BPF Break in Study Policy

Purpose

The bpf are committed to providing excellence in teaching and a positive learning experience for all our students.

We understand that there may be situations which means that a student needs to take a temporary break from their training journey with the bpf. A break in study may be for a brief period, and no longer than 2 years, and is considered a formal pause, interruption, suspension, break or leave of absence from a study and is not a formal withdrawal by the student from their training.

This Break in Study policy sets out our procedure for how a student can request to pause their training, the steps that we will take and how we will support fair, consistent and timely decisions.

Scope

The Break in Study Policy (henceforth known as 'Policy') applies to all students (who may otherwise be known as a 'trainee') who have registered and enrolled in a programme of study with the bpf and that because of their situation, the student should take a break in studies until such time as the student is able to sufficiently return to their programme of study. This includes students who are undertaking a formal qualification, an infant observation as well as those who are completing programmes of continuous professional development.

Depending on the student's training journey, a break in study can be complex and may impact other activities that the student is engaged in which are beyond the teaching space and form part of the programme of study, such as an infant observation; clinical work including seeing training patients through Clinical Services; personal therapy; supervision and/or professional placement.

A break in study is different to a request for additional consideration, which is for an *acute but short-term incident, occurrence or situation which is beyond the student's control and which impacts the students' performance or ability to study*.

This policy may be used alongside other bpf's policies and regulations, including our Additional Considerations Policy, Support to Study Policy, Student Fitness to Practise Policy and our Competency and Pillars Framework for bpf Trainees.

Who can use the Break in study process

Students who are registered on a programme of study at the bpf can make a request for a break in study. Commons grounds for a request in a break in study may include, but not be limited to:

- Health and medical reasons, including physical illness and mental health
- Personal and family circumstances, including bereavement and caring responsibilities
- Financial and employment factors, including financial difficulties and professional opportunities

There may also be occasions when the bpf require the student to pause their training. A request for this may be submitted by staff, including the Director of Training or Chair of the Training Committee for the student's programme of study. This may occur when the student:

- has not secured a clinical placement
- does not demonstrate personal or professional readiness to progress in their training
- is suspended from their training pending the outcome of internal proceedings (including Student Code of Conduct or Student Fitness to Practise procedures), or pending the outcome of external regulatory proceedings (including those brought by the British Psychoanalytic Council or the Association of Child Psychotherapists)
- has been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983
- has been remanded in custody pending a criminal trial, or sentenced to a period of imprisonment

On such occasions, requests by staff may be made alongside other bpf policies, including our Fitness to Practise Policy and Student Code of Conduct.

Pregnancy, Parenthood and Family Care

The bpf provide a supportive and individual approach to students who are or become pregnant; or experience miscarriage, still birth or neo-natal death as well as students who are welcoming new children into their families through pregnancy, adoption and fostering. The Student Pregnancy, Parenthood and Family Care Policy sets out our procedure and considerations for students to help them manage their journey during this time.

Timeline

Requests may be time sensitive (in-the-moment) or may be because of a cumulation of events. All requests for request to study should be submitted without any undue delay. We will review the request within 14 calendar days. The review of a request may be delayed, for example, if the student is unable to participate in the process or is unable to submit the required evidence, or if the bpf is closed, such as during the Christmas and New Year period.

Appendix A sets out the request for break in study timeline and process.

Evidence

We may require supporting evidence that is appropriate to the student's request.

Break in study procedure

Step 1: Early resolution

Students should contact their Director of Training or Chair of the Training Committee (or nominee) to informally discuss their break in study request. They will work with the student to consider the implications of a break in study and consider whether there are alternative options. Depending on the student's training journey, a break in study can be complex and may impact other activities that the student is engaged in which are beyond the teaching space and form part of the programme of study, such as an infant observation; clinical work including seeing training patients through Clinical Services; personal therapy; supervision and/or professional placement.

Students should complete the Break in Study Request Form & Student Support Plan, setting out the reasons for the request, proposed start and end dates, programme stage and course components.

The Director of Training or Chair of the Training Committee (or nominee) will meet with the student to develop a support plan and understand that each support plan will be individual to the student.

