

Student Advice Service's

# INFORMATION GUIDE ON INTERMISSION

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This guide has been created to address any questions or concerns students might have about the intermission process. The information below is for all undergraduate students and students on the following postgraduate courses: EMBA, LLM, MAST, MBA, MCL, MEng, M.Fin, MMath, MMus, MSci, PGCE.

The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) considers applications for intermission from undergraduate and certain postgraduate students. The EAMC's 'Guidance Notes for Disregarding Terms' provides information relating to applications for intermission and is referred to throughout this guide. The official guidance notes can be found [here](#).

Whilst this guide aims to cover as much information as possible about the intermission process, every student's situation is unique. If you would like to discuss the intermission process further, you can speak to your Tutor or [contact the Student Advice Service](#) for support and help with exploring your options.

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# WHAT IS INTERMISSION?

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Intermission, also known as 'disregarding terms', allows students to take time out of their studies for reasons of medical or grave cause. This could include physical or mental illness, bereavement or unforeseen financial difficulties.

The purpose of intermission is to allow students to take a complete break from their studies and alleviate any academic disadvantage they may face as a result of an illness or grave cause.

Intermission is usually granted for an academic or calendar year and allows students to remain in standing so they are able to return to study and take their examinations in the subsequent year.

# IS INTERMISSION RIGHT FOR ME?

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For some students, the choice to intermit can be difficult; there are often a number of factors to consider. If you are unsure whether intermission is right for you, you might want to explore alternative options that may be available to you before making a decision. Some of those options are listed below:

## REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

If you are a disabled student or have a long-term health condition, you could access support from the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC).

The ADRC can provide eligible students with Student Support Documents (SSD) or summary emails to suggest reasonable adjustments that can be put in place to alleviate any academic disadvantage faced as a result of a disability or long-term health condition.

You can find out more about the support offered by the ADRC on [their website](#).

## STUDENT SUPPORT DOCUMENT (SSD)

An SSD provides a summary of recommendations specific to a student to help support their studies.

With the student's permission, this will be placed on the student's CamSIS record which can be accessed by specific administrative and academic staff who have the required access to ensure the recommendations are put in place.

Recommendations could include reserved seating during lectures, extended library loans or 1:1 study skills sessions; recommendations will be tailored to an individual's specific needs.

Further information about SSDs can be found on the [ADRC's website](#).

## EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS (EAA)

If you are a disabled student, you might be eligible for an EAA to help alleviate any academic disadvantage you may face during an examination due to your disability. Examples of EAAs include extra time, use of a pc or a separate room to complete exams.

Your College will need to apply for an EAA on your behalf by the division of Lent Term.

You will also need to provide medical evidence to support your application, such as, but not limited to, a full diagnostic report written by a Practitioner Psychologist or Specialist Teacher.

Where supporting documentation is required but not available by the division of Lent Term, it must be submitted no later than the last Friday of Lent Term.

Further information about the process of applying for EAAs can be found on this [link](#).

The ADRC's website also provides information about [Examination Access Arrangements](#).

## ADJUSTED MODES OF ASSESSMENT (AMA)

Adjusted Modes of Assessment (AMAs) could be put in place where an EAA does not adequately address the needs of a disabled student.

An AMA will relate to the specific needs of the individual student. Examples could include replacing a written examination with an essay, a portfolio of essays or a long extension.

Further information about the AMA process can be found on this [link](#).

# WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLCATIONS OF INTERMISSION?

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As intermission is a complete break from your studies, usually away from Cambridge, you may have questions or concerns about the implications of intermitting, such as the impact on accommodation and finances.

## ACCOMMODATION

If you are a student considering a period of intermission, you may have concerns about where you will live during your break from studies. When students intermit, they are generally required to leave their College residence. This would usually mean that a student returns to their permanent home address for their period of intermission.

You should check with your College when you are expected to move out of your accommodation upon approval of your application for intermission.

