committee for permission to sit "under old regulations". You should ask your tutors whether this will apply to you. At your request, and in consultation with your Faculty/Department, the Academic Registrar will submit the relevant application to Education Committee.

#### **Appeals**

In the event that a request to suspend is not supported, or you dispute the decision, or you are found not to be fit to return to study following a period of suspension, you may seek a review with the Warden and Tutors Appeal Sub-Committee.