

Procedure on Break in Learning for Degree Apprentices

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

Introduction and Scope

1. In order to adhere to the Department for Education (DfE) rules, this procedure sets out how to respond to and manage breaks in learning for degree apprentices.
2. A degree apprentice may take a break in learning so long as they intend to return to the same apprenticeship programme.
3. Breaks in learning can either be provider-led or apprentice-led
4. Provider-led breaks in learning are used when there is no plan for any active learning to take place within a 3-calendar month period and usually apply to front loaded and block release delivery models
5. For apprentice-led breaks in learning, the decision to take a break in learning, the reason for the break and its expected duration must be agreed with the employer.
6. Reasons for an apprentice-led break in learning could include change in work circumstances, medical treatment, parental leave or leave for other personal reasons.

Procedure for apprentice-led breaks in learning

7. Schools are responsible for following the procedure in order to ensure that any requests for breaks in learning are handled consistently and degree apprentices 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.
8. As soon as it is known that a learner is temporarily unable to continue with their degree apprenticeship, they (or their employer) should contact the programme team to agree the duration of the break.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Breaks are normally not less than 4 weeks and do not normally exceed one year, in line with the University of Manchester [Policy on Interruptions](#). Breaks of less than 4 weeks should be treated as a short-term absence and be subject to the School's attendance policies.
12. A break in learning for degree apprenticeships can be approved without the need for consideration at the Mitigating Circumstances committee. Any other requests for mitigation will go through the University's standard mitigating circumstances process.

13. 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.
14. At least one month prior to the agreed return date, a member of the programme team should contact the degree 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 TLG Executive
2.0	October 2023	Changes to ESFA funding regulations relating to breaks in learning
2.1	June 2025	Minor amendments to align with changes to funding rules relating to provider-led breaks in learning

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Related Policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on Mitigating Circumstances • Policy on Interruptions
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 • Procedure on Supporting Return to Study
Policy owner:	Director of Student and Academic Services (SAS)
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