



# Senate Handbook

## Changes to Registration

**(Including suspensions of study and early terminations of registration)**

This Handbook supplements Regulations governed by Senate.

It includes policies, procedures, advice and/or guidance that staff and students are expected to follow in the proper conduct of University business.

# Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Requests by you to change your registration	5
3	Course Transfers	6
	3.1 Transfer to a different course of Study	6
	3.2 Transfer to a lower exit award (Taught Students)	6
	3.3 Transfer to a different completed award	6
	3.4 Research Student transfers	7
4	Change of mode of study	8
5	Suspension of study	9
	5.1 Voluntary suspension	9
	5.2 Suspensions authorised by the Academic Registrar	10
	5.3 Suspensions authorised by the Head of School	11
	5.4 Returning to study	12
6	Early termination of registration	13
	6.1 Voluntary withdrawal	13
	6.2 Early termination authorised by the Academic Registrar	14
	6.3 Early termination due to a lack of academic progress	15
7	Appealing against a decision about a change to your registration	17
	7.1 Broad outline of the stages of an investigation	18
	7.2 Your rights	19
	7.3 Stage 1 – Informal investigation	21
	7.4 Stage 2 – Formal investigation	22
	7.5 Stage 3 – Appeal	24
	7.6 Stage 4 – External complaint	26

## **Changes since version 1.1 (August 2015):**

- Removal of reference to Dignity at Study Advisors
- Addition of section on Course Transfers:
  - Transfer to a different course of study
  - Transfer to a lower exit award (Taught Students)
  - Transfer to a different completed award
  - Research student transfers
- Addition of section on change of mode of study
- Note that suspensions for students on 5 year registrations will only be approved in exceptional circumstances
- Removal of reference to telephone counselling and Medical Centre
- Note that MOD funded students require evidence to support any suspension request
- Reference to the University Student Attendance Policy
- Amended reference to Student Welfare Handbook from the Student Mental Health Handbook
- Correction of timescales from four weeks to twenty working days
- Note that appeal grounds are limited to those listed
- Correction of OIA deadline from three to twelve months
- Amendment that completion of procedures letters must be requested by students

# 1 Introduction

This Handbook describes the University's approach for managing requests (either from you, or from staff of the University) to change the nature or conditions of your registration. This includes:

- changes to your named programme of study (e.g. a transfer to a different course or final intended award);
- changes to your pattern of study (e.g. a change from full-time to part-time study or *vice versa*);
- changes to the length of time of study you need (e.g. requests for extensions of time for the period of study, with or without the payment of additional tuition fees);
- requests, for whatever reason, for either a temporary or permanent interruption to your period of study.

In most cases, requests are made by you, and such requests normally require the explicit support from either your Course Director (if you are on a taught course) or your Supervisor (if you are taking a research degree).

In some circumstances, however, the University may require you to halt your studies, on either a temporary (suspension of study) or permanent (termination of registration) basis. This Handbook outlines circumstances where this might take place with or without your consent, and outlines the reasons why that might take place, and your right of appeal against such decision, if you choose to disagree with it.

The Handbook supplements Regulations 41-47 and is designed to provide you with helpful information if you are considering changes to your registration conditions and/or interrupting your study. This Handbook also outlines how the University will consider your concerns and the procedures it will follow to investigate them.

## 2 Requests by you to change your registration

The University expects you, both at the point you originally register, and at the point at which you commit to a particular module of study, to honour that commitment.

When agreeing to a module or course, you are accepting that you are able to:

- meet the necessary time commitments for attending classes and other scheduled events,
- manage any private study commitments, and
- meet the stated dates of assessment (either examination dates or deadlines for the submission of work for assessment),

as outlined in course documentation provided to you through a handbook, website or virtual learning environment.

You are expected to address proactively any concerns you have about meeting those time requirements, either through adjusting your personal commitments and/or through raising your concerns with your Course Director or Supervisor and discussing appropriate options.

Where personal pressures result in you concluding that you cannot commit to the pattern of studies you have previously agreed to, you are expected to take responsibility for resolving these. Some of the options available to you are outlined in detail in later sections of this Handbook (e.g. suspensions of study) but you should also consider whether any of the following may help support your studies:

- switching from full-time to part-time registration; and/or
- deferring individual modules and/or assessments to future years of the course or programme;
- switching to an alternative award (e.g. changing from an intention to receive an MSc to a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma, or changing from a PhD registration to an MPhil or MSc by Research registration).

Any request to change your registration should be discussed with your Course Director or Supervisor, and then formally submitted in writing to him or her. The Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) will not consider any request from you to change your registration until there is:

- a) a clear and unambiguous indication of the requested changes, including clear alternative dates and/or plan of future study;
- b) a rationale for the requested changes, including supporting evidence;
- c) a clear understanding between you and your Course Director or Supervisor of the financial implications for your request (i.e. the payment of additional tuition fees or a fee rebate);
- d) clear support for the changes from your Course Director or Supervisor.

In very exceptional cases, the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) will consider requests directly from students where there is not support from the Course Director or Supervisor. Such requests would be considered under the appeals procedure outlined in Section 5. You are, however, generally expected to continue to discuss your options with your Course Director or Supervisor until you can mutually agree a solution.

Any requests for changes to registration (including requests for additional 'writing up periods') that are made after the current end date of registration will not normally be considered. In addition, requests for retrospective periods of suspension will not be granted. Advice on specific cases which may have exceptional merit should be discussed with the Academic Registrar.

