

Support for Students in the UK Armed Forces Policy

Policy Category:	Academic - Student
Subject:	Support for Students in the UK Armed Forces
Approving Authority:	Academic Board
Responsible Officer:	Vice-President (Education & Student Success) and Executive Director, Students and Education Directorate
Responsible Office:	Students and Education Directorate
Related Procedures:	N/A
Related College Policies:	Academic Regulations Mitigating Circumstances Policy Interruption of Study Policy
Effective Date:	1 September 2024
Supersedes:	College statement on support for students who are members of the UK Armed Forces
Next Review:	September 2027

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

King's College London recognises the vital contribution that the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom make to the defence of the realm. The university signed [the Armed Forces Covenant](#) in 2020 to pledge ongoing support to the Armed Forces community.

The university is committed to ensuring that students who are members of the UK Armed Forces are not disadvantaged as a result of their military service. These students may be eligible for reasonable adjustments to help them meet the requirements of both their programme of study and their military commitments.

This policy applies to students who are members of the UK Armed Forces, whether Regular, Regular Reserves or Reserves. The university recognises that some students may be members of international military services outside of the UK. These students may use the [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#) and should seek guidance from their department.

II. POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The university recognises the unique demands experienced by students in the UK Armed Forces and the possible challenges that may arise. This policy outlines how the university will support students in the UK Armed Forces to achieve academically whilst balancing their military commitments.

2. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of students

- 2.1 Students are responsible for informing their department of any military commitments that may interfere with their studies, such as an exercise or a deployment. This should happen at the earliest opportunity where possible, which would normally be at the start of each academic year.
- 2.2 Students should inform their department in advance of any planned absences as a result of their military commitments. Students are responsible for making their own arrangements to catch up on material covered in any sessions missed. If a student is required to have a prolonged absence, an interruption of study may be appropriate and this should be discussed at the earliest opportunity (see Section 5).

Postgraduate Research Students

- 2.3 Postgraduate Research Students are expected to discuss and agree a plan of progression with their supervisor, which should balance their research progression alongside their military commitments. This should happen at the earliest opportunity, which would normally be at the start of each academic year.

Responsibilities of faculties

- 2.4 Every student should be given an opportunity to discuss their specific circumstances and how this might impact their studies with their personal tutor and/or an alternative staff member, such as their programme lead or Assessment Sub-Board (ASB) Chair. This should happen at the earliest opportunity, which would normally be at the start of each academic year and arrangements revisited as necessary and agreed throughout the year. Input from professional services should be sought where required.

3. Adjustments to Programme of Study

- 3.1 At the discretion of the ASB Chair (or nominee) and programme leader, a student may be permitted to change modules and/or seminar groups to help balance their academic and military commitments. This should be discussed at the earliest opportunity and input from departmental professional services colleagues may be required. Requests are not guaranteed to be accepted.
- 3.2 In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the ASB Chair (or nominee), a student in the UK Armed Forces may be permitted to:
 - a. transfer from full-time status to part-time status, where this is permitted in the student's programme specification

- b. split their modules unevenly between semesters and/or academic years, where this is permitted in the student's programme specification

The ASB Chair (or nominee) should assess whether these adjustments are appropriate based on the student's personal and academic circumstances.

Where these above adjustments are not permitted in the student's programme specification, it may be possible to request an exemption in order to allow greater flexibility in the programme structure. Faculties should consult with [Academic Regulations, Quality and Standards \(ARQS\)](#) for advice on exemption requests or to discuss other possible accommodations. There is no guarantee that an exemption request will be approved.

- 3.3 Faculties should ensure that any implications of adjustments made to mode of attendance, timetabling, module distribution and/or periods of absence are made clear to the student before adjustments are made. This would normally include a consideration of the following:

- The student's ability to meet the minimum progression requirements of their programme and/or their expected date of award and graduation;
- The student's ability to complete their award within the maximum period of registration for their programme;
- For students on Professional, Statutory and Professional Bodies (PSRB) programmes, any mandatory requirements expected by the relevant external regulator;
- Any potential impact to the student's fees and funding, including any additional fees that the student may be liable for.

