

## ARDEN UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT

### QA 75 Break in Learning Policy

1. **A Break in Learning** allows a student to temporarily suspend their studies for a specified period of time to avoid withdrawal due to challenging personal reasons which have a substantial impact on ability to study (including, but not limited to medical, pregnancy/maternity/paternity/adoption leave or personal issues). It is important that you apply for a break in learning at the time that your personal circumstances affect your ability to study.
2. You must provide valid reasons and supporting evidence for your application, applications without appropriate supporting evidence will not be considered.
3. An application for a break in learning during the first 6 months of your programme will not normally be permitted.
4. You will be counselled individually on the precise length of time of the break in learning according to your individual circumstances. You may apply for leave up to a maximum of 12 months. In exceptional circumstances extensions beyond the 12-month limit may be considered at the discretion of the Academic Registrar. You will normally be permitted one break in learning period during your programme of study.
5. If the reason for requesting a break in learning is financial and you are experiencing financial difficulties, you should seek advice from the Finance Team ([financequeries@arden.ac.uk](mailto:financequeries@arden.ac.uk)). The Finance Team will discuss your individual circumstances and explore all options available to you.
6. For personal circumstances affecting a short period of time such as one study block or assessment period, you should consider applying for a 'short-term authorised absence' (**available for blended learning students only**) or submit a claim for extenuating circumstances in accordance with **QA 41 Extenuating Circumstances** rather than request a break in learning.
7. If you are studying on a **blended learning programme**, absences from class which occur before a break in learning is approved will *be managed through the **University QA88 Attendance and Engagement Policy***.
8. If you are considering taking a break in learning, you should seek guidance from student support or where applicable, your International Student Advisor, prior to requesting a break in learning. You may also request to talk through issues you are experiencing with your Programme Team Leader. Depending on circumstances there may be alternative solutions to assist you in your studies and you will then be advised accordingly.

9. A successful application for a break in learning may have implications for your progression, future study intensity, student finance, visa status, and other issues which are outside of Arden University's control. You should discuss the possible implications with student support or where applicable your International Student Advisor in the first instance. We advise you to contact the relevant bodies prior to applying for a break in learning to ensure you are fully aware of all possible consequences.
10. To request a break in learning you should complete the Break in Learning request, accessed via the Arden University Student Portal.
11. Break in Learning requests must be confirmed by the University and where possible you should continue to study until you have received confirmation that the break in learning has been authorised by the Programme Team/Academic Leader and/or the Head of Centre.
12. If you are financing your studies through a payment plan, on receipt of an approved break in learning request, you must immediately inform and provide this confirmation to the Finance Team ([paymentplans@arden.ac.uk](mailto:paymentplans@arden.ac.uk)) with an instruction to end your existing payment plan contract. To note, a Break in Learning will not be granted for financial reasons.
13. You will not be required to pay tuition fees for the period of absence from the University but will be liable to pay for the period leading up to the point of your **approved break in learning**. On your return to study, you will be required to pay any outstanding monies and the first instalment of any new payment plan that is required.
14. If you are receiving financial support from Student Finance organisations, such as the Student Loan Company (SLC) in England, when you are on an approved break in learning, the University is required to inform the appropriate external organisation of the change of status and funding payments will be adjusted accordingly. During the break in learning, you will not usually receive any payments.
15. If you are an international student studying in the UK and/or the Arden Berlin Study Centre and hold a student study visa, your right to remain in the country may be affected by taking a break in learning and as a visa sponsor, the University is legally required to report a student's change of registration status to the appropriate authorities. **You must seek immigration advice from the International Students Advisors prior to submitting a break in learning request.**
16. Requests for backdated break in learning to cover previous assessment periods will not normally be considered. Where there are circumstances that have prevented you from submitting an assessment or seriously affected your performance, you should submit a claim for extenuating circumstances and/or appeal in accordance with **QA 41**

### **Extenuating Circumstances and/or QA24 Academic Appeals Procedure.**

17. The date of resumption of studies will be agreed between you and student support at the point of application. An appropriate date in the academic calendar for resumption will be determined and will always be the first day of the commencement of the next module to be studied irrespective of whether it was previously studied in part.
18. Grades achieved prior to the start date of the break in learning will be carried forward. If you have submitted an assessment component prior to your break in learning but have not successfully completed the module, it may not be possible to carry forward individual module component marks if there are changes to the assessment requirements during the time of the break in learning.
19. Maximum periods of registration for online distance programmes permit flexibility in the pace of study and allow for any break in learning and/or consideration of extenuating circumstances. Therefore, if you are studying an online distance learning programme, an approved break in learning does NOT extend the maximum registration period of your programme. For students studying online programmes with a prescribed timetable or blended learning/degree apprenticeship programmes, a break in learning may result in an extension to the planned programme completion date. Individual timetables will be provided for students setting out the dates for the study of missed modules.
20. When you are due to return from a Break in Learning you will be contacted by student support to confirm the details of your return.
21. If you wish to return to your programme of study earlier than the agreed date you should contact student support the first instance. If you request an early return from a break in learning due to medical reasons, you may be required to provide a medical note confirming that you are fit to resume your programme of study.
22. If you are unable to return from a break in learning on the agreed date you should contact student support for further advice.
23. If you do not return from a Break in Learning on the expected date and fail to inform the University, you will be deemed to have withdrawn and shall be presented for formal withdrawal at the next Progression and Awards Board.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Policy Name:            | Break in Learning Policy   |
| Policy Reference:       | QA75   |
| Approval Authority:     | Academic Framework, Regulation and Policy Committee  |
| Last Approved:          | April 2024   |
| Responsible SMT Lead:   | Academic Registrar   |
| Responsible Department: | Academic Affairs   |
| Policy Contact:         | Joanne Walker, Head of Quality<br>( <a href="mailto:jwaker@arden.ac.uk">jwaker@arden.ac.uk</a> ) |
| Review Frequency:       | 3 years  |