



Intermission & Suspension of Status Guidance for Undergraduates and Tutors

1. Introduction

1.1. This note provides guidance about intermission and suspension of status for undergraduates and tutors.

It defines and sets out general principles regarding intermission, outlines college and university rules governing intermission and makes recommendations regarding the intermission process both before, during, and after intermission.

1.2. This note cannot cover all eventualities and anyone seeking further advice is encouraged to contact their tutor(s), the tutor for undergraduates (robert.pitkethly@spc.ox.ac.uk) or the college registrar.

2. Terminology

2.1. There are many reasons why a student might leave their course, whether temporarily or permanently, but it is important to clarify the general university terminology and the college terms used so that there is a clear distinction between very rare disciplinary cases and the vast majority of other cases where the reasons are more likely to relate to medical or welfare issues.

2.2. The university has three specific terms used to describe the status of students¹ between the planned start and end dates of their course.

- i) “Enrolled” : A student who is currently studying and on course.
- ii) “Withdrawn”: A student whose course has ended by formal withdrawal.
- iii) “Suspended”: A student who is not currently studying on course but may return to study and complete their course in the future.

2.3. The college’s Academic Expectations and Disciplinary Procedure (AEDP) and Student Regulations (SR)² envisage three categories of “Suspended” students :

i) “Sent Down” – a student whose course has ended as the result of academic disciplinary procedure (AEDP (s7.5(b)) or due to enforcement of student regulations (SR (s15, s47(iv))).

ii) “Rusticated” – a student who has “Suspended” status and is not currently studying on course as the result of academic disciplinary procedure under the AEDP (s7.5(c)) or due to enforcement of student regulations (SR (s15, s47(iv) s48) but who may be permitted return to study and complete their course in the future.

iii) “Intermitting” – a student who has “Suspended” status following intermission on medical, welfare or academic grounds and who is not currently studying on course but may return to study and complete their course in the future.

¹ See : <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/undergraduate/status?wssl=1>

² Both are available on the college website at <http://www.spc.ox.ac.uk/about/official-information>

- 2.4. For the avoidance of doubt within the college the terms “Rustication” “Rusticated” (including “Rusticate”), “Sent Down” and “Send Down” should only be used when imposed as the result of disciplinary proceedings under the AEDP or SR.
- 2.5. It should be noted that there may be extremely rare circumstances where a student is compelled to suspend their studies as the result of a) proceedings relating to fitness to study³ and/or b) the student being removed from the college by order of the master under Statute VIII(4) or c) summary rustication by the master or dean under SR s48 or d) other exceptional circumstances. Where there is disciplinary action involved the appropriate terms rustication or sending down may be used. If no disciplinary action is involved these may be referred to as involving intermission.
- 2.6. In the vast majority of cases where a student is not currently studying on course but may return to study and complete their course in the future, and thus has suspended status in the eyes of the university, the terms “**Intermitting**” “**Intermit**” or “**Intermission**” should be used to distinguish those cases where a student has **Suspended Status** as the result of factors other than disciplinary proceedings. As outlined above there may be extremely rare cases where intermission could be compulsory but not disciplinary but intermission will more usually involve the college and student mutually agreeing that the student should intermit. It is important that tutors avoid any implication that non-disciplinary related intermission is in any way a punishment or disciplinary suspension and treat all non-disciplinary intermission with appropriate tact and care.
- 2.7. The rest of this note will primarily deal with students who are “intermitting”.

3. General Principles

3.1. *Prioritisation of use of college resources*

- 3.1.1. The college is an academic community and the college is also a charity legally obliged only to use its resources to further the objects and principles set out in the statutes.
- 3.1.2. One of the college’s aims stated in the AEDP is “wherever possible to help students pass their first public exams and in due course graduate with a 2.1 or 1st class honours degree.” The aim of the college in any consideration of intermission is equally to help students graduate successfully even if that means taking a break from their course and studies in college.
- 3.1.3. Whilst the college therefore aims to help students complete their courses successfully, even if that means some students suspending status and intermitting, there are limits to the assistance the college can give intermitting students who have suspended status and are not currently students studying on course. Such limits may be defined by the non-academic needs of intermitting students and other factors such as regulation, but also by the limited financial and other resources, including time, that are at the disposal of college members.
- 3.1.4. Since the college’s resources are limited the college must ensure that its primary focus is on currently enrolled students who are studying on course. The welfare of intermitting students will still be a matter of significance.
- 3.1.5. The changed status of intermitting students, rather like the changed status of graduating college alumni, does not make intermitting students less valued members of the college but it does by definition change their relationship to the