Exceptional circumstances may include where a student does not have a permanent address beyond their College residence, or where a student is receiving specialist medical treatment in Cambridge that would be sacrificed if they returned to their permanent home address. If you feel that your situation means you need to remain in Cambridge, you should discuss this with your Tutor or Senior Tutor as soon as possible.

Where there are no exceptional circumstances, but you wish to remain in Cambridge, the University Accommodation Service might be able to assist you in finding privately rented accommodation, including house shares. To use this service, you would usually need to ask your College for a letter confirming you can access support from the University Accommodation Service during intermission. You can access further information about what the University Accommodation Service offer [here](#).

The national charity Shelter can also provide independent advice and support for anyone experiencing housing issues. You can contact them or get help through their website, which can be found [here](#).

## FINANCE

If you have concerns about the financial implications of intermission, you could speak with your College Tutor to see if there are any funds available from the College.

You could also discuss with the College when you can expect any refund for accommodation or fees that you may be owed in advance of your intermission and departure from College accommodation.

Some of the options potentially available to you are listed below:

### Student Finance funding

If you are eligible, you can apply for extended funding from Student Finance for up to a period of 60 days for medical reasons. Student Finance could also extend funding beyond this for students facing extreme financial hardship.

Information about extended funding from Student Finance can be found in [the following guidance](#).

### University's Realise Financial Assistance Fund

If you are intermitting and find yourself in financial hardship, you can apply for funds from the [Realise Financial Assistance Fund](#). This fund is available to the following group of students:

- Care experienced and estranged students
- Refugee, asylum seeker and forced migrant students
- Young carer students
- Gypsy, Roma, traveller, showman and boater students

### Medical Support Fund (Crane's Charity)

The Medical Support Fund is available to students, including intermitting students, at the University of Cambridge who need treatment for physical or mental illness, which cannot be obtained under the NHS.

Full details on eligibility criteria, how to apply, and a copy of the application form can be found [here](#).

## Fee Remission

You become liable for fees in any term where you have been in residence for longer than 21 days.

In exceptional circumstances, the University may consider remitting the fee for a term if you have resided a little over the limit of 21 days before going out of residence and where it is clear that you intend to return to repeat that term.

Fee remission is not usually possible if you apply to disregard terms retrospectively or if you have been in residence for a full term that you are required to repeat.

## College support

If you have concerns about the financial implications of intermission, you could speak with your College Tutor to see if there are any funds available from the College.

You could also discuss with the College when you can expect any refund for accommodation or fees that you may be owed in advance of your intermission and departure from College accommodation.

Further information about finance and your options can be found on the Student Advice Service website under '[Finance](#)', 'Undergraduate' and 'Financial Support for Intermitting Students'.

## ACCESS TO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

During a period of intermission, you would be expected to take a complete break from your studies. You would, therefore, under most circumstances, no longer have access to any College or University premises or facilities.

This would include social events organised by the College or University as well as sporting events where you would represent the University.

You will remain free to visit the city and friends.

This is to mitigate the possibility of any academic advantage gained from accessing College or University facilities.

There may be some circumstances in which you could continue accessing support from the College and/or University.

If you are required to pass an academic assessment in order to return from intermission, you may be allowed limited access to accommodation or facilities to prepare for this.

You may also be able to access continued support from individuals such as the College Nurse or College Counsellor during a period of intermission.

This is something that could be discussed with your College Tutor before you go to ensure you know what you can and cannot access during intermission.

## TIER 4 VISA

If you are an international student, intermission might mean that your visa would no longer be supported by the University. You would therefore be required to leave the UK for your period of intermission.

For more information about visas, you can contact the International Student Office: [international.students@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:international.students@admin.cam.ac.uk).

# I WANT TO INTERMIT. HOW DO I APPLY?

Other than in exceptional circumstances, an application to intermit will need to be made by the College on your behalf. Your application will be submitted to the EAMC.

You may wish to meet with your Tutor to discuss the application. You can also contact the Student Advice Service for information and advice.

