

SGUL Policy on Interruption of Study (IoS) for Students on MBBS Programmes



1. Introduction

- 1.1. The interruption of study (IoS) policy described in this document complies with the [SGUL General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study](#) (para 4.13) and applies only to students on MBBS programmes (home and international programmes).
- 1.2. It is recognised that students may need to take time away from the MBBS course for a variety of reasons. Requests for an interruption of study are submitted to the Year Coordinator in the first instance. The application is then reviewed by the IoS Panel, chaired by the Course Director and it is for the Panel to decide whether to authorise the interruption, based on an individual student's circumstances.
- 1.3. In cases where there are differences amongst the Panel concerning recommendations and/or whether to approve the application for interruption, the Chair will make the final decision.
- 1.4. Students should be aware that the IoS process is not a means of avoiding a suspension, assessment investigation or other disciplinary processes. Circumstances that would normally be investigated under the [Fitness to Practise or Study process](#) or [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#) will not be considered as appropriate grounds for an interruption of study.
- 1.5. The IoS process is not intended to be used to avoid assessments, for fear of academic failure. Students who are unwell at the time of an assessment should take advice as to whether they are 'fit to sit' and seek advice from the examinations and assessment team.
- 1.6. The usual period of interruption is up to and not more than one academic year. Completed attendance of clinical attachments or other taught Course components, or completed in-course assessments can be carried forward for a year. If an extension of IOS is granted (see [section 4](#)) 'skill-fade' may require that any clinical attachment previously completed is repeated, and workplace-based assessments will need to be repeated as the GMC requires evidence of procedural competency to be done within two years of graduation (see 4.11.6). This is also addressed in the Schemes of Assessment for each of the clinical years.
- 1.7. This interruptions policy also covers students whose next assessment attempt is in the following academic year. The relevant Boards of Examiners will award the student the assessment attempt but, other than for students repeating the year in full, it is the Interruption panel, who will consider study support arrangements and make recommendations for formative placements and other arrangements in order to facilitate a successful return to study and the best chance of progression to the following year.
- 1.8. In certain circumstances where students do not adhere to the terms of SGUL's [attendance and engagement](#) policy, the course team may enact an interruption of studies or commence termination of registration procedures without an application by the student (see [section 3](#))
- 1.9. When a student is on interruption, the student is registered on the course, but not enrolled for the period of interruption. The student remains subject to SGUL regulations.
- 1.10. A request to extend the period of interruption should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Any extension will require approval by the IoS Panel and will only be granted for one further year (see [section 4](#) for further details).
- 1.11. Approval by the Registration Extension Panel is required if the period of interruption exceeds the maximum period of registration allowed for the course (see [section 8](#) for further details).

- 1.12. The IoS process may take between 4 and 6 weeks from submission of the request form to the issuing of the formal confirmation letter.

2. Eligibility and Consequences of Interrupting Study

- 2.1. An interruption of study will be granted by the IoS panel on the grounds of extenuating circumstances which conflict with the student's capacity to meet the requirements of the course, and the Panel judges that it is in the student's best academic, financial, or personal interest to interrupt their studies.
- 2.2. **Extenuating circumstances** are defined as significant personal events outside the student's control which affect their ability to study and/or complete assessments, such as such as injury, illness, maternity or unavoidable family commitments/unavoidable circumstances.
- 2.3. The interruption of study will not be granted solely on the grounds of academic difficulties (see [section 4](#) for further details).
- 2.4. When an interruption of study is granted the student's, registration on the course continues but without enrolment on a specific year of the course. All relevant authorities (e.g. UK Visa and Immigration, if relevant – [see section 5](#)) will be informed.
- 2.5. A student who is not enrolled due to an interruption of study will not pay tuition fees for that period and is therefore not entitled to attend any formal teaching or participation in assessments during interruption.
- 2.6. Students on IoS normally retain access to their SGUL email account, and online resources on Canvas. A letter will be sent to the student's St George's email account setting out the dates and terms of the IOS, and resources available to them whilst on interruption.
- 2.7. For students unable to respond due to ill health, a student can nominate a person to be a point of contact and communication by completing the relevant section of the IoS request form. By naming the nominee the student grants the university permission to contact their nominee should concerns be raised about them, and is not responding to contact from the University. The student can change their nominee at any time by contacting their year coordinator or Student Support Manager in the first instance.
- 2.8. Students are expected to leave reliable points of contact during the IoS (phone number, email and address). It is the student's (or their nominee's) responsibility to update contact details during the IoS, if they change. Health permitting, a student on an interruption of studies is expected to maintain communication with SGUL and respond in an appropriate timeframe.
- 2.9. Failure to communicate with the University, when a student is well enough to do so, will raise concerns and may result in further action, including consideration of termination of registration, in line with General Regulations.
- 2.10. If students are applying for an IoS on health grounds, then normally the student will be required to undergo an occupational health assessment prior to undertaking the IoS, to assess the health problems and advise on health interventions required during the IoS. This will optimise the chances of recovery during the interruption.
- 2.11. On return from the IoS, normally students interrupting on health grounds will be required to undergo an OH assessment prior to their return, to ensure that they are fit to return to study. Students who have undergone or continue to undergo treatment for health conditions will be asked to consent to those medical professionals sharing their medical records with the Occupational Health Team. If students do not consent for their medical records to be shared in this way, they may not be permitted to return to their studies.
- 2.12. Students applying for an interruption on health grounds will be expected to give consent for the pertinent parts of their occupational health assessment to be released to nominated members of the MBBS course team so that appropriate support can be provided. The parts of the report needing full disclosure include whether or not the student is fit to return to study. Failure to provide this consent will be referred to the IoS panel and may result in the student not being permitted to return to the course.
- 2.13. Every reasonable effort will be made to support students with complex health problems or disabilities returning from a period of interruption, in line with the relevant University processes and GMC Guidance.