³ A summary of OU Fitness to Study Panel legislation which the college may make use of where agreement about (lack of) fitness to study cannot be reached in college is given in Appendix A.

day to day activities of the college. It is hoped, despite the limitations and delay involved, that where intermission is necessary it will result in any student concerned successfully completing their course.

3.2. *Who decides whether a student will intermit?*

3.2.1. There are exceptional circumstances when a student might be obliged to suspend their status against their will but the vast majority of cases involve the student, their tutors and the tutor for undergraduates discussing and mutually agreeing whether it would be best for a student to intermit or not.

3.2.2. A student cannot decide to intermit unilaterally. Stopping academic work without having first sought permission to intermit would involve breaches of the college's AEDP and failing to turn up for or submit work for university exams without having first been withdrawn from the exams by the college, or having had the college seek permission from the proctors, could result in failure of the course.

3.2.3. It is therefore essential that students discuss intermission and gain formal permission to intermit from the college's tutor for undergraduates before intermitting. In exceptional cases, such as those involving serious accidents or other urgent causes, the reasons for intermission may mean that such permission has to be granted retrospectively, after the student has left college.

3.2.4. Intermission is thus not a right that can be exercised unilaterally and the final decision as to whether a student may intermit rests with the college.

3.3. *How long can a student intermit for?*

Most undergraduate courses require a student to have taken their FHS exams within one year beyond the normally expected completion date for their course (e.g. 4 years for a 3 year course). Permission to take finals more than a year late usually requires special permission from the Education Committee to avoid a student being "overstanding for honours". Whilst one year intermissions may be granted by the college alone, further extensions are subject to approval of the Education Committee, which works in consultation with faculties and departments as necessary. Whilst extensions are possible (for example where there are continuing medical reasons) it is expected that permission in the first instance would be for no longer than a year with the case being re-examined if an extension is sought.

3.4. *Reasons for Intermission*

There may be a number of reasons for a student to intermit. Leaving aside intermission imposed by the college (or university) for fitness to study or other reasons, intermission agreed between the college and student will usually be for either medical or welfare reasons. Welfare reasons might for example include without being limited to: financial reasons, parental leave, taking up employment, other personal reasons, studying elsewhere. Such classifications may be used by the college when informing other authorities of intermission, for example in connection with student finance issues.

3.5. *Treatment of Intermittent Students*

Students intermitting for medical, welfare or academic reasons where there are no disciplinary issues involved should be treated with the same respect and objectives in mind as currently enrolled students, namely that the college's aim is to help the student meet their academic obligations and expectations and complete their course successfully, where necessary making any reasonable adjustments covered by the Equality Act 2010 whilst ensuring that academic standards are maintained.

3.6. *Individual Treatment*

All intermitting students are individuals and no two cases of intermission are likely to be exactly the same. Whilst general principles and guidelines may be set up, each

intermission will have to be arranged on an individual basis and if necessary tailored to individual circumstances but steered by a respect for equal treatment as regards college and university regulations.

3.7. Information and Advice about Intermission

Students should be provided on request with access to written guidance (such as this document) about the general process of intermission (this document will be available on the college website at <http://www.spc.ox.ac.uk/about/official-information>). Students may also consult the tutor for undergraduates or their tutors for advice about intermission. Tutors, and especially newly appointed tutors, will be informed of the existence of this document and told where they can find further advice via the college's tutors' handbook which is issued annually to all new and existing tutors.

3.8. Returning and Re-integrating

3.8.1. Students who have suspended status and are intermitting are by definition not in the same position as enrolled students and not subject to fees or access to the resources and facilities supported by fees such as formal tuition. Nonetheless students should be encouraged to maintain contact with their tutors whilst away from their studies and tutors may also maintain contact with intermitting students with the aim of assisting intermitting students to return to their studies and re-integrate successfully into the college on their return.

