

## Student Return to Studies - Academic Year 2020/2021, Semester 1

### Temporary Suspension of Studies (TSS), Responsive Blended Learning (RBL), and Mitigating Circumstances (MC)

#### Introduction

The following should be read in conjunction with the University Policy on Temporary Suspension of Studies (TSS): <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/doc/tss.pdf>. The following **does not** replace the existing TSS policy, but is an addition to the policy, for the current global situation (Covid-19) and the changes to the learning delivery of student studies for the academic year 2020/2021, Semester 1.

All normal TSS circumstances are still there, and the University has developed all courses in an RBL format, so we can continue to support student's studies throughout, and beyond, this current situation. Students will be able to complete their full complement of courses and participate in all forms of assessment, regardless of whether they are required to study off-campus or online, for a short or prolonged period away from campus. No student will be academically disadvantaged by this approach to learning.

Students who are unable, or feel unable, to return to on-campus study will not be required to submit either a TSS or mitigating circumstances (MC), if they are able to study and complete their assessments off-campus (remotely) via [Responsive Blended Learning](#).

Students who seek to apply for a TSS should be also aware of the potential consequences of their decision on their current and future studies, see further below.

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#### Temporary Suspension of Studies (TSS)

TSS remains in place for situations where it may be in a student's best interests to suspend their studies temporally, for example, to deal with issues that are stopping students studying effectively – such as health or personal circumstances. This would include personal circumstances specifically related to, or are due to a consequence of, the Covid-19 pandemic.

Such examples would include, but not limited to, caring responsibilities, technical limitations, including internet connectivity<sup>1</sup>, or a student's learning environment (for example their home life) that mean that they are not able to study to the same level if there were no such constraints on a student's ability to study.

#### Responsive Blended Learning (RBL)

The current global situation has meant, however, that the University has been required to adopt an RBL approach to student learning. RBL combines active, supported online learning with contextually appropriate face-to-face learning opportunities, responding dynamically to the changing external context. This approach enables students to proceed with their studies alongside their peers, whatever pandemic-related restrictions are lifted or imposed in specific

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<sup>1</sup> Such cases will be considered on a case-by-case basis where it is clearly evidenced that the circumstances have changed from 2019/2020. If the student was able to study remotely during the enforced lockdown period (from March 2020), then it must be demonstrated that the student can now no longer study remotely now.

contexts. Further details will be provided following online enrolment and will be made available via VISION, the University's VLE.

The University took this action to ensure that in these unprecedented circumstances each student would have the opportunity to continue their studies and achieve the identical learning outcomes from their courses and programme of study.

However, students will be permitted to study remotely for their courses, if they are unable to, or feel unable to, return to on-campus to study (*see RBL and Mitigating Circumstances*).

The University is committed to assuring all students, regardless of where they are in the world, that they can participate fully in all their courses and will not be academically disadvantaged by studying entirely off-campus or by combination of on- and off-campus study.

### **TSS and RBL**

There should be no academic reasons why students cannot study via RBL.

TSS applications will not be accepted for any taught students who do not wish to return to, or continue on, their studies in the academic year 2020/2021 due to their courses being taught in a (RBL) format; unless under exceptional circumstances.

Such circumstances would normally only include exceptional conditions (for example, health or well-being reasons that mean that you cannot study in this format) or situations which affect the students ability to study via RBL (for example, change in personal circumstances that means that they are unable to study by this mode due to their study learning environment).

### **Timely applications for a TSS**

If you are aware that your forthcoming studies are going to be affected due to health or personal issues, similar to the examples above, then you should apply for a TSS immediately, and before the start of the academic session.

### **Evidence to Support TSS applications**

Wherever possible, students should provide documentary evidence to support their TSS application (medical practitioners note, evidence of broadband speed, etc.). However, for certain circumstances providing physical evidence may be difficult. In these situations, students should provide as much relevant evidence as possible, explaining the circumstances and the impact or effect on their ability to study under RBL. The more relevant evidence (physical or written) that you can provide will aid in the decision making of whether to support (or reject) the TSS application.

### **Consequences of TSS**

Students should be aware that by taking a TSS, they will temporarily no longer be a student at the University and that their decision should not be taken lightly. A TSS will delay your studies and when you would normally be able to graduate. It may affect your ability to access to student related matters and discounts (for example, council tax rebates). When you return you will be in different cohort of students. However, you may still be able to access University Well-Being Support.

## **Retrospective TSS applications**

The University accepts that the majority of students will seek to return to their studies as soon as possible and endeavour to do all they can to maintain their levels of study.

However, the University also understands that students may begin their studies with good intention, but then realise that it is not possible (for health or personal reasons) for them to continue their studies.

Students, therefore, will have up to Week 6<sup>2</sup> (Consolidation week) to apply for a TSS for that semester. After that point (Week 7 onwards) TSS will only be accepted in very exceptional circumstances. For most cases, therefore, after week 6, students should submit a mitigating circumstances application.

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## **Remote Blended Learning (RBL) and Mitigating Circumstances (MC)**

The following should be read in conjunction with the University Policy on MC:

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm>

Students who are unable, or feel unable, to return to on-campus study will not be required to submit mitigating circumstances, if they are able to study and complete their assessments off-campus (remotely) via [Responsive Blended Learning](#).

However, as above, students cannot choose to avoid studying, or participating in, any of their courses. This includes participation in all forms of formative and summative assessment required for the course.

Irrespective of whether studying remotely or through a combination of online and on-campus during 2020/2021, students must report, in line with the University's MC policy and procedures, any extenuating circumstances to the University which impact their ability to study on a course or to complete any form of assessment.

**Registry and Academic Support  
August 2020**

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<sup>2</sup> For Semester 1, Consolidation week at the Malaysian Campus is Week 7.