

Advice Service

THINKING OF LEAVING?

INTERUPTION, WITHDRAWAL OR COURSE CHANGE?

In this guide you will find detailed information about student funding, tuition fees, housing, tenancy agreements, procedures, University regulations, debt, council tax and immigration.



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The Advice Service cannot be held responsible if the information here is incorrect. The Advice Service makes every effort to ensure information on these pages is accurate and up to date; however policies, procedures and regulations are subject to change. Therefore the Advice Service cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or inconvenience suffered as a result of using our pages. This information was checked on 23/08/2017

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ASK FOR THE



Student Support Centre



ALL STUDENTS MUST READ THIS SECTION

Declaration

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The Advice Service offers confidential specialist advice to help you make the right decision.

To book an confidential appointment with a professional advice worker, either in person or by telephone, please email adviceappointments@lincoln.ac.uk

We have drop in sessions which run Monday-Friday 12-2 in the Student Support Centre, where specialist advisers are available to talk in confidence. Drop-in sessions are short. If you need a longer appointment the adviser will arrange this.

The sessions are on a FIRST COME FIRST SERVED basis, so please arrive early to avoid disappointment.

You can also access lots of self-help information via our website. You can get directly to our website by clicking on the Advice Service logo available on all University desktop computers or by typing <http://advice.service.lincoln.ac.uk> into your web browser.



Click the logo.

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SECTION 1: Thinking of Leaving?

If you are thinking about leaving University altogether (withdrawing), or taking a break (interrupting), it is important to be aware of your rights and responsibilities. It's not unusual to think about leaving University and you are not alone.

Reasons why students think about leaving University can include:

- Money worries
- Choosing the wrong course
- Struggling to balance working and studying
- Struggling to make friends
- Unforeseen problems e.g. health or family problems

Leaving may feel like the only thing to do, but whatever your reasons it is a good idea to consider all the options. You can get help and information from the Advice Service, your Personal Academic Tutor and the Careers Service about the different options available to you.

Personal Tutor – Can help you if you are struggling with your course or something is affecting your ability to study. They can discuss the academic implications of a break from your studies. If you want to return to your course in future, then you will need to talk to your tutor about this before you leave.

Careers Service - Leaving your programme of study at the University could have far reaching effects and potentially impact upon your career aspirations. The Careers Service are here to support you to make a well informed decision. If you are considering leaving your programme of study or the University please make sure that you visit the Careers & Employability Service. They can help you to understand the career implications of your decision and support you in identifying the right path to fulfil your career aspirations. They offer one to one Careers Information, Advice and Guidance to help you to make the right decision for you. No need for an appointment – come to the drop in Monday to Friday **10am – 3pm** which is situated upstairs in the **Student Union** building or email: careers@lincoln.ac.uk

You can access lots of self-help information from the Careers & Employability Service from Blackboard by clicking on the Careers tab along the top.

SECTION 2: Working through your problems

If you are having problems which affect your study you can talk to:

- The Advice Service
- Your personal tutor
- Other support services, for example the Wellbeing Centre or the University Chaplain.

You may come to the conclusion that you can carry on with your studies. However, if your work has been affected, remember that you may need **evidence** of the problem, e.g. a medical certificate, in case you need to claim Extenuating Circumstances or show Student Finance that you had Compelling Personal Reasons (CPR) to get extra funding.

Please see Sections 13 and 14 for further information on Extenuating Circumstances and Compelling Personal Reasons (CPR).

SECTION 3: Changing Courses

If you are thinking of changing course within the University, you will need the permission of the programme leaders and you will need to discuss the details with academic staff. You will also need to think about how your new course will be funded. The Advice Service can provide advice on all areas of student funding. Please see page 1 for how to contact and make an appointment with us. The following information is taken from the University of Lincoln Taught Postgraduate Regulations 2017/18.

4.5 Change of Studies

4.5.1 A change of studies occurs when a student transfers their registration from one programme of studies to a different programme of studies.

