



Policy on

HE Suspension of Studies

Approved

June 2026

by

Senior Leadership Team

Policy Title	HE Suspension of Studies Policy
Document Owner	Vice-Principal for Higher Education
Policy Effective From	June 2026
Next Review Date	June 2029

New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

If you require this document in an alternative format and/or language, please contact records@newdur.ac.uk

We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments, and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

Other policies and procedures mentioned in this document will be published internally and externally in these locations:
[NCD Website](#)

This policy has been assessed for its compliance with the principles of the OIA Good Practice Framework.

Equality Impact Assessed: May 2026
Accessibility Impact Assessed: May 2026

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

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1. Scope

This policy covers responsibilities for the management of suspension of studies for an HE student on a New College Durham (NCD), Open University (OU) or Pearson HN programme. It will ensure that the College complies with the relevant NCD and OU Academic Regulations and external partners including regulatory and awarding bodies.

The policy applies to Apprentices and Non-apprentices.

2. Responsibilities

The Vice Principal for HE is responsible for ensuring a policy is in place defining responsibility for the procedures and management of Suspension of Studies.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for:

- ensuring this policy is maintained, monitored and disseminated;
- ensuring responsibility for procedures are clearly assigned; and
- convening the Suspension of Studies Panel.

HEDU are responsible for communicating extensions of suspensions of studies to the OU.

CIS are responsible for processing requests for SOS and submitting change requests to Student Loans Company (SLC).

Programme Leads are responsible for ensuring students are aware of the process for suspension of studies at their induction. They are also responsible for monitoring and recording engagement and attendance to allow them to identify where a student is not attending/engaging as described in the Student Engagement in Learning Policy and to identify suspension of studies as an option.

Access Fund are responsible for ensuring bursary funding is adjusted in the case of a student suspension of studies.

3. Relationship with existing policies and regulations

In addition to meeting the requirements of funding, validating and awarding bodies, this policy should be read in the context of the following College policies and procedures:

- HE Suspension of Studies Procedure
- Refund and Compensation Policy for HE
- Student Engagement in Learning Policy

- HE Access Fund Policy
- HE Withdrawals Policy

4. Suspending a student's studies

Suspending studies is the process by which a student can temporarily withdraw from their studies to pause their learning activities. They will not be enrolled during this time. The student can then return to the same stage of the programme and resume studies after an agreed period of time.

Reasons for suspension of studies might include:

- Physical or mental well-being
- Personal or exceptional circumstances
- Personal development (i.e. travel, volunteering)

A suspension will be granted for up to one academic year (an initial SoS). Mitigation should be considered for shorter term circumstances using the provisions of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

Before a student decides to suspend their studies, the student must seek advice from the Programme Lead. There may be financial, academic and professional implications to consider. Students must be informed of the financial implications of a decision to suspend their studies and of the fact they will be withdrawn if they fail to engage with the Programme Team on the date of their expected return to study.

Academic Registry will process the application following the internal **HE Suspension of Studies Procedure**, directing the student to relevant advice or guidance to assist their application. This will include information on how to assess the financial impact of their decision.

Students can return from SoS within the same academic year but they will trigger the fee liability for any term they are in attendance. Student Finance England would need to reassess their funding. If they return in a new academic year they should re-apply as normal.

Where there are exceptional circumstances a further one-year period may be applied for. In this case a suspension of studies panel will be held (see appendix 1). Extensions for students on OU Programmes cannot be approved by the panel but must be recommended to the OU.

Students will receive correspondence from Registry confirming their agreed date of return.

Programme Teams must not accept assignment submissions when a student is on a Suspension of Studies. There must be no student engagement with their programme. Grades must not be entered for any students while they are on

Suspension of Studies. The student will not be allowed to use College facilities excepting counselling or other guidance services.

The Programme Team must adhere to agreed contact arrangements during the suspension. They should make necessary arrangements for a student's return to study including assessing any programme modifications that may need to be allowed for.

5. Appealing a Panel decision

A student will have 10 College days after receipt of their outcome letter to appeal in writing on the basis of:

- Dispute over last date of attendance/engagement;
- Extenuating circumstances not previously disclosed; and
- Maladministration.

Students will be instructed to submit a formal appeal, supported by independent evidence, to HE Admin within 10 calendar days from the date of the final withdrawal letter.

HE Admin will co-ordinate an Appeal Panel at the request of the Vice Principal.

6. Formal recognition of credits

Completed modules/units that students have achieved prior to suspending their studies will be presented to the next Assessment Board and the student will receive a transcript confirming these results.

Following failure to re-engage a student may be eligible for an exit award.

7. Exceptions

Where an HE apprentice intends to engage in a break in learning under the Apprenticeship Funding Rules the elements of the application that do not apply to the HE programme will be managed by the Apprenticeships Office.

8. External Partners

It is expected that any external partners (i.e. institutions delivering NCD programmes under sub contractual arrangements) will apply this HE Suspension of Studies Policy and Procedure, either by direct adoption or by mirroring the requirements in their own policy.

The External Partner will inform Academic Registry if a student intends to apply for a suspension of studies. The student will apply as normal, following standard procedures.

9. Record keeping

Records of HE suspensions of studies will be held on the Assessment Board records permanently. Records of the process will be held for 6 years after the student's programme has ended.

10. Evaluation and review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years in light of experience and best practice. This mechanism recognises that changes to legislation may prompt a review of the policy before the three years stipulated.

Suspension of Studies Panel

Terms of Reference

The Suspension of Studies Panel will be responsible to the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board

Overall Purpose:	To ensure suspensions of studies (SoS) are identified and any extensions to these are assessed and approved or rejected within an acceptable timescale with due regard for the impact on the student, curriculum and College.
Key Tasks:	To report and monitor instances of extensions of SoS. To discuss the best course of action, ensuring the best interests of students prior to confirming SoS extensions.
Frequency:	The meetings will be convened as required.
Membership:	Attendees: Academic Registrar or nominee (Chair) Assistant Principal for Collaborative Partnerships and International Curriculum Rep from Each School (CM, Programme Lead or Head) Curriculum Representative from HE Partner HEDU Representative Registry Manager