



## Policy on suspensions of studies for postgraduate students

Approved by Governing Body in June 2024.

### Introduction

1. This document sets out the College policy position in relation to suspensions of studies for postgraduate (PG) students.
2. A suspension of studies is when a student takes a significant period (one term or more) away from their studies, often (but not always) for health reasons. Suspensions for postgraduate taught (PGT) students tend to be a year long, because the course structure rarely enables students to miss a shorter period.
3. For PG students, a request for a suspension of studies has to be supported by individuals in both the relevant department/faculty and the College before it is agreed by the University. It is unlikely that the College would refuse to support a request for a suspension of studies where the department/faculty is in support of the request.

### The process of requesting a suspension of studies

4. The University website [www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/status](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/status) explains the mechanics of how a PG student can apply for a suspension. Students considering applying for a suspension are advised on the [GSO.17 form](#) to discuss the possible grounds for an extension request with the relevant contact in their department/faculty.
5. In practice, some students do seek advice from College staff in relation to suspension of studies requests, but the College role in these cases is to advise the student about the particularities of their situation in relation to University policy rather than to set out a distinct College-specific policy.
6. The College has the opportunity to specify any conditions relating to a PG student's future return from suspension on the GSO.17 form. The most common condition included as part of the College's support for a requested suspension are that the student should arrange for the provision of medical evidence confirming that they are fit to study ahead of their return from suspension.

### Access to college facilities and services

7. The table below sets out the key areas of college provision for PG students and sets out the extent to which these are available to students during their period of suspension.

8. For many students on suspension, who leave Oxford to return to their home base, these matters are largely irrelevant. However some students do remain resident in Oxford during a period of suspension.

9. It should be noted that everything below relates to students on a period of suspension which has **not** been imposed on them for disciplinary reasons. If a student has been subject to disciplinary measures (via the *College Regulations* and the *Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedure*), particular restrictions might apply to them, which would be specified in writing.

Accommodation	<p>Where a PG student resident in college accommodation suspends their study, it is normally expected that they will leave college accommodation within a couple of weeks of having their suspension informally agreed by the college and dept (NB this may be some time before the suspension is formally recorded on the student system). In this instance, students will not be liable to pay rent after leaving the accommodation, even if this would be otherwise expected in their accommodation contract.</p> <p>Exceptionally, there might be reasons why a PG student might remain in college accommodation while on a suspension of studies, but this is not the norm and should never be assumed to be possible unless specifically agreed ahead of the College confirming its support for the student's request to suspend their studies.</p>
College Library	<p>Students on periods of suspension retain access to University libraries. Given the limited space in the College Library, it is not expected that PG students on suspension should use the Library as a study space while suspended.</p> <p>Exceptional arrangements to borrow books from the College Library while suspended would need to be agreed on a case-by-case basis by the College Librarian.</p>
IT	<p>Students on periods of suspension retain access to IT systems (including email) which are provided by the University.</p>
Dining Hall	<p>PG students on periods of suspension are permitted to use the Dining Hall on an occasional basis. Permission does not need to be sought in advance.</p>
College events	<p>PG students on periods of suspension are permitted to attend College events subject to any rules and restrictions imposed on other (non-suspended) students.</p>
Health, Wellbeing and Welfare team	<p>Students on periods of suspension may seek advice and guidance, particularly signposting to non-College provision, on an occasional basis, from the Dean for Welfare and other members of the Health, Wellbeing and Welfare team.</p>
College Office	<p>The College Office is available to all students, including those on suspension, particularly in relation to queries about academic status, University processes, University card renewals etc.</p>
College Advisor	<p>College Advisors are not normally expected to maintain contact with their advisees while they are suspended from their studies, Queries should be directed to the College Office or the Tutor for Graduates in the first instance.</p>

MCR roles	It would not normally be appropriate for a PG student on a period of suspension to retain an MCR leadership role while suspended.
MCR space and events	<p>PG students on periods of suspension are only permitted to attend MCR events and use the MCR space on an occasional basis when specifically invited to do by another member of the MCR.</p> <p>The MCR Committee can raise concerns about extensive use of the MCR or over-frequent attendance at MCR events by suspended students with the Tutor for Graduates in the first instance.</p>
Behaviour	PG students on periods of suspension remain subject to the <i>Student Regulations</i> and all other relevant policies (including in relation to harassment etc). Any inappropriate behaviour should be reported to the Dean.