UCQ
UNIVERSITY
CENTRE QUAYSIDE

Apprenticeship Break in Learning Policy

Version: 2
Revision date: 30/05/2025
Document reviewer: Vice Principal
Due for review: 30/05/2027

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1. Introduction

1.1 University Centre Quayside recognises the value of learning and endeavours to ensure all learners have a positive learning experience, when studying on their apprenticeship.

1.2 In order to adhere to the Department for Education (DfE) funding guidance, this procedure outlines UCQ's approach to managing breaks in learning.

1.3 The decision to take a break in learning, the reason for the break and its expected duration must be agreed between the apprentice, employer and provider.

2. Definitions

2.1 Break in Learning (BIL)

This term is used to describe a period, during an apprenticeship, where the student takes a break for reasons including change to work circumstances, medical treatment, unexpected leave or other personal circumstances.

3. BIL conditions

3.1 Breaks in Learning are used where active learning has not taken place for four weeks. Active learning must take place each calendar month.

3.2 An apprentice can also request to take a BIL, from their apprenticeship programme, if they plan to return to the same apprenticeship at a later date.

3.3 Apprentices must agree the BIL with their employer and provider.

3.4 You can take a formal BIL of 4 weeks or more and a BIL should not exceed 12 months.

3.5 In order to manage learner expectations and learning experience, UCQ have outlined BIL should not exceed one year in total. It is expected that an apprentice will take no more than one BIL on the Apprenticeship programme. UCQ will, however, discuss complex cases on an individual basis, where the student is actively engaged and making good progress.

4. Process

4.1 Requesting a Break in Learning (BIL)

If a student would like to request a BIL, they should discuss with their Professional Development Assessor (PDA) in the first instance to determine what alternative support would be available to avoid a BIL where possible. To proceed with a BIL request, an Application for Break in Learning form (QD APPS 018) must be completed, signed by the student and employer to confirm the intention to return to the programme. This form should be submitted to registry@ucq.ac.uk to process.

4.2 Decision-making

4.2.1 Normally, students will receive a response to their BIL request within three working days.

4.2.2 Should you have any queries regarding your application you can contact academic registry at registry@ucq.ac.uk.

4.2.3 Should an application be unsuccessful the applicant will be notified in writing explaining the outcome. If the applicant is not satisfied with this response they may appeal the decision through the Appeals Procedure (AC-001). This procedure is available from the UCQ website https://ucq.ac.uk/policies/. Appeals will be dealt with by a member of UCQ's Academic Council.

5. Monitoring

5.1 UCQ will monitor and regularly report on students currently undertaking a BIL.

6. Returning from a Break in Learning

6.1 UCQ will contact students at least six weeks prior to returning from a BIL to offer a date to return to their programme. Students will return from a break in learning, where there is capacity, to an available cohort undertaking their next module. This may be delivered on a different day to their original cohort.

6.2 The Professional Development Assessor will contact the student to have a return meeting on Teams to offer appropriate support, update Curriculum Plan and complete re-orientation of Ecordia, student portal and key policies and procedures. This aims to support the student to return to their studies smoothly.

6.3 Re-start documentation, including Individual Training Plan and Apprenticeship Agreement will be sent for signature by student and employer.

7. Avoiding a Break in Learning

7.1 During the programme, there may be an opportunity for a student to move cohorts, to avoid taking a Break in Learning. This can be arranged where learning continues, for example, to catch up on portfolio work before progressing to the next module. Moving cohorts should only be used in exceptional circumstances and can only be twice during the apprenticeship. It must only be used where a student is actively engaged in their learning journey, including a commitment to catch-up with their studies.

8. Document history

ISSUE NO.	DATE	PAGE	REVIEWER	DETAIL OF AMENDMENT
2	30/05/2025	All	Tara Henderson	Periodic review completed; References to ESFA updated to DfE throughout; Para 3.5 added 'should' to stipulation to align to DfE APP Funding Rules; S8 document history added; Section numbers updated accordingly

9. Initial equalities impact assessment

Department: All	**Completed by:** Tara Henderson, Head of Policy & Governance	**Date of initial assessment:** 04/05/2023
Area to be assessed:	TLA-026 Break in Learning Policy	
Existing or new policy/procedure:	New	
What evidence has been used to inform the assessment and policy? (please list only)		
External guidance and requirements: ➢ Consultation with OU Expert Reader ➢ OU/UCQ General Regulations ➢ ESFA funding rules **Internal guidance and requirements:** ➢ Consultation with Head of Quality and Data ➢ Senior Leadership Team ➢ HE Team		

1. Describe the aims, objectives or purpose of the policy/procedure		This policy sets out UCQ's arrangements for managing Breaks in Learning.		
2. Which stakeholders/groups are intended to benefit from this policy/procedure?		All apprenticeship students		
The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:- (1) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization (2) Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and (3) Foster good relations between different groups		**3. Could the policy/procedure have a disproportionately negative effect impact in terms of the aims set out in (1) to (3) of the Act on any of the protected characteristics?:-** **High** **Medium** **Low** **No effect**	**4. Briefly explain how the policy/procedure furthers or prevents the aims set out in (1) to (3).**	**5. If there is a disproportionately negative impact on any protected characteristics, can it be justified on the grounds of promoting equality or any other reason? If yes, please explain.**
Protected characteristics	**Age**	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Disability	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Gender	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Gender reassignment	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Pregnancy and Maternity	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Race	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Religion or Belief	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable

	Sexual Orientation	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable

6. Has there been any consultation/engagement with the appropriate protected characteristics?		Not applicable as no negative PC impact identified
7. What action(s) will you take to reduce any disproportionately negative impact, if any?		None required
8. Based on the information in sections 1 to 7, should this policy/procedure proceed to Full Impact Assessment? (recommended if one or more 'High' under section 2)		No
Assessor signature:	**Approved by:** **Michelle Elliott**	**Date approved:** 04/05/2023