The support plan will consider:

- The student's situation and any reasonable adjustments, support and options available to help them make an informed decision and agree next steps;
- Assess whether the bpf can support the student to resume their studies or continue to participate in their programme of study. Particular consideration will be given to whether the student is engaged in other activities as part of their programme of study which are beyond the teaching space and form part of the training journey, such as an infant observation; clinical work including seeing training patients through Clinical Services; personal therapy; supervision and/or professional placement.

Whilst decisions will be made in the best interests of the student, it is important that the ethical considerations for training patients who are under the care of the student are taken into consideration when developing a support plan.

If a member of staff raises a break in study concern about the student, the Director of Training or Chair of the Training Committee will contact the student and follow the break in study procedure.

Outcome

After completion of the early resolution, the support plan will be shared with the student setting out the outcome, including the reasons for the decision and any next steps.

The duration of a break in study will be no less than one term and no longer than 2 years.

Step 2: Break in study assessment panel

A break for study assessment panel will be held when:

- the student does not want to engage in the early resolution process
- the early resolution process has been attempted, however the student does not agree with the outcome
- the break for study request is complex and requires a more detailed consideration. This may include when there are ongoing concerns and when a student is engaged in other activities as part of their training journey which are beyond the teaching space and may form part of the programmes requirements, such as an infant observation, clinical practice, personal therapy, supervision and/or professional placement.

The break for study assessment panel will be held within 14 days of receiving the request. Requests that are time sensitive will be prioritised.

Members of the break in study assessment panel may include, but not be limited to:

- Director of Training or Chair of Training Committee for the programme(s) of study
- Learning Support Coordinator
- Head of Operations and Short Courses
- People & Programmes Manager
- Director of Clinical Services
- a member of the bpf Senior Management Team.

The student will be invited to attend the panel meeting. Prior to the meeting, we will provide the student with information about what to expect and let the student know who will attend the panel, which may include anyone who has been invited to provide information or evidence at the panel. The student may wish to bring a representative to the panel meeting. If the student does not engage in the process, or provide notice that they are unable to attend, the meeting will go ahead in their absence.

Outcome

After completion of the break for study assessment panel, the support plan will be shared with the student setting out the outcome, including the reasons for the decision and any next steps.

Step 3: Appeal

Students have the right to appeal if their break in study request has been rejected, or if they are unhappy with the outcome of the break in study assessment panel. The break in study request must have been considered in step 2 before an appeal can be made.

Permissible grounds for appeal are:

- that the break in study request procedures were not followed properly;
- that the decision we reached, or the outcome of the break in study request, was unreasonable;
- that we did not consider the break in study request properly, for example, it overlooked relevant information that the student included;
- that we did not give reasons for our decision;
- that the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for good reason, to provide earlier in the process;
- that there was a reasonable perception of bias during the process.

We will consider appeals against decisions taken on a break in study request in accordance with our Academic Appeals Policy. An academic appeal must be submitted within 14 days of the outcome of the break in study assessment panel.

Readiness to return assessment

The support plan will include a return to study assessment. Prior to the student's scheduled return to study, the student and the Director of Training or Chair of the Training Committee will meet to review the support plan, including any agreed actions, and complete a readiness to return assessment. This may include that the student resumes and/or increases personal analysis for a defined period of time in accordance with the course requirements, and that any outstanding course fees and other debt have been paid.

When you are in personal analysis as part of your course requirements

Students who are expected to be in continuous personal analysis for part, or the entirety of their training, may be advised to continue their personal analysis during any extended leave of absence, including a break in study. It is expected that the student's personal therapy must be face-to-face.

Students who significantly reduce or pause personal analysis may be required to recommence their analysis for an agreed period of time in order to support their readiness to return to their programme of study, and in accordance with regulatory requirements set by the British Psychoanalytic Council or the Association of Child Psychotherapists. These arrangements should be discussed between the student and their analyst, and the student must inform the training of any agreed arrangements, including changes to these arrangements.

The bpf reserve the right to ask the student about their arrangements which will form part of their support plan.

