

Taking a Break in Study

Guidance for students on an Apprenticeship course

If you are experiencing long-term personal or health problems that are affecting your ability and commitment to study, you may want to discuss the range of choices and options that might be available to help you, including the possibility of taking a break from your apprenticeship and from your studies. You should make an appointment with your Student Support Adviser (SSA) via [Hallam Help](#) to discuss your circumstances in depth. Details of who your SSA is and how to access them can be found on [MyHallam](#).

Taking a break from your apprenticeship and your studies (Break in Study) is a significant and serious step to take and it is very important that you think carefully about this and talk to your employer and your Apprenticeship Coach before making a request. Your employer and your Apprenticeship Coach must agree to you taking a Break in Study and also agree to you returning as an apprentice when fit to do so. You do not have to have authorisation in writing, but it is your responsibility to make sure that they verbally authorise the break.

In some situations your SSA, other members of the University or your employer, may recommend that you take a Break in Study as the best option for you.

The main aim of a Break in Study is to give you time to deal with the issues that you are experiencing, where those issues are substantial enough that it is not possible or practical for you to manage them whilst also continuing with your apprenticeship and your studies. When your situation has improved, you will then be able to return to your apprenticeship and to your studies at a date which is agreed between you, the University and with your employer.

You will be considered to be attending your apprenticeship and your course, and your employer will still be liable for your tuition fees, until you have:

- Had your request approved by your Apprenticeship Coach and your employer
- Met with your SSA
- Had a full discussion about your situation
- Explored the options
- Completed the relevant paperwork
- Had your request formally approved by the University

On what grounds can I apply for a Break in Study?

Requests for a Break in Study are only considered for reasons relating to Exceptional Circumstances, such as:

- Bereavement
- Caring responsibilities
- Domestic circumstances
- Financial reasons
- Impact of crime/harassment
- Maternity Leave
- Mental health
- Natural disaster/war
- Paternity Leave
- Physical health

A Break in Study will only be permitted if you anticipate being away from your apprenticeship and your studies for more than 4 weeks. You cannot take a Break in Study within the final 4 weeks of the teaching/planned delivery of a

course in an academic year. This is because the majority of the teaching/planned schedule for the year has been delivered to you and it is expected you will be in a position to make the attempt at the assessments. If you anticipate being away for less than 4 weeks or you are within the final 4 weeks of teaching/planned delivery on your course, other support options are available and your SSA will explore these with you.

You are not allowed to take a Break in Study for vocational reasons, such as annual leave, public holidays, short term absences or where you have left employment including redundancy.

Please see the [Break in Study Policy and Procedure](#) for more information on when students studying an apprenticeship course are permitted or not permitted to take a break from their apprenticeship and their studies.

How long can I take a break for?

The maximum length of a Break in Study which can initially be agreed is one calendar year. Please see the [Break in Study Policy and Procedure](#) for further information. It is important to note that there are only specific points in an academic year when you will be able to Return to Study. These are determined by the University and will be communicated to you at the point you take a Break in Study.

Things to consider before taking a Break in Study

Academic studies

You must ensure that you understand any implications for when you Return to Studies, for example:

- The course of study on which you enrolled may have changed during your Break in Study, in a number of ways, including changing the number and type of academic assessments. You must plan to return to the same apprenticeship programme, including any relevant qualifications.
- The academic regulations that apply to your studies may have changed.
- You may only be permitted to re-join the course/resume your studies at specific times which may not be of your choosing.
- In most instances, you will be joining a different group of students to when you started your course. You will need to develop new relationships with your new classmates, as they will already know one another.
- Your subject knowledge may be out-of-date, and you may have to cover previous content in order to get yourself up-to-date and to re-engage. **Remember:** you cannot continue to collect any evidence during a Break in Study, as this will be discounted.
- You may need to work hard to re-focus on your study skills and techniques and also how to manage your assessments.
- There may be restrictions on how many years you can take to complete your course, we call this Maximum Duration. There may also be Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements which will impact on your Return to Study.

What will happen to my results?

If you are taking a Break in Study part-way through an academic year, any assessment already submitted, or exams already taken, will be marked and considered at an assessment board. Please see the [Break in Study Policy and Procedure](#) for more information on assessments when taking a Break in Study.

Progression towards your Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours will pause and then resume upon your return from your Break in Study.

Accommodation

You must ensure that you understand the implications of any accommodation contract that you have signed. Taking a Break in Study does not release you from your accommodation contract and you are likely to be liable for some or all of the accommodation fees. In the first instance, you should speak to your Hall Manager or Landlord.

