

## Changing Course and Withdrawal

You may find that once you start your course, it is not really what you expected. You might not have settled in Sheffield or there may be other problems. This leaflet sets out options and points to consider.

### **Please note that this leaflet does not cover:**

#### **a. "Old" style Students**

If you started your course under the old funding system (pre-Sept 2006) you should seek advice.

#### **b. NHS Funded Students**

Students funded by the NHS should seek advice as their situation may be different.

#### **c. International Students**

If you are an international student you will need to consider immigration issues and requirements in addition to academic and financial matters. Please contact the Advice Centre for more information about this.

### **Talk about it first**

It is a good idea to approach your Course Leader first of all to make them aware of the situation, especially as you may need assistance later to get your funding transferred. Remember, there could be other solutions to the problems you are experiencing, whether these are related to studying, debt or personal problems.

There are people within the Students' Union and University who you can talk to, or who may have information on other courses or options available to you. This leaflet looks mainly at how your Student Finance England funding is affected if you are an undergraduate and you:

- transfer to another course;
- repeat part of your studies or have previously studied at HE level;
- temporarily withdraw (take time out);
- change to part time from full time and vice versa;
- Leave permanently.

**\*At time of press many of the funding details for 2012/13 had not been approved by parliament students should seek further advice\***

## **1. TRANSFERRING TO A DIFFERENT COURSE**

To transfer you will need to make sure there is a place available and that you meet the entry requirements for the new course. Contact the Admissions Tutor on the new course to discuss this. You must also inform Student Finance England (SFE) of the transfer and you can do this by logging into your Student Finance account to make the changes on line or by calling SFE on 0845 300 50 90

### ***Time out/Temporary withdrawals***

Students who temporarily suspend their studies during the academic year will normally be charged tuition fees on a pro rata basis. The temporary suspension must have been approved through the University Temporary Suspension procedure; otherwise the student will be liable for the fee for the full academic year.

Please note that students who temporarily suspend from their course before 1st December will not be entitled to receive the Tuition Fee Loan because the Student Loans Company will not make payment of the loan if a student leaves their course before that date. Therefore, students who temporarily suspend before 1st December will be invoiced for a pro-rata fee and will have to pay this directly to the University.

### ***Withdrawals***

Students who withdraw from the University will normally be charged tuition fees on a pro rata basis. The withdrawal must have been approved according to the University withdrawal procedure, otherwise the student will be liable for the full fee for the academic year.

Again please note that students who withdraw before 1st December will not be entitled to receive the Tuition Fee Loan because the Student Loans Company will not make payment of the loan if a student leaves their course before this date. Therefore, students who leave their course before 1st December will be invoiced for a pro-rata fee and will have to pay this directly to the University.

### ***What about the module credit I've completed?***

The Credit Framework in operation at Sheffield Hallam is part of a nationally recognised framework and common to many Universities within the UK. The credit framework enables students to transfer between Universities using the credit achieved at one institution towards an appropriate award at another institution. This is subject to the approval of the receiving University.

## How will my funding be affected if I transfer?

**\* It is anticipated that students who transfer onto a new course that starts in 2012/13 will be charged the higher rates of tuition fees through the 'new' system of student funding\***

The funding regulations allow funding for:

$(\text{length of your course}) + (1 \text{ year}) \text{ MINUS } (\text{any years of previous study})$
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### Example 1

You are on a three year course and have done year one. You decide to transfer to year two of a different course. Your new course is 3 years long. Your funding will remain unaffected and will be calculated as:

$(3 \text{ yrs}) + (1 \text{ yr}) - (1 \text{ yr previous study}) = 3 \text{ yrs funding available.}$

### Example 2

You are currently on a three year course and have done two years. You decide to transfer to a different course and start in year two again. Your new course is 3 years long. Your funding will be calculated as follows:

$(3 \text{ yrs}) + (1 \text{ yr}) - (2 \text{ yrs previous study}) = 2 \text{ yrs funding available.}$

To continue to get funding for fees:

- a) If your course is at the same university, it must be a course that is eligible for funding and you must be attending on the recommendation of the university, or
- b) If your course is at a different university, it must be a course that is eligible for funding and you should have the written authority to transfer from both the institution you are leaving and the institution you want to go to.

