College Procedures for the granting of authorised interruption of study for Undergraduate degrees

Authorised Interruption of Study is where the student is given permission to suspend their studies for a year or part of a year, with the expectation that they will return to resume their studies after that period. The granting of an interruption is a concession and is not a right.

Definitions

An Authorised Interruption of Study is where the student is given permission to suspend their studies for a short period of time for ‘good reason’. An interruption of study concession is only applicable where a student is unable to study due to circumstances that are largely beyond their own control. An interruption is not appropriate where the student is able to study but has failed to perform or to prepare adequately for examinations or to permit students to take extended annual/holiday leave or to effectively extend the period available to complete their programme. It should also be noted that failure on the part of a student to secure the appropriate visa is not a reason for an interruption. Directors of Studies should seek advice from the Academic Affairs section (Lynda.M.Henderson@ed.ac.uk). Authorised Interruption of Study should therefore only be considered where the circumstances surrounding the request are exceptional. Interruptions of Studies cannot be granted retrospectively.

The College regards that there are two classifications of requests at undergraduate level – those requests associated with special circumstances and those requests associated with interest activities of the students eg independently arranged year abroad.

Procedures

1) Authorised interruption because of special circumstances

First and second year students

In the College of Science and Engineering, the authority to permit Authorised Interruption of Study because of special circumstances for first and second year students, for one year, or part of a year, is delegated to Directors of Studies. There must be "good reason" for the interruption. An interruption of study concession should only be applicable where a student is unable to study due to circumstances that are largely beyond their own control. These circumstances can include

- Medical and health problems
- Personal and family problems
- Bereavement
If the student wishes to request an interruption of studies for special circumstances they must supply supporting evidence. The nature of the supporting documentation and the responsibility for producing that evidence rests entirely with the student. If the student is overseas or is only resident in Edinburgh for the purposes of education then they are responsible for ensuring that they procure medical or notary evidence (translated to English by an official translator) for any circumstance that may occur in their home county eg death or illness of a parent or close family member. The University cannot consider any requests that are not fully documented.

Interruption of study is normally for a whole academic year, or for a large part, eg a semester, of an academic year with the intention to return and complete the year. Cases involving continuing, minor or short term problems should be considered under the Special Circumstances Committee procedures. Short term interruptions are not appropriate.

Requests for more than one academic year or for consecutive periods must be referred to the College for consideration by the College Learning and Teaching Committee’s Concession and Progression Sub Committee. The Director of Studies must submit a case on behalf of the student to the Academic Affairs Section (Lynda.M.Henderson@ed.ac.uk) at the College Office. On receiving any application the College Learning & Teaching Committee Concessions Sub-committee will consider each individual case on its merits within the context of the University’s regulations.

All requests must be accompanied by supporting evidence. It should be noted that applications for consecutive interruptions will be subjected to greater scrutiny and higher level of supporting documentation will be required. The Sub-committee has the authority to reject an application or to impose conditions as it deems appropriate eg shorter time limit, requirement to repeat assessments or part of the course. The sub-committee also reserves the right to refuse to grant continuous applications.

The nature of the supporting documentation and the responsibility for producing that evidence rests entirely with the student. If the student is overseas or is only resident in Edinburgh for the purposes of education then they are responsible for ensuring that they procure medical or notary evidence (translated to English by an official translator) for any circumstance that may occur in their home county eg death or illness of a parent or close family member.

**Junior Honours, Senior Honours or Undergraduate Master Honours students**

Authorised Interruption of Study during the Junior, Senior or Undergraduate Masters Honours years where marks count towards the final degree classification can only be authorised by the CL&TC Concessions and Progression Committee. A Director of Studies can not authorise this type of interruption. The Director of Studies must submit a case on behalf of the student to the Academic Affairs Section (Lynda.M.Henderson@ed.ac.uk) at the College Office. All requests must be accompanied by supporting evidence. The nature of the supporting documentation and
the responsibility for producing that evidence rests entirely with the student. If the student is overseas or is only resident in Edinburgh for the purposes of education then they are responsible for ensuring that they procure medical or notary evidence (translated to English by an official translator) for any circumstance that may occur in their home county eg death or illness of a parent or close family member. The University cannot consider any requests that are not fully documented.

2) Student Interest Activities

Interruptions of study for any reasons that do not fall into the category of special circumstances can only be authorised by the CL&TC Concessions and Progression Committee. Examples that may be considered are:

- internships or other such activities relevant to the student’s career aspirations
- an independent year abroad (i.e. not part of the formal degree structure and not counting for credits).
- top level representation of country in sport or other prestige activities
- full time paid employment relevant to the student’s career aspirations

The student will be required to submit a detailed proposal covering details of the proposed activity and justification and a personal statement outlining the skills and experience that they expect/aspire to gain from the activity. Where possible the student should provide supporting documentation. The responsibility for sourcing and determining the nature of the supporting documentation rests entirely with the student. The completed case should be submitted to the Academic Affairs Officer, Lynda Henderson, Lynda.M.Henderson@ed.ac.uk.

On receiving any application the College Learning & Teaching Committee Concessions Sub-committee will consider each individual case on its merits within the context of the University’s regulations. The Committee has the authority to reject an application or to impose conditions as it deems appropriate eg shorter time limit, requirement to repeat assessments or part of the course. It should be noted that interruptions for special interest activities are expected to be for distinct, time limited periods for a specified event and the sub-committee reserves the right to refuse to grant continuous applications.

Students and Programme Directors should note that an interruption of study will have major implications for students’ visas and under new immigration regulations the University is obliged to report any interruptions granted for students on Tier 4 visas to UKBA. Students should therefore seek advice from the International Office or the Advice Place. It is the student’s individual responsibility to ensure that they abide by the conditions of their visa. A student requesting an interruption should ensure that he/she can secure sufficient financial support since there may be implications for funding, benefits, council tax and access to some services etc resulting from the interruption.