Further advice on your options can be discussed with independent staff as well, including:

- staff in Education Services (including the Academic Registrar, the Assistant Registrars and staff in the Student Advice Centre);
- staff and students in the Cranfield Students' Association (CSA);
- Learning Support Officers.

## 3 Course Transfers

There are options available to students to transfer from their existing course to another course during their studies.

### 3.1 Transfer to a different taught course of study

Students are admitted only for the course they have applied for. Requests to consider transfer from one taught course to another will only be usually considered within a reasonable time period of the student's start date.

Transfers of a registered student from one course to another course require the agreement of the course directors for both the original and new courses, as well as the Director of Education.

The transfer of any completed/part completed modules or learning credits from a student's previous course to their new course requires the approval of the new course's Course Director, and can only be approved where:

- i. The module(s) are shared or borrowed modules used by both courses; or
- ii. It can be demonstrated that the student will have met the learning outcomes of other modules on their new course by completing the transferred modules on their old course.

The transfer from one course of study to another may require the payment of additional fees.

Students who are applying for a new course and wish to transfer some credits achieved on one award bearing course to a different course may apply to do so through the recognition of internal learning credits at the application stage.

### 3.2 Lower exit awards (Taught Students)

A student who has failed to achieve their intended award will normally be conferred with a lower exit award (e.g. PgCert, PgDip), provided that they have achieved the required number of credits for that award.

This will be completed automatically by the University (there is no application required by the student), with their student record showing a fail for their intended award, with award of the completed exit award.

There is no additional fee charged to the student for the lower exit award.

### 3.3 Transfer to a different completed award

Where there is no lower exit award for the course that the student was originally registered on, students may apply to transfer their accrued credits to another lower award, provided that:

- i. They have achieved sufficient learning credits for the award that they are applying for,  
**and**
  - a. The achieved credits are from module(s) which are shared or borrowed modules used by both courses; or
  - b. It can be demonstrated that the student will have met the learning outcomes of other modules on their new course by completing the transferred modules on their old course.

## 3.4 Research student transfers

Research students may, during their studies, transfer to either a higher or lower award at their own request or be offered a lower exit award as an outcome of their formal thesis examination or progress review.

### 3.4.1 Transfer to a higher award

Research Students may, following discussions with their supervisor(s) request to transfer to a higher award (e.g. MSc by Research to PhD).

A student wishing to transfer to a higher research award will need the agreement of their supervisor and the Director of Research within their School. It is expected that a research student transferring from a lower research award (level 7 qualification) to a higher research award (level 8 qualification) will undergo an interview for the higher award as part of the process of supervisor/Director of Research agreement. Students will be required to pay the additional fees due for the PhD, unless they have an internal/external sponsor willing to cover the additional cost.

### 3.4.2 Transfer to a lower award

Research students may request a transfer to a lower award, usually as a result of changes to their personal circumstances. A student wishing to transfer to a lower research award will need the agreement of their current supervisor (and any new supervisor) and the Director of Research within their School.

### 3.4.3 Lower exit awards (Research Students)

There are several possible outcomes to the examination of a research thesis, which are explained more clearly in the Research Students Handbook. Examiners may award doctoral students with a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) award if they believe the student meets the required standard of study (as outlined in Appendix A of the Research Student Handbook) but that the work presented in the thesis does not meet doctoral standards (either in terms of absolute original output or in terms of volume of work).

It is only used in circumstances where the examiners do not believe remedial work on the current research and thesis can result in a PhD being obtained. Examiners may request that the candidate makes minor corrections to the existing thesis before awarding the Master of Philosophy degree.

A research student's review panel can recommend exiting with a lower award as an outcome of a progress review (most commonly an 'Additional Review'). In such cases the panel will make the recommendation on the review form to then be considered by the Supervisor and Director of Research.

## 4 Change of mode of study

Students may, for a variety of reasons find that they are unable to commit full-time to a course, or that they have more time for their study than they previously had, and therefore wish to transfer from part-time to full-time study.

Students can apply to transfer from one mode of study to the other, providing that;

- i. The alternative mode of study for the student's course has been approved as a unique course by the University's Education or Research Committee; **and**
- ii. The transfer has the approval of the Course Director or research Supervisor (for both modes of study where these are different).

Any student changing their mode of study will have their registration period adjusted accordingly, on a pro-rata basis, depending on the part-time registration period for that course. For example for a course with initial registration periods of 1-year (FT) and 2-years (PT), a change of mode of study would:

- For a full-time student with 5 months of their initial registration period remaining, who transfers to a part-time registration, result in their remaining registration period being adjusted to 10 months;
- For a part-time student with 10 months of their initial registration period remaining, who transfers to a full-time registration, result in their remaining registration period being adjusted to 5 months.

## 5 Suspension of study

There are a number of routes which may result in you having to suspend your study and spend time away from the University. These include:

- a) Where you choose to take a leave of absence owing to personal circumstances (voluntary suspension – see Section 3.1);
- b) Where the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) acts to remove you from the University temporarily for a specific reason (see Section 3.2)
- c) Where you have been involved in a disciplinary investigation of such a nature that it is felt appropriate or necessary to remove you from study, either while the matter is being investigated, or as a result of the investigation (see Section 3.3).

If you suspend your study, your period of registration (i.e. course end date) will automatically be extended to account for the period of suspension of study. No additional fees are charged for this adjustment. Access to the University and its facilities may be withdrawn during any period of suspension of study at the discretion of the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff), but this is not common: you should in most cases still be able to access your CCNT account, EVE, and library and IT resources.

If you have entered the UK on a visa specifically to study, you will be required to return to your home country if your study is suspended.

