

## Changing Course

You may find that once you start your course, it is not really what you wanted to do. 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.

### 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 with whom you can talk to, or who may have information on other courses or options available to you. This leaflet looks mainly at how your funding for fees from your LEA 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;
- permanently leave.

### 1. TRANSFERRING TO A DIFFERENT COURSE

To transfer you will need to make sure there is a place available and that you have the relevant qualifications for the new course. Contact the Admissions Tutor on the new course to discuss. You must also

inform your LEA or Student Finance England (SFE) and the Student Loan Company (in writing) of the transfer.

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

The funding regulations allow funding for:

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

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. social work. Seek advice.

#### Example 1

You are a 'current funding' student currently 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 designated course 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 designated course 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.

## **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 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 the following entitlement for:

'old' funding students:

- Higher Education Grant
- Tuition Fee Grant
- Tuition Fee Loan

'current' funding students:

- 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 your first year(s). 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?**

If already hold an honours degree you will not be eligible for funding for living costs OR tuition fee support.

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

Your LEA or SFE has discretion to award fee 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 your original course. Seek advice.

### Example 1

You are a 'current' funding student. 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 1999-2001. You start your 3 year course in September 2007. 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), 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 your LEA or Student Finance England and the Student Loans Company (in writing).
- You should give reasons why you are suspending and try to provide evidence (e.g. doctor's letter). Ask the LEA or 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 the LEA or 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 the LEA should 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, the LEA 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 benefits 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 part time you have should first check this is possible with your Course Leader. You then have two options:

1. Change to a part time course code. 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. 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 this option will allow you to continue to receive full time living costs support (as this is not affected by previous study), studying a full time course on a part time basis may affect your entitlement to tuition fee support 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'.

## **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 your LEA for funding.

## **6. LEAVING YOUR COURSE**

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

You should also inform your School Office, LEA or 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 **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 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 your funding 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