



# Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure

## Purpose of Procedure

The Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Procedure applies to circumstances where a student voluntarily wishes to leave the University permanently, and also circumstances where a student is required to leave the University permanently.

## Scope: Mandatory Procedure

The procedure applies to all students who withdraw or are excluded from the University and to University staff managing this procedure.

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## Document control

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1. This procedure is designed to:
  - (i) state the obligations on both the University and its students within the withdrawal and exclusion processes;
  - (ii) provide clear guidance on the process to be followed when a student has failed to satisfy the criteria for progression;
  - (iii) take into account the requirements of UK immigration legislation.
  
2. The following terminology is used:
  - (i) withdrawal from studies - this is a voluntary decision by the student to terminate their studies at the University.
  
  - (ii) exclusion from studies - this is where a student is required to leave the University. This may be for academic or other reasons (see 8-29 below).
  
3. This procedure makes reference to the College, School and to the Head of College or Head of School. It is for Colleges, Schools and their Heads to determine local arrangements for the delegation of their authority.
  
4. There are separate procedures for interruption of studies (which is a temporary suspension of studies).

## **Withdrawal from studies**

5. Any student may withdraw from their studies at the University at any point in the year. However, a student may not voluntarily withdraw after the University has decided to exclude the student.
  
6. Before applying to withdraw, the student is strongly advised to consult their Student Adviser/ Programme Director/ Supervisor, or the Students' Association Advice Place, in order to consider the implications of withdrawal. These include matters such as: access to the University's facilities; financial issues (for example scholarships, fees, external financial issues relating to the Student Loans Company/Student Awards Agency for Scotland etc.); Student Visas; exit awards; readmission.
  
7. Students wishing to withdraw must signal their intention by completing a standard University form (Withdrawal Form – Student) available at [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/forms/student-forms)



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## Exclusion from studies

### A. Exclusion for unsatisfactory academic progress (Taught and Masters by Research programmes)

8. The criteria for progression on a programme of study depend on the nature of the programme and / or year of study. These will be contained in the University's assessment and degree regulations (see the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study at <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>), Degree Programme Tables, and there may be additional information within College or School guidance, or in course and programme handbooks. This policy should be read in conjunction with those documents.
9. The [Taught Assessment Regulation on 'Publication of Results'](#) sets out responsibilities for communicating final programme outcomes to students where they have failed to meet programme requirements:  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf>.

Provisions relating to Masters by Research students are covered in the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research degrees:

[https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr\\_assessmentregulations.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pgr_assessmentregulations.pdf)

10. Where the relevant Board of Examiners has recommended a student for exclusion from studies for unsatisfactory academic progress, the Head of School (or delegated authorising officer) will invite the student for interview. The interview provides an opportunity for the student to make a case for continuation.
11. The interview may be carried out electronically (e.g. by video, web-camera, etc.). The outcome of the interview will be one of the following:
  - (i) The student is permitted to progress to the next year of study;
  - (ii) The student cannot progress to the next year of study on their current programme but is permitted to continue their studies under other options permitted in the University regulations;
  - (iii) The student may voluntarily withdraw permanently from studies. This option will not be available if the student has already been notified in writing of exclusion from studies;
  - (iv) The student may be excluded from the University. In such cases, the student's eligibility for an exit qualification will be explored.
12. The full range of options does not apply in every case, as it may depend on the year and nature of the programme and the status of the student. Exclusion from studies will only be invoked after other available options have been considered.
13. Where the student does not attend the interview, the Head of School (or delegated authorising officer) will proceed to make a decision on the case.



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14. The Head of School (or delegated authorising officer) will decide which option to apply, and will inform the student in writing (via the student's University email account) of the decision as soon as possible after the interview. The communication should set out clearly the decision reached and any terms attached.
15. The Head of School (or delegated authorising officer) will send a copy of the communication to the Student Adviser/ Programme Director. The School must advise Student Systems of any changes to the student's programme, mode of study, or exclusion via the online student programme change form in EUCLID.

## B. Exclusion for unsatisfactory academic progress (Doctoral or MPhil programmes)

16. Students are subject to annual progression review under the terms set out in the [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#). Following an annual progression review, the relevant Postgraduate Director or Head of the Graduate School may determine that a student has made unsatisfactory academic progress and recommend to the College Postgraduate Committee that the student be excluded from study.
17. The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer) will inform the student that exclusion from study for unsatisfactory academic progress has been recommended, and offer the student the opportunity to attend an interview. Where an interview is held, this provides an opportunity for the student to make a case for continuation. The interview may be carried out electronically (eg. by video, web-camera, etc).
18. Where the student does not attend the interview, the Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer) will proceed to make a decision on the case.
19. The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer) will determine whether to exclude the student from study, or to consider one of the alternative options available to it under the provisions of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.
20. The Convener of the College Postgraduate Committee (or delegated authorising officer) will inform the student in writing (via the student's University email account) of the decision as soon as possible following the interview. This communication should clearly set out the decision reached, and any of the terms attached.
21. The College is responsible for sending a copy of the communication to the student's Supervisor. The College must advise Student Systems of any changes to the student's programme, mode of study, or exclusion via the online student programme change form in EUCLID.