4.5.2 A student may only change their studies with the agreement, given on academic grounds, of the relevant programme leaders and where the timing of such a change is not prejudicial to the academic progress of the student. No student may change from one programme to another unless it is clear that they have adequate opportunity to complete all the assessments on the new programme in the teaching session assigned to the current cohort of students on that programme level.

4.5.3 A student who seeks to change their studies from one programme to another must obtain the Transfer of Award form from the Student Support Centre and ensure that it is approved by the relevant academic members of staff and returned to the Student Support Centre.

4.5.4 A change of studies may only take place where the transfer is explicitly approved by the importing programme leader, evidenced by the relevant signature on the student transfer form. In the case of a joint programme, authorisation from both importing programme leaders is required.

4.5.5 In allowing a student to change their studies, the University shall not give an undertaking that the student will be entitled to support from any financial sponsor to pursue the new programme of studies.

SECTION 4: Studying Part-Time

You may decide to study your postgraduate course on a part-time basis, or change from full-time to part-time study.

Part-time students from England can apply for a Postgraduate Masters Loan. The loan will be divided equally over each year of your course.

For more information about the Postgraduate Masters Loan please see Section 8.

You will need to support yourself financially while you are studying. You may be working, and/or you can apply for welfare benefits e.g.

- Jobseekers Allowance if you are looking for work.
- Income Support if you are a carer or a single parent of a child under 5.
- Employment and Support Allowance if you are not well enough to work.
- Housing Benefit for help with the cost of your rent
- Council Tax Support – because part-time students have to pay council tax.
- Universal Credit: at the time of writing (September 2017) this was not available to part-time students.

If you would like confidential specialist advice to help you make the right decision about whether to study part-time please see page 1 for how to contact and make an appointment with us.

SECTION 5: Taking a break- Interrupting Studies

If you have to leave university right now, but you know that you want to continue with your course at a later date, you can interrupt (take a break from) your studies. The usual period of interruption will be one academic year. The normal maximum period of interruption is two years, but this may be extended on a case by case basis.

You will need to discuss interruption with your School to agree on the period of interruption, the best time for you to return, and to discuss the academic implications of the break.

Some things to consider when interrupting:

Interrupted students are still classed as full-time students by the welfare benefits system; this means you will continue to be classed as a full time student for council tax while you are interrupted.

Unless you already have, or are eligible for, an underlying entitlement to benefits, (e.g. you are a single parent, or you get a disability benefit such as Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance), you **will not** be able to claim welfare benefits during your period of interruption.

You remain liable for the fees for the academic year in which you interrupted. If you have a payment plan, this will usually be suspended during the interruption and resume once you start studying again. Please see section 9 for more information about fees.

There are restrictions of the amount of student funding postgraduate students can get from the Student Loans Company: for more information please see Sections 8 and 14.

If you have missed deadlines to hand in work at the point when you interrupt, you may not be able to repeat that work when you return unless you make a successful claim for Extenuating Circumstances. More information about extenuating circumstances can be found in Section 13.

Below is an extract from the University of Lincoln Taught Postgraduate Regulations 2017/18. Regulations do change from time to time and it is important that you check the most up to date version of the University of Lincoln's regulations before you make any final decisions.

4.4 Interruption of Studies

4.4.1 A student may apply to the University to interrupt their studies for a specific period of time. The Interruption of Studies form is available from the Student Support Centre, whose staff will deal with any queries about the process. The student must ensure that the form specifies the period of the interruption and is signed by the appropriate member of academic staff, and must then return it to the Student Support Centre.

4.4.2 Students remain liable for the fees for the academic year in which they have interrupted their studies. If the fees have been paid in full the student shall not be liable for any further fees for the year in which they resume their studies and complete the year of study, provided that the student resumes studies at the same point as initial interruption. If a payment plan has been agreed this will normally be suspended during a period of interruption, and resume once studies recommence. The overriding principle is that the student will pay for one complete period of study (for full-time students this would

normally be one academic year) although this may be spread over two academic cycles. Where a student resumes studies at a point earlier than the initial interruption, an additional charge will be payable for the subsequent period of study. Detailed guidance relating to interruption of studies is set out in Annex C.

