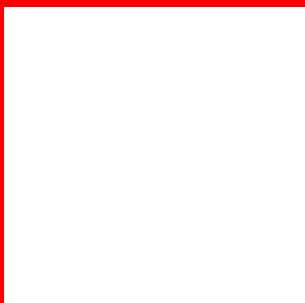




Interruption, Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies

Policy and Procedure



Document Overview

Title:	Interruption, withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Policy and Procedure		
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Version History

Version No.	Date	Description of Changes
V2	01/07/2025	Document amended due to company re-branding

Continuous Improvement

Policies, procedures and processes are meant to be 'living' documents that need to be followed, implemented and maintained. If the procedure does not reflect the current, correct work practice please contact us on

quality@knights.edu.mt

1. Interruption, Withdrawal and Exclusion from Studies Policy and Procedure

1.1 Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all students enrolled in programmes at KNIGHTS Approved Learning Centres. It covers the processes and conditions for requesting an interruption, withdrawal, or exclusion from studies. The policy is relevant to both domestic and international students, regardless of the mode of study (full-time, part-time, online, or blended learning). It is applicable across all programmes ensuring a consistent approach to managing interruptions and withdrawals, and addressing any implications for academic progression and immigration status where applicable.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent framework for managing requests for interruption, withdrawal, and exclusion from studies. It aims to ensure that students are fully informed of the procedures, implications, and support available when considering such actions. The policy seeks to balance the needs of students with the academic requirements of KNIGHTS, maintaining the integrity of our programmes while supporting students in managing personal, medical, or other significant circumstances that may impact their ability to continue their studies.

1.3 Policy Guiding Principles

Student Wellbeing: The primary consideration in all decisions related to interruptions, withdrawals, and exclusions is the wellbeing and best interests of the student. The institution is committed to supporting students through personal, medical, or other significant challenges that may impact their studies.

Fairness and Transparency: The procedures for requesting an interruption, withdrawal, or exclusion are designed to be fair, transparent, and easily accessible. Students will be provided with clear information about the steps involved, the implications of their decision, and the support available to them throughout the process.

Support and Communication: KNIGHTS will provide appropriate support and guidance to students throughout the process of requesting an interruption, withdrawal, or exclusion. Students will be encouraged to maintain communication with the KNIGHTS Admissions and Student Affairs team to facilitate a smooth transition, whether they are returning to their studies or making alternative arrangements.

Flexibility and Responsiveness: KNIGHTS recognises that each student's circumstances are unique and will approach each case with flexibility and responsiveness. While the policy provides a structured framework, individual circumstances will be taken into account to ensure that the most appropriate outcome is reached for each student.



Definitions

2. Definitions

KNIGHTS Approved Learning Centre:	An external institution or facility that has been authorised by the KNIGHTS to deliver its programmes. Students attending an approved learning centre are subject to the same policies and procedures as those studying directly at the institution.
Extenuating Circumstances:	Unforeseen or exceptional personal circumstances that may prevent a student from fulfilling their academic obligations, such as completing assessments or attending classes. These circumstances are evaluated through a formal process and may warrant special consideration by KNIGHTS.
Exclusion from Studies: (Termination of Student Status)	Applies to students who have been requested by KNIGHTS or a KNIGHTS approved Learning Centre to leave KNIGHTS.
Interruption from Studies:	Formal request for temporary pause of studies.
Withdrawal from Studies:	Is where the student terminates their studies with KNIGHTS on a voluntary basis.

3. Interruption of Study

3.1 What is Interruption of Study?

An interruption of study is a formal process that allows students to request a pause from studies for an agreed period of time, typically not exceeding one year. It may be necessary to interrupt studies for a period due to personal circumstances. Examples of situations where an interruption might be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

- Health or medical issues.
- Work-related reasons.
- Family obligations.

If students need to take time away from studies for personal reasons, KNIGHTS will temporarily halt the evaluation of academic performance and progress. For students enrolled in an apprenticeship programme, it is crucial to discuss the return date with the employer and the Admissions and Student Affairs team. With students considering an interruption of studies, any unresolved investigations or cases against them will be reopened and concluded upon their return, which may affect their continued enrolment in the programme.

3.2 Important Information

3.2.1 General Conditions

- a) If students interrupt their studies, any existing payment obligations must still be fulfilled.
- b) Students will be asked to resume their studies from the beginning of the module they had interrupted.
- c) If suitable arrangements cannot be made, students may be required to withdraw from their programme.
- d) A request to pause studies must be submitted as soon as the student becomes aware that this may be required.
- e) KNIGHTS requires all students to complete their programme within a designated period from their initial registration. Additionally, specific programme requirements may impose other deadlines, which students should consider when requesting an interruption.
- f) If and where possible it is advisable for students to interrupt their studies after completion of a module.
- g) The schedule of a module upon students return may be different to that of the original programme being followed. Students returning to their studies must follow the new schedule and any conditions therein.

