

Document Title	Student Withdrawal Policy
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St Mary's University is committed to improve student retention and maintain accurate student records for internal and external submissions. The purpose of this policy is to ensure students receive appropriate academic, pastoral and financial advice, before the withdrawal process is initiated.

This policy works in conjunction with the Leave of Absence Policy and Attendance and Engagement and Attendance and Monitoring Policies and also provides guidance for academic and professional services staff, on how to process requests for withdrawal, within a timely manner.

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 St Mary's University's Mission is to prepare its students for flourishing lives, successful careers and social commitment through excellent, research-enriched teaching in a strong community of mutual respect based on our Catholic ethos and identity.

1.2 Students who decide to withdraw from their programme of study should be supported to explore other options available to them, with withdrawal seen as their last resort.

1.3 All students considering withdrawal from their studies should seek academic advice and student guidance as soon as possible from both their Course Lead and Student Services and Wellbeing, before making a decision to withdraw. Advice and guidance can also be sought from Personal Tutors, Student Success and the Student's Union.

1.4 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive appropriate advice, guidance and support, before a withdrawal occurs. It also provides guidelines for academic and professional services staff on how to process requests for withdrawal.

2. DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

For the purpose of this policy and associated documents.

2.1 Student: any person registered onto a programme, be it full-time, part-time or any mode of delivery, regardless of the number of modules or credits registered onto at one time

2.2 Course Lead: an academic member of staff responsible for managing the quality, delivery and development of a course and students registered onto the course

2.3 Voluntary Withdrawal: a student's withdrawal from the programme following a withdrawal request

2.4 Forced Withdrawal: a student's termination from the programme by the University, due to academic failure, attendance, conduct or other reasons deemed appropriate

3. REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL

Students may decide to withdraw or are withdrawn from their academic programme and the University, for a variety of reasons including the following:

- Voluntary or self-withdrawal from the programme
- Academic failure or academic misconduct
- Permanent exclusion as an outcome of a student disciplinary process or a criminal conviction
- As an outcome of the Fitness to Study/Practice processes
- Failure to abide by University regulations e.g. non-payment of fees
- External compliance issues e.g. UKVI regulations
- Failure or cease to attend programme timetable, according to the Academic Regulations and Attendance and Engagement Policy
- Failure to arrive and re/enrol for their studies in subsequent academic years
- Death of a student

3.1 In the event of a voluntary withdrawal or self-withdrawal request, if following advise the student still wishes to proceed with the withdrawal, they are required to provide reasons for their decision by completing the online withdrawal form and return their University ID card.

3.2 International students studying on a student visa should note that their sponsorship from the University will be cancelled and their withdrawal reported to Home Office (UKVI).

3.3 Once a student has been withdrawn from the University, they do not normally have access to University systems and are not permitted to submit or sit any further assessments. Withdrawn students will be considered at the next assessment board and credit awarded where applicable.

4. STUDENT WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

4.1 The student withdrawal process is based with Registry Services, to ensure accurate student records are maintained at all times. With the exception of voluntary withdrawals, all other forms of withdrawals are initiated by formal procedures such as Exam Board, Student Disciplinary Processes, etc.

4.2 Students are permitted to withdraw from their studies at any time.

4.3 It should be noted that the date of withdrawal recorded would be the last date of attendance, as confirmed by the Course Lead, of which fee liability will be calculated from. In the event of a forced withdrawal, the withdrawal date will be recorded as the date of notification sent to the student for their termination from the course and/or University.

5. VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL

5.1 A student who considers withdrawing from the University is required to submit their request using the online withdrawal form and contact their programme, in the first instance.

5.2 Voluntary withdrawals should go through the online student portal, which sends an automated withdrawal request to Registry Services, which is monitored by staff in Registry Services. The receipt of the email request from the student will trigger the start of the process and freeze their tuition fee liability from that point.

5.3 All voluntary withdrawals received via the student portal shall be forwarded to the respective Course Lead, normally within three working days of receiving the email.