### Part-time students

The standard registration for a part-time MSc student is three years. The University would normally expect all part-time students to complete their studies within that time period, however the University acknowledges changes in circumstance may mean a student needs to suspend their study for an appropriate period.

For those students with a 5 year registration period suspensions will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

### 5.1 Voluntary suspension

The University recognises that sometimes life can change to such a degree that it is necessary to consider a temporary halt to your study. There may be a number of potential causes, including:

- Illness, either physical or mental (of yourself, or of close family and friends);
- Financial concerns, such that you can't afford to maintain your living expenses while studying;
- Personal relationships intruding upon your ability to study;
- Other personal circumstances (e.g. a change to your living arrangements).

Wherever possible, the University will act to support you continuing with your study, and there are a number of support mechanisms available to all students, including the Counselling Service, Learning Support Officers, the Student Advice Centre and the Cranfield Students' Association.

If you find yourself in a position where you believe your study is being affected, you should discuss this as soon as possible with your Course Director or Supervisor. He or she will be able to outline to you the various possibilities that might be open to you to accommodate your personal circumstances. These are most commonly:

- Recognising “exceptional circumstances” and allowing you to submit work for assessment late;
- Reviewing your patterns of study with you to see if they can be adjusted, including the possibility of transferring from full-time to part-time study (or extending your period of part-time study);



- Discussing with you taking time out from active study, either through a formal period of suspension of study (where you would normally remove yourself from the course for a short period of time), or through recognising that you will make little or no academic progress for a defined period of time.

Where you agree that it is sensible and appropriate to have a suspension from study, you will be asked to confirm this in writing to your Course Director or Supervisor<sup>1</sup>. He or she will also discuss with you a defined period of suspension (for up to one year) and a “return to study plan”, so that you are both clear on what will be expected on your re-engagement with the University. The “return to study plan” can be reviewed at any point, and further periods of suspension of study agreed. Please note it is extremely rare for you to be allowed a suspension of study for more than three years in total.

It is worth noting that if you are following a taught Masters course, PgDip or PgCert, and you are currently in the taught phase of the course, attending modules, that a suspension of study may well mean leaving the current course and returning in the next year. It is easier to accommodate short suspensions of study when you are engaged in your individual research project.

### **A request by the University for you to suspend your study**

Occasionally, it may be the case that the prospect of having to suspend your study is raised with you by either your Course Director or Supervisor, or by other staff concerned with your welfare. This is often in cases where it is recognised that you may be at risk of failing the course, and a suspension of study may be helpful to allow you time to resolve any personal issues, in order to then focus more successfully on your study.

It is important to note that a suspension of study is not intended as a penalty or punishment, but an attempt to ensure that you can undertake and complete your study in the most effective and positive way possible.

The University cannot require you to suspend your study if you are failing to make academic progress, but it may highlight that if you continue your study and your progress continues to be insufficient, it may take steps to terminate your registration instead (see Section 6.3).

## **5.2 Suspensions authorised by the Academic Registrar**

In certain circumstances, the Academic Registrar, or more usually a member of his or her staff, may authorise your suspension of study without your permission. The circumstances fall into three main categories:

- a) you have not been in contact with your course team or Supervisor; or
- b) you have been prevented (possibly through no fault of your own) from attending the specified location of study for the course; or
- c) you are considered by your nature or by your actions, to represent a clear risk to the health and safety of yourself, or of other students or members of the University.

### **Lack of contact with the course team**

As part of your conditions of registration, you should attend any compulsory classes and sessions, as outlined by the course team. More generally, if you are unable to attend other scheduled classes, sessions or meetings, you are expected to maintain contact with the course team (usually the Course Director, Module Leaders and course administrator) or Supervisor so that the University can verify that you are making appropriate academic progress.

---

<sup>1</sup> MOD funded students will also be required to submit appropriate evidence to support any request to suspend their studies.

Where you find yourself unable to engage in study effectively (e.g. illness), you should inform the course team or Supervisor as soon as possible, so that they can consider how best to support your continuation of study. It is your responsibility to ensure they are aware of any circumstances that are affecting your ability to study.

Where there has been no contact from you, and where the course team or Supervisor has attempted unsuccessfully to contact you, the course team may request that the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) suspends your study for a period of up to two months. During that time, he or she will try to re-establish contact with you through the contact details in EVE. It is therefore important you keep these up to date. If you do not respond to any approaches from Education Services, the University will take steps to terminate your registration, on the grounds that you have withdrawn from the course without giving the University formal notification.

### **Lack of attendance at classes, meetings and other teaching sessions**

The University has a formal Student Attendance Policy, which students are expected to adhere to. Where a student's attendance falls below what is expected by the University the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her team) may seek to suspend your status on these grounds.

There are some circumstances, which may not be your fault, where you cannot attend the specified location of study for your course. (The most common examples of this are lack of an appropriate visa to study in the UK and lack of site security clearance for the Defence Academy site at Shrivenham.) In these circumstances, the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) will discuss the likelihood of those issues being resolved and the likely timescales. He or she may authorise a suspension of study, with or without your consent, based on your ability to attend classes or sessions in the foreseeable future. If it appears likely that you will not be able to attend on a long-term basis, the Academic Registrar (or the authorised member of his or her staff) may instead choose to terminate your registration on a permanent basis.

### **Risk of health and safety to yourself or to others**

Cranfield University is committed fully to promoting a safe and harmonious environment.

The Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) may be required to act if he or she has received evidence to indicate that your current or potential future actions may represent a risk to the health and safety of yourself or others: this includes circumstances where you have committed an act of violence or damage or where it is suspected or confirmed you have a serious mental health illness (as outlined in the Student Welfare Handbook). Wherever possible, he or she will discuss this possibility with you and explain the reasons and evidence for this decision. It must be noted, however, that health and safety concerns will take precedence over your personal wishes to continue your study.

Such circumstances may in addition lead to a formal disciplinary investigation into your behaviour.

Where such a suspension of study is authorised, the Academic Registrar will discuss with you, or otherwise outline, any conditions which may apply to you in order to return to study. This will be the result of a formal risk assessment of your potential return to study.

## **5.3 Suspensions authorised by the Head of School**

Suspensions of study authorised by a Head of School are strictly limited to those associated with a formal disciplinary investigation. You should refer for more detail to the Student Handbook on Disciplinary Procedures.

Very rarely, suspensions may apply to you if you have been alleged of committing a serious offence, or if you are the alleged victim of an offence and it is seen as appropriate to remove you from the University so that the circumstances around the allegation are not exacerbated. Any suspension of

study will normally be limited to either the duration of the disciplinary investigation or, if it is a penalty as a result of a disciplinary investigation, a period deemed appropriate by the Head of School: if this is longer than twenty working days, there is a right of appeal (as outlined in the Student Handbook on Disciplinary Procedures).

## 5.4 Returning to study

You are not normally allowed to recommence your study unless a “return to study plan” has been agreed between you and your Course Director or Supervisor. Depending on the circumstances leading to your suspension of study, this may include a health and safety risk assessment and a requirement to put in place adjustments (by the University or by you) to support such a return to study. The Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) retains the right to authorise a further suspension of study, or an early termination of registration, if such a plan cannot be devised and/or implemented in reasonable timescales.

A “return to study plan” may include:

- a list of courses or modules you should attend on your re-registration;
- revised submission dates for any assessed work;
- preparatory reading or other work you should undertake before returning to the University;
- producing study or research plans for your Course Director or Supervisor;
- meeting with a Learning Support Officer to discuss your learning requirements;
- providing a medical report on your fitness to study, or having a meeting with a counsellor.

In addition, all returning students should formally re-register with Education Services.

If you have entered the UK on a visa specifically to study, you will usually need a new visa and should request a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies from the Student Immigration and Funding team in Education Services.

## 6 Early termination of registration

There are a number of circumstances which may result in you having to leave the University before you have completed your study. These include:

- a) Where you choose to remove yourself from the course or programme owing to personal circumstances (voluntary withdrawal – see Section 6.1);
- b) Where the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) acts to remove you without your consent from the University permanently for a specific reason (see Section 6.2);
- c) Where, based on evidence provided to him or her, the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) has decided that you have failed to make satisfactory academic progress or failed to show due diligence in your study and decides to remove you from the course or programme (see Section 6.3).

In all cases, formal written notification of the decision will be sent to you by staff in Education Services to your contact address recorded in EVE.

If you have entered the UK on a visa specifically to study, you will be required to return to your home country if your registration is terminated early.

### 6.1 Voluntary withdrawal

The University recognises that sometimes life can change to such a degree that it is necessary to consider giving up your study plans. There may be a number of potential causes, including:

- Illness, either physical or mental (of yourself, or of close family and friends);
- Financial concerns, such that you can't afford to maintain your living expenses while studying;
- Personal relationships intruding upon your ability to study;
- Other personal circumstances (e.g. a change to your living arrangements).

Wherever possible, the University will act to support you continuing with your study, and there are a number of support mechanisms available to all students, including the Counselling Service, Learning Support Officers, the Student Advice Centre and the Cranfield Students' Association.

If you find yourself in a position where you believe your study is being affected, you should discuss this as soon as possible with your Course Director or Supervisor. He or she will outline to you the various possibilities that might be open to you to accommodate your personal circumstances. These are commonly:

- Reviewing your patterns of study with you to see if they can be adjusted, including the possibility of transferring from full-time to part-time study (or extending your period of part-time study);
- Discussing with you taking time out from active study, either through a formal period of suspension of study (where you would normally remove yourself from the course for a short period of time), or through recognising that you will make little or no academic progress for a defined period of time (see Section 2);
- Recognising "exceptional circumstances" and allowing you to submit work for assessment late.

Although these options will be discussed with you, there are occasions where the circumstances are such that it is more appropriate to withdraw from the University on a permanent basis.

#### **A request by the University for you to withdraw from the course or programme**

Occasionally, it may be the case that the prospect of having to withdraw is raised with you by either your Course Director, your Supervisor, or by other staff concerned with your welfare. This is often in cases where it is recognised that you are at serious risk of failing the course, or reached a point in the course where you will be unable to gain sufficient learning credits to pass the course. Your

Course Director or Supervisor will outline to you where you are failing to make academic progress, and the likelihood of you failing the course or programme overall, and when he or she may take steps to recommend your removal from the course or programme.

In some circumstances, if you withdraw you may still be eligible to receive a lower award than that you intended to achieve (e.g. if you are studying for a taught Masters degree, passing some of the course may result in the award of a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate).

Where you are failing the course or programme, the course team or Supervisor will discuss this with you and request that you withdraw. If you accept this, you will need to confirm in writing your formal decision to withdraw from the course or programme. If you do not accept this, the University may take steps to terminate your registration without your consent (see Section 6.2).