3.8.2. Immediately prior to, or shortly, after their return from intermitting, the student's tutor or the tutor for undergraduates or college registrar should contact the student. This may in any event be necessary to remind a student to submit medical certificates in support of their return and/ or otherwise comply with other terms of their intermission regarding their return.

3.8.3. Tutors should consider what might be done to help the individual student prepare to meet their normal expected workload and what meetings might be offered following the student's return to study to welcome them back.

3.8.4. Students returning from Intermission should be offered the opportunity of meeting with one or more of the tutor for undergraduates, their main subject tutor, and the Senior and Junior Welfare Officers.

4. Considering Intermission

4.1. In the first instance either the student, or a student's tutor or some other college officer may raise the possibility of a student intermitting.

4.1.1. Where a tutor or other college officer is considering doing so, this should first be done with the tutor for undergraduates and where appropriate the views of any of the college's welfare team should be sought before raising the possibility with the student.

4.1.2. Where the student is considering doing so they may in the first instance consult any of the junior or senior welfare officers, the tutor for welfare, any of their subject tutors or the tutor for undergraduates. More detailed subsequent discussion must be with the tutor for undergraduates, the registrar or, in their absence, the senior tutor. The final decision to allow intermission and the terms of the intermission lies with the tutor for undergraduates or, in their absence, the senior tutor.

4.1.3. A student wishing to discuss intermission with any college tutor or college officer, or member of the welfare team, may ask to be accompanied by one other member of the college. The role of any accompanying member is purely

to accompany and support the student wishing to discuss intermission. They are not to act as an intermediary, representative or advocate in any discussion.

Any member of college accompanying a student discussing intermission should be reminded that the entire discussion is confidential and subject to the college's confidentiality policy⁴.

To avoid any misunderstandings an accompanying member of college may be asked to leave the room at any point so that the student discussing intermission can confirm that the accompanying member is present with their permission and/or to confirm whether the student discussing intermission is content to discuss any particular matter in the presence of the accompanying member.

- 4.2. In the case of a student considering intermission on medical grounds the college will require a certificate from one of the college doctors which supports the student's request to intermit. Wherever possible this should be obtained before a student leaves Oxford and will, other than in exceptional circumstances, always be a condition of intermission on medical grounds.
- 4.3. In considering intermission, it is for an intermitting student to decide where a student resides and how she/he spends their time but both tutors and students should carefully consider the implications of the options open to an intermitting student with a particular eye on the likely impact on the aim of returning to complete the course successfully.
- 4.4. Intermission should always only be considered as a last resort when other means of resolving a problem while continuing on course have been considered, tried and been found not to work or are clearly inappropriate.
- 4.5. The potential advantages of a year out from academic work may, and often do, enable a student to resolve problems which would otherwise have prevented them achieving their potential. However, up to a year's break from study runs the risk of disengagement from academic study and the disadvantages of a break in studies often outweigh any advantages. Students are not likely to improve their academic achievement through intermission unless there is some significant involuntary cause of underperformance which can clearly be overcome in the break provided by intermission.
- 4.6. Students who may feel that they are underperforming relative to their potential should not therefore see intermission as a means of improving their performance. The college will not agree to intermission solely on the grounds that an undergraduate is, or feels, ill-prepared for examinations, or that they have underperformed on their course or are unwilling to meet their minimum academic obligations and workload.
- 4.7. It should not be possible for any student to gain an unfair advantage over students who do not intermit so that academic standards are maintained.
- 4.8. If there are factors that may be seen to affect or have affected a student's performance in exams it may be more appropriate to submit a 'Factors Affecting Performance' form to the proctors which will enable the examiners to take the circumstances into account without the delays to course completion that intermission necessarily involves.
- 4.9. In very exceptional cases it may be possible by agreement with the university's Disability Advisory Service, the Education Committee, the relevant faculty or department and the student's tutors to make reasonable adjustments to their course, other than intermission, which will enable them to continue whilst preserving

⁴ (<http://www.spc.ox.ac.uk/sites/www.spc.ox.ac.uk/files/Statement%20on%20Confidentiality.pdf>).

academic standards for the course.

