



# SUSPENSION INFORMATION GUIDE

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This document has been put together by Oxford University Student Union with the intention of bringing together key information, advice and resources for Oxford students who are considering suspension or are currently suspended. All items were correct at the time of going to press (March 2017).

Information which the University of Oxford give can be found here:

**[www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/undergraduate/status?wssl=1](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/undergraduate/status?wssl=1)**

**[www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/status?wssl=1](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/graduate/status?wssl=1)**

# INTRODUCTION

The process of suspension can seem daunting. This booklet is designed to give you some basic information to help you through the process of suspension. In order to make the process more real, we have included some accounts from students about their experience of suspension.

It has been created by students from SusCam (Suspended Students Campaign) and the advice team at the Oxford SU: Student Advice.

The Oxford SU: Student Advice is Oxford SU's free, confidential advice and information service. We are independent from the University, Colleges and Departments. We have a team of three qualified, friendly and experienced advisors here to help you through the process of suspension and beyond.



## ADVICE TEAM:



Cate Hemingway | Nicky Reed | Hanne Clark

[advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)

[oxfordsu.org/advice](https://oxfordsu.org/advice)

If you have any questions, worries, or concerns please contact the Oxford SU: Student Advice who will be happy to help: [advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)



**SusCam** is Oxford SU's campaign for suspended students. We lobby for University policy changes to improve the process of suspension and equip students to campaign for change in their college. SusCam also organizes and provides a supportive social network for suspended students, and students considering or returning from suspension.

 [www.facebook.com/suspendedstudents/?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/suspendedstudents/?fref=ts)

 [@SusCamOx](https://twitter.com/SusCamOx)

[suscam@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:suscam@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)

<https://suscam.wordpress.com/>

# WHAT IS SUSPENSION?

Suspension of status at Oxford effectively enables you to ‘stop the clock’ on all elements of your degree, including residence, academic work and fees.

You may also have heard suspension referred to as, ‘interlocation’, ‘intermission’, or ‘rustication’. The latter term has, historically, had negative connotations and ‘suspension’ is the preferred term currently used by the University and Oxford SU.

Around 1,000 Oxford students suspend their studies each year. Most suspensions are a result of short or long term health problems, including mental health difficulties. Other common reasons include bereavement and financial difficulties.

Suspension

is sometimes used by Colleges in disciplinary cases or to address academic concerns. However, for whatever reason suspension is initiated the process is generally the same.

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“I suspended at the end of the first term of my second year, for mental health reasons. I’d been struggling with depression all term and it was only getting worse. It got to the point where I’d missed so much work that catching up would be a mountain to climb even for a healthy person. Suspension for me was always there as an option but I kind of viewed it as a last resort, and I only made the decision at the very end of term when it no longer made sense to continue. I needed the time out in order to give myself a chance to recover, and although it was a hard decision it was definitely the right one for me. Taking time out has meant that now I’ve returned I’ve actually been able to get the most out of my degree rather than merely surviving it.”

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## IS SUSPENSION OPTIONAL?

The vast majority of suspensions are decided jointly by the student in consultation with their college and tutors.

However, it is possible for a College to deny a student’s request to suspend or to enforce suspension against a student’s will. Enforced suspension can happen on academic, disciplinary, or medical grounds.

The term 'Fitness to Study' is often brought up in relation to suspension decisions. It is defined by the University as a student's ability to meet:

- the reasonable academic requirements of the course or programme, and
- the reasonable social and behavioural requirements of a student member (whether resident in College or not) without their physical, mental, emotional or psychological health or state having an unacceptably deleterious impact upon the health, safety and / or welfare of the student and / or other students and / or University or College staff.

The University is able to enforce suspension where the above conditions are not being met. This will usually be determined after consultation with medical professionals.