## 6.2 Early termination authorised by the Academic Registrar

In certain and very specific circumstances, the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) may authorise your early termination without your permission. These are:

- a) you are in debt to the University regarding your tuition fees, and have been warned that non-payment will result in your registration being terminated;
- b) you are found to have provided false or incomplete information during the application and admission processes, such that the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) has concluded your admission to the University was obtained under false pretenses;
- c) you are co-registered on more than one course or programme of the University without the permission of the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff);
- d) you have not replied to requests for making contact from the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff), relating to your absence from the University;
- e) you have been prevented (possibly through no fault of your own) from attending the specified location of study for the course or programme, and this situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future;
- f) you are considered, by your nature or by your actions, to represent a clear risk to the health and safety of yourself, or of other students or members of the University;
- g) a disciplinary procedure has ruled that you be permanently excluded from the University, providing that you have been allowed to exercise your right of appeal (see the Student Handbook on Disciplinary Procedures).

Some of these circumstances are expanded on below.

### Co-registration of courses – 6.2.c

Where you are registered on a full-time basis, it is expected that the majority of your time will be spent on your study. Cranfield courses are intense and you are expected to work at a level of structured and private study of between 40-50 hours every week – about the same as a full-time employed job.

Where you are registered on a part-time basis, this is usually on the understanding that you are employed in other activities outside of the University.

In both cases therefore, it is deemed to be inappropriate for students to be registered concurrently on two different courses leading to different awards of the University at the same time, and this is considered to be a breach of your terms and conditions of registration.

There is a small subset of exceptions to this, approved by the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff). These are limited to:

- “PhD with Integrated Studies” – students apply for a single combined programme including a PhD registration with taught course modules leading to either a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate. This joint registration is recognised at the outset by an extended period of study.

- Studying short courses for learning credits: the University permits a student to register for an award (a “registered student”) alongside studying short CPD modules for learning credits (as an “associate student”).
- Staff candidates – staff candidates may be co-registered for a PhD as well as attending courses in preparation for the submission of a Professional Postgraduate Certificate.

#### **Lack of contact with the Academic Registrar about your registration – 6.2.d**

As part of your conditions of registration, you are expected to maintain communications with the University, especially where the University contacts you through the contact details you register in EVE, and through your @cranfield.ac.uk email address. You are also expected to keep your Course Director or Supervisor aware of any personal circumstances which may require an absence from the University.

Failure to do so will result in Education Services being informed of an unauthorised absence from the University. The Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) will take steps to contact you to determine whether you have left the University on a temporary or permanent basis. If he or she is unable to reach you, or if you do not reply to his or her communications, the Academic Registrar (or the authorised member of his or her staff) will terminate your registration, on the grounds that you have withdrawn from the University without notice. You will normally be given between ten and twenty working days to respond to communications before such action is taken.

#### **Lack of attendance at classes, meetings and other teaching sessions – 6.2.e**

There are some circumstances, which may not be your fault, where you simply cannot attend the specified location of study for your course. (The most common examples of this are lack of an appropriate visa to study in the UK and lack of site security clearance for the Defence Academy site at Shrivenham). In these circumstances, the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) will discuss the likelihood of those issues being resolved and the likely timescales. If it appears likely that you will not be able to attend on a long-term basis, he or she will terminate your registration on a permanent basis, whether or not you agree with this decision.

#### **Risk of health and safety to yourself or to others – 6.2.f**

Cranfield University is committed fully to promoting a safe and harmonious environment.

The Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) may be required to act if he or she has received evidence to indicate that your current or potential future actions, or your physical or mental health, may represent a risk to the health and safety of yourself or others: this includes circumstances where you have committed an act of violence or damage or where it is suspected or confirmed you have a serious physical or mental health illness (as outlined in the Student Welfare Handbook). Wherever possible, he or she will discuss this possibility with you and explain the reasons and evidence for this decision. It must be noted, however, that the health and safety concerns will take precedence over your personal wishes to continue your study.

### **6.3 Early termination due to a lack of academic progress**

Wherever possible, the University prefers students to withdraw from study, rather than take action to remove them from a course or programme without their consent. On the recommendation of relevant staff in the School (e.g. Course Director, or members of a research student supervisory team), however, the University reserves the right to permanently exclude you if it receives sufficient evidence that you have failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress or failed to show due diligence in your study.

Before any termination of registration is acted upon by the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff), the relevant staff in the School are required to demonstrate that you had been given

adequate warning of the likelihood of your exclusion and that you have been given adequate opportunity to make amends and to present any exceptional circumstances to them.

If your Course Director or Supervisor wishes to remove you from the course or programme, he or she should inform you of that intention. If you disagree with that recommendation, it is very important that you discuss this with them at this stage, outlining your reasons why. Failure to do so may undermine any right of appeal (see Section 7). You are strongly recommended to outline your concerns in writing to them, either before, during or after any such discussions.

The circumstances you may choose to discuss may include:

- whether you had been made aware that you were failing to make academic progress;
- whether you understood that your current results or progress had been insufficient at this stage in the course or programme;
- whether you had been given clear advice on how to improve on your academic progress.

At this (or any stage) you are able to make a complaint about the quality of your teaching, supervision or learning support if you feel this is appropriate. Please refer to the Student Handbook on Complaints if you wish to consider this option.

Even if you disagree with the recommendation to withdraw you from the course, the Course Director or Supervisor may make such a request to the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff), along with evidence to demonstrate your academic progress to date, and the reasons for coming to this decision.

On receipt of a request to terminate your registration early, the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) may choose to:

- a) uphold the request. (If this is the case, you will have twenty working days from the date of formal acknowledgement by the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) to appeal the decision – see Section 7);
- b) defer any decision on the basis of seeking further clarification, which may include making further enquiries to the person making the request, or seeking your views on the request; or
- c) reject the request of the Course Director or Supervisor, but may provide you with appropriate warnings or further opportunities to take forward your study.

