



Withdrawals, Deferrals and Transfers Policy and Procedures (Awarding Body – De Montfort University)

Version 7

Approved by the Board of Governors

Last Amendment: September 2023

The following sets out the School's policy and procedures for withdrawing students from study programmes before completion. It also sets out the procedures for approving and managing students' deferrals and transfers to other study programmes. It has been compiled with due regard for requirements of *England's Regulatory Framework for Higher Education*, in particular the need to ensure that students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

These procedures do not apply to applicants who have not completed the enrolment process, or who are unsuccessful in their application to study with the School.

Document Information

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*The document owner is responsible for maintaining and updating the content of this document and ensuring that it reflects current practice at the School.

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1. Definitions

- 1.1. The term “withdrawal” refers to the discontinuation of study on a certain programme with no intention of continuing at a later point. Withdrawal from a study programme can be initiated by either the student or the School at any time.
- 1.2. The term “deferral” refers to a student’s delay in enrolling in/ starting a programme of study until a later semester/ year.
- 1.3. The term “resumption of study” refers to the restart of a study programme after a deferred start or a time of interruption/ intermission.
- 1.4. The term “transfer” refers to the process through which a student moves from one programme of study to another, either within the same School or elsewhere. This could be to begin another programme or to enter a programme at an advanced level if a student has the academic credits and the enrolment criteria allow it.
- 1.5. An “awarding body” is a higher education provider having degree-awarding authority. LSST distributes programmes through award validation and franchising agreements with recognised university partners; as a result, procedures for examining and granting withdrawals, deferrals, and transfers may differ amongst programmes, depending on the awarding authority.
- 1.6. “Exit Award” refers to any partial award that may be issued when a student does not have enough credits to claim the full award sought but has completed some components successfully. A student may withdraw or be withdrawn from their programme with an exit reward, which may contain one or more of the following:

- **Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE):**

A CertHE is awarded after one year of full-time study (or equivalent) at a university or other higher education provider.

If a student has been awarded a CertHE, they will have obtained 120 credits at Level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework (or over 120 but less than 240 credits) and have confirmed fails in their assessment record that prohibit further progression toward obtaining the intended degree or award.

- **Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE):**

A DipHE is awarded after two years of full-time study (or equivalent) at a university or other higher education provider.

If a student has been awarded a DipHE, they will have obtained 240 credits at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework (or over 240 but less than 300 credits) and have confirmed fails in their assessment record that prohibit further progression toward obtaining the intended degree or award.

Students who have been awarded an exit award, will be sent a certificate and academic transcript of results.

- 1.7. An “*Academic Transcript*” is a list of the programmes a student has been enrolled on and the grades that they received during a programme of study.

2. Principles

- 2.1. Those at LSST who process withdrawals, deferrals, interruptions, and transfers will follow the following principles:
- i. The School will engage with all students who choose to withdraw, defer, or transfer to another course and/or provider to ensure they are fully aware of the academic and financial ramifications.
 - ii. Before committing to proceed, the School will confirm that students requesting to withdraw, defer, or transfer have exhausted all available student support options.
 - iii. The School will respect a student’s decision to voluntarily withdraw from a programme or transfer to another provider without exerting undue pressure to remain and will readily assist the student in proceeding.
 - iv. Where a student leaves their programme before completion, the School will ensure they receive any exit award that may be due to them, as well as a transcript of their achievement to date from the awarding body.
 - v. Where the School seeks to withdraw a student from a programme, it will do so only as a last resort when all possible remedial interventions and attempts at reconciliation have been exhausted.
 - vi. All procedures for involuntary withdrawal will give the student in question the opportunity to present their case to the deciding panel.
 - vii. Where the School has taken a decision to withdraw a student, they will be notified of their right of appeal and the correct means of doing so.

- viii. The School will uphold a student's right to a refund of fees paid in accordance with its *Tuition Fee and Refunds Policy*.

3. Withdrawal from Study

3.1. Where the student initiates withdrawal:

If a student is considering withdrawing, the School will make every attempt to provide appropriate counsel and to inquire whether any further help would allow the student to stay on the programme might be provided. Students are encouraged to contact Student Support for information on any further assistance that may be available. Students will be informed of the academic and financial repercussions of such a decision at this point.

If the student decides to withdraw after talking with Student Support, they must complete a Request to Withdraw/ Defer Studies Form and submit it to Student Support; the form may be acquired through the Student Portal (LSST Connect).

All students enrolled on De Montfort University validated programmes must complete the Deferral Form, which can be downloaded on the DMU website at: <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/exams-deferrals-regulations-policies/deferral-of-assessments.aspx> or obtained from Student Support. All forms are available on the Students VLE account and through our student support department.

3.2. Where the School initiates withdrawal:

The School may commence the withdrawal procedure for a student if:

- the student has failed to progress academically and all assessment opportunities have been exhausted;
- the student has failed to satisfy LSST's attendance requirements;
- the student has low academic performance/submission of assignments;
- the student has repeatedly and/or severely breached of the School's codes of conduct, particularly where this pertains to the health, safety and wellbeing of individuals;
- the student has failed to return from a period of interrupted study;
- the student has failed to re-enrol where required;
- the student has not paid their tuition fees;
- the student has provided false or misleading evidence in connection with their application, registration, or at any other time.

Note: The above examples are not exhaustive.