- 4.10. In some limited instances where a candidate withdraws before their final exams start (withdrawal after exams start is only possible if due to illness or other urgent cause) a student may, if not overstanding for honours (which would then involve seeking permission from the university's Education Committee as well), be permitted by the college to intermit and re-enter in the subsequent year. This would only involve returning to Oxford to sit the exams in question. The same considerations apply as regards normal intermission. Past experience suggests that in the absence of exceptional circumstances this is only likely to result in a delayed and more difficult route to graduation with the same degree class or result that would have been obtained if the student had taken their exams at the first opportunity.
- 4.11. College and university fees are not payable for a term if a student has begun intermitting before Monday of 4th week of the term concerned.
- 4.12. The university's residence requirements mean that a student must have been in residence for at least 6 weeks of a term for the term to qualify towards completing their course's residence requirement.
- 4.13. If, quite apart from any considerations regarding intermission on non-disciplinary grounds, a student is also subject to disciplinary proceedings under the college's AEDP or SRs then those proceedings, if not also resulting in a disciplinary suspension of status, will be stayed during intermission and unless otherwise stated will resume on the student's resumption of their course. (Whilst particular proceedings may be stayed as the result of intermission it should be noted that intermitting students are still subject to college rules and regulations including the AEDP and SRs).
- 4.14. In conclusion, there may be exceptional circumstances where intermission can be of considerable assistance in helping students to achieve their potential and graduate successfully. However, it is often not the best solution and should only be undertaken after careful discussion and preferably by agreement between a student and their tutors.

5. Leaving

- 5.1. Once it has been agreed by a student and the tutor for undergraduates that the student should intermit, the tutor for undergraduates will draw up an intermission letter which will set out the conditions under which the student is permitted to suspend their status and intermit their course.
- 5.2. A draft of the individual intermission letter or a draft pro-forma intermission letter may be used to explain the usual conditions attached to intermission. An individual intermission letter will subsequently be sent to the student by email and if they are not in residence to their last known home address on their student record.
- 5.3. The intermission letter will be sent to the student by email and in paper copies one of which should be signed by the student indicating agreement to the conditions and returned to the tutor for undergraduates or registrar.
- 5.4. Once the student has written or verbal permission to intermit (the latter should be confirmed in writing / email) from the tutor for undergraduates they may leave college and begin their period of intermission.
- 5.5. The student intermitting should pay all outstanding battels, and return keys and key fobs to the lodge prior to beginning intermission. If they are leaving any student accommodation they should also inform the accommodation manager.

6. Intermitting

6.1. What a student does and where during intermission is for them to decide. The purpose of intermission is to resolve the issues that led to intermission so that the student can return to their course and complete it successfully. Exactly how this is achieved will differ for each student and the only common feature might be a period immediately prior to return from intermission when a student should begin to prepare to resume their full time academic workload and when advice on how best to do this could usefully be sought from their tutor.

6.2. Once a student has left college and begun their period of intermission they are no longer an enrolled student studying on their course but a student whose student status is suspended pending their return to their studies.

6.3. As such an intermitting student will necessarily be subject to a number of conditions. The following outlines the usual conditions that might apply but is not limited to all the conditions that intermission might be made dependent on in any particular case.

6.3.1. Battels

Students must contact the Finance Department and settle any outstanding battels before intermitting.

6.3.2. Keys

Students must return any college keys or key fobs to the lodge prior to departure.

6.3.3. Finance

Any discussions with Student Finance England or other funding bodies about a student's fees and other financial arrangements are the student's responsibility, although the university will write to confirm the dates of intermission to the Student Loans Company.

6.3.4. Tutors and Tuition

Although tutors may advise a student informally on academic matters during intermission, and a student may contact their tutors regarding any work to prepare for their return, students are not paying for or entitled to formal tuition whilst intermitting.

6.3.5. Accommodation

It is the intermitting student's responsibility to ensure that accommodation is arranged for their return. Students are of course welcome to seek the advice of the college accommodation manager about this.

6.3.6. Examination Entry

Students who are intermitting, and due to return to sit examinations/submit work during the academic year, will be required to enter for their exams using student self service by the advertised date. Students will be invited to enter by an email sent to their @ox.ac.uk email address and students should ensure that they monitor their university email account, or have it diverted to their personal account.