You have the right to appeal if you feel you are being forced to, or prevented from, suspending. The Oxford SU: Student Advice can assist you through this process: **advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk**

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“I was suspended by my College on Fitness to Study grounds. It came as a massive shock because I was keeping up with my academic work. I was really upset, I felt like I'd failed and that everyone was judging me for not being able to cope. But when I told my friends I was leaving, they were relieved that I was getting help, and offered only support and kind words. With hindsight, my College made the right decision, but perhaps more importantly it wasn't as big an issue as I'd thought it at the time. Suspension is common in Oxford, not least because often it is the right decision, there's no point in carrying on making yourself ill for the sake of getting a degree.”

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## ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION?

Suspension is a serious step, often contemplated only after a range of other measures have already been tried.

If your ability to fulfil academic obligations is being affected by health, personal, or financial problems, you are strongly advised to disclose this your College and tutors as early as possible so that appropriate support can be put in place.

## SHORT-TERM

For students on taught courses, there may be scope, for example, to reschedule or adjust work commitments e.g. take a brief rest break with a plan to make up work subsequently in the vacation or to produce essay plans rather than full essays for a limited period with a plan to write up later.

This is something that you should be able to discuss directly with your tutors.

It might be possible to defer a part or all of imminent examinations if there is a later sitting the same year, for example, for preliminary examinations. This would require an application to Education Committee. Applications can be made to the Proctors for short extensions to submitted work deadlines such as dissertations, theses and research projects. Speak with an Advisor at the Oxford SU: Student Advice if you want more information about this: [advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)

There are, however, limits on the extent to which work can be deferred. Using vacations to catch up on an incomplete term or to take deferred examinations may detract from the time available for you to rest, recuperate, and prepare for the next term. If you fall too far behind, continuation on course may become impractical and suspending may be the best option.

It might be that although you are meeting academic standards you are unwell. In this case it would be worth making an appointment with your GP or College nurse. The University Counselling Service provides short term counselling for students. They can provide both one on one and group counselling, as well as a number of other services.

More information can be found here:

[www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling?wssl=1](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling?wssl=1)

## LONG-TERM

If you have a long-term condition that is affecting your work, you are strongly encouraged to register with the Disability Advisory Service, which will be able to provide guidance on the range of support and adjustments that may be available.

To accommodate a disability it is sometimes possible to restructure taught courses in various ways by making an application to Education Committee. This might include spreading out modules, exams or submissions over a greater number of terms and/or switching to part-time study. You can discuss your options with any of: your College, the Disability Advisory Service, or the Oxford SU: Student Advice.

## TRANSFERRING UNIVERSITY

You may decide that you would prefer to complete your course at another University, or apply to do a different course. If this is the case you will have to go through an admissions process again: the institution will request an academic transcript and a reference. You may also have to complete another UCAS application. Contact the admissions officer at the University to which you would like to transfer, who can give you more specific information.

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“ I had always wanted to study at Oxford. The day I drove up for the start of my first term was a ridiculously happy one. Unfortunately, things didn't go according to plan so in the summer term, I decided to suspend my studies after struggling through most of the year. The plan

was to reset, study up on all the work I hadn't done and then return to take my prelims and carry on into my second year.

At Christmas time in what would have been my second year, I had serious thoughts about not going back but I had no idea what I would do. I decided to persevere with it all and to sit my prelims and see how things went. Fast forward to May, and by this point I was really beginning to see how much my course was making me continually unhappy. I wasn't getting any satisfaction out of it, even when I did something reasonably well. I went into my prelims knowing that I wasn't going to come back.

My last night of term as an Oxford student was very, very sad. I loved the place and all my friends there but I knew that Oxford was just not the place for me and it took me two years to admit that to myself.

I'm now at Bristol studying what really is my passion, Music. I simply cannot put into words how glad I am now that I dropped out. It was incredibly tough whilst I was caught up in it all, but now, I'm 100% sure that I made the right decision for me. Countless people tried to get me to either stay at Oxford and soldier on through, or to carry on doing a subject that I didn't enjoy, even if it did have to be somewhere else. I listened to their advice but still choose to do Music and so far, I'd probably call dropping out of physics to do music one of the best decisions I've ever made! But ask me again when I'm looking for a job...!"