- 2.14. Students with complex health problems or disabilities who require multiple periods of interruption, despite all reasonable adjustments, may be referred to the Student Progress and Monitoring Committee for assessment of their fitness to practise in line with the GMC guidance.

3. Student absence with no communication

- 3.1. Students who do not attend teaching or placement without prior or subsequent notification, do not communicate with university staff and do not respond to communications from the University in a timely manner in-line with SGUL's [attendance and engagement](#) policy, may lead to the course team deciding to place the student on an interruption of studies without their application or to commence a termination of registration process. The relevant member of the MBBS team will liaise with the Academic Registrar concerning any student who missed 4 weeks of teaching and failed to engage with the University's efforts to contact the student (or nominee); these steps are detailed below:
- 3.2. If students do not attend teaching or placement for a week without prior The Year Coordinator will inform academic staff responsible for the student e.g., Year Leads.
- 3.2.1. The Year Coordinator will use the student's details to contact them by telephone and email, on multiple occasions over a four-week period.
- 3.2.2. If there is no initial response, and the student has given the contact details of a nominee, the Year Coordinator will try the nominee's contact details to communicate with the student.
- 3.2.3. The Year Coordinator will record all attempts (and communication channels) to communicate with the student (or their nominee).
- 3.2.4. If after four weeks, there is no response from the student (or their nominee), then the Year Coordinator will send a registered letter to the student's address, setting out what the next steps will be in relation to the Course they are enrolled upon and set a two-week deadline for response.
- 3.2.5. If there is no communication from the student, after two weeks, the Year Coordinator will commence termination of registration (in-line with General Regulations Para 4.11) or enforce an interruption of studies whichever is deemed the most appropriate by the academic course team. Students should be aware that in clinical years, it will not normally be possible to remediate an absence of more than four weeks. This is in-line with the [Student Attendance and Engagement policy](#) at St George's and expectations set out in year-specific Becoming a Doctor handbooks.
- 3.2.6. The Senior Compliance Manager will be notified when a student stops attending placement, for international students, which may result in withdrawal of Tier 4 sponsorship on the grounds of missed attendances and lack of engagement.

4. Application and Approval Process

- 4.1. Requests for an interruption should be made in advance, unless extenuating circumstances apply, e.g. sudden illness. Retrospective (backdated) interruptions of study will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, e.g. when student's health prevents them from initiating the process in a timely manner and backdating of such an IoS will be time-limited, in-line with university processes.
- 4.2. It is acknowledged that in the case of students applying for an interruption period for maternity leave that many of the discussion points may be limited. Such interruptions will be managed to align with the St George's [Student Pregnancy, Maternity, and Paternity Policy & Guidance](#). Periods of maternity of leave do not contribute to the maximum period of registration.
- 4.3. To formally initiate discussions about a potential interruption, students should be directed to contact their year coordinator and academic year lead in the first instance. They can do so by email, telephone or in person. Other staff are available for informal discussion, such as personal tutors, year leads and staff in the Students' Union.