3.2.2 Access to Student Facilities and Resources

During interruption of studies, students' access to LMS will be temporarily disabled, as students will not be expected to engage with their studies during this period. However, students will still have access to KNIGHTS's student support services.

Students will be asked to refrain from participating in their programme, attending classes, submitting assessments, attending placements, or conducting research while their studies are interrupted. Upon students' return, the LMS access will be restored. It is recommended staying in touch with Admissions and Student Affairs team as this will help ease the students' transition back into their studies. Before a scheduled return, Admissions and Student Affairs team will reach out to discuss the logistics and arrange any necessary support services to facilitate reintegration into the study programme.

3.2.3 International Students

For international students studying on a student visa, interrupting their studies can significantly impact their immigration status. Students are not allowed to stay in the Malta if they are not actively engaged in a study programme. Students will be entirely responsible for their visa status in Malta. The Admissions and Student Affairs team will guide students accordingly.

3.2.4 Studying at a KNIGHTS Approved Learning Centre

Students enrolled in a KNIGHTS programme at one of KNIGHTS-approved learning centres, should expect all communication to be directed through the KNIGHTS-approved learning centre. It is the responsibility of the KNIGHTS-approved learning centre to notify KNIGHTS of any changes to the previously agreed study arrangements.

3.3 How to ask for Interruption from studies?

To request an Interruption from studies, students should follow the below process:

3.3.1 Process

- a) Send an official email to the Admissions and Student Affairs team (studentsupport@knights.edu.mt) requesting the interruption, giving reasons for this and providing proof where applicable, especially in the case of International Students, who are dependent on student visa status.
- b) The Admissions and Student Affairs team will bring matter to the attention of Academic Affairs Committee.
- c) In cases where the interruption is approved, the committee chair will thereafter issue formal letter outlining the reason for interruption, duration of interruption and any financial arrangements made in the process of said interruption. The letter will also instruct students to formally reach out Admission and Student Affairs team when they are due to return to their studies.
- d) In cases where the interruption is denied, the committee chair will thereafter issue a formal letter outlining reasons for such denial.
- e) Students whose interruption request has been denied shall be expected to proceed with their programme of studies.
- f) Students will be notified about the outcome of the request within 5 working days of receiving the said request.

3.4 Returning to Studies

Before students resume their studies, the Admissions and Student Affairs team will inform the students of the upcoming course/module start date. Students will need to confirm their intention to return/re-register. If students do not return as expected and fail to communicate with KNIGHTS, they may be withdrawn from the programme and will still be liable to settle outstanding balances. If students need to extend their period of interruption, they should notify the Admissions and Student Affairs team as soon as possible. If they do not request and obtain approval for an extension, and fail to re-register, their enrolment with the KNIGHTS may be terminated.

For international students requiring a student visa, the process will take longer. Students will need to rectify their visa status when they are ready to resume their studies.

4. Withdrawal from Study

4.1 What is Withdrawal from Study?

If students are facing circumstances that severely affect their ability to continue their current programme, it is necessary to inform KNIGHTS of their intention to withdraw. Once the decision to withdraw is made and the process is completed, it is irreversible, and withdrawn students will not be able to be reinstated into the programme. If students later decide to pursue further studies, they will need to go through the standard admissions process (**See Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure**). Students should consider withdrawal if they believe that taking a break from their studies will not be sufficient, particularly if they are unable to commit to returning in the next academic year. Additionally, if there are any unresolved investigations involving the students, KNIGHTS reserves the right to proceed with said investigations and impose any penalties due.

4.1.1 How to withdraw from a programme of studies?

It is very important that students do more than simply stop attending. To request to withdraw from a programme of studies, students should follow below process:

4.1.2 Process

- a) Student should send an official email to Admissions and Student Affairs team (studentsupport@knights.edu.mt) requesting the withdrawal, giving reasons for this and providing proof where applicable, especially in the case of International Students, who are dependent on student visa status.
- b) The Admissions and Student Affairs team will bring matter to the attention of Academic Affairs Committee.
- c) In such cases School Principal as Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee will reach out to the student to get a better understanding of the reason behind the decision and try to find the less drastic solution for the student.
- d) Following one-to-one meeting, the committee chair will thereafter issue formal letter outlining the reason for withdrawal and any financial arrangements made in the process of said withdrawal.
- e) Students will be notified about the outcome of the request within 5 working days of receiving the said request.