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# THE SUSPENSION PROCESS

Undergraduates who suspend their student status do so usually for a year, returning a year later in the term in which the suspension started. The process is College-based and can vary greatly from case to case and from College to College. The specific procedure in place at your College is set out in your College Handbook and also available from your Senior Tutor.

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“For me the process of suspension was quite informal. I’d actually left Oxford a couple of weeks before officially suspending as I’d had a bad reaction to some medication and my GP said I needed to be at home. My mum and I spoke to College over the phone and said that we’d decided that I would suspend. Shortly after I received a letter that I had to sign with details confirming my suspension, when I would return and what I would need to do in the meantime. I also had to sort out my student finance, but this was less complicated than I expected.”

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“Suspending for me was a very informal process. I made the decision to suspend myself, and although College weren’t too keen on the idea, I’d very much made my mind up when I told them. I was able to stay on in college for the remainder of the term to watch my friends finish their finals, and was eventually allowed to come back and re-sit that term a year later. I wish I’d had slightly more information on the process, such as who was in control of Student Finance and when to do Exam Entry, which is why producing the information booklet was a priority for me. Hopefully, this can help resolve some of the questions around the process which would have made my life a lot easier!”

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# 1: INITIATING THE PROCESS

The most likely first step is to ask for an informal meeting with either your tutor or a member of the welfare staff at your College. If after this initial discussion you decide that suspension is the option you wish to take, it is likely that there will be a more formal meeting to discuss your situation and decide on a plan. At this meeting you will be asked to explain why you want to suspend and to provide “evidence” to support your request such as a doctor’s note or a tutor’s report.

If the idea of a formal meeting seems alarming, you can meet with an Advisor from the Oxford SU: Student Advice **before** the meeting and who can chat through the process with you. An Advisor will help you plan what you want to say and help you think through things that you might want to raise and have clarified such as “over-standing for honours”<sup>1</sup> or what happens if you suspend during your examination period<sup>2</sup>. If you would rather submit a written statement to this meeting, an Advisor can help you draft this. An Advisor is also able to accompany you **during** the meeting with College, to make notes or record the meeting on your behalf and be a “friend in the room”. **After** the meeting an Advisor will chat through things that have been discussed and help you with any concerns you may have.

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“I thought it would be failing to take a year out, but suspension was without a doubt the best thing I ever did. I struggled my way through two years at Oxford with serious physical and mental health issues, and a year out was exactly the time I needed to recover and get my life back. I have enjoyed my Oxford experience so much more as a result. It’s not easy and it’s a big decision to make, but for me it was 100% the right one”

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“Suspending wasn’t the worst thing that ever happened to me, and it wasn’t the best. It just isn’t a big deal at all.”

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- 1 University Regulations state that a student on a three year course must be examined within four years and a student on a four year course must be examined within five years. If you are not going to meet these time limits due to suspension you should raise this with your college at the point of suspension. They may be able to apply to the Proctors to extend your degree.
  - 2 If you are suspending during exam time, withdrawal after your first examination paper/assessment submission requires the agreement of your college and the approval of the Proctors. In cases where you have already submitted assessed work (e.g. a dissertation) you should talk to your college about whether you should apply to carry these marks forward.

# 2: STARTING SUSPENSION

At the start of the suspension process you should:

- 1: Know what is expected of you while you are on suspension for example, reading lists or notes you are required to submit to tutors and deadlines for this work to be completed
- 2: Know if there are any conditions attached to your return. If there are, you should understand what they are and who is responsible and have them confirmed in writing, before you leave. These conditions should be:
  - Specific (e.g. pass special collections or provide a doctors note)
  - Clear (e.g. the required pass mark or who will obtain the doctor's note)
  - Timed (e.g. when you will sit collections or provide a doctor's note in September).
- 3: Know the consequences of not meeting any stated conditions
- 4: Have an appropriate named point of contact within College for queries during your time away
- 5: Know whether you are allowed in College during your suspension and what for, e.g. to socialize or use the library
- 6: Know if you have College accommodation for your return