Designated courses: these are generally HND, HNC, DipHE, first degree courses (BA or BSc), Foundation and Access/ Conversion courses. A further list can be obtained from the Advice Centre.

NB There are slightly different regulations for 'old' funding students. There are also certain exceptions such as if you are a student doing a "professional course" e.g. Nursing or Teacher Training. Seek advice.

## **2. REPEAT STUDY AND STUDENTS WITH "PREVIOUS STUDY"**

### **How is my funding affected if I have to repeat part of my course? What if I have previously studied at HE level?**

If you are repeating all, or part, of a year of your course for the first time, then you generally get fee and living cost support for one extra year.

If you have to repeat all or part of your course for the second time or more, then the study you have already done will be classed as 'previous study'.

If you have 'previous study', you will still generally be able to get student funding of the maintenance loan and supplementary grants for dependents as these are NOT effected by previous study. However previous study **does** affect further entitlement to:

- Maintenance Grant
- Special Support Grant
- Tuition Fee Loan

If your funding is affected by previous study, you may have to self fund your fees for 1 or more years of your future study. This is because any funding which is due to you will be paid in the later years of your course. You will need to think carefully if you can afford to pay your tuition fees.

### **What if I already have an Honours Degree or other qualification?**

In addition to the rules around previous study, further changes to funding rules mean that students **who wish to study on a course leading to a qualification that is equivalent to, or lower than, a qualification that they have** will not receive funding for their new course. This is referred to as the ELQ (equivalent or lower qualification) rules. However, such students may still be eligible for supplementary grants such as Disabled Students Allowance and Child Care Grant.

Some courses are exempt from these rules and you may still get some funding if you are studying medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, architecture, social work and undergraduate Initial Teacher Training.

If you started your course before 1st September 2009 this will only apply if you already hold an Honours Degree but for students who started their course after this most HE qualifications will be taken into account.

*Additionally fee charges may be different for students with a previous qualification. From 2011/12 new ELQ students may be charged market prices which are likely to be much higher. Some disabled students may be exempt from the higher fee level. Check with the University what fee level will apply to you.*

### **What if I am repeating/left a previous course because I had illness/bereavement/ other personal circumstances?**

SFE has the discretion to award support if you had 'compelling personal reasons' that meant you had to repeat your course or leave your previous course of HE. Compelling personal reasons could include sickness, bereavement, family crisis or pregnancy for example. You should present a strong case with evidence of the reasons you had to leave or repeat your original course. Seek advice.

#### Example 1

You repeat the first year of your three year course. This means you get:

$(3 \text{ yrs}) + (1 \text{ yr}) - (1 \text{ yr previous study}) = 3 \text{ years funding.}$

Your funding for fees and living support is unaffected.

#### Example 2

You have already done 2 years study at university in 2001-2003. You start your 3 year course in September 2010. You get:

$(3 \text{ yrs}) + (1 \text{ yr}) - (2 \text{ yrs previous study}) = 2 \text{ years funding}$

You will get help with tuition fees and living costs for years 2 and 3 of your course. You will have to self fund your fees for your first year.

However if you had to withdraw from the 2nd year of your original course due to "compelling personal reasons" (e.g. illness), the 2nd year is not counted as previous study and your funding would be calculated:

$(3 \text{ yrs}) + (1 \text{ yr}) - (1 \text{ yrs previous study}) = 3 \text{ years funding}$

### **3. TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL**

#### **How do I temporarily withdraw?**

If you decide to take time out from your studies:

- you will need the written agreement of your Course Leader;

- You must inform Student Finance England and the Student Loans Company (in writing or on line if you have an account).
- You should give reasons why you are suspending and try to provide evidence (e.g. doctor's letter). Ask Student Finance England to confirm in writing that you will receive funding for your fees when you return.
- You should talk to your Course Leader and check that you will have a place on the course when you want to return and that the course will not change significantly whilst you are not studying.

### **How will my funding be affected?**

You can usually only continue to receive student support (loan and supplementary grants for dependants) if you are 'in attendance' on your course so if you temporarily withdraw you would probably not be entitled to Student Support OR benefits (see next FAQ).

Before you temporarily withdraw, you should consider how you will support yourself. To continue receiving your loan, you could ask Student Finance England to take account of any hardship you may face, the length of deferral and the reason for deferring your studies.