- 4.4. When the student is unable to participate in the process through illness, their nominee will be a point of communication and the student will be placed on an interruption, until the student is sufficiently well to re-establish communication.
- 4.5. After informal discussion, the student should make a formal application for the IoS. The administrative process is overseen by the relevant year coordinators, in collaboration with the Student Support Manager. The Year coordinator will provide day-to-day administration of the IoS process.
- 4.6. Stage 1 – Initial Application
- 4.6.1. Students are advised to consider their reasons for wishing to interrupt and then, the student is invited to meet with the relevant member(s) of the team; normally the year coordinator and/or the relevant team manager (depending of staff availability and complexity of the case) and the academic year lead. Other academic staff may be involved in preliminary discussions to provide relevant context. The aim of the meeting is to:
 - discuss the student’s reasons for requesting an IoS and consider any evidence they might present in support of their request;
 - clarify that in cases of interruption on health grounds, students are required to engage with health services and provide evidence of this prior to interruption being granted. This may include evidence of a treatment and support plan and an assessment by Occupational Health;
 - outline the process and possible outcomes of the request for IoS, including who will review the case and how long the process may take;
 - explain the implications of interrupting studies, including its impact on the programme registration period, student wellbeing and future career progression which should be balanced against the potential impact of continuing to study in difficult circumstances;
 - explain the implications of interrupting studies for student finances and University accommodation if relevant;
 - record the teaching and assessments completed prior to IoS and those to be completed on return.
 - agree what, if any, support will be required/available to the student during an IoS, including any requirements for return e.g. clearance by Occupational Health and reports from other healthcare professionals;
 - agree the type and frequency of communication with the student during an IoS. Students must understand the importance of communication and responsiveness during IoS, either directly or via their nominee.
 - agree the process of return and a provisional date. The process of return will include health, academic and pastoral considerations, reasonable adjustments, a signed statement of agreement of conditions for return and exceptional circumstances. Criteria and the process for confirming the resolution of issues/health and restoration/clarification of currency of knowledge and skills will be agreed;
 - discuss conditions which may be required for a return to study;
 - inform students that if they have (exceptionally) had an interruption of more than 1 year, they will be required to confirm the currency of knowledge and practice by formatively repeat assessments (including placements for the clinical years) passed prior to IoS, to inform the student and staff of the state of their knowledge and skills after the IoS, and enhance the student’s insight into the currency of their knowledge and competencies. Students are asked to contact the finance team (studentfinance@sgul.ac.uk) to discuss the financial implications of attending formative placements.
 - Provide an opportunity for students to reflect on how they will spend their time on interruption, this may not be pertinent to all student cases (e.g. maternity) but may be relevant for those with health conditions who wish to seek support during their time away from St George’s.
 - complete the IoS request form.

- 4.6.2. The student may need to discuss specific implications of interruption with staff outside the MBBS team following, or prior to, the initial meeting (see Table 1). Each case is different. Students are therefore encouraged to seek advice as early as possible to allow enough time for an informed response from relevant University staff. Students are also advised to always ensure their personal tutor is aware of any difficulties, including any application to interrupt, so they can offer support as appropriate.

Table 1

Issues	Member of staff
Student finance / tuition fees	Student Finance Policy Officer
Visas	Senior Compliance Officer
Accommodation (if resident in Horton Halls)	Student Accommodation & Welfare Adviser
Health (if relevant)	Occupational Health /GP / specialist treating team
Personal matters	Personal Tutor / Counsellors / Student's Union
Career progression	SGUL Careers Advisor / USMLE Lead