Although all this may sound overwhelming, everyone will be trying to support you and it is important to get things right at this stage to help prevent many problems later

“The term that I suspended was quite an eventful one, as I had finally realised that what I really wanted most was to take time off to recover. After speaking to my personal tutor, who seemed quite shocked that I was even considering suspending, she came round to the idea, and after another few meetings with tutors and the academic office in my college, I had finalised the process. One thing I would recommend is, before going into meetings with College, have a list of information which you want confirmed by college: for example, what access rights you have, whether you can remain on your JCR's mailing lists, whether you can request that your tutor emails you every so often to check how

you are, and, especially if you are returning to exam term, any arrangements regarding which you might be required to contact your College / faculty. For me (and I'm sure many others), the process of suspending is often pretty turbulent emotionally and making yourself a list of things you'd like discussed in the meeting beforehand will mean that you hopefully don't leave the meeting more confused or uncertain than when you went in."

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# FINANCIAL MATTERS

## TUITION AND MAINTENANCE FEES

Your College is responsible for notifying the Academic Records Office, who in turn will inform your grant awarding body (e.g. Student Finance England) of your suspension. If you start suspension before the beginning of week 4 of any term they are not liable for fees for that term. After this deadline they are still liable for the fees for that term. You should check this with your grant awarding body.

It can take Student Finance 4 - 6 weeks to process the University's notification that you have suspended your studies. Student Finance will not usually pay you any further Maintenance Loan/Grant installments after they have processed the notification that you have suspended your studies. However, you may receive a payment while the notification is awaiting processing.

If you do receive a payment of your maintenance loan whilst the notification of your suspension is being processed, you may have to repay some or all of this payment.

If you are unsure, contact **[advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)**

## VISAS

If you suspend your studies the Home Office would usually expect you to return to your home country unless you are not medically able to do so. If you hold a Tier 4 Student visa issued using a CAS number, the University is obliged to report your suspension to the Home Office who may cut your visa length short, which will also have an impact on your right to work in the UK. However, they will contact you before a report is made.

If you are suspending, it is recommended that you contact the Student Immigration team who administer the process on behalf of the University to check the impact suspension will have on your visa:

**[student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk)**

# 3: DURING SUSPENSION

## ACCESS TO INDEPENDENT ADVICE

Students on suspension can access all the services of the Oxford SU: Student Advice. You can telephone, email or use the online chat facility Live Advice to speak with an Advisor. Advisors can help with questions you may have during your time away such as accommodation, and in preparation for your return, such as liaising with College and the Disability Advisory Service to negotiate special adjustments for your return. [advice@oxfordsu.org](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.org)

## ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

During suspension you will not have formal teaching from the University or your College, including tutorials, lectures, seminars, classes and labs. Some College tutors may offer ad hoc advice on substantive academic matters at their own discretion.

As a suspended student you will:

- continue to have access to your Oxford Nexus email account
- retain your Bod card<sup>3</sup> and access to University libraries<sup>4</sup> (unless you are suspending for non-payment of fees)

As a suspended student you will **not**

- be able to access your enrolment certificate on Student Self Service. However, if you need this for any reason, you can ask College to write you a letter of proof of enrolment on College headed paper. You can also ask Student Information at Exam Schools.

“Colleges vary in terms of access but I kept my Bod Card and was able to visit all the University libraries I wanted. This really came in handy in the term before my return when I was able to go over all the work that my new year was doing (the work I’d done a year ago). I did make attempts to study before that and get ahead of work, but it didn’t really go anywhere and in hindsight I’m really happy that I had fun on my year out, and only did enough work to make sure I restarted on an equal playing field. It’s different for everyone, and maybe it would

3 If your University card expires while you are on a period of suspension, you should contact your college to request a new card, which will be issued to last until your new expected completion date.

4 If you have moved back home and need access to books, your local University library may be able to provide you access. Contact your local University directly to find out if this is a possibility.

have nice to get ahead but suspending didn't hold me back at all and I'm happy with the way it turned out."