If you leave your accommodation for a Break in Study, make sure that you consider where you will live and any financial implications.

How does a Break in Study affect my tuition fee and apprenticeship funding?

It is your responsibility to make sure that you fully understand the implications of a Break in Study on your financial situation. You must speak to your employer/sponsor about your personal circumstances before proceeding with a Break in Study.

Please see the [Break in Study Policy and Procedure](#) for more information on tuition fees and funding when taking a Break in Study.

Are you a student taking Maternity Leave?

If you are a pregnant student, when you are ready to disclose your pregnancy, you should notify your employer, your Apprenticeship Coach and your SSA. Your SSA will arrange for a Pregnant Student Risk Assessment (PSRA) to be undertaken at the earliest opportunity and also create a Pregnancy and Maternity Student Support Plan (PMSSP), along with processing your Break in Study - apprenticeship.

Please see the [Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy](#) for more information.

How do I apply to take a Break in Study?

If you have explored all options available to you and decided that the most effective way for you to deal with your issues is to take a Break in Study, rather than to continue studying with all the additional support that the University can offer, then you will need to apply formally for a Break in Study. You must speak with your employer and your Apprenticeship Coach for them to verbally approve your break. Having sought approval you must then meet with your SSA to complete a Break in Study form. It is essential that you meet with an SSA in a timely manner, so that if you do take a break from your apprenticeship and your studies, the correct forms can be completed and your Break in Study can be accurately and efficiently processed.

Your request will then be formally considered by the University and a decision made. If your request is approved, you will receive confirmation of your break.

Will I keep in contact with the University during a Break in Study?

You must not attend any teaching during a Break in Study and teaching staff are not obliged to provide you with any academic support. Also, you cannot continue to collect any evidence during a Break in Study, as this will be discounted. This is to enable you to concentrate on the circumstances that led to you taking a Break in Study and to give you the best possible opportunity to positively resolve them.

You will retain all access to the University's IT systems and library. You can also contact [Hallam Help](#) if you need advice and guidance during a Break in Study and they will signpost you to the correct service. Further information is available in the table below.

Return to Study

You will be contacted approximately 4 months prior to your intended Return to Study date and we will contact you via your University email address. At this point you will be asked to confirm that your situation has resolved and that you are both in a position and prepared to Return to Study and re-engage with teaching and learning. This is important as we have a duty of care to our students to ensure that they are able to benefit from their university experience.

If there have been changes to your course and/or to the academic regulations which apply, then you will be invited to meet with your SSA and possibly a member of your course team and your Apprenticeship Coach prior to resuming your studies, to discuss the impact for you and give you an opportunity to ask any questions.

If you do not reply when we contact you, or you do not engage with your planned Return to Study, then it is likely that you will be formally withdrawn from the University.

Services available during an approved Break in Study

We understand it is important that you are able to keep in contact with the University during your Break in Study. The table below highlights what access you have to specific services during this time:

Access to:	What you are entitled to during a Break in Study
Academic Staff	Staff are not required to provide you with academic support during a planned Break in Study. This is so that you are able to focus on resolving the issues that led to you taking a break.
Accommodation	You will need to discuss your rental agreement with your accommodation provider.
Blackboard	You will retain access to Blackboard.
Careers and Employability	There is a dedicated Careers and Employability area in MyHallam where you will find lots of information.
Disabled Student Support Team	If you have a Learning Contract or think that you will need one on your return, you can contact the team during your Break in Study to discuss the support that you may need on your return.
Hallam Help	Please contact Hallam Help on 0114 225 2222 or by emailing hallamhelp@shu.ac.uk if you have any questions during a Break in Study but don't know who to contact.
International Experience Team	You can access support and advice from the team .
Library	You retain full access to the library.
Multi-faith Chaplaincy	The Multi-faith Chaplaincy exists to serve the spiritual and religious needs of all students.
My Hallam	You can access a wealth of information via My Hallam .
Students' Union Advice Centre	You can continue to access support and advice .
Student Support Adviser	You can contact an SSA in relation to your Break in Study, Return to Study, a Course Transfer or a Withdrawal.
Apprenticeship Coach	You can contact your Apprenticeship Coach in relation to your Break in Study, Return to Study, a Course Transfer or a Withdrawal.
Student Wellbeing	Student Wellbeing provides information and advice to support your psychological wellbeing in order for you to manage your studies and make the most of university life.
University e-mail	Your email account remains live. You are reminded to regularly access this account or to set up auto-forwarding to a personal account that you regularly use. Don't forget – we will contact you via your University email address regarding your Return to Study.

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