Students should liaise with the fellow's secretary about exam entry in Michaelmas term.

6.3.7. Council Tax

According to the OU Academic Records Office (aro@admin.ox.ac.uk) as of August 2017 and following a review of local policy, Oxford City Council will no longer offer an exemption from Council Tax for students who have suspended

their studies. Students who are currently suspended, and who already have an approved council tax exemption in place, will not be affected - unless they move house and make a new council tax claim.

If a student who has suspended their studies finds themselves in hardship, they can apply for a discretionary discount under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act. The Council policy for discretionary discounts can be found on the local government website:

<https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2115/council_tax_discretionary_discount_procedure>. Students applying for this would be expected to provide evidence of their situation for a discretionary discount to be considered.

The OU Student Registry provide details to the Council of enrolled students and their term time address in Oxford to facilitate the Council's processing of student exemptions. A student who becomes ineligible for a student council tax exemption, as they are no longer have enrolled status, will immediately become liable for payment and the Council will seek recovery of discounts, which may include interest. This liability will commence at the start of the period of suspension.

Other local authorities may also consider that having suspended status means a student does not meet the definition of a full-time student, and therefore they may be liable to pay council tax. Some authorities will consider the reasons for suspension when deciding liability to pay. For further advice please contact student.information@admin.ox.ac.uk.

6.3.8. Student Visa

Changes in a student's status may affect their visa. Students should seek advice from the university's Tier4compliance@admin.ox.ac.uk prior to intermitting.

6.3.9. Submitted Work

Where a student who intermits has already submitted work (such as extended essays or project work or a thesis) as part of their formally examined work for Final Honour School (FHS) or First Public Exam (FPE, e.g. prelims / mods) it may be possible to request that the work is held over for assessment by examiners in the following year when the student returns from intermission. It is essential that this issue is discussed by the student and their tutors and formal permission sought from the Education Committee by the college registrar. If this is not done the work may be destroyed and completely new work will need to be resubmitted.

6.3.10. College and university rules and regulations

Suspended students including intermitting students, are still members of the university and college and as such are subject, allowing for necessary variations, to university and college rules and regulations.

6.3.11. Eligibility for Sports and other Teams

Eligibility for university level sports is decided by rules set by Oxford University Sport⁶ and the requirement that a student be "actively studying for, a recognised degree" would imply that suspended, including intermitting, students are ineligible. Other sports and competitions may have their own rules but the assumption should be that unless there are clear statements to the contrary on suspension, including intermission, a student is likely to be ineligible for college and other sports teams.

Eligibility for university team participation is a separate matter from access to university sports facilities which may well depend on whether a student is a paid

⁶ <http://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/student-sport/varsity/criteria/>

member of such facilities which in turn is conditional on possession of a university card.

6.3.12. Eligibility to hold college offices / employment

Suspended students including intermitting students are not normally permitted to hold any college post or college employment during their period of intermission.

6.3.13. Access to University Facilities

i) Intermitting students will normally have access to certain university facilities as set out by the university⁷. This will normally mean that intermitting students can retain their university card, Single Sign On (SSO) access to online resources, including email, and to University libraries. If their university card expires during intermission students should contact the college office to arrange renewal.

ii) Intermitting students may contact the university's Disability Advisory Service (DAS) whilst intermitting but services accessed through the Disabled Students Allowance will not be available until a student returns to formal studies. This includes services such as specialist SpLD tuition, specialist mentoring, assistive technology training, proof-reading and library assistance.

iii) Intermitting students may also contact the University Counselling Service whilst intermitting and this may occur via on-line counselling support. Longer or more specialised treatment will need referral to the appropriate NHS services. Students already in contact with the University Counselling Service should contact the service to discuss intermission and how the service might help with their return to studies as the end of their intermission approaches.

6.3.14. Access to college facilities and resources

The college wishes to support intermitting students by allowing them to overcome the issues that led to intermission and return to successfully complete their course. But there is a distinction to be drawn between the full range of facilities available to on course students and the facilities and resources a student may have access to whilst intermitting and not studying on course or paying college fees.

