

## **Programme Withdrawal and Suspension Guidance Document**

### **Introduction**

These guidelines provide details of the process and documentation relating to withdrawal or suspension of taught programmes. If you require any further information, or have specific queries, please email [quality@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:quality@manchester.ac.uk) in the first instance for advice.

### **Deadlines**

For all withdrawn and suspended taught programmes, Faculty and School colleagues should use the [Withdrawal or Suspension of Taught Programmes template](#) to notify TLD. Please email approved documentation to [quality@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:quality@manchester.ac.uk).

It is imperative that paperwork is **submitted as soon as possible following approval**, and **at the latest by June in the respective recruitment cycle** e.g. June 2025 for September 2025 programme start. This is for the following reasons:

- Our [Student Protection Plan - Policy on Refunds and Compensation](#) stipulates *'if a taught programme is withdrawn after the 30th June in any recruitment cycle, the University may compensate for evidenced expenses relating to attempts to find a suitable course at another institution, up to the end of September in the same academic year.'*
- We are obliged to adhere to very tight reporting deadlines set by the Office for Students.
- Admissions can only act to remove the programme on receipt of approved documentation.

### **Legal considerations and Communication**

A potential legal risk arises where offers made to applicants have been accepted as, from that point in time, a legally binding contract comes into force. The terms of this contract can be changed but must be mindful of the potential legal implications of doing so.

The Directorate for Legal Affairs will review individual programme closures so that colleagues are fully supported where such a decision is made, and to advise accordingly. This consultation should be indicated on the [Withdrawal or Suspension of Taught Programme template](#) in the appropriate section.

*School and Faculty colleagues should refer to the following guiding principles to help mitigate and reduce potential legal risks when a programme is being withdrawn or suspended:*

- Fully document the reasons for the withdrawal and decision-making. This will strengthen justification for proceeding in this way and to anticipate challenges or questions from prospective students. This should reference any alternatives explored (e.g. online/remote/adjustments), along with student feedback/consultation (where feasible) and how this was considered. Significant adverse impacts on the learner experience can also be indicated.
- The University recognises that timing is critically important and aims to inform students of withdrawal decisions as early as possible. Early communication enables applicants to make a fully informed decision about alternative applications and choices, or perhaps to accept a place on a different programme with the University. It also means that the risk of applicants making life/planning/financial decisions (such

as securing accommodation) based upon their offer with The University of Manchester is lower, which reduces the likelihood of complaints.

- The legal risk is reduced when meaningful discussions with applicants regarding alternative relevant or of interest study options at the University are possible.
- It is helpful to be able to point to conditions considered as part of the offer made to a student E.g. reference specific published material such as where the programme may still be 'subject to approval', and/or where this may have been noted in any written offer made to an applicant.

**\*PGT ONLY \* change of programme start date (consult the programme amendment matrix):**

- The amendment process only needs to be followed in circumstances where the PGT programme is to commence at a different time to those published by the University for the new academic session i.e. teaching will not begin week commencing 26 October for PGT programmes.

Please also be mindful that PGT application deadlines vary, including dates by which applicants are to indicate their acceptance on a programme. This may impact availability of alternative options where an offer-holder does not wish to proceed on the basis of the changes made. Early communications and conversations with prospective students and applicants will therefore be critical in minimising the potential for complaints.

Several templates have been developed by Admissions colleagues to ensure consistency when communicating with different types and levels of offer-holders. The templates comply with CMA obligations and [Student Protection Plan - Policy on Refunds and Compensation](#) so please use these with limited flexibility and do not delete any content. The templates can be found at [Programme Amendment, Withdrawal and Suspension Applicant Communication Templates and Guidance](#) (if you have not got access to this Student Marketing & Recruitment, Admissions Sharepoint site, you can request access at [SMRA Hub Request Form](#)). Please note that all communication to offer holders should be done through the Admissions Team.

### **Resuming Suspended Programmes**

Colleagues should pay careful attention when resuming suspended or withdrawn provision to ensure that such programmes undergo some measure of review or revalidation to ensure currency and/or to reflect any changes that may have taken place during the dormant period. It may therefore be necessary to trigger a programme amendment prior to resuming some suspended programmes.