4.4.3 A student shall normally be expected to return to their programme of studies in the following academic year at the point in the teaching or assessment calendar equivalent to when study was previously interrupted. Where students interrupt at the semester break this may be relatively straightforward but where an interruption has been at another point this will require careful monitoring by the Programme Team. Academic judgement may be used when deciding upon the relevant point of return to study.

4.4.4 A student returning after an interruption of studies shall enrol only upon those modules not previously assessed, or where reassessment has been agreed by the Board of Examiners. Any assessments already completed will be carried forward.

4.4.5 The University cannot guarantee that changes to a programme of studies will not be made during a student's period of interruption. Where changes have occurred the Board of Examiners, in consultation with Registry, will make appropriate arrangements to enable the student to complete the programme of studies.

4.4.6 During a period of interruption of studies the student and the University remain bound by these Regulations.

4.4.7 Where a student has formally interrupted their studies, the period of interruption of study will not normally be included for the purposes of calculating their maximum period of registration. The normal maximum for a period of interruption of studies is two years, but this may be varied at validation, for example, to account for the more restrictive requirements of professional bodies.

Annex C – Interruption of Study

Interruption of Studies During Term 1

Those students that interrupt studies between weeks 1 and 15 may resume studies the following academic year with no additional cost.

Interruption of Studies During Term 2

Those students that interrupt between weeks 16 and 30 may resume studies the following academic year with no additional cost provided they resume study in weeks 16 or later.

If a student resumes earlier than week 16, an additional charge, calculated at 25% of the full tuition fee rate for the academic year studies are resumed will also be payable to account for the repeat delivery of term 1.

Interruption of Studies During Term 3

Those students that interrupt in weeks 31 and 32 may resume studies the following academic year with no additional cost provided they resume study in week 31 or later.

If a student resumes earlier than week 31, an additional charge will also be payable, for the academic year studies are resumed, to account for the repeat delivery of term 1 and/or 2 calculated as follows:

Resumption of studies between weeks 1 and 15: 50% of the full tuition fee rate for the academic year

Resumption of studies between weeks 16 and 30: 25% of the full tuition fee rate for the academic year

Students may not interrupt studies for the current academic year after week 32. Students unable to complete assessments due to unforeseen circumstances during the subsequent examination and re-sit examination periods should submit a claim to the University Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

Students wishing to complete current year studies but interrupt studies for the following academic year may do so at the end of the examination periods - week 51

SECTION 6: Studying elsewhere

If you decide that another course at a different university would suit you better, a good first step is to get advice from the University of Lincoln Careers Service or the careers

advisor in your faculty. Once you have decided on a new course and a new university you should approach the new university to see if you can get an offer.

Changing universities has serious implications for your student funding and possibly your accommodation contract. For more information please see sections 7,8,9,10 and 14.

SECTION 7: Withdrawing from University

Some people decide that being at university is not the right choice for them at this time and that they should leave the course permanently. If this applies to you, it is a good idea to speak to the University's Careers Service before you leave. They can help you to decide what to do next and what you can do with the skills, abilities and qualifications that you already have.

Withdrawing will have implications for your funding, your finances and possibly for your accommodation. You may still be liable for course fees when you withdraw. Please see sections 8, 9,10 and 11 for more information.

If you think you might want to withdraw from university, come and talk to the Advice Service. Please see page 1 for how to contact us.

SECTION 8: Student Funding for Postgraduates

Eligible postgraduate students who are ordinarily resident in England can apply for a Postgraduate Masters Loan (PGL) as a contribution towards the cost of their studies. In 2017-18 this will be £10280. This is the maximum amount of funding available.

The PGL is also available for part-time study. The funding will be divided equally over the number of years in your course.

(Please note that postgraduate funding is different if you live in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. Please contact your funding body or the Advice Service if you would like more information about this.)

Normally students will only be able to get one PGL.

