

Suspending, Leaving, Changing or Repeating your course

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Student Funding Team

Student Hub (RM050)

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What does it mean to withdraw or suspend?

It is essential you understand the difference as it will affect any future funding you can get.

Withdrawing - means you have left higher education completely and are no longer eligible for student funding. You become liable to repay your student loans and council tax. You can work or claim state benefits. If you return to university later on you will be assessed under any new funding regulations and your funding entitlement may be reduced.

Suspending - means you are temporarily absent from your course. You have **not** left and are still classed as a student. If you are full time you continue to be exempt from paying council tax. If you have an overpayment of any loans or grants due to suspending your studies, the Student Loans Company will deduct the overpayment from any future loans/grants to be paid to you. However, depending on the reason WHY you are suspending, you may still be able to receive some student funding (see section '*I'm suspending my studies due to compelling personal reasons*').

How will my funding be affected?

Basic rule - Funding is available to cover the length of your course plus one year. If you do a three year degree course you can get up to four years funding (3+1). If you are on a foundation year and it is directly linked to your degree then this becomes five years (4+1) as the foundation year is included in the calculation. If you have to repeat a full year (either first, second or final) of a three-year degree course you may receive funding for that 'extra year' of study (the 'plus one'). You can only have this 'plus one' once during your studies unless you have a case for 'compelling personal reasons'. The same rules apply if you leave university and decide to return to higher education later on.

The moment you enrol onto a higher education course the government will class you as having had a full year of funding, even if you leave the next day. **Therefore it is essential you choose the right course for you.**

Finally

Always get advice from:

- The Student Funding Team
Tel: 023 82013427
Email: student.funding@solent.ac.uk
Visit: located in the Student Hub, RM050
- Student Finance England (SFE):
Tel: 0300 100 0607
www.studentfinanceengland.co.uk
- The Income Team
Tel: 023 8201 3970
Email: income.team@solent.ac.uk
Visit: Finance Service, A101
- Your Course leader / School office
Visit: Student Hub RM050, for information
- The Employability Team - to help you decide your future career options
Phone: 023 8201 3883
Email: employability.enterprise@solent.ac.uk.
Visit: located on the Ground Floor of the Mountbatten Library.
- The Accommodation Office (if in halls)
Telephone: 023 8201 5040
Email: accommodation@solent.ac.uk

If you attend a course that lasts *at least* one academic year and leave *before* you start your course:

- you may get a full refund of fees - providing that prior to the commencement of the course, written notification of withdrawal has been received by the University
- If you leave within the first term you will be charged **25%** of fees
- If you leave *during* the second (spring) term you will be charged **50%** of fees
- If you leave *during* the third (summer) term you will be charged **full fees**.

If you applied for a tuition fee loan, the relevant percentage of this will still be paid to the University.

Returning onto the same course will result in tuition fees being calculated on a pro-rata basis. Returning to an alternative course (subject to approval) would result in the total tuition fee being charged for that year of study.

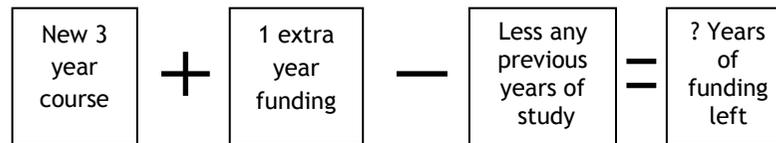
Important

If you transfer/change your course to a **different** university **within the same academic year**, a percentage of your tuition fee loan will stay with your original university to pay for the term(s) you started in. The remaining loan will be remitted to the institution you are transferring to.

If you transfer to another university and fees are paid by another method other than a tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company (SLC), Southampton Solent University will treat this as a withdrawal, and any fees owing will be calculated in accordance with the withdrawals and suspensions policy (full details are on the university's portal: <http://portal.solent.ac.uk/support/finance/student-fees-and-finance/student-fees-and-finance.aspx>)

If I change / repeat my course, what can I get?

The funding rules allow for the length of your current course, for example:



If you return to do a three-year course and have done two years already, you may get:

$$3 + 1 - 2 = 2 \text{ years funding (for years 2 and 3 only)}$$

If you 'use up' too many of your entitlement years you may find you can't get a tuition fee loan or maintenance grant and **you** would have to pay the tuition fees yourself, but you should still get:

- A maintenance loan; including the income - assessed element
- Supplementary grants e.g. if you have dependents

If you are repeating a year as a 'full-time' student but on a 'part-time' basis you must be studying for at least ten weeks in order to still receive some student funding.

It is important that you check your academic progression before continuing with your funding as this can have a severe effect on your entitlement.

ELQs (equal to or lower qualifications)

Students who already have a Higher Education (HE) qualification, which is 'equivalent to or higher' than the course they want to study, may be charged more and pay a higher fee than a student who is *progressing up to* a higher qualification. Check with your university to see if they implement the ELQ policy, before starting a course.

Previous Study

If you have previously studied in Higher Education (including overseas) whether funded or not, and you did not finish the course/get your qualification, this *will* be taken into account and will reduce your funding entitlement for a new course. However you could still be eligible for some funding. Please **always** check with a Student Funding Adviser before you start another course in higher education.

If you already have a degree qualification from a UK or overseas institution, you are **unlikely** to get any funding for your new degree course.

Can I get funding whilst I am suspended?

There is no automatic entitlement to student loans or grants during a period of suspension. However in some cases, where this causes financial hardship, you can write to Student Finance England to request they consider 'Funding through a period of suspension'.

When you suspend your studies your funding payments should stop. If you continue to receive any payments after your suspension date you could have an overpayment and will have to repay this money (unless you have suspended due to CPR*).

Most students will need to find a source of income for the relevant period of suspension. The majority of students find work; some return home to live, and manage with family support.

However, if you need your funding to continue you will have to apply for '**discretionary funding**' for the time of suspension.

Please see our leaflet on 'how to apply for Compelling Personal Reasons and Discretionary payments' for a full list of evidence needed and how to prepare your application.

I'm suspending my studies due to personal problems (compelling personal reasons*)

Student Finance England (SFE) will have discretion to extend your funding should you suffer 'compelling personal reasons' (CPR) for repeating a period of study, for example, ill health. This discretion can be applied for each occasion you are unable to complete a year due to CPR. You can suspend:

- On medical grounds
- Due to personal circumstances e.g. bereavement

You must inform your School and SFE, providing full evidence of the reasons e.g. doctors/solicitors/university letter etc. You can continue to get your student funding for *up to 60 days after* you suspend and can also apply to the Solent Access to Learning fund.

If you are a student who **can** normally claim benefits while studying, such as lone parents or someone with a disability, your claim should continue during your period of suspension. If you are ill for more than 28 weeks you might be able to claim benefits. Further information is available from your local Jobcentre Plus or the benefits office.

For more detailed information on 'how to apply for Compelling Personal Reasons and Discretionary payments' please look at our leaflet, available from the Student Hub or our webpages: www.solent.ac.uk/studying/student-support/funding-advice/useful-leaflets.aspx

Will I still have to pay my tuition fees?

This will depend on when you leave (withdraw from) your course.

If you:

Attend a course lasting *less* than one academic year, you remain liable for the **full fee** regardless of the date of withdrawal.