

Intermission Policy

Date: 10 June 2026

Last amended by: Tim Johnson

Overview

ThinkSpace Education (TSE) recognises that students may, on occasion, face circumstances that make it temporarily impossible to continue with their studies. Intermission provides a formal mechanism for students to take a break from their programme and return at a later date, without losing the credit they have already accumulated.

This policy sets out the grounds on which intermission may be granted, the duration and approval process, the conditions that apply during a period of intermission, and the process for returning to study.

TSE's postgraduate programmes are validated and awarded by Arts University Bournemouth (AUB). This policy operates within the framework of AUB's academic regulations, which permit online MA students to intermit for a maximum of six study blocks and no longer than two years in total.

1 Roles and Responsibilities

- 1.1 The Head of Postgraduate Education (HPE) owns this policy and is responsible for approving all applications for intermission.
- 1.2 The HPE chairs TSE's examination board and, as such, is the relevant authority for all decisions regarding intermission duration, including any extension beyond twelve months.
- 1.3 This policy will be reviewed annually by the HPE and, where necessary, more frequently following significant changes to AUB's regulations or TSE's operational practices.

2 Eligibility and Grounds for Intermission

- 2.1 Intermission is available to any currently enrolled student who has a genuine reason for needing a temporary break from their studies.
- 2.2 Grounds for intermission include, but are not limited to:
 - Serious illness or medical condition
 - Bereavement
 - Significant caring responsibilities
 - Financial difficulty
 - Significant change in personal or professional circumstances
- 2.3 Students wishing to apply for intermission should contact TSE in writing, setting out the reason for their request and their anticipated return date.

3 Considering Alternative Arrangements

- 3.1 Before approving intermission, the HPE will consider whether a more appropriate alternative arrangement exists. Where a student's circumstances could reasonably be addressed by one of the following, this will be explored before intermission is granted:
 - A change of study schedule (for example, moving from full-time to part-time)

- A mitigating circumstances claim
 - An assignment extension
- 3.2 This consideration ensures that students are offered the most appropriate form of support for their situation. Intermission should be the right tool for the circumstances — a complete, temporary break from study — rather than a default response to any difficulty. TSE's flexibility in offering alternative arrangements is a core part of its approach to student support.

4 Duration and Approval

- 4.1 Intermission may be granted for a period of up to twelve months. This is approved at the discretion of the HPE.
- 4.2 A further period of intermission, up to a maximum of twelve additional months, may be granted on the recommendation of the HPE in their capacity as examination board chair. Any extension beyond twelve months is subject to ratification by AUB in accordance with the TSE–AUB Partnership Agreement.
- 4.3 No student may intermit for a total of more than twenty-four months, or more than six study blocks, across the duration of their programme. This is in accordance with AUB's academic regulations. A student who has not returned to study within this period will be deemed to have withdrawn.
- 4.4 Intermission takes effect from the end of the term in which it is granted and resumes at the start of the agreed return term.

5 Access During Intermission

- 5.1 During a period of intermission, the following restrictions apply as standard:
- No one-to-one tutorials
 - No new module access
 - No peer review participation
 - No assessment submission
- 5.2 The following access may be granted at the discretion of the HPE, where there is a clear benefit to the student's ongoing engagement and likelihood of return:
- Webinar observer access
 - Read-only access to VLE course materials
- 5.3 Students on intermission retain access to the TSE Discord community.
- 5.4 Students with outstanding fee arrears are subject to the access restrictions set out in the Student Fee Payment, Debt, Refund and Compensation Policy (the Fee Payment Policy), which apply independently of intermission status.
- 5.5 Where intermission extends beyond twelve months, TSE reserves the right to withdraw access to all course materials and resources, including completed module content. Students will be notified in writing before any such access withdrawal takes effect. Full access will be reinstated upon confirmed return to study.

6 Fees During Intermission

- 6.1 No tuition fees are charged during a period of intermission, unless the student is already in arrears under an instalment plan. Students should refer to the TSE Student Contract for the full fee position during intermission.
- 6.2 Students should be aware that on return from intermission, the current fee schedule will apply. Where a student has been on intermission across a fee review period, the fee on return may differ from the fee at

the point of intermission. Students are encouraged to confirm the applicable fee with TSE before confirming their return date.

7 Returning from Intermission

- 7.1 Students must notify TSE in writing of their intention to return at least three weeks before the start of the relevant term.
- 7.2 Students may only return at the start of a term. Return mid-term is not permitted.
- 7.3 Where intermission was granted for medical reasons, TSE may request written confirmation that the student is fit to return to study before reinstating access.
- 7.4 On return, the student resumes their programme at the point at which they intermitted. No credit is awarded for any module that was incomplete at the point intermission began; that module must be completed on return.

8 Failure to Return

- 8.1 Where a student has not returned by their agreed return date and has not contacted TSE, TSE will make three attempts to contact the student over a period of four weeks from the expected return date.
- 8.2 If there is no response after three contact attempts, TSE will issue a written withdrawal notice. The student will be formally withdrawn from their programme.
- 8.3 Withdrawal means full deregistration. A withdrawn student is no longer enrolled at TSE and retains no continuing rights as a student, including access to course materials, tutor support, or any other TSE facilities. If a withdrawn student wishes to return to study, they must submit a new application, which will be assessed under the admissions process, programme requirements, and fees in force at the time. Previously completed modules do not carry forward automatically, though the student may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in accordance with the TSE RPL Policy.