However, if you did not complete your course due to **compelling personal reasons (CPR)**, you can get a new PGL Master's for a **new course**. Repeat funding due to CPR may be awarded **once only** per student. Please see section 14 for more information about CPR.

If you **interrupt** (take a break from) your studies, your PGL payments will stop. If you get a payment for the term after you interrupted, this is an overpayment which you can be asked to repay immediately. If you don't repay an overpayment by the time you resume your studies, it can be deducted from your future PGL payments.

SLC have discretion to continue payments of your PGL during a period of interruption if you can show that you will be in financial hardship. Please note you will never receive more than the maximum PGL entitlement.

If you interrupt your studies for two years or more (whether this is a continuous period or a cumulative total of shorter interruption periods), you will only receive further payments of your PGL if you can provide evidence of compelling personal reasons (CPR).

If you **withdraw** from the course (leave the course completely), all future payments of PGL Master's will be cancelled. You should notify the University and SLC immediately, to ensure that you do not receive any more payments of the loan.

SECTION 9: University Fees

As a postgraduate student you are responsible for paying the course fees to the University. You must pay in full or set up a payment plan within 21 days of enrolment on the course. If you set up a payment plan, you will pay by monthly instalments: the maximum number of instalments is 9.

There is more information about how to pay your fees on the University's main website.

What follows is an extract from the University's General Regulations 2017-18, Part H

H5 Students interrupting or withdrawing from a programme of study

5.1 Except in the case of Bachelor of Architecture, Master of Architecture and short courses, a student withdrawing from a postgraduate programme of study on a permanent basis within four weeks of their effective start date (see section H6 Glossary), shall not be liable for tuition fees and entitled to have any monies paid refunded in full.

5.2 Except in the case of Bachelor of Architecture, Master of Architecture and short courses, a student withdrawing from a postgraduate programme of study on a permanent basis, after week 4 and up to and including week 10 from the effective start date, shall not be liable for tuition fees and entitled to have any

monies paid refunded in full but will be liable to pay an administration charge of 25% of the total tuition fee due for the year.

5.3 Except in the case of Bachelor of Architecture, Master of Architecture and short courses, a student withdrawing from a postgraduate programme of study on a permanent basis after week 10 from their effective start date, or interrupting studies at any point during the academic year, shall not normally be entitled to a refund of tuition fees and will remain fully liable for any unpaid fees.

Please note: if you withdraw from the course **after** week 10 from your start date, or interrupt, you are not entitled to a refund of the fees and remain liable for any unpaid fees.

SECTION 10: Accommodation

If you decide that you no longer want to stay, or cannot stay, in your rented accommodation when you withdraw or interrupt your studies you need to check the terms and conditions of your contract.

Most students in Lincoln have fixed term tenancies. This means that you are legally bound by your contract with the landlord to pay the rent until the end of the tenancy, whether you are living there or not.

If you do not pay the rent, the landlord could take legal action against you (and/or your guarantor if you have one, and/or your housemates if you have a joint tenancy) in the County Court.

Your tenancy agreement may have a “break clause” within the fixed term which allows you to leave early if you give the required notice. These are extremely rare in the Lincoln area.

You may be able to persuade the landlord (and your housemates if you have a joint tenancy) to let another person take over your tenancy. The landlord is **not** obliged to agree to this. If you do find a new tenant for the property and the landlord agrees, make sure that you get an agreement in writing that you are released from the tenancy. You will remain liable for the rent until that happens.

If you are stuck with having to pay the rent for the rest of the tenancy, but you are no longer living in the property, you may be in a situation where you cannot afford to pay the rent in full.

When you have moved out of the property and you no longer need to live there, you may still owe rent. The rent debt in this case is known as a non-priority debt, because the landlord’s ability to evict you for non-payment has no effect on you.

In this situation you can negotiate with the landlord to ask if they will accept payment of the outstanding debt in smaller instalments, based on what you can afford to pay.

The Advice Service can help you to do this, or if you have withdrawn from the University, your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) can help.

