

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

MANAGING INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES APPLICATIONS

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1. Acceptable reasons to consider for approval of interruption of studies

- 1.1. The following reasons may be considered to support an application for interruption.
 - 1.1.1. Work responsibilities
 - 1.1.2. Medical reasons
 - 1.1.3. Financial reasons
 - 1.1.4. Highly special personal circumstances, if thoroughly and convincingly substantiated.
- 1.2. All interruption applications must be substantiated by acceptable supporting documents, such as letter of appointment, text of academic assignment, medical certificate(s) or report(s), financial statement(s), and affidavit or any other relevant documents depending on the nature of the request.
- 1.3. An interruption of studies may be granted for a full academic year (i.e. starting in January and ending in December) and not for parts of an academic year. Leave of absence for shorter periods (i.e. less than a full academic year) must be handled according to the rules for "Absence from academic activities" earlier on in this yearbook.
- 1.4. An interruption of studies may be granted once at the most for a period of one full academic year (i.e. starting in January and ending in December) for the following programmes:
 - 1.4.1. Undergraduate bachelor's degrees, diplomas or certificates
 - 1.4.2. Honours degrees and postgraduate diplomas
 - 1.4.3. Masters degrees
- 1.5. An interruption of studies for the degree of Doctor may be granted either twice at the most, namely for a period of one academic year (i.e. starting in January and ending in December) in each instance, or once only, namely for a period of two academic years
- 1.6. Academic environments are at liberty to deny applications for interruption of study where such applications are not lodged in good time, or where such applications are

not practically feasible based on the requirements of the programme concerned.

17. Applications and associated supporting documents that are illegible or that have been altered may be rejected and if it can be proven that the student altered such a supporting document, it could lead to disciplinary action.

2. Managing an interruption of studies application

- 2.1. Students must complete the [interruption of studies application form](#) and submit it to the relevant Faculty Administrator or delegated official in the Registrar's Division on or before 30 April of the year concerned.
 - 2.1.1. Applications received after 30 April of the year concerned will be considered on merit, if the student has not registered for the year.
 - 2.1.2. A third-party interruption of studies application will only be considered if the student is medically incapacitated (with evidence submitted of the medical incapacity).
 - 2.1.3. If the student has submitted their application to the academic environment directly, the Faculty Administrator must be informed immediately to provisionally capture the interruption on the academic record and initiate the required processes.
- 2.2. The relevant Faculty Administrator will forward the application and the supporting documents to the relevant academic environment who must consider the application as follows
 - 2.2.1. Applications for interruption of studies for **undergraduate programmes** must be considered and recommended by the programme leader, or another designated official of the faculty concerned and be submitted to the relevant committee(s) or designated official of the faculty.
 - 2.2.1.1. The faculty's relevant committee(s) or designated official must consider the application based on its internal procedures and communicate the outcome to the Faculty Administrator for processing and Faculty Board for noting.
 - 2.2.1.2. The Faculty Administrator or their delegate should enter the recommendation regarding an approved application for interruption under Academic Notes on the student's golden record in SUNStudent. This entry must include the year of and reasons for the interruption.
 - 2.2.1.3. The relevant Faculty Administrator or their delegate will communicate the outcome of the interruption application in writing by email, after the relevant faculty has considered the application and after the request was approved.
 - 2.2.2. Applications for interruption of studies for **postgraduate programmes** must be recommended by the supervisor or programme leader and the chairperson of the department concerned and must be submitted by the departmental chairperson to the relevant governance structures of the faculty, including the faculty board.
 - 2.2.2.1. The relevant faculty board must consider the application based on its internal procedures and communicate the outcome in the next Communications Report of the faculty board to Senate.
 - 2.2.2.2. The Faculty Administrator or their delegate should enter the recommendation regarding an approved application for interruption under Academic Notes on the student's golden record in SUNStudent. This entry must include the year of and reasons for the interruption.
 - 2.2.2.3. The relevant Faculty Administrator or their delegate will communicate the outcome of your interruption application in writing by email, after the relevant faculty board has considered the application and after the request was approved by the Executive Committee (Senate).

