

Guidance for students thinking about postponing their studies



**Harper Adams
University**

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Thinking about postponing?

When you start a course with us, we hope that you are able to follow it through to completion in the normal way. However, we recognise that for some students, circumstances may arise where you may need to take an unplanned break in your studies for unexpected reasons, which may be out of your control.

We encourage you to chat to the Student Wellbeing Officer about your options and the support we can offer you. For course-specific advice and guidance, you should speak to your Course Manager or Course Tutor.

If you are thinking of postponing it is important to seek our advice and support as early as possible. We have dedicated staff able to give you advice and guidance on your options based on your own particular circumstances. It may be that we are able to make reasonable adjustments to allow you to remain on your course of study on either a full-time or a part-time basis.

Our standard policy is to allow students, who may experience such unexpected circumstances, to postpone their studies for a limited period of time. The main reason that students are permitted to postpone is due to health reasons, which prevent the ability to study. We also will consider 'significant changes in life circumstances', which may include events such as a family bereavement or a 'once in a lifetime opportunity' related to career aspirations and programme of study. There is no automatic right to postponement under any circumstance; each request will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Course Manager and Student Records Officer, in discussion with the Student Wellbeing Officer.

The only other time where a student is permitted to postpone, is where they are placement exempt and wish to remain with their original cohort. Such a postponement is at the Course Manager's discretion.

It is important to note that postponements are normally granted for up to a maximum of one academic year. Regardless of when you postpone during one academic year, you are expected to be in a position to restart your studies at the start of the next academic year. If it is anticipated that a postponement may be longer than this, it may not be agreed and a student may be advised to withdraw from their studies and reapply when they are in a position to recommence their course. As courses can change from year to year, the continued availability of the study programme will also be taken into consideration when a postponement request is made.

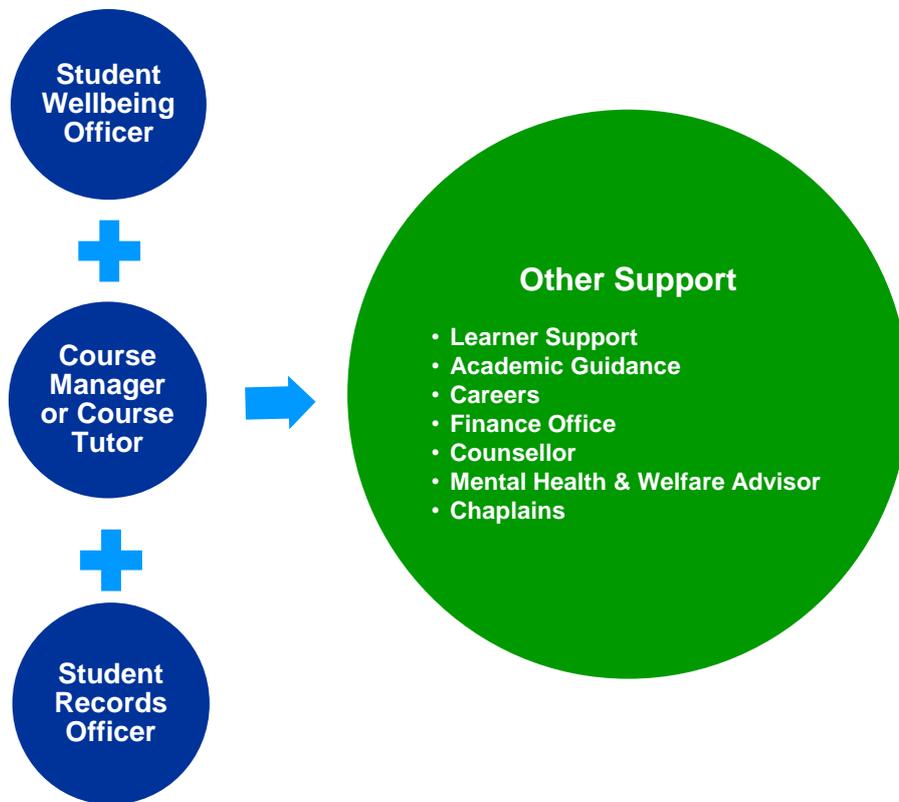
Postponement may also have financial implications. If you are in receipt of student loans, you are strongly advised to contact your Student Finance authority to get a clear statement based on your current position. You may be required to fund one of the additional future years yourself, so you should make enquiries so you can prepare for this if it is the case. It is also important to note that if you have postponed for certain health reasons, there is no automatic right to return to your course without first undertaking a 'Fitness to Study' assessment, in line with the arrangements set out in the University's Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Having decided to postpone, you need to complete a postponement form, with the assistance of your Course Manager or Course Tutor. The form must be accompanied by evidence supporting your reason for postponement. Postponement forms are available from the Student Records Officer (Registry, Faccenda Centre) or by emailing studentrecords@harper-adams.ac.uk.