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## ACCESS TO COLLEGE FACILITIES

Access to college facilities varies between colleges - you should check what you will be able to access before you leave.

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“ I didn't have access to my college. Although I was allowed into college for meetings with tutors, I wasn't allowed to visit for social events or to see friends, and I couldn't use facilities such as the library, Hall or the JCR. Some Colleges are a bit more relaxed about access so it's worth checking with your college to see what their policy on this is.”

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## ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY SERVICES

### Counselling Service

The Counselling Service is available to students who suspend and they also have an increasing number of online resources:

**[www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling/self-help?wssl=1](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling/self-help?wssl=1)**

Students who live away from Oxford can arrange to have on-line counselling support with the service via Skype.

### Disability Advisory Service

If you have a disability advisor at the Disability Advisory Service, you can remain in contact with them, however, the services accessed through the Disabled Student's Allowance will not be available to you until you return to formal studies. This includes services such as specialist SpLD tuition, specialist mentoring, assistive technology training, proof-reading and library assistance.

### Careers Service

For suspended students who need or want to find employment, the Careers Service is still available to you. They can provide individually tailored advice on skills that you may want to develop during your time out and they may be able to signpost you to opportunities in your home area if you are leaving Oxford during your suspension

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“ During my time out I kept my Bod Card and could use the university libraries, which was very helpful as it allowed me to do a bit of work before my return. I was also able to access the Disability Advisory Service, who put together

a student support plan for me that was given to my College and tutors (with my permission). The support plan explained how my mental health problems would impact my work when I came back and what College could do to support me (e.g. flexibility with deadlines).”

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## ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### **Sport**

While suspended students are not eligible to play in Varsity matches or BUCS competitions, students can train with University teams.

### **Drama and Music**

The Oxford University Drama Society and Oxford University Music Society have confirmed that suspended students are welcome to be involved in their activities, events and productions.

### **Clubs and Societies**

If there is any other club or society you would still like to be involved in during suspension, it is recommended that you get in contact with the President or Captain.

### **Access to College Common Rooms**

Access to college common rooms varies from college to college. Contact your JCR president for more information.

## FINANCIAL MATTERS DURING SUSPENSION

### **Tuition Fees**

The Tuition Fee Loan is not payable for any term after the student has withdrawn. For more information see:

[www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/fees/liability/payments/suspension](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/fees/liability/payments/suspension)

### **Maintenance Loan**

Students who suspend their studies are entitled to their maintenance loan/grant pro-rata to the number of days from the start of the academic year to the date on which they suspended their studies, plus 60 extra days' worth if the suspension was due to health reasons. Student Finance England (or equivalent) will calculate your maintenance loan/grant entitlement and ask you to repay any overpayment.

If you suspended your studies due to what Student Finance England (or equivalent) call “compelling personal reasons” - these include serious illness, pregnancy, caring responsibilities and other circumstances beyond your control) - and if you will have financial commitments during your period of suspension which you won't be able to meet without your maintenance loan/grant, it is possible to ask Student Finance England (or equivalent) to pay your maintenance loan/grant through your period of suspension. They have the discretion to pay you or not. The request process is a complex one, and students are advised to seek help from

their College Office rather than submit a request themselves. Oxford SU: Student Advice can also help.

## Hardship Funding

The Access to Learning Fund (for UK students only) is available for suspended students.

You may be able to apply for a college hardship fund though you won't usually be able to receive any on-course specific funding (such as vacation residence).

Please see this link for more info:

[www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/assistance/hardship/alf](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/assistance/hardship/alf)

## Benefits

Students whose studies are suspended are still considered by the Department for Work and Pensions to be full-time students, so are not entitled to any benefits.

## Work

Some students are able to work during their period of suspension.

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“The university was really supportive, and approved a fee waiver for the term before I suspended, when I had been in Oxford but too unwell to work. My college sorted my Student Finance on my behalf, and made sure I got the extra funds that suspended students are eligible for upon suspending studies. This made a massive difference to me, and was a relief not to have to worry about finance.”