- 4.6.3. Notes will be taken by the year coordinator at the initial meeting, and any subsequent meetings required. The student will receive the notes of the meeting to aid them in discussions and follow-up actions after the meeting.
- 4.6.4. Students are advised to take a balanced approach when considering the best solution to their immediate difficulties and its potential long-term impact on their academic progress and professional career opportunities. It may not be in the student's best interests to take significantly longer to complete a course of study than their peers without adequately justified reasons. However, continuing to study in difficult circumstances may carry the risk to health, progression or future prospects. It is important for students to remember that an IoS is not an easy solution and there are times when additional support may be more appropriate than time away from studies.
- 4.6.5. If, following these preliminary discussions, the student decides against proceeding with their request, no further action will be taken. The record of the discussions, including notes of the initial meeting, will be retained electronically for information.
- 4.7. Stage 2 – IoS Panel Consideration
- 4.7.1. If following the discussions held at stage 1 the student decides to proceed with their application, the IoS request form maybe amended to reflect advice and further discussions or changing circumstances, as appropriate to the support of that student.
- 4.7.2. The completed form will be submitted to the IoS Panel (by the year coordinator) for their consideration together with:
- the student's file summary/notes;
 - for clinical years, summary of completed assessments and return to study plan (including recommendations for formative placements);
 - the student's examination records, remaining period of registration and use of discretionary panel;
 - any evidence submitted in support of the request.
- 4.7.3. The panel membership will depend on the MBBS programme in which the student is enrolled (see Table 2). The panel may convene virtually or face-to-face. The panel will normally reach a consensual decision based on documentary evidence received but the final decision, in the face of conflicting views, will rest with the MBBS Course Director or their nominee.

Table 2

Programme	IoS Panel Membership
MBBS 4/5 year Programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MBBS Course Director or their nominee 2. Relevant Academic Year Lead 3. BD Lead for MBBS or their nominee.
International MBBS 4/6 year Programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International MBBS Course Director or their nominee 2. Relevant Academic Year Lead 3. BD Lead for MBBS, or their nominee.

4.8. Stage 3 - The Outcome

4.8.1. Following its deliberations, the IoS Panel may:

a. **Approve the interruption**

The Panel will grant the interruption if it is satisfied that:

- i. it is necessary due to **extenuating circumstances** which conflict with the requirements of the course; and the reasons cited by the student indicate that interruption of study would genuinely be in the **student's best academic, financial, or personal interest** in the view of the Panel;
- ii. Where possible, there is sufficient planning for appropriate interventions and activities during the IoS to resolve the reasons cited for the interruption and to facilitate a successful return to the course.

b. **Approve the interruption with additional conditions for return**

The panel has the duty of care to ensure that the time away from study does not adversely affect the student's progression, pose any risks to patient safety and to remove the disadvantage of time out of practice/training. To that effect, the panel has the discretion to impose certain conditions that must be met prior to return. These requirements are designed to ensure the student's knowledge and competencies are at the required level for a successful return to the course and may include:

- clearance from Occupational Health;
- concordance with recommended interventions including medical and psychological treatments;
- contact with the personal tutor whilst on interruption;
- evidence of seeking expert support for any learning or other disability during IoS;
- formatively repeating experiential or taught parts of the course previously completed and associated assessments for which fees may be charged;
- completion of a formative clinical attachment (in T, P and F years) prior to return to formal study for which fees will be charged.
- Students are advised to contact the finance team at St George's (studentfinance@sgul.ac.uk) to discuss the financial implications of attending formative learning opportunities.

The above list is not exhaustive and other supportive measures may be considered depending on individual circumstances. The conditions will need to be met, in order for a student to return to their studies, failure to meet these conditions will be considered by the IoS panel and may result in the student not being permitted to resume their studies. It should be noted that any approval for an interruption of Studies is granted on the basis that when the student returns to study it will be on a full-time basis.

c. **Request further information**

The panel may ask to see further evidence to support the student's claim, e.g. supporting evidence or recommendations.

d. **Reject the request for interruption**

Should the panel find that the request does not meet the grounds for approval cited in para 2.1 above; the request for interruption shall be declined. Students must not assume that requests for interruption or extensions to interruptions, will be granted and should continue to attend course activities until the panel's decision has been communicated.

- 4.9. The panel's decision letter will include the rationale for their decision, the services available to students whilst on IoS, conditions and/or recommendations agreed for the IoS and return, the outline of communications between the student and the university during the interruption, the expected time of return. Where relevant details of

occupational health approval and required timing for an application for extension of program registration will also be detailed.

- 4.10. If a student is not satisfied with the decision of the IoS panel, they may request a review (see [Section 12](#) for further details).