Intermitting students will not visit or use any college facilities or remain on college premises without the prior written permission of their college tutor or other college officer. This includes common rooms, the computing room, the dining hall, the lodge (pigeonhole), the library, the bar, the JCR and the college's accommodation.

6.3.15. Under the current JCR constitution intermitting students remain members of the JCR for up to two years with no obligation to pay their termly fees, though this continued membership is without prejudice to "any limitations the college may legitimately impose on the rights of suspended status members". This will include intermitting students and is therefore subject to those conditions regarding intermission mentioned in this document and in intermission letters.

6.3.16. Permitted access to college facilities and resources

6.3.16.1. Students seeking permission for access to college during intermission may in the first instance consult any of the junior or senior welfare officers, the tutor for welfare, any of their subject tutors or the tutor for

⁷ See <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/undergraduate/status?wssl=1>

undergraduates.

6.3.16.2. The final decision to allow access to college during intermission lies with any of the student's tutors or any college officer.

6.3.16.3. Where tutors or other college officers grant permission for an intermitting student to access college this should be confirmed in writing to the student and circulated to the student's other tutors, the lodge staff, the tutor for undergraduates, and the decanal and welfare teams.

6.3.16.4. Examples where tutors and college officers may normally permit access to college - but are not obliged to - if a request is received from an intermitting student could include but are not necessarily limited to:

a) Access to college library facilities. This may be particularly appropriate where university facilities are insufficient, a student is preparing to return from intermission and intermitting students' use of college library facilities would not hinder their use by enrolled students. A fob key giving access to the library may be issued in such cases.

b) Access to the college site to attend specific college events and which are either events open to the public or events to which guests of college members might be invited.

c) Such events might include end of term (post Friday 6pm of 8th week) and beginning of term (pre Monday of 1st week) functions, plays, performances, public lectures, speaker events and chapel services held in college.

d) Visits to a student's tutor or other college officer by prior appointment.

6.3.16.5. Permission to access college may be granted by an intermitting student's tutors or any college officer within the above guidelines for an individual event or for multiple specified events occurring in a specified term. Where permission for specified events is given the college retains the right subsequently to deny or rescind any permission granted to access college.

6.3.16.6. As a general principle an intermitting student with no academic obligations and not paying college fees should not normally be spending any significant amounts of time in the academic environment of the college. If an intermitting student is doing so without good cause then it suggests that consideration should be given as to whether intermission should cease and they should continue with their course.

6.3.16.7. Persistent flouting of agreed restrictions on access to college facilities by intermitting students may result in a requirement that their intermission be reassessed and if no longer deemed appropriate, permission to intermit may be withdrawn and/or other appropriate action taken under the college's student regulations or statutes.

6.3.16.8. Intermitting students' time in college during their intermission period should normally be confined to those occasions when either there is an academic or administrative reason to permit their presence or there is a permitted event which is clearly distinguished in time and space within the college.

6.3.16.9. The college's limited resources are intended primarily for the use of enrolled fee paying students who are studying on course. Intermitting students are not therefore entitled to formal tuition during their intermission though they are encouraged to keep in contact with their tutors. Intermitting students are also encouraged to contact their tutors if appropriate immediately prior to their returning to their studies.

6.3.16.9. A student may wish to keep in contact with the college's welfare team and especially immediately prior to their return to college. However, intermitting students' welfare needs cannot be the primary responsibility of the college welfare team whose limited resources are only intended to support enrolled students who are studying.

As mentioned above there is limited access to university counselling services for intermitting students and intermitting students' health needs should be met by their local NHS and other resources.

6.4. Maintaining Contact with college

6.4.1. Intermitting students are permitted to intermit because continuing their studies without a complete break from study or making reasonable adjustments to enable continued study have not proved possible. The college is primarily a place of study and it is therefore expected that some students will be advised on medical grounds to take a complete break from college precisely because it has been their place of study.

6.4.2. The ultimate aim of intermitting is to return to study and it might therefore be important to maintain links with college where those can facilitate an intermitting student's eventual return to academic study.