If you are struggling to prioritise your financial commitments, the Advice Service can give confidential specialist advice on budgeting and debt. Please see page 1 for how to contact us.

SECTION 11: Welfare benefits

If you have withdrawn from your course and are no longer a student, or you are studying part-time, you can make claims for all welfare benefits, such as:

- Jobseekers Allowance if you are looking for work;
- Income Support if you are a lone parent with a child under 5 or a carer;
- Employment and Support Allowance if you are not well enough to look for work;
- Housing Benefit if you pay rent and are on a low income
- (Please note that if you are no longer a student then depending on the area you live in you may have to claim Universal Credit instead of the above benefits)
- Council Tax Support to help with the cost of council tax.

If you are interrupted from your course, you are still treated as a full-time student for benefits purposes. Most full-time students are not eligible for welfare benefits and this will not usually change when you interrupt. This could mean that you have no income for a year or more, unless you are well enough to work. Students who CAN get benefits include:

- Lone parents with a child under 5;
- People with a disability;
- Couples where both of you are students and you have a child.

If you are a full-time student who can get benefits, or a part-time student, and you get the PGL Master's, 30% of the maximum loan you can get is treated as income when

calculating means-tested benefits. So if you are eligible for the £10,280 loan you are treated as having £3084 of income when calculating your welfare benefits.

If you would like confidential specialist advice about how your postgraduate funding will affect your welfare benefits, please see section 1 on how to contact the Advice Service for more help.

SECTION 12: Immigration

If you are in the UK on any type of visa or you are an EU national there may be other implications if you decide to change course, interrupt or withdraw. Our specialist immigration advisers can advise you further. Please see page 1 for how to contact and make an appointment with us.

SECTION 13: Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating Circumstances

There may be circumstances in your life which prevent you from completing assessments or other work at the right time. If so, you can apply to the University to take your extenuating circumstances (EC) into consideration where you feel your performance in the assessments has been affected by circumstances beyond your control.

You apply for EC using Blackboard. A successful claim will be accompanied by independent evidence (e.g. medical evidence) of the circumstances which affected your ability to do the work.

An application for EC is a request to do the work again at a later date. If your EC claim is successful your School will talk to you about when you can do the work.

You can also apply for EC to have a penalty for late hand-in removed.

You can apply for EC more than once. You should apply for EC as soon as you think you need to. Delay can cause your claim to be refused.

Section 14: Compelling Personal Reasons

If you have been unable to complete a course, or have interrupted your studies because of compelling personal reasons, you can ask SFE to take these into account.

If you have withdrawn from a course because of CPR, you may be able to get another PGL for a new course. You can only do this once.

If you have interrupted your studies you generally can't get funding to repeat a year or part year of the same course.

If you have interrupted your studies for 2 years or more, you will need to provide evidence of CPR before your payments of PGL can be resumed.

Students awarded CPR will still be liable for any previous loans taken out during the year(s) affected. A successful CPR claim does not write off your loans. It allows you to apply for additional funding that you would not otherwise be awarded.

To apply for CPR you write a letter to Student Finance England, PO Box 210, Darlington DL1 9AZ. We recommend that this is sent by 'Signed For' delivery.

A successful claim for CPR will be accompanied by independent evidence of the compelling personal reasons. This could be medical evidence, letters from a professional adviser, or a letter from a tutor who is aware of your situation.

You should, in your own letter, explain in detail how the CPR affected your ability to study.

You should ensure that:

- your CRN (Customer Reference Number) is clearly written on the letter and every piece of evidence. You can find your CRN on your student finance award letters.
- Any evidence from a professional is an original document.
- Your letter includes your full name, address, date of birth, customer reference number and is dated and signed.
- Your letter states clearly the academic year(s) to which your application relates.



The Advice Service is an independent service located in the Student Support Centre. We offer confidential legal advice to all enrolled students at the University of Lincoln. Our advisers are members of professional bodies such as [UKCISA](#), [IMA](#) and [NASMA](#) and we adhere to their professional codes of conduct and standards.