- 3.4 If there are acceptable reasons, Assessment Boards can extend the maximum period of registration permitted under a student's programme specification by up to 2 years (as long as the maximum period does not exceed the university's overall maximum of 10 years) without the need for an exemption. Further information can be found [here](#) and in the Academic Regulations.

Postgraduate Research Students

- 3.5 At the discretion of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies (or their nominee), the student's supervisor and their funder, a Postgraduate Research Student may be permitted to transfer from full-time to part-time status. The same group of decision makers may also decide to approve the progression timeline for research students to facilitate balancing their academic and military commitments. Advice on this should be sought from the [Centre for Doctoral Studies](#).

4. Assessment

- 4.1 Students unable to sit an examination or meet an assignment deadline due to a military commitment are expected to comply with the university's [Mitigating Circumstances](#) process.
- 4.2 Flexible deadlines for assessments may be agreed on an individual basis between the student and their programme lead and ASB Chair (or nominee). Following an informal conversation between the student, their programme lead and the ASB Chair, the student should make a formal request using the [Mitigating Circumstances process](#) based on the deadlines discussed and agreed.
- 4.3 All Mitigating Circumstances requests should be accompanied by third-party evidence of the student's military commitment (such as documentary evidence which confirms the student's participation).
- 4.4 ASB Chairs (or their nominee) will be asked to consider cases where a student is prevented from submitting a Mitigating Circumstances request in advance of an examination or assessment deadline as a result of a military commitment undertaken at short notice. The student should inform their department as soon as possible of their circumstances and should submit a Mitigating Circumstances request with supporting evidence (including any evidence of why they were unable to submit the request in advance of the examination or assessment deadline) as soon as possible.
- 4.5 If a student is unable to attend a scheduled assessment due to their military commitments, they may request to defer the assessment to the next assessment period via the Mitigating Circumstances process. Faculties should ensure that students are aware of the potential implications of deferring to the next assessment period (such as how this affects progression or date of award, or any PSRB implications). There is no guarantee that a request to defer an assessment will be approved.
- 4.6 On a case by case basis and at the discretion of the ASB Chair (or their nominee), internal unseen written examinations may be replaced by an alternative assessment if it is not appropriate for the student to defer the examination to the next assessment period.

Postgraduate Research Students

- 4.7 Research students must engage with their supervisory team on the scheduling of their viva examination to accommodate examiner availability alongside their military commitments. Research students who experience delay with their thesis progression and submission may apply for an exemption to the regulations to extend their submission deadline (see academic regulations 6.9). Advice should be

sought from the [Centre for Doctoral Studies](#) and should be discussed at the earliest opportunity.

5. Interruption of Study

- 5.1 It is recognised that students may need to take a break from their studies as a result of their military commitments. An interruption of study is for a sustained period and the request is normally initiated by students on a voluntary basis. Faculties have the discretion to determine if an interruption of study is appropriate for a student based on their personal and academic circumstances. Any request should be considered in line with the university's [Interruption of Study policy and procedure](#).

6. Support

- 6.1 In addition to this policy, there are a variety of university services and resources available to students in the UK Armed Forces who may find themselves facing challenging circumstances (Appendix 1).
- 6.2 The university recognises that members of the wider armed forces community, such as students with family serving or students who are former members of the military, may be impacted by circumstances related to military service. These students should speak to their department for support and guidance and are encouraged to use the university services available to them (Appendix 1).

Appendix 1: Links and Resources

Associated Policies and Procedures

[Academic Regulations](#)

[Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#)

[Interruption of Study Policy](#)

(Internal only) [Exemptions from the Regulations](#)

Contact Details

[Academic Regulations, Quality and Standards](#)

[Centre for Doctoral Studies](#)

Academic Support for Students

[King's Academic Skills for Learning](#)

[Academic Skills Tutors](#)

[Academic, Digital & Employability Skills](#)

Support Services for Students

[KCLSU Advice](#)

[Student Services Online](#)

[Student Services Online - Assessment](#)

[Health & Wellbeing Support and Advice](#)

[Disability Support](#)

[Fees, Funding & Money Advice](#)

[Visa & International Students Support](#)

[Money & Housing Advice](#)

[Personal Tutoring](#)