An application must include all of the following:

- a completed and signed application form
- a statement from the College; usually in the form of a letter from your Tutor or the Senior Tutor
- a completed declaration form from you giving permission for medical evidence to be disclosed to medical members of the Committee
- evidence of medical circumstances or other grave cause
- your SSD if appropriate
- all supervision reports available for the academical year(s) to which a period of intermission would apply

Where an application concerns an undivided two-year Part I, reports for both years should be provided.

For courses where supervision reports are not routinely available (e.g. the LLM), the College should supply whatever testimony of the student's industry and ability it can.

Supervision reports should be provided in chronological order, most recent first.

## Application submission dates

The EAMC meet at certain points throughout the year to consider applications for intermission. The meeting dates can be found on [this page](#).

## Medical evidence

You will need to provide evidence that is relevant, contemporary, self-explanatory and specific. The Student Advice Service's 'Guidance on Medical Evidence' outlines the specific requirements for medical evidence relating to an application for intermission.

The guidance can be found on the [Student Advice Service's website](#).

The evidence you provide should be from a relevant medical professional, preferably a GP or other medical professional based in Cambridge.

The evidence should also be obtained as close as possible to the affected period of time and relate to the time in question. It should clearly explain the nature of your health issue and the impact it has on your day-to-day life and/or studies.

## Evidence of grave cause

A grave cause is considered to be something that is unanticipated and entirely beyond your control, among other characteristics. Examples include death or serious illness of a close family member or partner.

Evidence of grave cause will need to be obtained from a relevant, independent professional and should corroborate details given in the application.

Evidence from a family member, friend or individual with a close personal connection to the student or family will not be considered by the EAMC.

Examples of evidence of grave cause could include a hospital note or a doctor's letter confirming a loved one is unwell; evidence confirming a student is the sole carer of a family member or a police report.

If the grave cause is a bereavement, the EAMC would accept a statement from a student's Senior Tutor; no other proof of bereavement would be required.

### **College statement**

Your Tutor or Senior Tutor will be required to provide a statement as part of the application. This is an opportunity for the College to highlight any important matters that they would like the EAMC to take into consideration.

It might be helpful, in some cases, to have a further statement provided by a Director of Studies (DoS).

The EAMC will pay close attention to the care taken by the College when preparing a statement.

As such, it would be a good idea for you to discuss with your Tutor or Senior Tutor the information you wish to be included in the statement. The College should share the application and statement with you before submitting it. This is so you are aware of how your case is being presented and ensure that your situation is accurately represented.

### **Student's personal statement**

In addition to the College statement, you can provide your own personal statement in support of your application.

If you decide to submit your own statement, it should be clear and concise.

An example of a personal statement for medical reasons can be found at the end of this section.

### **Further supporting evidence**

Along with your own statement, you are able to submit any other supporting evidence that you feel would be relevant to your application but may not fit into the categories listed above.

If you have further questions about relevant evidence, you can contact your Tutor or Senior Tutor. The Student Advice Service can also help discuss what evidence could be included with your application.

## Conditions of return from intermission

Before the College submits the application on your behalf, it would be helpful to discuss with your Tutor which conditions will be set to enable you to return after your period of intermission.

Conditions of return may include:

- Medical evidence that demonstrates you are fit to return to study
- An academic assessment
- Evidence that financial concerns have been resolved

Having this information will make sure you are aware of what will be required of you before your return so you are able to prepare appropriately.

## EXAMPLE OF A PERSONAL STATEMENT: INTERMISSION FOR MEDICAL REASONS

*Letter dated 13 November 2022*

Dear Exam Access and Mitigation Committee,

I am writing in support of my application to intermit the 2022-23 academic year so that I can return in Michaelmas term 2023.

I am a third year undergraduate student studying History, and I am a member of Downing College.

I returned to University 3 October 2022, at the beginning of Michaelmas term, and it was from this moment that I began to experience heightened anxiety and panic attacks. During the long vacation, I had been worried and anxious about returning to University and the amount of work that I would need to complete in my final year.

From the day I returned, I had difficulty eating or sleeping. This affected my ability to concentrate or focus for a prolonged period of time. I have not been able to socialise with friends or take part in the clubs and societies I was a member of last year, as I have been too anxious and exhausted to leave my house.

