

Procedure on Break in Learning for Apprentices

This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the University's [Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extensions](#) and [Policy on Interruptions](#).

Introduction and Scope

1. In order to adhere to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) rules, this procedure sets out how to respond to and manage breaks in learning for apprentices.
2. An apprentice may take a break in learning so long as they intend to return to the same apprenticeship programme.
3. The decision to take a break in learning, the reason for the break and its expected duration must be agreed with the employer.
4. Reasons for a break in learning could include change in work circumstances, medical treatment, parental leave or leave for other personal reasons.

Procedure

5. Schools are responsible for following the procedure, in order to ensure that any requests for breaks in learning are handled consistently and apprentices are treated equitably. Schools will be responsible for making the procedure for requesting a break in learning clear at the outset of the apprenticeship via the handbooks.
6. As soon as it is known that a learner is temporarily unable to continue with their apprenticeship, they (or their employer) should contact the programme team to agree the duration of the break.
7. For the avoidance of doubt, Schools should refer to the ESFA funding rules to clarify whether the break is a short-term absence, break in learning or withdrawal.
8. When a student has been identified as requiring a break in learning, the [Break in Learning Form](#) should be completed and submitted to the programme team confirming employer approval.
9. Apprentices require a break in learning where no active learning is expected to take place within a complete calendar month. The University is also required to retrospectively apply a break in learning where the apprentice does not engage in the expected active learning for a period of two consecutive and complete calendar months.
10. Active learning means maths/English functional skills training and/or new learning towards the Skills, Knowledge and Behaviours set out in the apprenticeship standard. In order to qualify as active learning, the activity must take place during the apprentice's paid working hours.
11. Breaks in learning do not normally exceed one year, in line with the University of Manchester Policy on Interruptions.
12. *Breaks in learning which do not trigger a break in learning under the ESFA rules will be treated as a short-term absence and be subject to the School's attendance policies.*

13. A break in learning for apprenticeships can be approved without the need for consideration at a Mitigating Circumstances panel. Any other requests for mitigation will go through the University's standard mitigating circumstances process.
14. Once the break in learning has been approved, the programme team will advise the ESFA of the break in learning and update the Individualised Learner's Records accordingly. The programme team should then mark an interruption on the University records system.
15. At least one month prior to the agreed return date, a member of the programme team should contact the apprentice to confirm return to work and training.

Procedure on Break in Learning for Apprentices: Version amendment history		
Version	Date	Reason for change
1.0	July 2021	Creation and approval by TLSG
2.0	October 2023	Changes to ESFA funding regulations relating to breaks in learning

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Related Procedures and Guidance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of Recognition of Prior Learning for Apprenticeship Programmes • Guidance for Recording Off-The-Job Training in Degree Apprenticeships • Guidance on Supporting Degree Apprentices in Redundancy
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Lead contact:	Teaching and Learning Manager (Policies and Degree Apprenticeships), Teaching and Learning Delivery, Division of SAS <i>For any queries or questions relating to this document, please direct your email to teaching-policy@manchester.ac.uk</i>