



Brunel
University
London

Periods of absence for students who participate in national / international events – staff guidance

Documentation Management

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Introduction

From time to time, students at the University wish to become involved in high-profile national or international events which require them to be away from the University for a period of time. Such events may include involvement in, for example, sports, music or acting, although this is not a definitive list. The University is well disposed towards the release of such students from their studies for this purpose. This guidance has therefore been produced to guide staff in making appropriate decisions and recording such decisions.

Guidance

Such students are required at an early stage to:

- a) Submit supporting evidence in relation to the activity they are undertaking to the programme leader, who should consult the relevant Head of Department/Division. This evidence should include formal documentation from the relevant organisation. The expectation is that students would be involved at national or international level. Playing in 'friendly' games for example, or undertaking training for national/international events will not constitute a good reason for absence.
- b) Discuss the length of time to be spent away from the University. This may range from missing one examination to spending a block of time abroad. The programme leader will use his/her discretion, according to the circumstances presented, to decide a course of action and, if necessary, negotiate a revised pathway through the programme with the student. The following options may be considered.

Periods of absence from formal lectures, seminars etc.

The student should inform the programme leader at least two weeks in advance of any sustained planned leave of absence from sessions due to participation in any high-profile activity. Every effort should be made to ensure that the work is covered. If this is not possible, the programme leader may agree alternative arrangements to ensure that the learning outcomes are achieved. Under these circumstances it is advised that periods of absence are limited, and that a maximum number of sessions that can be missed during any module is agreed by the programme leader.

Late submission of coursework

Students who are unable to submit coursework by the given deadline for reasons relating to high profile activity may avoid disadvantage under the late penalty policy if they are able to negotiate special arrangements with the programme leader in advance. The programme leader will decide whether the circumstances should be considered as a special case and if so, define a revised submission deadline for the student. Where a change in a deadline is agreed as a special case, the same late penalties will apply as for other students if work is late after a re-negotiated deadline. If the commitment covers more than one piece of work, then adjustments to all appropriate work deadlines should be made.

NB Although the programme leader can afford some flexibility with prescribed classes, given that there is no attendance requirement, and coursework deadlines, there should be no compromise on the academic standards required for the attainment of any piece of work. It is also the programme leader's responsibility to ensure that maximum length of time for the completion of the programme will not be exceeded.

Deferred Examinations

Deferred examinations are a concession intended to allow students who are unable to attend examinations at the prescribed date and time and may be granted exceptionally. If a deferred examination is granted, all other module requirements must be met in order to successfully complete the module.

Students granted examination deferral can either:

- resit as a first sitting on the first available resit date for that programme;
- resit as a first sitting the following year with the next intake;

They may not sit the examination at a different time to the rest of the student cohort.

Suspension of studies

Students may suspend their studies (up to one year full time, two years part time, in accordance with Senate Regulations). This would be appropriate if a student is participating in major events and needs to take a large block of time out from their studies for travel, participation, etc.

Transfer to an alternative mode of study

Where a full-time programme has provision for a different mode of study (e.g part- time, distance learning) it may be an option for a student to transfer in order to complete the programme successfully.

Special arrangements for completion of placements

Any planned absences during professional placement periods will be negotiated between the programme leader and the placement provider and agreed by both. It is likely that the placement will need to be repeated at a later stage, but if the proposed period of absence is minimal, this requirement may be waived. Any adjustments made must take account of the specific progression requirements of the programme; any professional body requirements and subsequent funding implications.

Recording of Information

Colleges must ensure, where appropriate, that all relevant information and the record of the decisions made are drawn to the attention of the relevant Board of Examiners.

The Student Record Amendment Form (SRAF) must be completed in all cases and submitted to the programme leader, and the relevant departmental Taught Programmes Office. The programme leader will confirm that all available options have been discussed and that academic guidance has been provided. Students should inform their personal tutor of any agreed special arrangements.