Studying at a KNIGHTS Approved Learning Centre

If students are enrolled in a KNIGHTS programme at one of KNIGHTS approved learning centres, all communication should be directed through the KNIGHTS approved learning centre. It is the responsibility of the KNIGHTS approved learning centre to notify KNIGHTS of any changes to the previously agreed study arrangements.

Once the request for withdrawal is received, a representative from the KNIGHTS approved learning centre will reach out to discuss the additional considerations related to students' decision to withdraw. After the withdrawal, student will no longer be recognised as a student.

Once the decision to withdraw is made and the process is completed, it is irreversible, and withdrawn students will not be able to be reinstated into the programme. If students later decide to pursue further studies, they will need to go through the standard admissions process (**See Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure**).

4.2 Important Information

4.2.1 Fee Liability

Depending on when students ask to withdraw, they may still be liable to pay a portion of or all tuition fees. For information regarding any costs, that may be incurred relating to pending fees, please refer to Cancellation and Refund Policy which can be found in **Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure**.

4.2.2 Exit Awards / Credits

If students choose to withdraw, they will generally be eligible to receive any credits for fully completed modules prior to withdrawal. If the total credits earned meet the criteria for an exit award, this will also be granted. Please note that partially completed modules will not be considered for credit; only those modules that have been fully completed before withdrawal will be eligible for consideration.

5. Suspension and Termination of Student Status

5.1 Suspension of Student Status

Suspension of student status is a temporary measure that may be implemented under specific circumstances:

1. where a student is unable to fulfil their academic obligations or
2. is in violation of institutional regulations.

Reasons for suspension can include, but are not limited to, academic underperformance, disciplinary actions, non-payment of tuition fees, or health-related issues that prevent the student from continuing their studies for a period of time.

During the suspension period, the student is not permitted to attend classes, participate in assessments, or engage in any official academic activities.

5.1.2 Process and Responsibilities – Suspension of Student Status

The Academic Affairs Committee Chair will formally notify the student of the suspension, outlining the reasons, the duration, and the conditions required for reinstatement. It is the students' responsibility to address the issues that led to the suspension and to provide evidence of their readiness to return to their studies.

Where applicable the Academic Affairs Manager will provide guidance and support to suspended students, including counselling services, academic advising, and access to resources that may assist them in overcoming the challenges they face. Should students be suspended due to non-payment of fees, they may reach out to the KNIGHTS Finance team to find the solution that will allow them to honour their financial obligations. The aim is to facilitate the student's return to active status once the conditions of the suspension have been resolved.

5.2 Termination of Student Status

Termination of student status also known as exclusion from studies is the process by which a student is permanently removed from their programme of study and from KNIGHTS or from a KNIGHTS approved learning centre.

This may occur as a result of but is not limited to:

- continuous academic under-performance;
- non-attendance or non-engagement;
- serious breaches of institutional regulations;
- due to non-payment of agreed payment terms;
- a decision by the student to permanently withdraw from their studies.

In cases of academic termination, the institution will have conducted a thorough review of the student's academic record, provided warnings, and offered support to improve performance. If these measures do not lead to improvement, the institution may proceed with termination.

For conditions to meet progression regulations refer to the **Student-Life Cycle Policy and Procedure**.

Detailed process for termination due to non-attendance or non-engagement or for termination due to breaches of institutional regulations can be found in the **Programme and Academic Regulations Policy and Procedure**.

Detailed process for termination due to breaches of institutional regulations can be found in the **Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure**.

Upon termination, students lose all rights and privileges associated with their enrolment, including access to KNIGHTS LMS, learning material, resources and participation in academic or extracurricular activities. The termination is recorded in the student's academic file, and they are provided with a final transcript and any relevant certification of

the work completed up to the point of termination. KNIGHTS may offer post-termination support, such as career counselling or guidance on future educational opportunities.

Status

- Students who are running a risk of termination will have the case discussed at Academic Affairs Committee level.
- The School Principal as Chair of Academic Affairs Committee will hold one-to-one meeting with the student to provide the opportunity to the student to make a case for continuation and to outline all the implications of exclusion.
- The student will also be informed of the reasons which have led the institution to terminate the student from the programme of studies.
- Students will be notified about the final decision within 5 working days of the one-to-one meeting being held.

5.2.2 Appeals

Students have the right to appeal the termination of their student status if they believe it has been unjustly applied. Students who wish to challenge such a decision are encouraged to consult our **Grievances and Appeals Policy**, which outlines the procedures for submitting an appeal, as well as the grounds and timelines for consideration. This policy provides a clear framework for ensuring that all appeals are handled fairly and transparently.

6. Associated Policies

- KNIGHTS Ethos Policy
- Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedure.
- Student Life-Cycle Policy and Procedure
- Programme and Academic Regulations
- Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Student Rights, responsibilities and Code of Conduct Policy
- Data Privacy and Information Management Policy