4.11. Application for an additional interruption or extension of interruption of studies

- 4.11.1 The usual period of interruption of studies granted will be no more than one academic year. In exceptional circumstances, which normally relate to ill health, students may apply for a further year of interruption, subject to adequate evidence. Occasionally a student with a previous interruption of studies who has sustained a period of return may then request a further additional period of interruption. A student considering an additional period of interruption should contact the year coordinator in the first instance for advice and guidance.
- 4.11.2 To request an extension/additional period of interruption on health grounds, the student must submit:
- A new IoS form
 - Supporting evidence which should include a medical statement outlining the prognosis for recovery and confirming the ability to sustain a successful return.
- 4.11.3 To request an extension/additional period of interruption on other grounds, the student must submit (to relevant year coordinator):
- A new IoS form
 - Supporting evidence which should include a statement outlining the plan for further interruption and confirming the ability to sustain a successful return.
- 4.11.4 The evidence submitted will be forwarded to the IoS Panel as at first application.
- 4.11.5 In considering the application for an IoS extension/additional period of interruption, the Panel will ensure the best decision for the student is reached by reviewing the evidence submitted in full, as well as the likelihood of successful progression on return.
- 4.11.6 If approved, the IoS Panel will decide any amendments to the plan of return to address skill-fade and currency of knowledge and practice. This should include assessment of knowledge and skill level, repeat of prior taught and experiential learning, formative assessments and the plans to prevent the requirement for a further interruption. As in 1.6, workplace-based assessments will need to be repeated and clinical placements completed prior to the IOS may need to be repeated if the IOS duration is more than one year. This is also reflected in the Schemes of Assessments for the Clinical Years.
- 4.11.7 It should be noted that students with a recurrent health condition will need consideration of the prognosis of the condition with treatment, resilience required for the Course and clinical practice, likelihood of relapse and recurrence as well as an ongoing care plan and any reasonable adjustments on return. Such a review will be in line with University regulations and General Medical Council guidance.

5. Implications for International Students

5.1. Immigration status

- 5.1.1. For international MBBS students sponsored by SGUL for their Tier 4 visa, an interruption of studies has significant implications for their immigration status. International students on a Tier 4 visa are required to be in full-time attendance. As the immigration sponsor of Tier 4 students, SGUL is required to report withdrawal of sponsorship to the Home Office at the beginning of the interruption period. The withdrawal of sponsorship will result in the curtailment of the student's Tier 4 visa and the student being required to leave the UK. Students in this position will need to apply for a new visa in order to return to the UK to resume their studies and should be advised to contact the Senior Compliance Officer to discuss visa implications before submitting their interruption request.

5.2. Finance

- 5.2.1. Students on international MBBS programmes in receipt of US Federal Aid should note that they will be required to start repaying their loan if they are away from study for a period longer than 3 months.

5.3. Occupational Health

- 5.3.1. Students on international MBBS programmes who interrupt on health grounds need to undergo the Occupational Health assessment to confirm they are fit to return to study. For students who spend their interruption in their home country, it is acceptable to obtain a detailed report from the physician providing treatment, or other medically qualified appropriate physician who has no conflict of interest with respect to the student. The report must clearly state the diagnosis, prognosis, treatment and outcomes, what medical assessment(s) were carried out to determine the student's current state of health and that the student is fit to return to study.
- 5.3.2. The student must grant permission to share the report with SGUL Occupational Health Services who will determine the student's fitness to return. It will also be necessary for the student to consent to share any support recommendations with nominated members of the MBBS course team and SGUL staff responsible for implementing this support.
- 5.3.3. In some cases, it may be necessary to arrange an additional occupational health appointment on student's arrival in London.

6. Funding Issues

- 6.1. Students are reminded that taking an interruption of study can affect the funding available to them when they return to complete the course. Before deciding about whether to interrupt, students are advised to consult their funding body about the implications on both their tuition fee and maintenance funding. Previous study at Higher Education level, any repeat study required, and any extension to the current course duration will be considered by the funding body when calculating the funding remaining.
- 6.2. Students are advised to contact the St George's finance team to discuss the financial implications of interrupting their studies. Students can contact the Student Finance Team at studentfinance@sgul.ac.uk.
- 6.3. Students will not normally receive any maintenance support from their funding provider during the period of interruption. They will also not be entitled to Council Tax exemption or student travel discounts.
- 6.4. If a student interrupts part way through an academic year they will be charged a pro-rata tuition fee to reflect the period in attendance. If a student then returns part way through an academic year, they will be charged a pro-rata fee based on the date of resumption of study. Pro-rata fee amounts will be calculated in accordance with the St George's [Tuition Fee Policy](#) for the relevant academic year.
- 6.5. If students are required to repeat taught or experiential teaching and learning on return to the Course, they will need to pay for the additional study time on a pro-rata basis.
- 6.6. Students should make application(s) for funding for each academic year that it is required. Where an interruption of study spans two academic years, they will need to reapply for funding in good time prior to resuming study. Once a student resumes study, the relevant year coordinator will inform the Student Finance team so they can notify the relevant funding bodies. This will ensure that any maintenance and tuition fee funding due will be paid out to the student/University as soon as possible after the student is back in attendance.

