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Higher Education Withdrawal and Suspension of Studies Policy	HEP003	2

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Higher Education Withdrawal or Suspension of Studies Policy

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1. Policy Statement

1.1. This policy outlines the various rules and regulations that surround withdrawal and suspension of studies, as well as several factors that you should consider before making any decision around withdrawing or suspending your studies. If you require this policy in a different format, or if you need additional information or support, please contact: complianceteam@activatelearning.ac.uk

2. Purpose

2.1. Activate Learning recognises that circumstances sometimes arise which mean students studying higher education programmes at Activate Learning either need to withdraw (i.e. permanently leave) or suspend (i.e. temporarily pause) their academic studies.

2.2. The purpose of this policy is to provide you with clear information and guidance about the steps you will need to take, the implications of withdrawing or suspending your studies, and the additional support available to you.

3. Definitions

3.1 **Withdrawal**: The formal process by which your studies are discontinued before completing your programme of study.

3.2 **Suspension of Studies**: A temporary pause in studies, with the intention of returning to the programme at a later date (usually the following academic year).

4. Scope

4.1. This policy applies to all students studying a higher education qualification[1] or module(s)/unit(s) thereof, delivered by Activate Learning.

4.2. If, in any case, either an Awarding Body's regulations or the requirements of a Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) conflict with those below, the regulations of the Awarding Body or PSRB will take precedence.

– This policy outlines the various rules and regulations that surround withdrawal and suspension of studies where a student wishes to leave, or is required to withdraw, from their programme of study, or is experiencing extenuating circumstances which cannot be adequately supported or managed through either the Higher Education Extenuating Circumstances procedure (such as extensions to deadlines or Exam Board consideration), the Fitness to Study and Reside Policy , or the Student Positive Behaviour Management Procedure

5. Responsibilities

5.1. It is your responsibility as a student to proactively communicate with your Programme Coordinator and the Higher Education Learning Partnerships team at the earliest opportunity if you might be considering withdrawal from, or suspension of, your studies, to seek relevant advice, and to ask for clarity and support if required to help you make a well-informed decision. The Higher Education Learning Partnerships team can be contacted at: AdminHE@activatelearning.ac.uk

5.2. The Academic Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the college student record system is updated and that the relevant awarding body and Student Loans Company are notified of any changes where applicable.

[1] Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Foundation Degree or BA/BSc (Hons) top-up Degree

6. Implications of Withdrawal or Suspension of Studies

6.1. Before deciding to withdraw or suspend your studies, you should carefully consider the following implications:

a) **Academic Record:** Withdrawal or suspension of studies may affect your academic record, including the award of credit and/or qualification. The extent to which a withdrawal or suspension of studies impacts on your academic record will be dependent upon the point at which you withdraw or suspend your studies. Further details are provided in the Higher Education Withdrawal and Suspension of Studies Procedure

b) **Tuition Fees:** You may still be liable for a portion of your tuition fees, depending on the timing of the withdrawal or suspension of studies. You are advised to review the Student Fees Policy and the Terms and conditions of student loans - GOV.UK to understand any liability you may have at the point of withdrawal or suspension of studies.

c) **Student Loans**: Withdrawal or suspension of studies may affect your entitlement to student loans and other financial support. For example, if you are in receipt of a Maintenance Loan you may have to repay a proportion to Student Finance England. We advise any student in receipt of a Maintenance Loan who is considering withdrawal or suspension to carefully read the guidance from Gov.UK[2] and the Terms and conditions of student loans - GOV.UK

7. Re-admission following withdrawal

7.1. If you withdraw from your programme and later wish to return to your studies in a different academic year, you must apply through the standard admissions process. Re-admission is not guaranteed and will be subject to availability and academic requirements. You can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning for the credits you have achieved prior to withdrawal, and this will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

7.2. If you have been withdrawn by Activate Learning, you may not be able to return to the same programme or another programme. For example, if you have been withdrawn from your programme by Activate Learning, your eligibility to apply for future study will depend on the reason for your withdrawal. In some cases, such as withdrawal due to unresolved debt, serious academic misconduct, or disciplinary exclusion, you may be restricted from applying to any programme at Activate Learning. These restrictions are outlined in the

[2] Student finance if you suspend or leave your course: Overview - GOV.UK

Higher Education Terms and Conditions and relevant policies such as the Student Positive Behaviour Management Policy. If you have been withdrawn for other reasons, such as academic failure or health-related concerns, you may be permitted to apply for a different programme, subject to the admissions criteria and any conditions set by the awarding organisation, professional body, or Activate Learning.

8. Resumption of studies following suspension

8.1. **Point of return** - If you temporarily suspend your studies, you must be aware that you will not necessarily simply be able to resume studying at the same calendar point in a future year. Depending on when you suspend and whether any unit(s) / module(s) are partially completed and / or not achieved at this point, you may be required to either retake or restart unit(s) / module(s) in a future year, which may necessitate a suspension period which does not fall neatly within a semester or 12-month period.

8.2. **Academic record** - Any units/modules that have been successfully completed prior to your suspension will be ratified by the appropriate assessment board and form part of your student record. This does not apply to units/modules that have been partially completed at the point of suspension.

8.3. **Support to return -** Depending upon the circumstances that surrounded your suspension of studies, it may be appropriate for the Fitness to Study and Reside Policy or Positive Behaviour Management Procedure to be used to support the process of returning to study.

8.4. **Attendance pattern** - You should also note that there is no guarantee that attendance patterns are consistent between academic years. For example, if you were studying on an evening-only basis, or only attending one day per week, you are not guaranteed to be offered the same attendance pattern post-suspension. The attendance pattern will depend on the unit(s) / module(s) you need to study upon your return, and cohort sizes and timetabling arrangements for the future cohort(s) you will in-fill with.

8.5. **Module/Unit availability** – Activate Learning may change its module/unit offer between academic years, in response to awarding body changes, PSRB requirements, student feedback, or sector changes. Whilst changes to modules between years are rarely widespread or significant, it is not possible to guarantee that the same modules/units will be available to you upon resumption of studies.

8.6. **Tuition fees** - In line with Activate Learning's Fees Policy you will be charged tuition fees for the unit(s) / module(s) you study post-suspension. If you return post-suspension on a part-time basis (i.e. you are studying fewer than 120 credits in the bespoke academic year), you will be charged for the credits you study in line with the Fees Policy and Activate Learning's Office for Students (OfS) approved fee limits.

References

- Higher Education Withdrawal and Suspension of Studies Procedure
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
- Fees Policy
- Higher Education Terms and Conditions
- Assessment and Verification Policy
- Higher Education Assessment and Verification Procedure