



Centre for Alternative Technology

Graduate School of the Environment

Student Withdrawal Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy describes the procedures that should be followed when a student requests to withdraw or is withdrawn involuntarily.
- 1.2. Students can voluntarily withdraw from a programme at any time, and for any reason, upon submission of a completed GSE Withdrawal form. It is important that you let CAT know via Student Support or a tutor as soon as possible if you wish to withdraw. Students requesting to withdraw from their programme of study should always be supported to explore and consider any other options that are available to them such as an intermission or leave of absence – see section 5, or transfer to another programme.
- 1.3. Students may be required to withdraw due to academic failure or in accordance with Academic Regulations e.g. by failing to pass a core module following the maximum number of attempts allowed; or failing to complete within the maximum time allowed.
- 1.4. In some circumstances GSE may take steps to withdraw a student who fails to satisfactorily engage with their studies or fails to abide by CAT or validating university regulations (*involuntary withdrawal*). In such situations the procedure described in this policy should be carefully followed and documented.
- 1.5. Students who are in receipt of bursaries, sponsorship or other funding should be aware that CAT is obliged to report withdrawals to the relevant funding authority, for example the Student Loans Company (SLC), and this may affect their funding.
- 1.6. **International students studying at CAT in the UK.** CAT will report to UK Visas and Immigration any international students on a student visa who are withdrawn either voluntarily or involuntarily from their programme. This will be in line with CAT's compliance responsibilities as a student visa sponsor. Reporting a withdrawal to UK Visas & Immigration will normally result in curtailment of a visa for international students.
- 1.7. Students, academic staff, and support staff all have a responsibility to ensure that any changes in student circumstances are promptly reported to the appropriate team for action.

2. Related Documents (weblinks)

- LJMU Student Attendance Policy ([available here](#))
- UEL Engagement and Attendance Policy ([available here](#))
- GSE Student Charter ([available here](#))
- GSE Complaints Policy ([available here](#))
- GSE Fees Terms and Conditions ([available here](#))

3. Voluntary Withdrawal

- 3.1. Enrolled Students can voluntarily withdraw from a programme at any time and for any reason.
- 3.2. Students who are considering withdrawing should be advised to seek academic advice and guidance as soon as possible from their Programme Leader and Student Support team, including information about the possible academic and financial consequences.
- 3.3. If, following advice, the student still wishes to withdraw they should confirm this by completing the online withdrawal form available from the [GSE Form Hub](#) (application forms are also available from the Student Support office on request).
- 3.4. The receipt of completed withdrawal forms will be acknowledged by the Student Support team and withdrawing students will be asked to return their University ID cards and advised that they will no longer have access to either CAT or awarding University facilities or systems, this includes CAT email and MS Teams.
- 3.5. Withdrawn students are not permitted to submit coursework or any assessments. Withdrawn students will be considered at the next assessment board and credit awarded where applicable.
- 3.6. The Student Support team will inform the awarding university and the GSE Student Finance Team of the withdrawal as soon as possible.
- 3.7. If appropriate, withdrawing students will be notified of their eligibility to receive an early award and invited to attend the next available Graduation ceremony.
- 3.8. Withdrawing students will be advised about their options for re-enrolling should they wish to return to their studies at a later time.

4. Expectations of Enrolled Students

- 4.1. All GSE students are expected to be committed to their studies and to demonstrate this through their attendance and general level of engagement.
- 4.2. Students are expected to engage with activities that are scheduled as necessary to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes of their chosen programme, as outlined in programme handbooks and module guides.
- 4.3. Expectations of students are more fully described in the GSE Student Charter, Graduate School of the Environment Student Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures and the applicable Academic Regulations and related policies of the awarding university, and with regard to engagement these include, *inter alia*:
 - taking responsibility for informing us of any factors that adversely impact on their ability to engage with your studies in a timely manner;
 - keeping personal details, such as contact information, up to date;

- checking CAT student email account and VLE (Moodle / Canvas) or Microsoft Teams for notifications regularly and, when required, responding to requests for information in a timely manner;
- taking part in all required tutorials, in-person, via Teams, Zoom, Skype, phone or email; Other collaborative software may be used as it becomes available to the GSE
- taking a responsible and professional attitude to their studies such that they aim to meet deadlines, plan work accordingly, and attend all taught sessions or complete on-line materials for which they have registered;
- ensuring that tuition fees and other fees associated with their study are paid in-line with the requirements of the Fees Terms and Conditions policy.