## 7 Appealing against a decision about a change to your registration

This Section describes the University's approved procedures for the management of appeals against changes to your registration made without your consent, and rejections of a request from you to change your registration details. It supplements Regulation 47 of the University's regulations and outlines the details of the procedures that you may follow to raise an appeal.

You are advised to read this Section of the Handbook carefully and thoroughly, so that you understand how the appeal process will be undertaken.

Further advice and support within the University is available from:

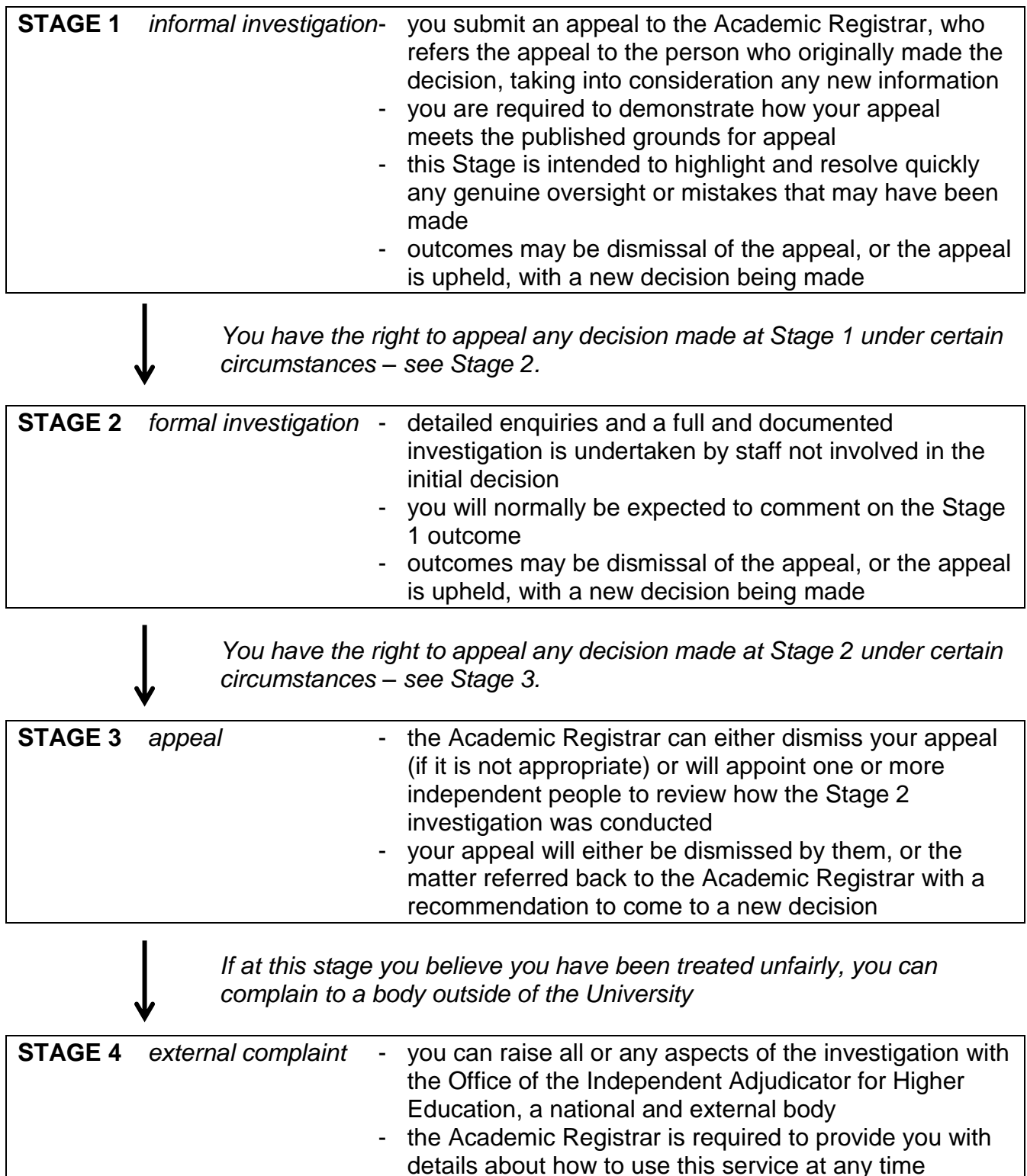
- staff in Education Services (including the Academic Registrar, the Assistant Registrars and staff in the Student Advice Centre);
- staff and students in the Cranfield Students' Association (CSA).

Please note that the University will process any changes to registration with immediate effect, with the exception of early termination of registration related to academic progress (as outlined in Section 6.3), which is put in force twenty working days after confirmation of the decision, specifically to allow consideration of any appeal



## 7.1 Broad outline of the stages of an investigation

All investigations are managed in the following way:



Please note that where the Academic Registrar has been directly involved in the original decision, he or she will allocate the management of the case to another officer of the University.

## 7.2 Your rights

The following rights apply to all internal stages of an investigation (i.e. Stages 1, 2 and 3).

### Transparency

During the course of any investigation, you will be informed and kept up to date of:

- the names of the people who have been appointed to investigate the appeal;
- the projected timescales for the completion of any investigation and, if there are unexpected delays or deferrals, any revised timescales;
- all evidence received or collected by the investigators;
- the final decision(s) of the investigators, in the form of a written report for a Stage 2 or Stage 3 investigation.