5.4 The Course Lead is responsible for meeting with the student within three working days of receiving the email notification. At this meeting, they shall discuss with the student their reasons for considering withdrawal, offer advice on pastoral and financial support available and discuss other options available within St Mary's, if their choice of programme is not suitable. If the student is unable to travel to the University, video meetings are permissible.

5.5 All information provided by the student in the withdrawal form should be treated with utmost confidentiality, as it may contain information pertaining to sensitive, individual circumstances. A student will be provided with a disclaimer to allow the University to use the information provided anonymously, for any monitoring and planning purposes.

5.6 At the meetings, Course Leads will be expected to keep a written account of the discussion with the student and the options offered to them, to help come to the decision. Course Leads are expected to ensure that the student is aware that they can receive further advice from the Student's Union, Student Funding, Fees Office and Accommodation office, where applicable.

5.7 Students can also contact the Fees Office or Student Funding Services to seek further information on the impact of their decision on their financial liability.

5.8 If a student is residing in St Mary's Halls of Residence, they should consult the impact of their request with the Accommodation Office.

5.9 The student and Course Lead can complete the online withdrawal form together and ensure that advice and information is covered from the following stakeholders, before it is processed by Registry Services:

- Student's Union
- Fees Office
- Accommodation Office (if applicable)
- UKVI (if applicable)
- Wellbeing Services

5.10 After completing the form, the student and Course Lead will be required to sign the withdrawal form and normally, the student will submit the form to Registry Services.

5.11 Once the form is received, Registry Services shall process the request, update the Student Records System (SITS) and inform the student once the process has been completed. Registry Services shall also notify all relevant stakeholders, which is done on a regular basis.

5.12 Registry Services will additionally inform the Student Loans Company for all students on Government funding of withdrawals throughout the academic year and after the University Exam Board, at all liability points. These processes are carried out to ensure that students do not incur unnecessary debt from the Student Loans Company, when they have been withdrawn from the University.

5.12 It is important for students to note that Student Loans Company may retain or claw back some of their maintenance funding, for those who withdraw close to the end of the academic year.

NOTE: the above procedure will not apply to students studying on a Student Visa. All voluntary withdrawal requests from students on a Student Visa must be sent to the UKVI Compliance and Immigration Adviser in the first instance, where students shall receive advice on their visa status, prior to making a decision.

For further information on Student Visa advice, refer to the [Student Visa Engagement and Monitoring Policy](#).

6. FORCED WITHDRAWAL

6.1 In the process of a forced withdrawal, a student is not required to complete a withdrawal form. Notification of the withdrawal (or termination) from the course and/or University will be sent to the student from Registry Services.

6.2 If students have been advised that their studies at the University are being terminated or they are forcibly withdrawn from the course following the University Exam Board, they will be given ten working days to appeal, from receipt of the email notification. Appeal hearings will take place online and students may be accompanied by a friend or third party.

Further information on appeals and conduct can be found in the University's Academic Regulations.

7. FEES AND FUNDING

7.1 Students who are withdrawn from their course and the University will have their tuition fees recalculated on the following basis:

- Start date of the course
- Last date of attendance
- Liability point, as recognised and confirmed by the Fees Office

7.2 The tuition fee liability points are published in the Tuition Fee Policy. Students will have the opportunity to request advice from the Fees Office.

7.3 Final notifications will be sent by Registry Services. For students with financial support such as Student Finance England, the University is obliged to inform the funding body of the student's withdrawal, of which payments will be suspended from this point.

8. REPORTING

Registry Services will be responsible for updating the Student Records System (SITS) and Student Loans Company (if applicable). Reports can additionally be produced to inform student withdrawals, Leave of Absence and any changes in students' status to the relevant departments and services.

The Planning Office and related stakeholders will be able to access up to date information directly from the Student Records System, which is also reported directly to the PVC (Academic Strategy).