



## A Quick Guide to Suspension of Studies for Undergraduate Students

1. Suspension or intermission of studies, from now on referred to simply as 'suspension', is always going to be a last resort, but it may become necessary if you are unable to carry out your studies to the required standard and it is plausible that a period away from Oxford will remedy this. Please note the fundamental difference between suspension and rustication. "Rustication" refers to expulsion as a punishment, such as for non-payment of fees, and is not an applicable term for the process outlined here.
2. Suspension is not to be taken lightly. Intermitting your studies is disruptive, so it is only to be undertaken if, in your view and the College's, carrying on with your studies is impossible or near impossible.
3. To make the break complete, and also so as not to make suspension seem more attractive an option than it is, there are strict rules about what suspension entails. In particular, suspended students are not allowed in College for any reason unless they have special permission from the Tutor for Undergraduates or the Dean (rarely granted). Suspended students are usually expected to leave College within 48 hours of suspension being confirmed, and may not leave any belongings in storage during their suspension.
4. Normally, suspension will be for a year: you will leave with the intention of picking up your studies where you left them in a year's time. Often however, it will be possible to return at the beginning of the equivalent term if you have suspended part-way through a term, and in exceptional circumstances other variations may be possible.
5. If you are considering suspension, the first thing to do is to consult your Personal Tutor, who will then usually contact the Tutor for Undergraduates and the Academic Administrator. You may also contact either of these latter two directly, but in that case we will always consult your Personal Tutor. We will respect a request for suspension, but will only allow it if it is clear that it is the right course of action.
6. If all parties agree that suspension is reasonable and appropriate, you will need to get a certificate from the College doctors stating that you are unfit to study. (If your reason for suspending is not medical, you will be advised individually as to any evidence requirements). Once we have that, the normal process is for a meeting to be arranged involving the student, the Personal Tutor, the Tutor for

Undergraduates, and the Academic Administrator. (In some circumstances this can be an online meeting.) The case for suspension will be discussed and then usually (if it has got this far) agreed, the terms of suspension will be set out, and you will be able to ask any questions.

7. At this meeting and subsequently, the terms for your return will also be agreed, which in the case of suspension on medical grounds will - as a minimum - require a medical certificate, usually from the College doctor, stating that you are fit to return to your studies. These terms, including dates, will be sent to you in a letter as soon as possible after the meeting mentioned in 6. above.
8. Students are expected to remain in contact with their Personal Tutor during suspension.
9. Suspension has a bearing on the level of access a student has to the University (Appendix A), and will affect financial circumstances (Appendix B) and - if applicable - visa arrangements (Appendix C). It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have reviewed all information available before suspending.
10. In virtually all cases, suspension is by mutual agreement, but the College does also have the power to enforce suspension in exceptional circumstances. The procedures for this are set out in the 'Fitness to Study' document.
11. Should you suspend your studies, a number of people in College can help ensure that your return from suspension is as successful as we all hope it will be, and so it is important to remain in touch with your Personal Tutor and the College Office about your fitness to study, including any documentation required before your return, and the Domestic Bursar's office regarding the availability of accommodation.

In addition, please be sure to contact in good time the people who can assist with the welfare side of your return: that might include the Disability Advisory Service, the College's welfare team, the University Counselling Service, JCR Welfare Reps, and/or the University's Student Union.

Fuller details about suspension, especially in more complex cases, are contained in the 'Fitness to Study' document, to which this 'Quick Guide' is only an introduction.

Charlie Louth, 08 August 2024

**Notes on dates**

The end date of a period of suspension shall be Wednesday of 0<sup>th</sup> week of the term in which a student is due to recommence their studies, except in the following cases:

1. Suspended students who are deemed to be in their 'priority year' (defined in Regulation 10.8) and are due to recommence their studies in Trinity Term will be permitted to return from suspension and to take up College accommodation, should it be available, from **two weeks** before 0<sup>th</sup> week of Trinity Term.
2. Suspended students who are returning for 'assessment only' will remain suspended until the release of their assessment results but will be permitted to return to College accommodation, should it be available, from **one week** before their exams commence (unless the exam is in week 0 in which case a student may return **5 days** before their exams commence) and will be permitted to continue to occupy the room until a full day after their last exam (e.g. if the last exam is Friday of 8th week, to remain until Sunday).

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## Appendix A: the University

The university's guidelines concerning changes in student status are available online, here: [www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/undergraduate/status](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/undergraduate/status)

(Home > Oxford students > Academic matters > Study guidance > Undergraduate > Changes in student status, last accessed 11 September 2023).

As the university's policy states, during their suspension, students ...

- **can** keep their University card and SSO access and, with them, can continue to use University libraries and online resources, including email;
- **can** use the Counselling Service and receive the same level of support as other students, including online support for those who live far from Oxford;
- **can** remain in touch with their disability advisor (if relevant), but **cannot** access disability services (which can include specialist SpLD tuition, specialist mentoring, assistive technology training, proof-reading and library assistance); and
- **will not** receive any formal teaching (including access to lectures, whether in person or recorded).

## Appendix B: Finances

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to ascertain the impact of suspension on their financial position, especially if they are in receipt of a Student Loan. The College cannot offer financial advice and does not have the ability to intercede with the Student Loans Company on behalf of a student. This university

webpage offers some guidance: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/fees/liability/payments/suspension>

### **Appendix C: Visa and Immigration**

If you are on a student visa, please consult the guidance here for information about how suspending will impact your visa status:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/during/changes>