3.3. **Consequences of withdrawal:**

Any student withdrawing from their programme of study should take into consideration the following consequences of withdrawal:

- Their registration with LSST and the awarding body shall be terminated, and they shall no longer be a registered student of either institution.
- The School will duly process records with awarding bodies, other external bodies, any regulatory or governing body or other agencies will be notified. For the purpose of the student record, the date of withdrawal will be the same as the date the decision to withdraw is made or the date provided on the relevant form, unless evidence is readily available to confirm an earlier date.
- Students must take into consideration and refer to Student Support for guidance on the implications of withdrawal on their student loan and their finances.

4. **Deferral of Study**

- 4.1. All students registered on a De Montfort University programme can defer at any time; a deferral is also known as a “leave of absence”.
- 4.2. The period of interruption is one academic year from the date of their intake. The maximum deferral period is of one calendar year and can only return on the same intake (students unable to obtain an award within their registered period have 3 years in which to achieve the award). Any student who requires to defer for more than one academic year will be advised to withdraw.
- 4.3. Circumstances that may be grounds for deferral shall be the same as those for mitigation and shall include the following:
 - Physical or mental ill-health
 - Severe financial hardship
 - Emotional/personal difficulties, e.g. bereavement
 - Disability e.g. where a student’s disability comes to light for the first time at the assessment
 - Unavoidable absence from the School, e.g. requirements of employer
 - Unavoidable absence from domicile, e.g. eviction

- Other serious circumstances which could not be foreseen by the student

Note: The above examples are for illustration only and not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

- 4.4. Students will not be able to defer modules only. Where a student is unable to attend their module and/or submit for assessment although, will be able to submit at the next assessment point, they should refer to the *Mitigating Circumstances Policy*.
- 4.5. Students may apply to defer their studies by filling in and submitting a Request to Withdraw/Defer Form to Student Support. The form can be downloaded from the Student Portal or from Student Support.
- 4.6. Students registered on a DMU programme of study, students are also required to complete DMU's *Deferral form* (available for download from the DMU blackboard or from the Registry – registry@lsst.ac). Also available from the students VLE, Student Support and Registry departments.
- 4.7. The School deferral process records the student's deferral status and calculates the student's debt or Student Loans Company (SLC) element of the tuition fee for refund purposes or to carry forward. In circumstances where students have a split fee liability between the Student Loans Company and the student, any refund due on any balance of fees paid by the student in excess of the reduced fee will be carried forward and credited to the next registration period or paid back to the student. If the student or SLC element of the fee is greater than the fee paid at the point of suspension, the student will be liable for immediate payment of the outstanding amount. Failure to pay will prevent the student re-joining the programme.
- 4.8. All students registered on a De Montfort University validated programme, should be aware that the following will apply whenever a student wishes to defer:
 - a. The result of any module – either pass or fail – for which all assessments have been completed, will be retained;
 - b. The result for any module that has not been completed, for example, the student has submitted to Assessment 1 but not Assessment 2, will not be retained. The student shall re-register on that module on their return, however they will not be charged again for the module, and the assessments will not count as a retake, therefore they will not be capped.

Resumption of study

4.9. A date of resumption of study is agreed between the student and the School at the time of the application for deferral of studies, which cannot be more than two calendar years. Where the student is liable for the fee, the student will be invoiced the full tuition fee for the academic session, plus any repeat fee applicable, with a discount applied equal to the tuition fee charged for the period of study prior to the deferral.

4.10. Where the student is SLC funded, a new Financial Assessment letter will be required for the fee due at the point of resumption.

Withdrawal following deferral

4.11. Students who desire to withdraw after the deferral period should tell Student Support of their intentions. If a student fails to re-register for their program of study within two weeks of the agreed upon restart period, the Registry Department may do so automatically.

4.12. All students on DMU programmes will need to complete the DMU Student Initiated Withdrawal form.

Note: DMU who will notify Student Finance England of any change of status where applicable.

5. Transfer

5.1. Students who wish to transfer to another LSST course during the first two weeks of their current semester may do so through the Registry Department. The transfer application will be carefully reviewed by Registry, who will consider class size, course availability at another Campus, and other pertinent issues, including whether the transfer is in the best interests of the student.

5.2. If permission is given for the transfer, the student agrees to undertake additional studies themselves to enable them to catch up with the course within a reasonable time; e.g. 4 weeks.

5.3. If the transfer results in a move to a course with lower costs, a commensurate discount or refund will be offered. If the transfer results in a move to a course with higher costs, additional fees to cover the difference will be charged.

5.4. Where a student wishes to transfer to another institution the following applies:

- Any transfer requested will be treated as a Student Initiated Withdrawal and as such must follow the relevant process (this is inclusive of any process involving tuition fees).
- The new institution would be the entity responsible for assessing any accreditation for prior learning.
- Where a student has passed modules on the relevant programme of study, an academic transcript of the completion of said modules would be provided by the awarding body. If the student has passed and completed all the required modules for any given exit award, certification will be awarded by the awarding body. As such for all University validated programmes; a Certificate of Higher Education (level 4, 1st year of degree programme), or a Diploma of Higher Education (level 5, upon 2nd year completion of a degree programme) would be awarded.

6. Review and Update

6.1. The Head of Registry will evaluate this policy on an annual basis, and any changes must be approved by the School's Board of Governors.



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Quality Manager

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Version 7

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