

ST CROSS COLLEGE – POLICY FOR STUDENT SUSPENSION

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The University has a general policy on this subject which provides a good overview and can be found at: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/status?wssl=1>

Suspension is a serious step and needs to be thought about carefully, particularly in relation to the effect it will have on the overall timescale of a course. This policy is designed to explain the effects of suspension in more detail from the College perspective.

There are two types of student requested suspension – retrospective and forward looking. (NB: this policy does not cover University imposed suspension, typically for non-payment of fees, which is referenced in the University policy above).

In cases of retrospective suspension, the rationale is that the student has not been able to engage effectively with their work for a certain number of terms and will be expected to repeat these terms later in their course. In the event that such a request is granted then fees for the relevant period will be refunded. The student needs to be aware that they will be liable for equivalent fees for the repeated terms to come (plus any cost of living increases that may be incurred), plus of course the costs of accommodation, food, etc for the additional time.

This policy will now consider ‘forward looking’ suspension, where a student has gained approval (for whatever allowable reason) to suspend their studies for a period – often for a term or two, but in the case of taught courses for a whole academic year. It should be noted that the Monday of Fourth Week each term is a significant date, because suspension after this date will result in fees being payable for this whole term. Suspension before this date will make it possible to have the fees for this term refunded as described above.

The University definition is: “Suspension of status within the University ‘stops the clock’ for all elements of your degree, including residence, fees and terms for which a particular status may be held.” The clear understanding is that the student hopes to return after suspension and will then be liable for fees, accommodation charges, etc for the equivalent extended period. Although the individual is suspending their student status, the University states that: “a student with suspended status will retain their University card and Single Sign On access to online resources, including email, and to University libraries, during periods of suspension.”

We expect that it will be normal for students to move away from Oxford (typically back home with family) during suspension. We therefore assume that cases where they stay in Oxford during periods of suspension will be rare. However, in such cases it should be noted that the following benefits of College life would not normally be available to suspended students:

- College provided accommodation
- Common Room access
- Dining rights
- College library access
- College events attendance (Ball, bops, talks, etc)
- Sports club activity
- Access to the College punt
- Iffley Road gym membership

It should be emphasised that this is not intended in any way to be a punitive policy – it is driven by an approach of fairness (a suspended student is not paying College fees during their period of suspension, so should set aside the privileges of College life during this period) and by a desire to maintain harmony and cohesion amongst those students who continue to engage with College life in the normal way.

There can be additional levels of complexity in cases of suspension from taught courses. Because of the inevitable constraints of course timetables, such students are usually obliged to suspend for a full academic year cycle, whether that timing fits their need, for example for recovery, or not. It is anticipated that such cases will prove most in need of scrutiny, as such students will face particular logistical challenges in relation to accommodation and may also reasonably wish to return to Oxford ahead of the date of resuming their course. The College will assess such cases carefully on a case by case basis.

The College administration will do all it can to assist students in the various stages of suspension, and there is a formal working group meeting once per term to discuss cases in order to assess the best way to help on a personalised basis.