6.4.3. Where a student can spend their period of intermission away from Oxford occasional visits to Oxford during the period of intermission, if they occur at all, are unlikely to fall outside the permitted exceptions above and maintaining contact with the college will primarily be a matter of communicating with tutors and others by email.

6.4.4. Some intermitting students may choose or have no option but to continue living in Oxford in non-college accommodation. In such cases maintaining links with the college whilst intermitting should still occur within the permitted access listed above and by communicating with tutors and others by email.

6.4.5. When an intermitting student visits college during their intermission period with appropriate permission they should be welcome. Where tutors or other college officers give permission for an intermitting student to access college facilities and resources this should be confirmed in writing to the student and circulated to the student's other tutors, the lodge staff, the tutor for undergraduates, and the decanal and welfare teams so that misunderstandings as to whether or not an intermitting student has permission to be in college are avoided.

7. Return & Reintegration

7.1. It is important that students who intermit make suitable preparations to return to their studies as the end of their period of intermission approaches and that they comply with any conditions that may have been agreed regarding their return.

7.2. Notification of Return

A student's intermission letter will usually require a student to contact their tutors and /or the college registrar at least one month prior to their return to confirm that

they intend to return.

7.3. Conditions regarding Return

Intermission letters will specify any conditions that must be met prior to a student being allowed to return from intermission and resume their course. If a student has not complied with any such conditions regarding their return by the due date specified in their intermission letter the registrar and/or tutor for undergraduates will contact them and remind them.

7.4. In the exceptionally rare case that, despite reminders having been sent, an intermitting student does not notify the college in sufficient time that they intend to return from intermission the college reserves the right to assume that the student does not wish to continue their studies at Oxford University and deem them to have withdrawn from their course.

7.5. Medical Conditions regarding Return

In the case of students intermitting on medical grounds it will, other than in exceptional circumstances, always be a condition of subsequent return from intermission on medical grounds that a student obtains a certificate from one of the college doctors confirming that they are fit to resume their studies and specifying any conditions which might be made regarding their return. The certificate must be sent to the registrar or tutor for undergraduates before a specified date, usually a month prior to their planned return. The intermitting student should plan to visit the doctors early enough to allow this to happen in time.

7.6. In some circumstances where a student's home is distant from Oxford the student may be given permission to substitute a certificate confirming fitness to study from their home GP or any medically qualified doctor or consultant who has responsibility for their clinical care (not being a family member) providing that this is confirmed by one of the college doctors following their return to study.

7.7. Academic Arrangements for Students Returning from Intermission

Students returning from intermission are fully enrolled students. Intermitting students are not expected to be carrying out academic work whilst intermitting but are expected to be able to cope with their normal enrolled student's workload following their return. Intermitting students may therefore wish to seek the advice of their tutors regarding any preparations they can make to enable them to take up their studies again more easily, particularly as regards the coming term's work. Tutors may in response suggest reading and essays which might assist students.

7.8. Collections

Enrolled students should expect to sit a formally invigilated collection at the beginning of each term for each subject that they studied the preceding term unless they took a public exam (e.g. prelims/ mods/ finals) the preceding term or they have been informed otherwise by their tutors⁸. A student returning from intermission will in most cases not have been studying the preceding term but should nonetheless consult with their tutor as to whether they should sit any collection papers and if so what they should be.

7.8.1. A student returning from intermission may be asked to sit a collection, usually on work that they have studied before intermission; they will not normally be expected to sit a collection on new work. Collections will normally only be set for students returning from intermission if it would be useful to gauge the student's retention of material studied before intermission to enable work to be planned.

7.8.2. The return of a student intermitting solely on medical or welfare grounds should not normally be made conditional on performance in any collection.

⁸ <http://www.spc.ox.ac.uk/sites/www.spc.ox.ac.uk/files/Collections%20guidance%20note.pdf>

This is without prejudice to the possibility that a student subject to separate disciplinary procedures (whether under the AEDP or SR) might have their return made subject to conditions which could include performance in a collection or other written work and without prejudice to any stayed disciplinary proceedings which might resume on a student's return following intermission.