I missed my first lecture on 6 October due to the anxiety I was experiencing. The thought of attending the lecture caused me to feel breathless, which culminated in a panic attack.

This continued for the next two weeks, with me missing every lecture and supervision I was due to attend.

On 21 October, I contacted my Tutor to share my situation. The thought of missing so much of my studies was making my anxiety worse. My Tutor advised me to visit my GP. It was following this conversation that I booked an appointment with my GP.

On 1 November, I went to see my GP, who confirmed I was experiencing generalised anxiety disorder and panic disorder. I was prescribed medication and was advised to seek therapy to help manage my anxiety. My GP also suggested I consider taking a break from my studies, as it appears it is the pressure of studying that has been exacerbating my symptoms. My GP indicated that with medication and therapy, I can learn to manage my symptoms so that I can return next year to complete my studies. You will find a supporting letter from my GP attached to my application.

I have been referred to a therapist for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and I have my first session on 13 December, which I am hoping will provide me with some tools to manage my anxiety and panic disorder. I have been advised that my course of treatment should be completed in 6 months. I would like to complete my therapy before commencing my studies to make sure I am in the best possible position when I return next academic year.

My first and second year supervision reports are testament to my dedication to my studies. I want to complete my studies to the best of my abilities without facing any disadvantage. It is for this reason that I request a period of intermission. Intermission will allow me to take the time I need to manage my anxiety so that I can return to University ready to finish my final year.

Please also find attached to my application supporting letters from my College Nurse and Tutor with details of my condition and the support I have received.

Thank you for considering my application. I hope the Committee will be satisfied that my mitigating circumstances are supportive of my request for intermission.

Yours sincerely,

John Smith

Note: This is a fictional example. Although it has not been inspired by real-life situations, some students may have had similar experiences and might identify themselves with this situation. Our aim is to provide an example based on a common issue that may require a student to apply for intermission.

# WHAT HAPPENS AFTER MY APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED?

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Your application will be submitted by the College on your behalf to the EAMC for consideration.

Incomplete applications will be sent back, which could delay the process.

The EAMC will take into account all the evidence and statements provided, as well as your academic performance throughout the year.

The outcome of the application should be communicated to you in writing by your College Tutor. They should also provide you with a copy of the EAMC's letter.

If your application is not approved, you are able to request a review of the decision.

A request for review should be submitted within 14 days of the formal decision being communicated to you.

Information about the process can be found in the [Procedure for the Review of Decisions of University Bodies](#).

# WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE I GO?

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As highlighted above, it is important that you know what conditions need to be met to allow you to return from intermission before you commence a period of intermission.

This is something that could be discussed with your Tutor or Senior Tutor before your application is submitted. It should also be clearly set out in writing at the point at which your application is approved.

If you are still unsure, you could contact your Tutor or Senior Tutor for further information. The Student Advice Service can also provide support.

You should also meet with your Tutor to discuss your return and what can be expected during your absence.

For example, your Tutor should set out what you can and cannot access during intermission. You could discuss at this point whether you can continue to access support from your College Nurse or College Counsellor.

Your Tutor can also discuss with you how often they will be in contact with you.

You may want to prepare for a meeting with your Tutor by listing the questions and concerns you have relating to a period of intermission.

# WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL READY TO RETURN?

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For many students, a period of intermission allows them the necessary time to recover or resolve issues they have faced.

You may feel that you are unable to return as your period of intermission comes to an end.

In exceptional circumstances, a period of intermission can be extended beyond three terms.

Under very exceptional circumstances, a period of intermission can be extended beyond two years.

If you do not feel ready to return, a new application to disregard terms can be made by the College on your behalf to extend the period of intermission.

If you find yourself in this situation, you might want to discuss this with your College Tutor or Senior Tutor as far in advance of your return as possible.

You can also access support from the Student Advice Service at any point during the intermission process.

# WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE I RETURN FROM INTERMISSION?

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## Application for 'Resuming Study'

When your period of intermission is coming to an end and you are ready to resume your studies, your College will need to apply to the EAMC for permission for you to return.