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“I lived in Oxford during my year out as circumstances meant I couldn't return home. Having a bod card was great as it meant I could work in central University libraries. I was able to find a job in one of the other Colleges, and my College library gave me some flexible work cataloging the books relevant to my subject and making recommendations for new purchases, which was a good way to stay in touch with the University during my time out. College were equally quite relaxed about me coming back to visit from time to time, although I know I was lucky in that respect.”

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“I was lucky in that I was able to get a part-time admin job in my time off and I ended up going back home and living with my parents. It was actually really refreshing to do something completely different, as my job was very hands-

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on and involved interacting with lots of people every day, which, as a humanities student with minimal contact hours every week, was definitely a blessing.”

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## ACCOMMODATION DURING SUSPENSION

### Finding Accommodation

It is unlikely that your College will continue to provide you with accommodation during the period of your suspension. If you want to remain in Oxford, it is possible to find other forms of accommodation. One less well-known resource is other colleges - some will rent out any spare rooms they have to suspended students, if you ask, by emailing the accommodation office at each college.

These are website which advertise accommodation:

Daily Info: [www.dailyinfo.co.uk/oxford-accommodation](http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/oxford-accommodation)

Gumtree: [www.gumtree.com/flats-and-houses-for-rent/oxford](http://www.gumtree.com/flats-and-houses-for-rent/oxford)

Spare Room: [www.spareroom.co.uk/flatshare/oxfordshire/oxford](http://www.spareroom.co.uk/flatshare/oxfordshire/oxford)

The process of finding accommodation can appear quite daunting and so the Oxford SU: Student Advice have developed the Living Out Guide, [oxfordsu.org/advice/accommodation/](http://oxfordsu.org/advice/accommodation/) to help you through the process and advisors are always happy to help you with accommodation issues: [advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)

### Council tax

Some local authorities may consider being suspended means a student does not meet the definition of a full-time student, and therefore you may be liable to pay council tax. Some authorities consider the reasons for suspension when deciding liability to pay.

If you questions or concerns, please seek advice from Oxford SU: Student Advice [advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)

## VISAS

If during the course of your suspension you have returned to your home country, you may need to apply for a new CAS number and student visa before your return to study. You should always contact Student Immigration for further advice. [student.immigration.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.immigration.ox.ac.uk)

## ACADEMIC WORK

If you have any questions about academic work while suspended you should contact your subject tutor.

In the lead up to your return, you might find it helpful to re-read old notes, begin to look at material from the reading list and spend some time studying.

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“ I have mentoring at the Disability Advisory Service, paid for by the Disabled Student’s Allowance, and I’d really recommend looking into this before you return if you suspended for long term physical or mental health problems. Mentoring is great because it basically gives you a chance to talk to someone about how things are going, and they can help you to solve any problems you might be having.”

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## SOCIAL LIFE

Some people find it beneficial to visit friends in College or Oxford during their suspension, to maintain a network of friends. College policies vary on whether they allow students who are on suspension to visit – check this with your College before you leave.

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“ I have mentoring at the Disability Advisory Service, paid for by the Disabled Student’s Allowance, and I’d really recommend looking into this before you return if you suspended for long term physical or mental health problems. Mentoring is great because it basically gives you a chance to talk to someone about how things are going, and they can help you to solve any problems you might be having.”

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# 4: RETURNING FROM SUSPENSION

## ACADEMIC MATTERS ON YOUR RETURN

### Re-entry requirements

If re-entry requirements have been set at the beginning of suspension these will need to be met. These may include submitting a doctor's note confirming fitness to study or re-entry collections. If you have any questions or concerns an Advisor at the Oxford SU: Student Advice will be happy to help: [advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)

### Returning to studies

Having taken a break from work you might find coming back to academia difficult. It may be helpful on return to have a meeting with your tutors to discuss your academic work. Make sure you and your tutors have a similar expectation of how much work you should be doing. In general, this will be the same as anyone else in your year group on this course, although 'reasonable adjustments' due to any medical condition may apply.