5. Intermission / Leave of Absence

- 5.1. If owing to work, family or other personal or professional commitments, a student has insufficient time for their studies they can apply to take an authorised break known as *intermission* or a *leave of absence*.
- 5.2. Our awarding university partners have separate and differing rules and regulations relating to study breaks, however in all cases where a student wishes to take a break from their studies this must be agreed in advance with the Programme Leader in the first instance.
- 5.3. More information about applying for intermission / leave of absence is available from the Student Support team.

6. Reasons for Involuntary Withdrawal

- 6.1. GSE seeks to enable all students to complete their studies to the best of their potential and will not take steps to involuntarily withdraw a student unless there are clear and justifiable grounds to do so.
- 6.2. Where a student fails to sufficiently or satisfactorily engage with their studies or abide by GSE and university requirements, the escalation procedure described in the following section may be invoked at the discretion of GSE staff.
- 6.3. Circumstances where the involuntary withdrawal of a student will be considered include, but is not limited to:
 - failure to complete enrolment or registration tasks, or pay the course deposit;
 - failure to attend or engage with the introductory core module(s);
 - academic failure;
 - failure to abide by applicable regulations or policies of GSE or the awarding university, including non-payment of tuition fees; fitness to study, or disciplinary issues
 - failure to comply with requests for information from GSE staff in a timely manner e.g. module choices.
- 6.4. Under normal circumstances the decision to withdraw a student involuntarily will be approved by the Programme Leader and/or the Head of School.

7. Involuntary Withdrawal – Procedure

Informal Stage

- 7.1. Where there is reasonable justification for withdrawing a student involuntarily, the Student Support team will first seek to resolve any problems informally.
- 7.2. A period of not less than ten working days and not exceeding one calendar month should be allowed for attempting to resolve issues informally.

Example 1: a student does not submit their module choices for the forthcoming term of study by the required deadline: The Student Support team will contact the student by email to remind them that they have missed the booking deadline and allow them a further period of time to submit their choices. If the student does not respond to the reminder an attempt will be made to contact them by telephone. If, after repeated attempts, it has not been possible to contact the student using the contact details they have supplied, or they still fail to comply with requirements after being successfully contacted, the involuntary withdrawal procedure may be instigated.

Example 2: student fails to pay tuition fee by the stated deadline: In most circumstances students who do not pay their module tuition fees by the required deadline are denied access to learning materials and prevented from submitting work for assessment for the module(s) affected. Furthermore, where a student has missed a payment deadline and has not since paid or responded to emails from Student Finance Office they will be prevented from taking any further modules until the overdue fee has been resolved (see [GSE Fees Terms and Conditions](#) for further details).

Where a student is unable to finance their studies, and this will prevent them from attempting the minimum number of credits required by Academic Regulations, consideration should first be given to intermission / leave of absence options. If the maximum period of intermission allowed has already been taken and the student is unable to demonstrate that they can adequately finance their studies, the involuntary withdrawal procedure may be instigated.

- 7.3. Where a student has not complied with requests for information or has failed to make contact with staff in the Graduate School when asked to do so, the Student Support team should contact the student's personal tutor and Programme Leader to ascertain if they are aware of any circumstances that might be preventing the student for engaging before progressing to the formal stages.
- 7.4. Where there is evidence that there is a valid reason(s) for non-communication or non-compliance e.g. illness or other extenuating circumstances, the Student Support team will contact the awarding university to see what, if any, options are available.
- 7.5. If it is not possible to resolve problems informally and a decision is taken by the Student Support team to recommend withdrawal of a student in the absence of their written consent, the date and reason(s) for this should be recorded on the student record.