7. Timing of Interruptions

- 7.1. An interruption of study may begin immediately in cases where the student's absence from the University is unavoidable or urgently required, e.g. in case of bereavement, accident or ill health. In all other cases, the interruption of study begins from the end of a term/semester (i.e. after the end of assessments attached to that term/semester) so that there is a clearly identifiable point at which a return to studies should occur.
- 7.2. It is common for students to become anxious about their knowledge and performance before the examination period but the IoS process is not designed to address these concerns. Interruptions should not ordinarily be granted just before the start of examinations simply as a means of allowing students to avoid (or postpone) failure in a number of modules, as this would provide these students with an unmerited advantage. Students who become ill or in difficulty at this time should consider the '[mitigating circumstances](#)' process for deferring examinations if they feel that they are not 'fit to sit'. Students wishing to interrupt at this time can still initiate the IoS process but will be

advised about the likelihood of success of their application. Returning directly to exams after IoS can be difficult especially in the clinical years and completion of formative placement(s) or module(s), for which fees would be payable, before returning to enter examinations may be essential.

8. Interruption and Maximum Period of Registration

- 8.1. The University requires all students to complete their programme within a set period after initial registration, regardless of individual circumstances. The maximum period of registration allowed is stipulated in the MBBS Programme Regulations (standard course length + 2 years). Should the period of interruption extend the registration period beyond the maximum allowed, then the student will need to apply for an extension to the registration period as required by the MBBS Programme Regulations. This procedure for [consideration for an extension to a maximum period of study](#) provides full details. Students should note that periods of maternity leave or a single year of intercalation do not contribute to the period of registration.
- 8.2. An interruption should, wherever possible, be for a definite period. In exceptional circumstances where it would be inappropriate to set a date of return to studies, the date of return from interruption may be provisional with an agreed date for review by the IoS panel.
- 8.3. As stipulated in section 1.6, the total maximum period of interruption should not normally exceed one academic year.
- 8.4. Students will need to be aware that further periods of interruption on the same grounds, either consecutively or requested later, may not be granted. When a further interruption is required, it will be essential to provide the reasons and likelihood of successful resolution. The process for considering such requests will be the same as that described in section 4.11 above.

9. Administrative steps in a successful application for IoS

- 9.1. If the request for IoS is approved, the student will be notified by the relevant year coordinator and will receive a formal letter (by email) outlining the following:
 - The start date of interruption and the anticipated return to study date.
 - Conditions and recommendations for interruption, e.g. Occupational Health assessment of fitness to study, undertaking counselling, engagement with GP, etc.
 - The list of completed teaching, experiential learning and assessments attended and passed, and those outstanding.
 - A list of resources to which the student has access whilst on interruption (this may include activities in which the student should not engage e.g. peer tutoring).
 - An outline of agreed communication during the interruption and in preparation for the return to the course. These arrangements will be agreed with the student on a case-by case basis and the student is expected to engage with the communication plan, as outlined in section 2.7 above. Persistent lack of student's response to communications from the course team may lead to the termination of registration in-line with the General Regulations.
 - A plan for attendance to teaching, experiential learning and assessment on return to the Course, including any teaching or assessments which may need to be formatively repeated.
 - International students will be advised on visa matters by the Senior Compliance Officer.
 - If the student needs to apply for an extension to registration/maximum period of study, or may need to do so in the future, and timescale for this.
- 9.2. The relevant year coordinator responsible for processing the student's case will notify the following staff to confirm the approval of interruption of study:
 - Student Records so that they can amend SITS
 - Student Finance Advisor
 - Examinations team
 - Teaching administrators and course team as appropriate

- The student's Personal Tutor and the Personal Tutor Lead for MBBS
- Accommodation Advisor (where appropriate)
- Senior Compliance Advisor (for international students)
- Director of Planning and Performance (for students on international MBBS only)
- USMLE Lead (for students on international MBBS only)

9.3. The responsible administrator will record full details on the IoS records, and a copy of the letter will be saved in the student welfare folder on the shared drive.