When you are seeing patients as part of your course requirements

Students should think carefully about the ethical considerations of taking on a training patient if they will not be able to fulfil the length of psychotherapy commitment that the patient has agreed. This is:

- Low-fee once weekly psychotherapy: one-year minimum commitment involving one session per week
- Low-fee intensive psychotherapy: two-year minimum commitment involving three sessions per week.

Decisions should be made with the best interests of the patient.

The Director of Training or Chair of the Training Committee will work with the student and the Director of Clinical Services to develop their support plan. The Director of Clinical Services, Director of Training and clinical supervisor may recommend that the student does not take on a training patient, or pauses working with a training patient, until the student returns fully from their break in study.

How each student returns to the clinical component of their training will be approached on a case-by-case basis. Students may be asked to complete the training case they were working with or they may be asked to start with a further training patient. The student's progression on their training will also be taken into consideration.

If the student is already seeing a training patient, they should provide a report from their supervisor and patient prior to taking their break in study. There reports will be taken into consideration as part of the student's readiness to return assessment.

When your course is delivered in partnership with another institution

If the student is undertaking a course or programme of study which is being delivered by the bpf in partnership with another educational institute, such as Birkbeck (University of London), University College London or the Anna Freud Centre, the student's support plan will be developed in conjunction with the respective policy of that educational institute.

We may share information proportionate to the student's support plan with the relevant educational partner so that we can provide appropriate support for the student.

Table 1: Qualification and Accrediting Institution

Qualification	Accrediting Institution
MSc in Psychodynamics of Human Development	Birkbeck (University of London)
Doctor of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy	University College London (UCL)

When you are on your professional placement

As part of a programme of study, a student may undertake a professional placement. Students should follow the placement provider's leave of absence related policy in conjunction with the bpf's Break in Study Policy. We may share information proportionate to the student's support plan with the relevant educational partner so that we can appropriately support the student.

Course fees and other payments

In accordance with our Credit Control Policy, students preparing to return to study must have settled any outstanding course fees and other debt prior to resuming their training.

When your course is funded by NHS England?

Students who are on a course funded by NHS England should contact their Director of Training and Training Manager for information and guidance.

When you have a bursary?

A bursary or sponsorship may not cover a break in study. Students who are part or fully funded by a bpf or external bursary, or other forms of sponsorship, should refer to their bursary or sponsorship agreement and speak with the bursary or sponsorship provider.

Confidentiality and data

Information about relating to a student's break in study will be kept confidential as far as possible. Information will only be shared without the student's permission where there are significant concerns about the health and safety of the student. The support plan will be stored securely and in accordance with the bpf's data retention policy.

Governance

The Corporate Governance Team will provide an annual assurance report about the application of our Break in Study Policy to bpf's Audit and Risk Committee and Board of Trustees. Information on any complaints will be anonymised and no personal information about a student or others associated with a complaint will be disclosed in the report.

Internal resources

Students may wish to refer to our Student Policies and Regulations.