You will also be entitled to receive on request copies of any evidence or key documents that influence the final decision of the investigators, and the right to rebut or dispute the honesty or accuracy of that evidence.

### Right to a fair hearing

The University takes any investigation very seriously, and is committed to ensuring that it appoints investigators who are not prejudiced or biased against any person involved in the investigation.

If you believe, however, that an appointed investigator may be aware of your personal or educational circumstances, to the extent where they may have made pre-informed decisions about the case, or has been substantially involved in supporting you throughout your study at any time, you may raise this with the Academic Registrar (or if the investigator is the Academic Registrar, with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)). He or she will then consider whether those circumstances represent a “conflict of interest” in them serving as an investigator, and will either appoint a different investigator(s) or explain to you why this is not appropriate or necessary.

### Supporting the investigation

You are required to meet reasonable requests of the investigators, including attending informal meetings with them and/or with others. You have the right to refuse to meet the investigators or provide evidence, but on the understanding that any right to appeal (Stage 3) against the final decision on the grounds of incomplete evidence may then be deemed invalid by the Academic Registrar.

You have the right to be accompanied in any meeting you may have by any person you choose. This person shall be referred to as your “friend” in any meeting or formal report. If you wish to bring a friend to a meeting, you are required to notify the investigators in advance. Your friend is entitled to discuss any matter with you during the course of the meeting (including requesting a private discussion), but is not entitled to represent you or your views on your behalf.

During the course of any investigation, you have the right to ask for a reasonable deferral of any meeting with the investigator, or any deadline of request for information, but only on the grounds that you need further time to prepare for the requested meeting or information. The investigators reserve the right to continue their investigations in the meantime, and to reach a decision if they deem your deferrals to be unreasonable.

### Continuation of study and registration

In cases where your registration has been terminated early as a result of concluding you have not made appropriate academic progress (Section 4.3), any action to terminate your registration will be halted while any appeal at Stages 1 to 3 is being investigated. Your status with the University will be

one of a registered student in a period of suspension of study. You will not therefore be permitted to continue with the course but, in the event of your appeal being upheld, will not be prejudiced in any return to study thereafter.

In all other cases, the changes to registration will remain in effect.

## 7.3 Stage 1 – Informal investigation

You must register an intention to appeal against the decision to terminate your registration within twenty working days of the notification being sent to the addresses registered by you in EVE. If you register an appeal, your termination of registration will be deferred pending the outcome of any Stage 1, 2 or 3 investigation.

There are limited grounds for appeal against the decision to terminate your registration, and in any appeal submission you will be asked to state clearly which of the following grounds apply:

- A. that the evidence considered by the person who made the decision was inaccurate or incomplete, to the extent where the changes to registration would have been different;
- B. that there were administrative errors in the Academic Registrar's processes, to the extent where the changes to registration would have been different;
- C. that there was prejudice or bias against the candidate by the person who made the decision.

You will also be asked to provide evidence to support those grounds.

Except in cases which cite grounds C, a Stage 1 investigation is limited to the person who made the original decision undertaking an informal review of that decision, to verify to himself or herself that the decision was made in full knowledge of the facts. This may either be a member of staff in Education Services or, in cases where a request has been rejected by your Course Director or Supervisor, by that person.

Where you wish to use grounds C above, the appeal will automatically proceed to Stage 2, where the investigation will be conducted by people independent of the initial decision.

The outcomes of a Stage 1 investigation are either to:

- dismiss your appeal, noting that the original decision was the correct one and/or you have not provided appropriate supporting evidence to support the grounds on which the appeal was submitted; or to
- uphold your appeal in the light of the new evidence, with a different decision being made and your registration details being changed by the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff).

If you believe that the result of any informal investigation (Stage 1) has been unfair, then you may appeal in writing to the Academic Registrar (through [appeals@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@cranfield.ac.uk)). A request for an appeal will only be accepted if it is made within twenty working days of the conclusion of the stage 1 investigation. Either the Academic Registrar or a member of his or her staff will contact you to discuss your circumstances and advise you on possible next steps.

## 7.4 Stage 2 – Formal investigation

If you believe that the result of any informal investigation (Stage 1) has been unfair, then you may appeal in writing to the Academic Registrar (through [appeals@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@cranfield.ac.uk)). A request for a Stage 2 appeal will only be accepted if it is made within twenty working days of the conclusion of the Stage 1 investigation. Either the Academic Registrar or a member of his or her staff will contact you to discuss your circumstances and advise you on possible next steps.

The grounds for appeal are the same as those outlined in Section 7.3. Your appeal at Stage 2, however, will be investigated by people not involved in the initial decision.

In order to submit a Stage 2 appeal you need to include:

- a) a re-statement of the grounds under which you are appealing;
- b) a commentary or statement on the Stage 1 report/statement provided to you by the Academic Registrar, including any inaccuracies you believe are in it.

You may also want to include additional evidence (over and above what you provided at Stage 1). You are entitled to do this, but any additional evidence must be accompanied by a statement to explain why this was not presented at Stage 1. (The most common reason for this is that you were not aware it was relevant or important to the examiners.)

Please note that the Academic Registrar may dismiss summarily your appeal if:

- (a) he or she does not believe that you have provided sufficient evidence to support your stated grounds of appeal, or you have not provided a commentary on the Stage 1 statement; or
- (b) it no longer conforms to the permitted grounds of appeal; or
- (c) it was submitted out of time.

He or she can only do this after consulting either the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) or Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the circumstances, and only with his or her agreement. The Academic Registrar will confirm with you in writing if your appeal is dismissed.