7.8.3.A student intermitting on medical or welfare grounds which have involved questions regarding their fitness to study or their commitment and/or ability to meet their academic obligations may have their return made subject to the successful and timely completion of a series of academic tasks similar to those they might be required to complete for tutorials on their return. The possibility of any such conditions must be mentioned in the intermission letter and clearly specified in advance of the tasks concerned.

An example of such work might involve the student confirming their intention to return, and if intermitting on medical grounds having been declared fit to return to study, and then in the month prior to their return the student's tutors sending them an online reading list and essay title with a request to submit a tutorial essay based on the reading material within one week, with a further such exercise then being set. Successful completion of the series of essays to expected standards (AEDP 2.2.(a)(ii)) and within the time limits specified should give the student and their tutors some assurance that the student is committed to and capable of returning to normal tutorial work.

Failure to complete such a task on which return is conditional may involve a further period of intermission until the student can show that they are capable of returning to their studies and meeting their minimum academic obligations. Where there are questions regarding a student's fitness to study which cannot be resolved by agreement between the student and the college the case may be referred to the University Fitness to Study Panel⁹.

7.9. Reintegration

Students returning from a period of intermission will need to re-adjust to life as a full time enrolled student both in terms of academic work and life in the academic college community. In order to assist with this and as outlined (at 3.8) above, students returning from intermission will be offered the opportunity of meeting with one or more of the tutor for undergraduates, their main subject tutor, and the senior and junior welfare officers if they wish. They may also contact officers of the JCR regarding their reintegration with JCR activities.

8. Additional Issues & Questions

This guidance note cannot hope to cover all the possible implications and variations which may accompany intermission for any particular student. Students with remaining questions about intermission are therefore encouraged to discuss any detailed questions they may have regarding intermission with their tutor(s), the tutor for undergraduates (robert.pitkethly@spc.ox.ac.uk) or the college registrar.

⁹ A summary of OU Fitness to Study Panel legislation which the college may make use of where agreement about (lack of) fitness to study cannot be reached in college is given in Appendix A.

OU Fitness to Study Panel

1. The University has “Fitness to Study Panel” legislation which is now part of University Statute XIII Part B (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/787-121.shtml>).
2. Regulations for the Panel can be found at :
<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/76-0812.shtml>

A primary referring body which can refer a student to the panel could include a college. (see Pt1 1.2 (4) in the regulation above). A student’s condition can give rise to immediate suspension by the Proctors but such suspension must be reviewed every 21 days (Reglns Pt1 3.10 (1) & (2).

3. In 2012 when the FtS Panel started the University issued a “rationale” (http://www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/fitness_to_study/) which summarised the panel’s aims as :

“Summary

The Fitness to Study regulations aim to provide a common framework across departments/faculties and colleges for dealing with cases where questions arise as to whether a student is fit to study or return to study after a period of leave on account of medical, psychological or emotional problems. It is recognised that college procedures work well in the vast majority of cases and that the Fitness to Study regulations would be used in a limited number of cases. The regulations establish a set of procedures to deal with the small number of serious and difficult fitness to study cases and will be applied only after normal college or department/faculty procedures have, in the reasonable view of the relevant college or department/faculty been followed appropriately. A new body, the Fitness to Study Panel, is proposed to which colleges, departments and faculties may refer such cases. The outcome of the Fitness to Study Panel’s deliberations will be a **decision** on behalf of the University and a **recommendation** to the relevant college which will be based on academic judgment informed by medical, legal and other expert opinion. Such decisions/recommendations will combine a proper regard for the welfare of the student with recognition of the demanding academic requirements of Oxford degree courses. The underlying principle is to provide a coordinated mechanism for resolving the small number of cases that have not been resolved by the usual means in colleges and/or departments/faculties, thereby reducing the risk of both the inequitable treatment of students and successful appeals to the OIA or the courts.”

4. The Panel is said not to deal with “routine” / ”straightforward” cases :

“C. What the regulations do not deal with

13. These regulations are not for dealing with a) routine cases of academic underperformance or b) straightforward breaches of college or university disciplinary codes which in either case do not include serious medical, psychological or emotional problems.

Matters which are solely disciplinary, decanal or concern academic underperformance should be dealt with by existing procedures and fall outside the scope of the regulations.”

The panel can have students referred to it by a college or department but is not a body that a student can appeal to.