Please read the following information thoroughly before you complete the postponement form, to ensure you are fully aware of the implications of postponing.

Thinking of postponing: where to start?

The best starting point for general support is the Student Wellbeing Officer, for course specific advice and guidance you will need to speak to your Course Tutor or Course Manager. They may advise you to seek additional guidance from other staff at the University who can help you make an informed decision about your options and future steps.



Fees and Charges

At postponement

The amount that you will be charged for the academic year depends on the date you finalise your postponement and it is recorded as received by the University. If you have paid tuition fees and accommodation in advance, you may be eligible for a refund. Therefore, it is essential that you contact the Finance Office (detailed above) for clear information about your own financial liabilities.

You will be charged both tuition fees and on-site accommodation fees (if applicable) in line with the liability points as set out in the Fees and Charges booklet, which can be found at www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo. It is important that you pay attention to the dates, particularly if you are postponing near the end of a term. You will be charged **in full** for the tuition which has taken place while you have been registered and up to the next liability point. If you live in off campus accommodation, you must speak to your landlord directly about your charges as your rental agreement is unlikely to contain liability dates.

On returning to study – same course and year

When you return to study, you will return at the start of a new academic year. You will need to undertake the entire year again, except for any modules which you completed in full before your postponement. All assessment components of partially completed modules are disregarded. You should expect and be prepared to pay full tuition fees for the year that you return. Even if you postponed your studies mid-way through the previous year, and paid fees for part of that year, you will still be required to pay for fees in the year that you will be repeating, either partially or in full. The University has the discretion to apply a 50% fee waiver to any study period for which the fee has already been paid in the pre-postponement period, if the reason for postponement is beyond the student's control. You will still be required to pay the full rate for the part of the year you haven't previously studied.

If you are returning to on-site accommodation, you will be required to pay the full charges for the time that you are resident.

If you are returning to study on a different course you will be required to pay the full tuition fee for the new course of study, regardless of any pre-agreed waiver, which would only be applied to the original course of study, as you are accessing a different course of study.

Please also note that tuition fees may increase in line with an approved inflationary rate and you will be liable for the fees that apply in the year you return to study, based on your year of entry.

When you return to study

Postponed undergraduate students are only able to return at the start of the academic year. Postgraduate students can return when the next module is available. There is no automatic right to return to your studies. The Student Records Officer contacts all postponed students during the summer before their intended return to ask them to confirm that they are indeed returning. You must reply to this letter to confirm your return (or otherwise) so arrangements can be made.

If you have postponed due to health grounds you will be required to complete a 'Fitness to Study' assessment. Details of this are in the University's Health and Well-Being Policy, which can be found at www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo. Once the completed form is received, the procedure set out in the policy will be followed, in order to assess your case. Therefore it is important for you to complete the form as fully as possible and return by the stated deadline, as there is no automatic right to return without completing this process.

Steps to Postponement

Contact the Student Records Officer on 01952 815320, by emailing studentrecords@harper-adams.ac.uk or in person in Registry (Room FS1, 2nd floor Faccenda Centre) to say you want to suspend your studies and obtain a postponement form

Ensure you have read and understood the guidance in this document.

Discuss the postponement with the Student Wellbeing Officer and your Course Tutor. If it is agreed that this is the best option for you, they will help to complete the form and sign it off.

Return the completed postponement form, together with supporting evidence to the Student Records Officer. The date of postponement will be taken as the date the form is recorded as received by the University and it is up to this date that financial liability will be judged.

Your form will be reviewed and processed by the Student Records Officer. Relevant internal departments will also be notified (including the Finance Office, Examinations Office, Student Services and Library). If applicable, the relevant Student Finance Authority / the Student Loans Company will also be notified.

Where an international student studying on a student visa postpones from their course and the University, UK Visas and Immigration will be notified and their leave will be curtailed.

The Finance Office will calculate any tuition, accommodation or other charges that may be outstanding or will need to be refunded, and confirm fees to be charged on return to study.

If you receive any tuition or maintenance loans or funding, you should inform Student Finance that you have postponed. We will also do this on your behalf, but it is important that you contact them to gain an understanding of what you may be required to pay back immediately and to ensure you are aware of what you are entitled to when you resume study.

If you are living in Halls, notify Student Services as soon as possible. You will be expected to vacate your room within 24 hours and return your room key to Student Services. If you cannot do this, please discuss alternative vacating arrangements.

Final things to do before you leave campus:

- Return all library books, equipment and pay any library fines.
- Check that you do not have any post to collect.
- Please arrange re-direction to an alternative address for all mailings delivered to Harper Adams.
- Contact the Students Union if you have been involved with the gym or sports teams.
- Ensure that you are aware of the date of the start of the next academic year, in preparation for your return to study.