

## Aston University US Federal Direct Loans

### Return of Title IV Direct Loan Funds

### Withdrawing, Suspending or Changing Your Studies

#### Introduction

If you begin attendance and then completely withdraw or otherwise cease attending before the payment period ends, or make changes to your studies that affect your eligibility for Title IV Direct Loans, we will recalculate your loan entitlement based on the period of attendance/entitlement. As a result, you or the University may be required to return funds to the US Department of Education from the Title IV Direct Loans subsidised, unsubsidised or PLUS loans received and/or disbursed. Future disbursements may also be affected.

Title IV Direct Loan funds will be returned in the following order:

- Unsubsidized Federal Stafford loans
- Subsidized Federal Stafford loans
- PLUS Loan Funds

The requirements for Title IV Direct Loan funds when you withdraw are separate from the refund policy that the University has, and therefore you may still owe funds to the University to cover unpaid institutional charges.

All the Title IV Direct Loans scheduled for a disbursement period are considered to have been earned if you have been in attendance (at least half time) for more than 60% of the payment period. As an example, if you complete 60% of the payment period you will have earned 60% of the assistance you were originally scheduled to receive within that loan period. If you complete 60.5% of the payment period you will have earned 100% of the assistance you were scheduled to receive.

If you receive more assistance than was earned, the excess funds must be returned to the US Department of Education by the University and by you to your loan servicer.

If you receive (or the University received on your behalf) less assistance than the amount earned, then you may be able to receive those additional funds as a post-withdrawal disbursement.

The University must return any unearned funds within 45 days of the withdrawal date to the US Department of Education. Any funds that have been disbursed and are regarded as an overpayment must be returned to the loan servicer by the student within the same timeframe.

Please note a period of suspension from studies which will be longer than 180 days in any 12 month period, for the purposes of Title IV loans, is treated as a withdrawal. The 12 month period begins on the first day of suspension of studies and the return of Title IV funds policy will apply.

We are unable to disburse any loan funds for first-time borrowers until after you have been in attendance on your programme for 30 days.

### **Notification of return of Title IV Direct Loan funds**

Upon notice of a withdrawal from study we will email you to notify you of any funds that may require repayment. You will be emailed a copy of the Return to Title IV Direct Loans (R2T4) calculation along with details of your loan servicer so you can make arrangements to repay funds within the 45 day period.

Once the University has determined the amounts of each type of unearned Title IV aid that must be returned, any remaining unearned funds that were disbursed are the responsibility of the student. Remaining unearned funds must be repaid by the student in accordance with the terms of the loans and conditions of their promissory note.

### **University refund policy**

The University has a refund policy which can be found here: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/current-students/finances/paying/index>.

Credit balance refunds for withdrawn students are placed on hold until the R2T4 calculation is completed. The regulatory timeframe for any credit balance resets to 14 days from the day of a R2T4 calculation.

### **University determination of withdrawal date**

This will be the date of your decision to withdraw or the date you were told would be the withdrawal date. If there was a period of suspension (leave of absence) before you withdrew, the date of withdrawal is the date of the decision to withdraw, not the date the suspension began (which might be in a previous academic year).

Where you are reported as a fail and withdrawn, the date of withdrawal will be the date that the Board of Examiners met to approve such a withdrawal.

If the University is unable to determine the date of withdrawal e.g. due to no communication from you, then the date of withdrawal will be determined by the academic department (normally the last known date of attendance). The University will make a determination within 14 days of student's non-attendance if the student should be withdrawn.

## **Change in your circumstances/withdrawing from studies**

### **Personal circumstances**

You must ensure that the personal details the University holds are correct and up-to-date. If you change your address – either your semester-time or home address – please ensure that you update your details online through My Aston Portal (MAP): [www.aston.ac.uk/map/](http://www.aston.ac.uk/map/)

If your name changes you will need to contact Student Records: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/academic-services/for-students/your-student-record-administration/contacts-in-student-records>

### **Academic circumstances – withdraw, suspend or change your studies**

If you are considering suspending (leave of absence) your studies, transferring from one programme to another, or withdrawing from your programme, please discuss your situation with your Director of Studies who will be able to advise you on an appropriate course of action. It is a University Regulation that you attend regularly, and if circumstances are such that you are not able to do so then please contact your Director of Studies to discuss your situation and agree an appropriate course of action. Your personal tutor will also be able to provide support and guidance on matters relating to your programme.

The financial implications of withdrawing from the University or suspending your studies can be significant so you should also consult with the Financial Assistance Team (US Loans) who will be able to advise you on implications for fees and on how to suspend any funding you are receiving. Information on tuition fee liability following the decision to suspend studies can be found here: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/current-students/finances/student-finance-centre/withdrawals>

An approved period of suspension from studies longer than 180 days is treated as a withdrawal for the purposes of Title IV loans only, not a withdrawal from your programme of study.

If you hold a visa allowing you to study in the UK you should seek advice from the International Student Advice service about Tier 4 implications of suspending or withdrawing from your programme. Further information can be found here: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/student-advice/academic-advice/leave-of-absence-suspension-of-study>

Please contact your Academic Faculty to register any change of academic circumstance, including change of optional units. Guidance and further information can also be found: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/academic-services/for-students/faqs/index>

University Regulations for Students can be found online which include attendance and progress, conferment of qualifications, admissions, academic reviews and appeals. <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/clipp/quality/a-z/general-regulations/index>

### **Post-withdrawal disbursement (PWD)**

If the student receives less federal student aid than the amount earned, the student may be offered a disbursement of the earned aid that was not received. If relevant, the University will provide notification of this to allow the student or parent to make an informed decision as to whether to accept any disbursement of loan funds, along with a 14-day deadline for a response. A response received after this deadline may not be honoured, and a response received 180 days or more after notification date will not be honoured.

The University will provide notification of PWD within 30 days of the date of a student's withdrawal, and any disbursement will be made no later than 45 days after notification of withdrawal.

## **Definitions**

### **Approved Leave of Absence (LOA)**

A Leave Of Absence is a temporary interruption or suspension in a student's programme of study. LOA refers to the specific time period during a programme when a student is not in attendance prior to returning and completing the programme. Students returning from a LOA are not required to re-apply for admission but must re-register for their programme.

### **Unapproved Leave of Absence**

The University may grant a student an LOA that does not meet the conditions to be an approved LOA for Title IV Direct Loans purposes (for example, for academic reasons). However, any LOA that does not meet all of the conditions for an approved LOA is considered a withdrawal for Title IV Direct Loans purposes.

### **Official Withdrawal**

A “withdrawal” refers to a student’s intent to completely terminate studies at the University with no expectation of return. A withdrawn student who subsequently decides to return to their studies must reapply for admission through the University’s Admissions Office.

### **Unofficial Withdrawal**

An unofficial withdrawal is one where the University has not received notice from the student that the student will cease or has ceased attending.

### **Note:**

Students who withdraw from their programme or do not receive a ‘pass’ mark at the end of an academic year will have that grade used in calculating the quantitative aspect of the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards and may affect the student’s future eligibility for Financial Aid.

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