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“I returned for Michaelmas of my second year, retaking that term as I had been completely unable to work in the run up to my suspension. I was lucky enough to have understanding and supportive tutors who were willing to be flexible with the workload and make reasonable adjustments to help me fit back in. This was really helpful, particularly as I had a bit of a relapse with my depression in the first term back. Returning from suspension, although far from perfect, has generally been a positive experience. It took a while to fully settle back in but I'm now at a stage where I feel able to work properly and enjoy life again.”

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### Exams

If you return in a year when you must sit public examinations, you should check the dates. Exam entry dates are different for each subject and information on when both the examination entry and exam assessment dates will be posted on the University's exam information page here:

[www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/entry?wssl=1](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/entry?wssl=1)

If there are changes to the syllabus or exam regulations during the time you are suspended, you are entitled to be examined on the versions that were in place at the time you studied the material - even if this means the Department have to

write a different exam paper for you. This entitlement applies for up to 3 terms for prelims and 6 terms for finals. If you have been suspended for longer, you will need to apply to the University's Education Committee for this. Talk to your College to ensure they coordinate with your Department at the earliest possible stage so that there is time to put together an exam paper. If you have any questions or concerns an Advisor at the Oxford SU: Student Advice will be happy to help.

**[advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)**

## FINANCE ON YOUR RETURN

Once you have fulfilled any return requirements, your College will inform the University Academic Records Office and the Fees Team who in turn will notify Student Finance of your return in order that your tuition fee is paid. You should contact Student Finance to tell them you are returning to study so your maintenance loan can be reinstated. It is recommended that you log on to your Student Loan account to check that the payments are correct. However, be aware that it can take between 20 and 30 days for the Student Loans Company to process the notification once this has been submitted. More information on the process can be found here:

**[www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/fees/liability/payments/suspension?wssl=1](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/fees-funding/fees/liability/payments/suspension?wssl=1)**

## ACCOMMODATION ON YOUR RETURN

If your College agreed to give you accommodation on your return be sure to contact them before you return to confirm arrangements. Some students find living in College accommodation removes some of the stress of coming back as it is sorted for you, and if the rest of your new year group is living in it, it is an easy way to get to know them.

If College is not able to offer you accommodation or you want to live with friends in private rented accommodation, The Living Out Guide from the Oxford SU: Student Advice is a fantastic resource for students:

**[oxfordsu.org/advice/accommodation/](http://oxfordsu.org/advice/accommodation/)**

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“Fortunately when I suspended I was living out in a privately rented house rather than in college accommodation. This meant that I was still able to visit my friends, and for the second half of my time out I, when I was doing a lot better, I was able to live in Oxford again. When I returned, I moved back into college accommodation, which I was allowed to do in order to keep me with my original year group. Colleges probably have different policies about this, but it's definitely worth asking College what your options are for accommodation when you return.”

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## SOCIAL LIFE ON YOUR RETURN

Coming back to Oxford may be difficult, and can feel isolating when friends are in the year above you, or have graduated. It can be incredibly useful to make friends with other people who have suspended, to have people around you who are more aware of suspension and the different things that go with it.

SusCam socials can be a wonderful way to meet other students and build up a support network of people who are thinking about suspending their studies, are suspended currently, or have returned from suspension. There is always a start of term social, in addition to others that go on throughout term; information can be found at the SusCam Facebook page:

**[www.facebook.com/suspendedstudents/?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/suspendedstudents/?fref=ts),**

or in the email bulletins from the Oxford SU President.

There is also a Facebook group which could be useful called Oxford Suspended Status Students Solidarity and Support:

**[www.facebook.com/groups/350529701804420/?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/groups/350529701804420/?fref=ts)**

If you'd like an anonymous post to be made on your behalf, you can email the Chair of SusCam at **[suscam@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:suscam@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)**, and they'll post on the group for you.