At this point, your College will need to submit any required medical evidence to show that you are fit to return.

Ideally, this evidence should be obtained from the same medical professional who provided the initial evidence and should clearly outline that you are fit to return. Evidence from a current GP or practitioner can be obtained if this is not possible. They would need to have seen the initial medical evidence in order to make a judgement about your fitness to return.

Evidence satisfying any other conditions imposed, such as an academic assessment or evidence that a financial difficulty has been resolved, should be obtained by you and sent to your College before the EAMC's deadline.

The deadline for a College to apply for a student to return for the academic year is 24 August; for the calendar year is 24 November; and for return in the Easter term is 24 March.

Further information about applications to resume study can be found on the [Student Registry's website](#).

## Support from the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC)

If you are a disabled student, it might be useful to [contact the ADRC](#) in advance of your return.

Consulting with the ADRC can help to ensure that any support you need upon returning from intermission can be put in place.

Any changes to existing health issues or new health issues can also be accommodated by the College and University if communicated in advance of your return.

# WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I RETURN?

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When you return, you should meet with your College Tutor to discuss any changes that might have happened whilst you were away.

You can use this opportunity to discuss updated adjustments following support from the DRC. This might be in the form of a Student Support Document (SSD) or summary email.

You could also discuss further support that might help you to readjust to University life. This may include support from the College Nurse, Counsellor or Chaplain.

The University Counselling Service (UCS) runs a number of workshops specifically for students returning from intermission.

Further information about the workshops and group counselling, including how to book a place, can be found on the [Student Support website](#).

The UCS can also provide [individual counselling](#).

The Student Advice Service are also able to provide support. You can email [advice@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:advice@cambridgesu.co.uk) or use our [website contact form](#) to make an appointment to speak to an Advisor.

Appointments can be conducted in person, over the phone or via video call. Our Advisors are also able to communicate via email, if this is what you would prefer.

# USEFUL RESOURCES

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**University of Cambridge: Guidance Notes for Disregarding Terms (Intermission)**

[https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/guidance\\_notes\\_-\\_disregarding\\_terms\\_202324.pdf](https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/guidance_notes_-_disregarding_terms_202324.pdf)

**Disabled Students' Campaign: Guide to Undergraduate Intermission, 2017** (*This guide has been written from a student's perspective by students who may have experienced the process themselves*)

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/resources/guides/ug-intermission/>

**University of Cambridge: Student Support**

<https://www.studentsupport.cam.ac.uk/>

**Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre**

[www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk](http://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk)

**University of Cambridge: Guidance Notes for Examination Allowances**

[https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/guidance\\_notes\\_-\\_examination\\_allowances\\_202324.pdf](https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/guidance_notes_-_examination_allowances_202324.pdf)

**University of Cambridge: Guidance Notes for an Adjusted Mode of Assessment (AMAs)**

[https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/ama\\_guidance\\_notes\\_2023-24\\_v.1.pdf](https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/ama_guidance_notes_2023-24_v.1.pdf)

**Student Loans Company**

[www.slc.co.uk](http://www.slc.co.uk)

**University of Cambridge: Overview of Financial Support**

<https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/overview-of-financial-support>

**Student Advice Service Information and Resources on Intermission**

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/information/academic/intermission/>

**Student Advice Service: Guidance on Medical Evidence**

[https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/pageassets/advice/information/exams/examinationallowance/SAS-GUIDANCE-ON-MEDICAL-EVIDENCE\\_2023.pdf.pdf](https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/pageassets/advice/information/exams/examinationallowance/SAS-GUIDANCE-ON-MEDICAL-EVIDENCE_2023.pdf.pdf)

**University of Cambridge: Procedure for the Review of Decisions of University Bodies**

<https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/reviews-decisions-university-bodies>

**University of Cambridge: Guidance for Applications for Resuming Study following Disregarding terms**

[https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/guidance\\_notes\\_-\\_resuming\\_study\\_202324.pdf](https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/guidance_notes_-_resuming_study_202324.pdf)