

York Online Repeat Study Policy, 2023/24



Purpose and scope:

The York Online programmes were developed as flexible programmes, aimed at working professionals, enabling students to balance their studies around work and other commitments. The University recognises that the nature of those other commitments may at times have a significant impact on a student’s ability to study. This document sets out the University’s policy for enabling students to repeat modules that were adversely affected by the student’s circumstances. This policy applies to all students studying on one of the [York Online programmes](#).

Document control:

Approved	13/05/2022 Standing Committee on Assessment 31/05/2022 Special Cases Committee 09/06/2022 University Teaching Committee	This version applies from: 04/03/2024
Policies superseded by this policy:	Section 4 of the Special Cases Progress Cases Policy (‘Leave of Absence and Repeat Study’) Section 4.3 of the York Online programme characteristics 2017 The 2022-23 version of this policy	
In-year amendments	Date: 04/03/2024	Details of change: Sections 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 reviewed and extended to reflect changes to the request process and provide additional guidance Section 4 renamed and extended to include scope of Repeat Study Redundant sections removed: ‘Requesting Repeat Study as part part of a Leave of Absence application’; and ‘Requesting Repeat Study without a Leave of Absence application’. New section added: ‘Fees for Repeat Study’ Sections 6 - 9 restructured into more logical order References to ‘study breaks’ removed throughout
Related policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations		
The York Online Fit to Sit / Submit policy		
The York Online Registration, Absence and Engagement policy		
The York Online procedures for managing disruptions in the CPM		
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1. Introduction

1.1 As part of its commitment to enabling a lifelong journey of growth and development, the University of York offers a series of 100% online programmes, known as York Online, aimed primarily at mid-career professionals seeking to enhance their careers or transition into new ones. Students on these programmes represent a distinct population within the University, with the majority being mature learners with full-time work and family commitments that may need to take precedence over their studies from time to time. The University recognises the diversity of experience and barriers to attainment that our York Online students may encounter. In response, the University aims to provide a supportive environment that enables students to respond flexibly to changes in their circumstances and manage their learning and progression on the programme.

1.2 Studying at Masters level alongside employment represents a significant commitment and can often be challenging. Students have a responsibility to manage their time and workload effectively, monitor their engagement with the programme and plan accordingly. The University expects all students to monitor their progress through the programme, consider whether they have any personal circumstances that may affect their ability to study, and inform the University of whether or not they intend to register for an upcoming module.

1.3 The University expects that all students who have registered for a module will be actively studying that module and able to engage effectively. Where work, family or other life commitments impact a student's ability to engage with their studies, the University has policies in place to support students experiencing disruption to their studies and/or assessment. These are the York Online Fit to Sit / Submit policy and the York Online Registration, Absence and Engagement policy. Students experiencing difficulties are strongly encouraged to inform the University through one of these policies as soon as they become aware of a potential disruption to their studies.

1.4 However, the University recognises that sometimes the impact of a student's circumstances is so severe that they are unable to effectively engage with these policies in a timely fashion. In such cases, the student may request Repeat Study via the appropriate process.

2. Definitions

2.1 Capstone project module (CPM) (formerly ISM) - a module where students are expected to identify a research topic and carry out their own research. CPMs have different assessment rules around compensation and reassessment, compared with taught modules (see below), and a specific contribution to the calculation of merits and distinctions. See the [Guide to](#)

[Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#) for further details. **CPMs are not in scope for this policy.**

2.2 Conditions of return - any requirement that must be met before the student is permitted to resume their studies. These may be academic, e.g. submission of outstanding assignments, exams, etc, or non-academic, e.g. providing medical evidence of fitness to return.

2.3 Leave of Absence - an approved break from or between modules. This is requested by the student due to personal circumstances or as a time-management tool. A student may also be put onto a Leave of Absence if there are no modules available for them to study in the upcoming online learning period.

2.4 Online learning period (formerly “teaching periods”) - each online learning period lasts eight weeks and students study a single module in that time. The online learning periods are numbered OL1 (the September start) to OL6 (the June start).

2.5 Taught module - a module where the content has been defined and structured by the module author, even where study might be self-directed. This is distinct from modules where students are expected to identify a research topic and carry out their own research (see capstone project modules). Taught modules have seven weeks of teaching followed by an assessment period; for the purpose of this policy, module teaching is defined as ‘complete’ after the end of week 7, whether or not a student has engaged with it.

2.6 Working days - standard working days for the University are Monday to Friday, 9.00 - 17.00 UK time, excluding Bank Holidays and University closure days.