If the appeal is accepted, the Academic Registrar will then, within ten working days of this receipt, transmit your appeal to the relevant person to investigate. The Academic Registrar will usually only appoint one person to undertake the Stage 2 investigation, but may appoint more than one person if the case is particularly complex.

If you have any concerns that an appointed investigator is too familiar with your case, please raise this as soon as possible with the Academic Registrar, who will consider whether an alternative investigator should be appointed.

The assigned investigator(s) will review the Stage 1 investigation and your additional information/evidence. They will usually arrange to discuss your appeal with you, either in a face-to-face interview, or over the telephone. The purpose of the interview is to clarify your concerns and ensure that all elements have been understood by them as part of the investigation. You may bring a friend to this meeting and make notes of your own, and you may also ask to see the notes made by the investigators, to check for accuracy.

The investigator(s) will normally consider your appeal within twenty working days and provide a full report to the Academic Registrar. The report will include a decision to either dismiss your appeal (thereby confirming that they still believe the original decision and the Stage 1 outcome will be upheld), or otherwise uphold your appeal (either in full or in part) and refer the matter back to the Academic Registrar, with or without a recommendation for a new or alternative decision.

The full report of the Stage 2 investigation will be provided to you by the Academic Registrar (and will be considered to be the end of the Stage 2 procedure).

If you believe that the result of the formal investigation (Stage 2) has been unfair or inappropriate, then you may appeal in writing to the Academic Registrar (preferably through [appeals@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@cranfield.ac.uk)). A request for an appeal will only be accepted if it is made within twenty working days of the conclusion of the stage 2 investigation. Either the Academic Registrar, or a member of his or her staff, will contact you to discuss your circumstances and advise you on possible next steps.

## 7.5 Stage 3 – Appeal

The University takes allegations and their investigations extremely seriously, and acts in an appropriate manner to ensure that fairness for all parties is maintained throughout. It will likely assert that decisions arising from an investigation have been the result of a fair and thorough investigation, and are based on evidence provided by the parties concerned.

You have the right to appeal to the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) against any decision arising from an investigation, but only under specific circumstances. These are limited to:

- A. that the evidence provided to the assigned investigator(s), was incomplete or inaccurate, to the extent where it is reasonable to conclude that the outcome may have been substantially different;
- B. that the assigned investigator(s) had summarily dismissed significant pieces of evidence in coming to his or her or their decision;
- C. that the assigned investigators were prejudiced or biased against you, including any undisclosed conflicts of interest.

You may not appeal if you do not like the outcome, or if you believe the investigators have not understood the evidence from your perspective. (You retain, however, the right to complain about the University to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education – see Stage 4).

Any appeal must:

- (a) be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) (through [appeals@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@cranfield.ac.uk)) within twenty working days of the conclusion of the Stage 1 or Stage 2 investigation;
- (b) state clearly which of the grounds A, B and/or C above are relevant to the appeal;
- (c) provide a clear statement of the foundation for the appeal, and evidence to support this statement;
- (d) outline a preferred outcome or solution for any appeal investigator to consider.

Please note that the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) may dismiss summarily your appeal if:

- (a) he or she does not believe that you have provided sufficient evidence to support your stated grounds of appeal; or
- (b) it does not conform to the permitted grounds of appeal; or
- (c) it is submitted out of time.

He or she can only do this after consulting the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) or Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) of the circumstances, and only with his or her agreement. The Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) will confirm with you in writing if your appeal is dismissed.

If your appeal is accepted, the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) will confirm this to you. He or she will then, within ten working days of this receipt, appoint two senior members of the University to investigate your appeal, from Schools other than the one in which you are registered. The investigators will contact you to confirm they have been appointed and outline to you the timescales they believe will be needed to review your appeal and come to a decision.

The investigators shall not review the matter themselves, but instead focus on the process of the previous investigation, in line with the stated grounds of appeal. On completion of their investigation into your appeal, you will be provided with a report, including a decision and the reasons for it. The investigators may decide:

- (a) to dismiss your appeal; or
- (b) to fully or partially uphold your appeal, and refer the matter back to the Academic Registrar, with a recommendation of a new decision.



## 7.6 Stage 4 – External complaint

At the completion of Stage 3, the University will consider any decision it has made to be final and complete, with no further right of appeal. This is equally true if any appeal you have made is dismissed summarily by the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff), or if you have no grounds for appeal.

If you, however, remain dissatisfied with the outcome or with how the University has managed the case and its subsequent investigations, you have the right to submit a complaint against the University to the external regulator for the UK higher education sector, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

More information about the OIA can be found at [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

In order for you to use the OIA, the University must agree that you have exhausted the internal procedures. This is managed by the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) issuing a “completion of procedures letter” to you. A “completion of procedures letter” is provided to you on request at the conclusion of any Stage 3 appeal (whether it is not accepted, summarily dismissed or fully investigated).

You may also request from the Academic Registrar (or a member of his or her staff) a “completion of procedures letter” at any point in the process if you do not believe the University is capable of following its own procedures fairly, and you do not wish to engage further with the University on this matter.

Please note that the OIA will not consider any complaint from you unless a “completion of procedures letter” has been provided to you.

Any complaint to the OIA must be registered within twelve months of the University issuing a “completion of procedures letter”.

<b>Owner</b>	Academic Registrar
<b>Department</b>	Education Services
<b>Implementation date</b>	September 2017
<b>Approval by and date</b>	Academic Registrar, September 2017
<b>Version number and date of last review</b>	Version 2.0; September 2017
<b>Next review by</b>	July 2020