Initiation & Notification

- 7.6. If it has not been possible to resolve matters informally the Student Support team will recommend to the Programme Leader or Head of School that the student should be withdrawn.
- 7.7. With the agreement of the Programme Leader or Head of School the Student Support team will inform the student, by email and by post, of the intention to withdraw them from their programme, stating clearly the reason(s) for this.
- 7.8. If appropriate, and at their discretion, the Programme Leader or Head of School may grant the student a final opportunity to comply with requirements and in these cases a maximum of one calendar month will be allowed for this.
- 7.9. Upon notification of their withdrawal the student should be provided with a copy or link to this policy on the CAT website, in addition to any other relevant information.

Final Stage

- 7.10. If, after any agreed final deadline has passed, the student has still failed to comply with programme requirements the Student Support Manager will write to the student and inform them that they will be withdrawn from their programme of study at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.11. The Student Support team should inform the awarding university of the withdrawal as soon as possible after the deadline for the student to register an appeal has passed.
- 7.12. Where a student appeals the decision to withdraw them before the deadline to do so, the awarding university will not be notified unless and until the appeals process has concluded and the decision to withdraw the student is upheld.
- 7.13. Withdrawn students should be asked to return their University ID cards and advised that they will no longer have access to either CAT or awarding University facilities or systems, this includes CAT email and MS Teams.
- 7.14. In some circumstances involuntarily withdrawn students may be permitted to re-enrol to complete their programme e.g. a student withdrawn for non-payment of fees may be allowed to return if they are able to demonstrate that their financial circumstances have improved.
- 7.15. If the student withdrawal date is disputed, then the last recorded date on which CAT resources or facilities were used will be taken as the date of withdrawal.

8. Complaints and Appeals

- 8.1. Regardless of the reason for their withdrawal, all students will have the right to appeal the decision to withdraw them.
- 8.2. Where a student wishes to appeal notification of this must be received in writing within 10 working days of their withdrawal date.
- 8.3. Appeals will be managed in accordance with the GSE Complaints Policy and Procedures. A link to or copy of this will be provided to the student upon notification of the decision to withdraw them.

9. Fees and Early Awards

- 9.1. The Student Finance Officer will be informed of all withdrawals and asked to review the student's payment record in order to assess fee liabilities / reimbursements.

This assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the current version of the GSE Fees Terms and Conditions. International student fee liabilities / reimbursements are calculated in an identical manner to the equivalent Home student.

- 9.2. The Student Finance Officer will also inform the Student Loan Company and any other providers of financial assistance where appropriate.
- 9.3. Withdrawing students in receipt of a CAT bursary will be removed from the bursary scheme, and no additional payments shall be made under the scheme.
- 9.4. Depending upon the number of credits achieved withdrawing students may be eligible for an early award and the Student Support team will ascertain this in conjunction with the awarding university before advising the student.
- 9.5. GSE reserves the right to retain award certificates and final transcripts and withhold an invitation to our Graduation ceremony where tuition fees have not been paid in full.

10. Data Privacy and General Data Protection Regulations 2018

Once a student has been withdrawn from CAT their records will be maintained within the principles outlined in CAT's data privacy policy following the same times periods as a student who has graduated from CAT.

Liverpool John Moores University, University of East London and the Centre for Alternative Technology are all registered as a Data Controller with the Office of the Information Commissioner as required under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. They only processes data in accordance with the Regulations and for the purposes notified to the Information Commissioner.

This policy and contact details may be amended from time to time.

Amendments to Student Withdrawal v.2 dated July 2021

Minor typographical changes to correct misspellings etc

4.3 Sources of information regarding expectations of Enrolled Students has been added to.

6.3 Reasons for involuntary withdrawal extended to include fitness to study and disciplinary issues

7.15 Dispute over withdrawal data procedure

9.5 GSE reserves the right to retain award certificates and final transcripts where tuition fees remain unpaid

10. Section on Data Privacy and General Data Protection Regulations 2018 added

Date Document Approved: April 2024

By: Trustees Board

Version 2.1

To be Reviewed by: July 2027