10. Expectations of St George's and students on IoS

10.1. Whilst on interruption **the student** is expected to:

- Ensure that he/she (or their nominee) respond in a timely fashion to correspondence.
 - Ensure that he/she fulfils any conditions of interruption.
 - Inform the university of any changes which may impact the duration of IoS.
 - Inform the university of any changes of contact details for them or their nominee (email, telephone, address).
 - Contact the Students' Finance Office in good time, before resuming study, about reapplying for funding.
 - Attend any Occupational Health if required to do so, prior to return.
 - Apply for an [Extension to Registration/maximum period of study](#) where appropriate, and specifically if the period will expire before or shortly thereafter the student returns to study.
- Inform [Student Finance England](#) and [NHS bursaries](#) of their interruption, where appropriate.

10.2. During the student's interruption **the MBBS team** is expected to:

- Send a formal letter (via email) to the student confirming the date of return, the cohort allocation, outstanding assessments, new personal tutor details (if applicable) and any other relevant information (relevant year coordinator).
- Communicate with the student at agreed times set out in the IoS confirmation letter (relevant year coordinator or their nominee).
- Inform the student in a timely fashion of any changes to curriculum (logistical, content etc.) (relevant year coordinator).
- Address any concerns raised by the student whilst on interruption, including an exceptional request to defer return date. See [Section 4.11](#) (relevant year coordinator or their nominee).

11. Return to Study

11.1. If significant changes to the curriculum have been introduced during the period of interruption, the student will be subject to the new regulations and scheme of assessment on return to the programme. If there has been considerable curriculum change while the student has been away, adjustment to the date of return may be required to ensure the student has the best opportunity for a successful return.

If assessments and clinical placements remain unchanged between the previous and current curriculum the assessments completed prior to interruption will stand. Should the scheme of assessment be significantly altered, the student will be required to complete any additional assessments following consultation with the MBBS course director prior to the return. These changes will be communicated to the student ahead of their return by the Year Coordinator.

11.2. Students who were significantly unwell prior to their interruption or who have been away for more than one year may need to repeat completed assessments or placements (see section 4.11.6), as directed by the IoS Panel.

11.3. Students returning to study may feel isolated from their cohort, particularly those returning for part of a clinical year after a significant break. It is important that the student meets with the academic year lead soon after their return, and personal tutor, to discuss any concerns they may have and agree any appropriate intervention.

- 11.4. Students returning to study will be asked to meet with the appropriate Academic Lead and Year Coordinator to ensure they are offered all available support and guidance.
- 11.5. As outlined in section 4.11.6, students returning from a period of interruption longer than one year, will require a plan of return that will include measures to address the implications of potential skill-fade, loss of confidence and the need for clinical mentoring. The recommendations to address skill-fade will be set out in the letter granting an approval of a second period of interruption and supported prior to return and once the student is back in full-time study, in liaison with appropriate members of the MBBS academic and administrative course team.
- 11.6. Tasks to be completed on return to studies:

The student will be expected to:

- Make appropriate arrangements for their student finance.
- Renew their ID card. The student should present the return from IoS letter email from the MBBS course team to staff in the Student Life Centre.
- Engage with the MBBS Team including attendance at all the relevant support meetings arranged by the team.
- Attend occupational health and disability assessment meetings, if required.
- Meet with their personal tutor after return.
- If relevant, provide original immigration documents (passport, visa etc.) to the Senior Compliance Manager.

The MBBS course team will:

- Refer the student to Occupational Health as directed by the IoS panel, if applicable, and the relevant year coordinator will obtain proof of attendance of appointment. Health clearance should consider not only return of health but recovery to a point of sufficient resilience to cope with the physical, psychological and academic rigours of the course.
- Ensure that the returning student has a current personal tutor. If the person is no longer at St George's a new tutor will be identified and the student notified prior to return by the year coordinator.
- Where a student has a current personal tutor, notify the student's personal tutor of his/her return to study date (by the MBBS administrative course team).
- Make an appointment for the student to meet with the academic year lead if the student experiences any difficulties in engaging with the course on return. The purpose of this meeting will be to address any engagement issues in a supportive manner.
- Allocate the student to relevant cohorts and record assessment progress in preparation for their return to study (relevant year coordinator), as detailed in their formal letter of interruption.
- Ensure the student's Smart Card has been renewed, if applicable (relevant year coordinator)
- Inform other departments and staff (as relevant) of the student's return including Student Records, Examinations and Assessment team, Accommodation Advisor, Disabilities Adviser, Senior Compliance Officer, Director of International Development, USMLE Lead.
- Ensure specific arrangements for additional support are confirmed and initiated.