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“ One of the things that really worried me when I was suspending was that when I came back everyone would have moved on with their lives and left me behind. To some extent this was true, people had developed new friendships, had different experiences, got to know Oxford better than I did. But they were also happy to have me back, there was genuine warmth in the greeting I received from my old year group, even those who I hadn't known that well. I rejoined in Michaelmas of first year so it was easy to integrate with my new year as just another fresher. The thing was, that Oxford hadn't changed that much in the 9 months I'd had off, I was still going to be able to go on and do the things that I'd wanted to do before, and been scared of missing out on while I was gone.”

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“ I returned in Trinity of my second year, re-taking that term as I had been so ill the previous year. I was very lucky and re-integrated well as I go to such a small College, and already had friends across year groups which definitely helped when my original year moved on. This year, now my College friends have mainly graduated, I've relied a lot on the friends I have made through campaigning at OUSU. The support network I have through SusCam has definitely got me through the worst parts of final year!”

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There have been some challenges too - for instance, I don't feel like I've integrated very well with my new year group - mostly because they are living out of college so I don't actually see them! However, I'm not too worried about this as a number of my friends are on four year courses so will still be around, and I've made loads of new friends at other Colleges, particularly through SusCam!"

## HELP AND ADVICE ON YOUR RETURN

### Disability Advisory Service

Disability advisors will be very happy to help you to make plans to reinstate recommended support as quickly as possible on your return to study.

[www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability?wssl=1](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability?wssl=1)

### University Counselling Service

On returning from suspension you might find the extra help of a counsellor useful in adjusting to being back in Oxford and coping with the various stresses of returning. There are self-help resources and podcasts that you might find helpful here:

[www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling?wssl=1](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling?wssl=1)

### Oxford SU: Student Advice

The Oxford SU: Student Advice is Oxford SU's free, confidential advice and information service. We are independent from the University, Colleges and Departments. We have a team of three qualified, friendly and experienced advisors who can help you when you return with any issues arising from your re-entry conditions and re-adjustment to student life: [advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)



Coming back after having been suspended was my favourite time at university."


# 5: SUMMARY OF RESOURCES

## INDEPENDENT ADVICE

### Oxford SU: Student Advice

[oxfordsu.org/advice](https://oxfordsu.org/advice)

[advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)


  @ousunews

## STUDENT SUPPORT AND CAMPAIGN GROUPS

### SusCam

You can contact us via:

 [www.facebook.com/suspendedstudents/?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/suspendedstudents/?fref=ts)

 @SusCamOx

[suscam@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:suscam@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)

Blog: <https://suscam.wordpress.com/>

### OSDC Oxford Student Disability Community

Oxford SU's campaign to raise awareness and support students with disabilities.

[oxfordsu.org/get-involved/campaigns/disabilities/](https://oxfordsu.org/get-involved/campaigns/disabilities/)

[oxdisability@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:oxdisability@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk)

 [http://facebook.com/groups/oxdisability](https://facebook.com/groups/oxdisability)

### Oxford Nightline

Oxford Nightline is an independent listening, support and information service run for and by students of Oxford and Oxford Brookes universities.

Open 8pm-8am from 0th week to 9th week of Oxford term time

01865 270270

 oxfordnightline

16 Wellington Square

[www.oxfordnightline.org](https://www.oxfordnightline.org)

 @OxfordNightline

[coords@oxfordnightline.org](mailto:coords@oxfordnightline.org)

### College contacts

→ Personal Tutor or Welfare Tutors

→ College GP

→ JCR/MCR Welfare Officer

→ College Peer Supporters

## UNIVERSITY SERVICES

### University Counselling Service

[www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling)

01865 270300

[counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk)

### Disability Advisory Service Service:

[www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability)

01865 280459

[disability@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:disability@admin.ox.ac.uk)

### Student Immigration

Examination Schools, 75-81 High Street, Oxford OX1 4BG

[student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk)

## NATIONWIDE MENTAL HEALTH CHARITIES

### Mind

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Oxfordshire Mind: 01865 263730

[www.oxfordshire-mind.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshire-mind.org.uk)

### Rethink Mental Illness

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

### Student Minds

[www.studentminds.org.uk](http://www.studentminds.org.uk)

### SANE

[www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