3. Definition and parameters of Repeat Study

3.1 Repeat Study is the opportunity to take a previous taught module (or modules) again where the student’s ability to engage with that module was affected by a significant disruption which could not have been foreseen, and where the student was unable to engage with, or benefit from, University processes at the time (e.g. by taking a Leave of Absence). Repeat Study is therefore only granted in exceptional circumstances.

3.2 Repeat Study can only be requested retrospectively. Students who know, or anticipate that, their ability to study will be impacted by an upcoming circumstance or event should always take time out from the programme by requesting a Leave of Absence.

3.3 There are two circumstances where Repeat Study may be requested:

3.3.1 Where a student requests a Leave of Absence and believes one or more taught modules where teaching has been completed were affected by their circumstances;

3.3.2 Where a student experienced a disruption to their studies during one or more completed taught modules, and this disruption also prevented their engaging with, or benefitting from, University processes at the time. The circumstances have since been resolved, so the student is able to continue studying, but they wish to request mitigation retrospectively.

3.4 All students submitting a formal request for Repeat Study will be required to evidence not only good grounds for Repeat Study, but also good reason for failing to take action earlier and for continuing to sign up for modules.

3.5 If a student does not have 'good reason' for failing to disclose their circumstances at the time, their request for Repeat Study will be rejected (see section 6 on what constitutes 'good reason' and section 7 on evidence requirements).

4. Permitted scope of Repeat Study

4.1 The minimum period of Repeat Study is one module; repeat of weeks within a module is not permitted.

4.2 There is no maximum period of Repeat Study, but students who continue to sign up for modules when they are also experiencing complex and challenging personal circumstances will be required to demonstrate and evidence good reason for failing to take action earlier, and for continuing to sign up for modules despite struggling to engage with their studies (see section 6 on what constitutes 'good reason').

4.3 Students who are considered to have grounds for Repeat Study of part of a module will be given Repeat Study of the whole module, and will always return to week 1 of the module. This will include re-taking all formative and summative assessments that were offered as part of the module that is to be repeated. Students should take care not to re-submit work previously submitted, as per section 1.3.11 of the Academic Misconduct policy.

4.4 Repeat Study requests are tied to specific modules, rather than to online learning periods. Consequently, being granted Repeat Study of a module does not grant the student permission to repeat assessments for other modules that were scheduled during the same online learning period. This means that marks for assignment extensions, reassessments and 'sit as if for the first time' (SAIFFT) assessments for earlier modules will be unaffected by the outcome of a student's Repeat Study request. If a student wishes to resit an assessment that took place in the

same online learning period for which they are requesting Repeat Study, then they must submit their request via the York Online Fit to Sit / Submit process:

- Where the student has demonstrated that the disruption for which they are requesting Repeat Study began **before** an assignment deadline or exam start time and their Repeat Study request is upheld, the associated Fit to Sit / Submit request should be approved without need for further evidence or explanation.
- Where the disruption for which the student is requesting Repeat Study started **after** an assignment deadline or exam start time, the student will be required as part of their Fit to Sit / Submit claim to explain why they believe the assessment was disrupted and provide evidence that demonstrates that the timing and nature of the circumstances they describe would have negatively affected their ability to prepare for, or attempt, the assessment. However, if their Repeat Study request has been upheld, the student should not need to demonstrate any further 'good reason' for not using the Fit to Sit / Submit process when the assessment took place.

4.5 Students may not use this policy to repeat a capstone project module.

4.6 When a student registers for a module for which they have been granted Repeat Study, they will join a new iteration of that module with a new cohort of students. The University may make reasonable changes to the course or to related educational and other services and facilities where it is necessary for the University to deliver a better quality of educational experience to students enrolled on the course. When returning to a module for which a student has previously been registered, it is the student's responsibility to engage with all material in the new iteration of the module from week 1. Failure to engage from the start of the module, or with any changes, will not be considered adequate grounds to request in-module mitigation under the Fit to Sit / Submit policy, or to request further Repeat Study of the module unless there are other, extenuating circumstances which impact the student's ability to engage.

5. Fees for Repeat Study

5.1 If the Repeat Study request is approved, the student will not be charged tuition fees for the repeated modules.

6. 'Good reason' for not taking action sooner

6.1 The following are examples of 'good reasons' for not taking action sooner, through either the York Online Fit to Sit / Submit policy or the York Online Registration, Absence and Engagement policy:

- a complex and ongoing medical condition which would have clearly impacted the student's ability to make informed decisions, and/or judge risk;
- a medical condition where symptoms have been ongoing, and have impacted their studies, but which has only recently been diagnosed, or where the extent of the impact has only recently been realised;
- severe issues outside the student's control which meant they were unavoidably prevented from seeking support or taking a break from studies;
- where the student was given misleading advice or incorrect information regarding this policy by an employee of the University, or an employee of the Students' Union (YUSU) or Graduate Students' Association (GSA) (including full-time officers), or an individual or company employed or contracted to act on the University's behalf.