External resources

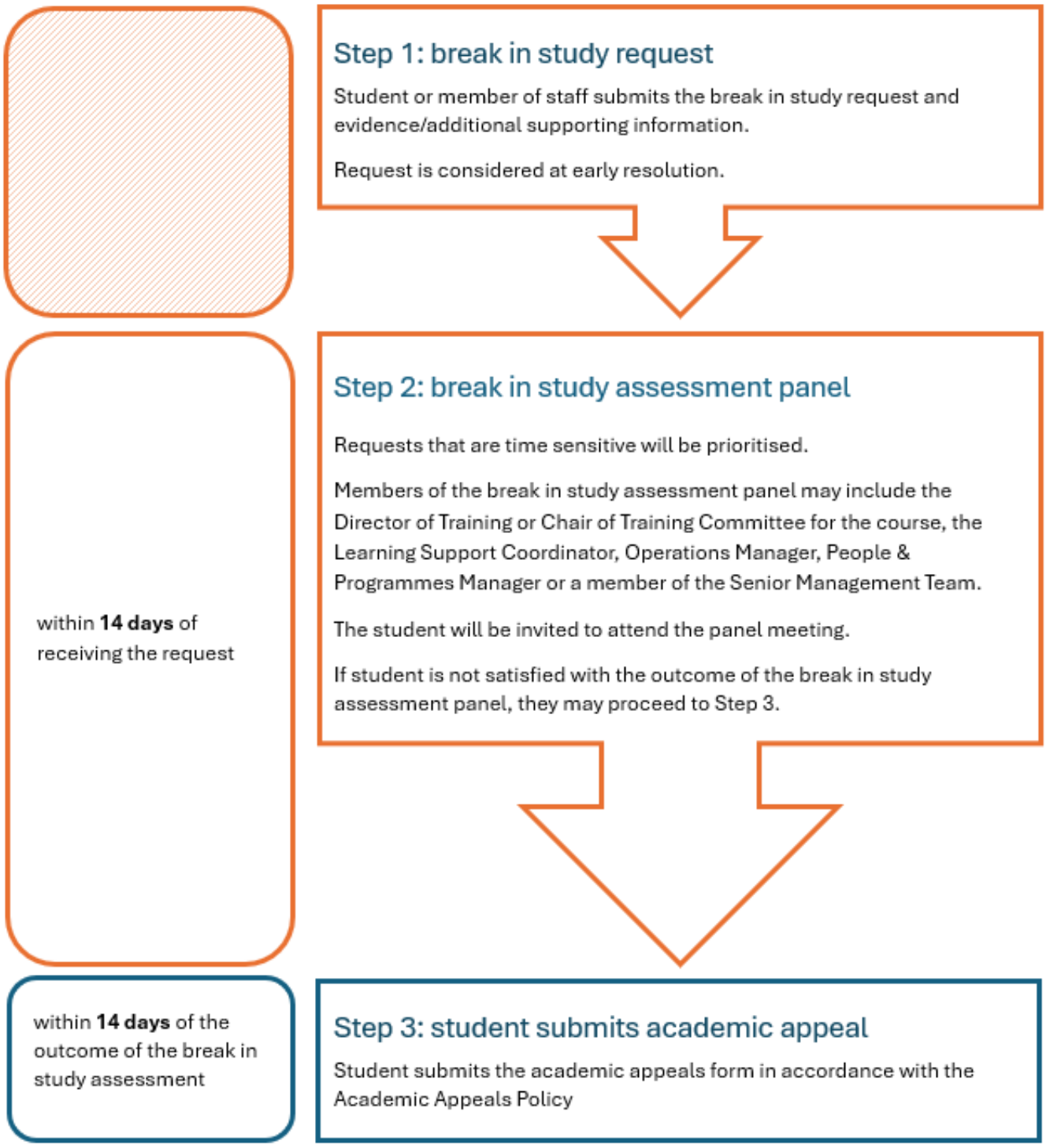
- University College London

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/

- Birkbeck, University of London
  https://www.bbk.ac.uk/

Version	Date	Description of Amendments	Author
V1	28.10.2026	Publication of Break in Study Policy and Break in Study Request Form & Student Support Plan	Director of Professional Standards

Appendix A: Break in Study: Timeline and process workflow



Accessible version of Break in Study: Timeline and process workflow

1. **Process step 1: break in study request**

    - Student or member of staff submits the break in study request and evidence/additional supporting information.
    - Request is considered at early resolution.

2. **Process step 2: break in study assessment panel**

    - The break in study assessment panel will be held within 14 days of receiving the request.
    - Requests that are time sensitive will be prioritised.
    - Members of the break in study assessment panel may include the Director of Training or Chair of Training Committee for the course, the Learning Support Coordinator, Operations Manager, People & Programmes Manager or a member of the Senior Management Team.
    - The student will be invited to attend the panel meeting.
    - If student is not satisfied with the outcome of the break in study assessment panel, they may proceed to Step 3.

3. **Process step 3: student submits academic appeal**

    - The student must submit the academic appeal within 14 days of the outcome of the break in study assessment.
    - Student submits the academic appeals form in accordance with the Academic Appeals Policy.