In addition, St George's will:

- Calculate fee amounts in accordance with the St George's Tuition Fee Policy for the relevant academic year and inform the student of their dues (Student Finance Officer)
- Renew the student's Tier 4 sponsorship, where relevant (Senior Compliance Officer).
- Ensure any additional reasonable adjustments, including a Summary of Support Needs (SOSN), are in place, if required.

12. Appeal Against the IoS Panel Decision

- 12.1. If a student is not satisfied with the decision of the Interruption of Study Panel, the student may submit a request in writing to the Chair of the IoS Panel to request further explanation of the decision. If the student then wishes to appeal the decision, then an appeal must be lodged in writing with the Head of Medical Programmes Administration within 10 working days from the date of notice of the decision of the IoS Panel. The review of the decision can only be requested on one or more of the grounds specified in paragraph 12.2 below.
- 12.2. The student may submit an appeal if he or she considers that one or more of the following grounds apply:
 - (a) there is relevant and substantial new evidence available which could not reasonably have been brought to the attention of the IoS Panel;
 - (b) there has been a procedural irregularity of sufficient weight during the IoS Panel's deliberations to suggest that the outcome would not have been the same had it not occurred;
 - (c) the recommendation of the IoS Panel was manifestly unreasonable.
- 12.3. The student must:
 - (a) provide additional relevant new information including supporting evidence; or
 - (b) explain clearly the point of procedural irregularity he or she feels is applicable; or
 - (c) explain why he or she finds the decision unreasonable (supported by evidence).
- 12.4. A new Panel will be convened to review the decision of the IoS Panel to review in view of the information submitted by the student, either face-to-face, or electronically, within 10 working days from the date of appeal received from the student.
- 12.5. This review Panel will consist of a Senior academic nominated by the MBBS Course Director, an Academic Lead not involved in the first IoS Panel and a Year Assessment lead (not previously involved in the student's IoS application).
- 12.6. For the sake of expediency, the quorum will be deemed enough to review the student's request for an informal review.
- 12.7. As a result of the review the review Panel may decide to:
 - (a) uphold the initial decision and provide additional explanation of the reasons to do so;
 - (b) change the initial decision and grant the student's request if it finds that:
 - i. The new evidence reasonably supports the student's request;
 - ii. The procedural irregularity is evident and has had a direct impact on the initial decision;
 - iii. The student's argument for the initial decision being 'manifestly unreasonable' is justified.
- 12.8. The student shall be notified of the outcome of the review by the IoS Panel within 5 working days from the date of the IoS Panel's meeting.
- 12.9. Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal can submit a complaint via SGUL's [student concerns and complaints](#) procedure.

Document version control			
Version	Date	Author	Changes
1.0	April 2016	J. Carroll; K. Pigott; C. Shoults; E. Witter; R. Bevilacqua	Original document created
1.1	Feb 2017	J. Carroll; S. Rice	Updates to 2.6; 3.5 and 10.3
1.2	May 2018	J. Carroll; C. Shoults	Updates to 1.4; 2.3 and Section 7
1.3	June 2019	J. Carroll; C. Shoults; K Pigott	Updates to all sections
2.0	September 2019	J. Carroll; C. Shoults	Updates to sections 1.4; 1.6; 2.7; 2.8; 2.9; 3.2; 3.4; 3.4; table 2; 3.6.1 b; 3.9; 4.2; 4.3; 7.3; 7.4; 8.1; 10.2; 10.4; 10.5; 10.6;
3.0	November 2019	C.Shoults	All sections reviewed. Updates to Section 4
4.0	December 2019	J. Ibison	All sections reviewed. Changes to process for extension of IOS and need formalisation of appeal process.
5.0	January 2020	J. Ibison	
6.0	February 2020	J. Ibison	
7.0	February 2020	J. Ibison – consultation with SCC	All sections reviewed.
8.0	February 2020	K. Pigott	All sections reviewed and links fixed
9.0	June 2021	J.Ibison K Pigott and L Stock, Hannah Cock	All sections reviewed

Ratified at the MBBS Course Committee (02 June 2021)