**NB: There are certain exceptional circumstances when you may continue to receive Student Support even if you are not attending - contact the Advice Centre for more info.**

If you defer your studies due to illness Student Finance England can continue to pay any student funding for up to 60 days. If your illness will last more than 60 days or you have deferred for other reasons, then Student Finance England can give discretionary funding. This may be useful if you cannot claim benefits. You should present a strong case with evidence of the reasons you had for deferral of your course.

### **Can I claim Benefits?**

The Benefit Regulations do not recognise the term "temporary withdrawal". If you withdraw temporarily with an expected date of return to your course you are still classed as a full time student for benefit purposes. You are therefore not eligible to claim benefits (unless you fit the criteria of students who can claim such as single parents or disabled students).

If you are taking approved time out due to an illness or a caring responsibility that has come to an end and you are waiting to go back on your course, you may be able to claim JobSeekers Allowance. Seek advice.

#### **4. CHANGING FROM FULL TIME TO PART TIME**

If you want to change your mode of study to part time you have should first check this is possible with your Course Leader. You then have two options:

1. Change to a *designated* part time course (this is a genuine part time course and will not have the same course code as the full time version.) If your course is available on a part-time basis with a part-time course code, your funding for fees and living costs will be affected as part time students are funded differently to full time students. Seek advice. If you are a part-time student you may also be able to claim benefits as long as you fit the normal criteria for claiming.
2. Continue to study on the full time course code but on a part time basis. If for example you wish to complete your final year over two years, then you can continue to get full time funding for both years (but see previous study rules below). This is because if you are deemed to be on a full time course you should be eligible for support for that course, it should not matter that you are studying it on a part time basis.

While choosing option 2 will allow you to continue to receive a student loan (as this is not affected by previous study), studying a full time course on a part time basis may affect your entitlement to the tuition fee loan and Special Support/Maintenance grants if it takes you longer than the prescribed number of years to complete it i.e. 'length of your course + 1 year MINUS any years of previous study'.

**\*The Funding system for Part-time students is changing from 2012/13 and you should seek further advice\***

#### **5. CHANGING FROM PART TIME TO FULL TIME**

If you are a part-time student and you want to study full-time, you should check whether your course is available on a full-time basis with a full-time course code. You can then apply to SFE for student funding.

#### **6. LEAVING YOUR COURSE**

**What do I need to do if I want to leave my course?**

You should also inform your Faculty Office, Student Finance England and the Student Loan Company in writing that you have left your course, otherwise you may be continued to be charged tuition fees. You are treated as having left your course when you inform the university in writing that you have left, or when they deem that you have abandoned

it. You should contact your Faculty to ask how to formally withdraw to avoid further fee charges.

You **may** have to repay any supplementary grants that cover the period when you are not attending. Supplementary allowances are paid to cover 1 September to 31 August and so it may be better to officially leave your course on the last day of the vacation.

Student Loans do not have to be repaid immediately but are repaid in the normal way (as a monthly repayment once your income reaches approx £15,000 pa).

### **How is my funding for fees affected if I leave my course?**

Any years (or part years) of study you have done before withdrawing will be counted as previous study (unless you are withdrawing for 'compelling personal reasons'). This will be taken into account and the previous study calculation (see part 2) will apply. You will therefore need to think very carefully before you withdraw as funding for any future HE study you wish to undertake may well be affected.

Further advice is available from:

#### **Advice Centre**

The HUBS  
Paternoster Row  
Sheffield  
S1 2QQ  
Tel: 0114 225 4148  
Fax: 0114 225 4943  
Email: [advicecentre@shu.ac.uk](mailto:advicecentre@shu.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.hallamunion.org/advice](http://www.hallamunion.org/advice)

#### **Student & Learning Services**

Sheffield Hallam University  
City Campus:  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Owen Building  
Tel: 0114 225 3813  
Collegiate Crescent Campus  
Heart of the Campus  
Tel: 0114 225 2491

#### **Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care**

Contact via Initial Advice and Guidance  
City Campus - Tel: 0114 225 3813  
Collegiate Crescent Campus - Tel: 0114 225 2491

**Counselling**

Ground Floor,  
Surrey Building, City Campus  
Tel: 0114 225 2136