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Interruption of Studies/ Intermission Procedures

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1. What is an Intermission?

- 1.1. An intermission is an approved leave of absence from all study for a defined period. An intermission is a serious step to take for any student and should only be considered with reasonable care and consideration for the risks.
- 1.2. A student who is granted approval to intermit will suspend all activity that is associated with the programme on which they are registered with immediate effect.

2. Common reasons for a period of intermission

- 2.1. Some examples of common reasons for authorised intermission include:
 - Health reasons (mental or physical health problems)
 - Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Family leave
 - Extra-curricular activities e.g., elite sport/art/music related opportunities
 - Employment opportunities
 - Financial circumstances
 - Military service
 - Intercalated year
- 2.2. Students may be required to take a period of intermission by the School following:
 - 2.2.1. the fitness to study/fitness to practice process being implemented
(Please refer to the [Low-Level Concerns, Fitness to Study, and Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure](#))
 - 2.2.2. or following failure of a module prior to the end of the academic year.

3. Request for intermission (also see appendix A intermission process flowchart)

- 3.1. Students wishing to undertake a period of intermission should discuss this with their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) or Clinical Academic Tutor (CAT) in the first instance, notes may be taken during the meeting and kept on the student record system for future reference.
- 3.2. Discussions with PAT/CATs may be waived in situations described under 2.2, including Stage 2 of the KMMS Low Level Concerns, Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedure.

- 3.3. The School must advise the student how their study is likely to be impacted, and it is expected that students will normally be required to repeat their current stage the following academic year (i.e. to start the year again). The student should also be advised that there will be an expectation that they engage in a plan for resumption of studies.
- 3.4. Following the meeting, students should be directed to the KMMS Student Life and Guidance Team to understand the financial and other logistical implications. After these discussions, if students still wish to intermit, they will need to complete the [intermission application form](#). Students must agree a return to study date with the School when the intermission is requested.
- 3.5. Where the student is required by the school to intermit because of fitness to study/fitness to practise concerns and/or prior to module failure, the student will be advised of the impact of the intermission by the School and will be able to access the Student Life and Guidance Team for additional advice.
- 3.6. Where the intermission of study is on health-related grounds, the student is normally required to provide medical evidence (see section 4) to inform decisions about the length of intermission.
- 3.7. On receipt of the form, it will be reviewed by the Head of Year before being signed off by the Programme Director. If approved the student will be formally written to and the relevant central/external departments notified.
- 3.8. Factors which will be taken into account when reviewing a request for intermission will include the following:
 - The nature of the reason for the request – whether it relates to maternity/paternity leave, is serious and/or likely to be long-term.
 - The documentary evidence provided in relation to the reason.
 - The performance, attendance, and engagement of the student up to the point of the request. Students who do not regularly attend, are not engaged or who are struggling to perform academically will be considered carefully in relation to an intermission, where it may be more appropriate for them to withdraw or transfer from the Programme.
 - The overall duration on the Programme.
 - Any planned major or substantive changes to the format of the Programme or the cost of the Programme which may significantly impact on the student at the end of the intermission period when they seek to resume study.

- Any actions or plan necessary for resumption of studies.
- 3.9. Students should request an intermission ahead of the meeting of Boards of Examiners where possible. Retrospective requests for a period of intermission will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and where the student can show good reason why the request was not made at the appropriate time.
- 3.10. Retrospective requests will not be granted where a student has been notified already that they have failed summative assessment(s) and therefore module(s) and current stage unless they successfully appeal the decision of the Board of Examiners.
- 1.3. Student visa holders who wish to request an intermission must seek advice from the University of Kent Student Immigration and Compliance Team as an intermission will have visa implications. Student visa holders on a period of intermission for longer than 60 days cannot remain in the UK during their intermission as they will not be studying full time. The University of Kent will notify the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) agency that they are no longer sponsoring the student under the student route. The student must make arrangements to leave the UK in line with Home Office guidelines unless they have another immigration status that entitles them to remain. The student must also accept the risk that they may not automatically secure a confirmation of acceptance of studies (CAS) to return to study at the end of their intermission period – if they do not do so, they will be withdrawn from study. Students may wish to seek advice from the Students' Union on the implications for their visa.

4. Acceptable evidence

- 4.1. Students will be required to submit medical evidence when the reason for intermitting is health related, unless required by the School as per 2.2.
- 4.2. Acceptable supporting evidence other than medical documentation includes an original (not photocopied) document written and signed by an appropriate third party, giving details of the circumstance, its duration, and, where possible, its impact. An appropriate third party would be one who knows the student in a professional capacity or one who can verify the circumstances (e.g. lecturer, personal tutor, Students' Union representative, GP, University Counsellor) and who is in a position to provide objective and impartial evidence. Letters from family members or fellow students will not be acceptable.

5. Establishing the period of intermission

- 5.1. The maximum for a period of intermission is one academic year, or two academic years, where a current stage is interrupted on health, maternity, or paternity grounds. These periods may only be exceeded under exceptional circumstances as described in section 11.
- 5.2. Studies will normally resume at the start of the next academic year except where the period of interruption would not compromise progression from the current stage.
- 5.3. In some cases of Maternity/Paternity or where there are approved exceptional circumstances, students in year 3 or 4 who have successfully completed all modules and assessment criteria, except IP1 or IP2, may be permitted to carry forward their marks and return the following academic year to complete IP1 or IP2.
- 5.4. The minimum period of intermission is one calendar month. Multiple periods of intermission within the programme are permitted and this will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis in accordance with other relevant KMMS policies and procedure.
- 5.5. The maximum period of registration for the BMBS is ten years, except where a student undertakes an intercalated degree. The ten years will exclude intermissions that derive from periods during which students have been unable to engage with their studies due to reasons linked to characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. (See [Regulations](#) for the conferment of the award for the BMBS).