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## C. Exclusion for non-attendance or non-engagement

22. Students must attend and participate as required in all aspects of their programme of study. The Degree Programme Table or programme handbook sets out programme requirements for engagement. The Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will invite for interview any student who has been referred for Exclusion for non-attendance or non-engagement.
23. The interview may be carried out electronically (e.g. by video, web-camera, etc.). Where the student does not attend the interview, the Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will proceed to make a decision on the case.
24. The outcome of the interview will be one of the following:
  - (i) The student is excluded due to non-attendance or non-engagement. In such cases, the student's eligibility for an exit qualification will be explored;
  - (ii) The student is permitted to continue their studies under options permitted in University regulations.
25. The Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will decide which option to apply, and will inform the student in writing (via the student's University email account) of the decision as soon as possible after the interview. The communication should set out clearly the decision reached and any terms attached.
26. The Head of College (or delegated authorising officer) will send a copy of the communication to the Student Adviser/ Programme Director/Supervisor. The College must advise Student Systems of any changes to the student's programme, mode of study, or exclusion via the online student programme change form in EUCLID.

Students holding Sponsored Student visas:

27. The International Student Attendance and Engagement Policy sets out the University's responsibilities as a sponsor of international students within the UK immigration system, which includes the requirement to evidence Sponsored Student student attendance and engagement at key points in the session. The policy ensures that the University has relevant guidance for staff and mitigates risk related to the University's sponsor licence by ensuring that we have robust student attendance and engagement procedures in place:  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/internationalstudentattendanceandengagementpolicy.pdf>
28. Where a student holding a Sponsored Student visa is excluded or withdraws from the University for any reason, the Compliance Manager (Student Administration) will report the student to the Home Office and end the sponsorship of their visa.



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## D. Exclusion under Fitness to Practise procedures

29. In line with the provisions of the University's Degree Regulations, Colleges may exclude students who have failed to meet Fitness to Practise requirements for their programmes. Programme Handbooks include information regarding Fitness to Practise requirements for programmes, where such requirements exist. Colleges publicise procedures relating to Fitness to Practise.

## E. Exclusion for non-matriculation

New students:

30. Matriculation consists of three components: (i) registration, which includes international check-in where relevant; (ii) confirmation of attendance; (iii) full admission (i.e. adhering to other related admissions requirements).

[www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/student/matriculation/index.htm](http://www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/student/matriculation/index.htm)

In order to matriculate, a new student must:

(i) within two weeks of their start date, be "registered" or have their "attendance confirmed";

(ii) within five weeks of their start date, have completed both of these matriculation activities.

31. Any student failing to meet these requirements will be deemed not to have commenced their studies, and will be excluded from the University and have their record cancelled.

32. A new student will not be fully matriculated until they provide the appropriate documentation at the start of their studies, including immigration documentation where required.

Continuing students:

33. Matriculation consists of two components: (i) registration; (ii) confirmation of attendance.

In order to matriculate, a continuing student must:

(i) Within two weeks of their anniversary date<sup>1</sup>, be "registered" or have their "attendance confirmed";

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<sup>1</sup> The anniversary date is the date on which the student formally starts their next year of study. This will normally be the equivalent point in the new session to their original start date on their programme, but may be adjusted to take account of any authorised interruptions of study.



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- (ii) Within five weeks of their anniversary date, have completed both of these matriculation actions.

34. Any student failing to meet these requirements will be deemed not to have resumed their studies, and will be excluded from the University and have their record cancelled.

35. Further details on matriculation are available from Student Systems:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/students/matriculation/matriculation-intro>

## F. Exclusion for lapse of time

36. A student who is past the maximum end-date of their studies will be excluded by the University. Before such an exclusion is enforced, the University will seek to make contact with the student to inform them of the exclusion timetable.

37. Postgraduate research students who fail to submit a thesis by the deadline specified by the regulations will be excluded.

38. A research postgraduate who has been examined but not carried out the required corrections or re-submission within one month of the maximum timescale stipulated by the relevant College Postgraduate Committee will be excluded.

## G. Exclusion for disciplinary offence

39. The University's Student Discipline Committee may impose permanent exclusion of a student from the University. The [Code of Student Conduct](#) sets out expectations for student behaviour and the procedures the University uses to resolve matters when students' behaviour is unacceptable.

## H. Exclusion for debt

40. Exclusion can also result from non-payment of any debt to the University as detailed in the [Policy on Collection of Student Fees and Related Charges](#)

## **Appeals**

41. All individuals who have been excluded, irrespective of the reason for exclusion, may lodge an appeal against the exclusion through the normal University appeal procedure. Appeals should be sent directly to Academic Services at the email address [academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk)

42. Details of the appeal procedure can be found at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/appeals>

43. For individuals who are excluded for disciplinary reasons, details of the discipline procedures, including the appeal procedures can be found at:



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[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline)

## Readmission

44. After withdrawal or exclusion an individual is no longer a student of the University and loses student status and access to University facilities. After withdrawal or exclusion, a former student wishing to be considered for return to study at the University must go through the normal application procedures.
45. A former PhD student who has been excluded through lapse of time is entitled to ask the College to reinstate their registration at a later date to permit examination of a completed thesis. A decision as to whether or not a candidate should be reinstated will be taken by the College, and factors such as the passage of time and its implications for the topic of study will be taken into account. Approval of such a reinstatement is exceptional and attracts a fee.

**25 May 2023**