2.2.3. All academic environments must clearly outline whether there are any conditions associated to the interruption and if so, must include such conditions in their recommendation report before approving the interruption request so that the Faculty Administrator can communicate the conditions to the student when approval is granted.

2.2.3.1. These conditions must also include an indication of what will happen to the student if the conditions are not met.

3. Impact of interruption on the academic record and student fees

- 3.1. Students will not be registered in the year of interruption.
- 3.2. Students who are granted interruption of studies do not have access to university emails, systems, classes, the libraries, residence or any other SU facility during the interruption year.
- 3.3. Where interruption of studies has been granted before the stipulated due dates, all modules for the period for which results have been entered, will be deregistered and the student will have to repeat these modules anew upon their return.
- 3.4. For postgraduate and other research components, the ethics approval and research topic will not lapse for the approved interruption period, but no research activity may take place during the interruption.
- 3.5. Students' continued registration with the relevant professional or regulatory bodies (e.g. the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) or the South African Nursing Council (SANC)) will be managed according to these bodies' registration requirements during the interruption period.
- 3.6. A student who has engaged in behaviour that violates regulations, rules or policies of the University, and/or is the subject of a disciplinary enquiry in terms of the University's Disciplinary Code for Students, and/or the disciplinary code of their residence, will not be granted an interruption of studies.
- 3.7. Outstanding fees must be paid in full prior to or upon the student's return from interruption.
- 3.8. Students are solely responsible to and must timeously consult their funder/sponsor to determine the impact of interruption on the continuation of their funding.
- 3.9. For more information on fees payable, consult the [Student Fees Yearbook Part 3](#).

4. Managing requests to return to studies after an interruption

- 4.1. All students wishing to return to studies after an interruption must complete an application to the programme concerned on the application portal (<https://student.sun.ac.za/>) before they will be allowed to reregister. This is required to ensure that the student's latest information is captured on the University's administration system prior to registration.
- 4.2. Students granted an interruption of studies for non-medical grounds and if no conditions were set by the academic environment for the student's return:
 - 4.2.1. Such students will automatically be readmitted to the programme in the year(s) after the interruption of studies was taken

- 4.3. Students granted an interruption on medical grounds and who wish to resume their studies must submit a medical report from their treating healthcare practitioner to the relevant academic environment, indicating whether they are fit to resume their studies or not.
 - 4.3.1. The academic environment must consider this report and inform the relevant Faculty Administrator, if the student may reregister or not. The Faculty Administrator or their delegate will make the necessary arrangements for re-registration with the student.
 - 4.3.2. If a student is not considered fit to resume their studies by their treating healthcare practitioner or the academic environment concerned, they must be managed according to the relevant faculty's guidelines in handling fitness to practice or fitness to study.
- 4.4. Where specific conditions were set by the academic environment for the student to return to studies after an interruption and the student must submit the required documents to the relevant academic environment, indicating whether they are fit to resume their studies or not.
 - 4.4.1. The academic environment must consider this report and inform the relevant Faculty Administrator, if the student may reregister or not. The Faculty Administrator or their delegate will make the necessary arrangements for re-registration with the student.
 - 4.4.2. If a student does not meet the conditions stipulated by the academic environment, they must be managed according to conditions that were communicated to the student.
- 4.5. Students who fail to reregister after an interruption before the final registration date (as published in the University Almanac for the year concerned), will not be allowed to reregister for the programme automatically. These students must apply to the faculty concerned for approval to re-register in the programme.
- 4.6. Students who do not reregister after an interruption will also be deregistered from any professional or regulatory bodies if such registration is tied to their status as a registered SU student. The University must inform these bodies that those students' registration with the relevant body must be cancelled.
- 4.7. Students who have failed to reregister after an interruption and who want to return to the programme at a later stage, may be liable for penalty fees for the year(s) of unapproved non-registration – consult the Division for Student Finances (studentaccounts@sun.ac.za) in this regard.

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