6. Status and assessment record implications

- 6.1. The School will update the student record to show the period of intermission starting from the last date of attendance entered on the application form and verified by the student record system. This date will be used to work out the tuition fee liability and student funding. Students should ensure that they fully understand the financial implications of the request before making final decision.
- 6.2. Students on intermission will be presented at the end of stage examination board and granted permission to repeat the year on the same basis as their current attempt (i.e. students sitting the year for the first time, will return to sit

the year as if for the first time), except for intermission on grounds described in 2.2.2

- 6.3. All summative assessment marks achieved for completed stages prior to the period of intermission will be carried forward.
- 6.4. Assessment marks for an incomplete stage that is intermitted will not normally be carried forward. However, students will be allowed the normal number of assessment attempts for each stage as for the first time, where applicable and in accordance with the [academic regulations](#) on repeat years.
- 6.5. Students subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) or Occupational Health checks or any other status check should be informed in writing that if a period of intermission is set for 9 months or more, they may be required undertake a new DBS/Occupational Health check/submit a letter of good conduct and that study cannot be resumed until this check has been completed.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The University of Kent will notify the Student Loan Company of each intermission of studies and resumption date where the student receives funding support. There is no right to the payment of bursaries and student loans during the period of interruption.
- 7.2 Students in receipt of a scholarship should check their terms and conditions to understand the implications of an intermission on their payments.

8. Access to resources

- 8.1 During the period of intermission students will not have access to resources except for the following:
 - Usage of the Library
 - Access to student computer accounts
 - Access to KMMS Student Life and Guidance services

9. Accommodation

- 9.1 If a student is occupying University/ NHS Trust accommodation, they will be required to vacate their room following the processing of the intermission

request, in line with their accommodation terms and conditions. For further information students should contact their accommodation office.

- 9.2 Students in private rented accommodation can contact the Student Life and Guidance team for guidance and signposting to additional support.

10. Resumption of studies

- 10.1 Students who intermit are expected to return to study at a date agreed at the time of the intermission. Students will be required to undertake a number of steps prior to resuming their studies, failure to complete these steps could result in a delay to resuming their studies.

10.2 Students will be required to:

- Have received formal permission to resume their studies in writing from the Programme Director or nominee.
- Engage with an agreed plan for resumption of studies. This should normally be described at the point of approval of the intermission but may need to be updated during the period of intermission, depending on the reason for the intermission. The plan may include assessment by occupational health and or satisfactorily meeting conditions established by a fitness to study or fitness to practise panel before the planned date of resumption.
- Arrange a meeting with their PAT/CAT to discuss their return to the programme.
- Confirm that they are ready and able to resume studies
- Provide medical certification confirming they are fit to resume their programme of study prior to re-enrolment (in cases where an intermission of studies was approved on medical grounds).
- Student visa holders (including Tier 4) must contact the School at least three months prior to their resumption date in order to advise and update on their arrangements to apply to secure a student visa for their next period of study.
- In exceptional circumstances where a student intermits study for two complete academic years, they will also be required to sit a formative return to study Applied Knowledge Test, covering the work of the previously passed stages to provide the student with feedback on their current knowledge base prior to resumption of their studies. The format and criteria of the test will be determined with the lead for assessment at KMMS and relevant Head of Year.

- 10.3 Where a programme closes before a student resumes study, the student will be contacted by the Programme Director to discuss possible arrangements to transfer programme.
- 10.4 If a student does not meet the requirements of the resumption of studies plan, they may not be re-enrolled on the programme.
- 10.5 If a student does not re-enrol at the agreed resumption date and does not submit a request to extend their period of intermission, and reasonable attempts by the School to contact the student have failed, the student shall be deemed to have withdrawn – the date of withdrawal being identified as the original intermission date.

11. Intermission of studies extension

- 11.1 Where a student on an approved period of intermission indicates they wish to be absent beyond the agreed return date, an extension to the intermission period may be considered by the Programme Director providing that the total period of absence including the extension does not exceed two academic years, including their current stage. In such instance students will need to complete a new intermission request form.
- 11.2 Requests to intermit for more than two academic years including the current stage will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances. Such requests must be approved by the Dean of the Medical School.
- 11.3 In deciding whether to extend an intermission of study for more than two years, the Dean of the Medical School will take account of:
- The nature of the reason for the request – whether it is serious and likely to be a long-term issue.
 - The documentary evidence provided in relation to the reason.
 - The performance, attendance, and engagement of the student up to the point of the original request.
 - The overall duration of the programme
 - Planned major or substantive changes to the format of the programme or the cost of the programme which may significantly impact on the student at the end of the interruption period when they seek to resume study.
 - Whether the total duration of the absence represents too great a break in terms of maintaining the essential currency of study and their proficiency in any required professional skills and experience.

Appendix A – Intermission process flowchart