6.2 The following are not considered to be 'good reasons':

- retrospective consideration of module results, including arguments that the student's performance in a specific assessment was surprising, disappointing or out of character;
- continuing to register for modules because they were unwilling to extend their programme end date;
- a belief that the University would not take the issue seriously;
- ignorance of the student support policies and procedures available at the time that the student was affected (e.g. policies regarding Leave of Absence or Fit to Sit / Submit procedures);
- that the student received a reminder about an upcoming payment deadline; such reminders are intended to help students plan and are an opportunity to report problems with their studies to the University;
- where the student was given misleading advice or incorrect information regarding this policy by another student;
- believing or hoping that they would do well enough in the module(s) not to need to take a break from studies;
- deciding not to disclose their circumstances because they wanted to demonstrate that they could succeed without help;
- general embarrassment or being reluctant to disclose their circumstances, including being reluctant because they belong to, or grew up in, a culture in which problems are not openly discussed or disclosed to others. *This is not accepted as a good reason for non-disclosure of exceptional circumstances at the appropriate time because it would be unjust to accept claims from some students but not others on the basis of assumptions about cultural norms based on a student's nationality, ethnicity or religious faith. The*

University does not discriminate against students on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, faith or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

6.3 Evidence is required to support the student's reason for not taking action sooner, wherever possible. This may be evidence that is also submitted to support the Repeat Study request, or specific evidence to support the reason for the delay.

7. Evidence requirements

7.1 All requests for Repeat Study must include evidence that demonstrates the nature of the disruption, the timing and the impact on the student's studies. The student's own account of events is important evidence here, particularly for demonstrating the impact of events, however additional, independent evidence of the circumstances must also be provided.

7.2 All evidence must be in English or be accompanied by an English translation; translations should preferably be provided by an independent third party. It is the student's responsibility to source the translation.

7.3 Evidence must demonstrate that the student was affected during the module(s) for which repeat study is being requested.

7.4 Students will not be expected to provide independent evidence confirming the death of another person. Where the death is of someone other than a close family member, students will be expected to explain the relationship and the impact on the student's ability to engage in their studies. The following are considered close family members: parents and step-parents, siblings, spouse, children, grandparents, grandchildren, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, parents-in-law, and brother- or sister-in-law.

7.5 Students will not be expected to provide independent evidence confirming sexual violence or domestic or intimate partner abuse.

7.6 Students will not be expected to provide evidence of a miscarriage or of an abortion, or of complications arising from a miscarriage or abortion, or of health conditions related to pregnancy.

7.7 Where the student has been impacted by the serious illness or accident of a close family member (as defined in 7.4), they will not be expected to provide independent evidence confirming that illness. They will be expected to describe the situation and its impact on their ability to study. A serious illness is defined as anything involving inpatient hospital treatment,

surgery, or several weeks outpatient treatment; an accident includes anything that requires emergency treatment. Acute incidents in chronic conditions will be considered in the same way.

7.8 The University recognises that students may encounter other circumstances where it is not possible for a student to get independent evidence. In such cases, a statement made by the student, along with an explanation of why independent evidence cannot be obtained, may be sufficient. In such cases, consideration will be given to whether the explanation as to why evidence cannot be obtained is plausible.

7.9 Where evidence is required, the following types of evidence are more likely to be accepted:

- a recent letter or certificate from a medical professional, dated and on headed paper; this includes GPs, consultants, midwives and nurses as well as psychiatrists and other mental health practitioners;
- an appointment letter, hospital discharge letter or other medical documentation, dated and on headed paper, or a screenshot from a patient app, that confirms a medical diagnosis, clinical investigation or referral;
- a letter from the student's employer, dated and on headed paper or an email from the student's employer, sent from the employer's email address;
- for students running their own business, a letter, dated and on headed paper, from a business partner, solicitor or accountant or other independent evidence such as financial statements;
- a police crime report;
- a letter or other evidence from another professional service, such as the local council, a charity or independent advisory service, a family solicitor, etc;
- a supporting letter from another University of York service such as the Open Door Team, Disability Services or Student Hub;
- a written account from an independent third party from outside the University who directly witnessed the circumstances.

7.10 The following types of evidence are less likely to be accepted:

- a letter or certificate from a medical professional that simply repeats the student's own description of events and does not provide an independent assessment;
- a medical appointment confirmation (for example email, or screenshot from a patient app) where the student has requested the appointment in question (i.e. the student requesting the appointment may not in itself be taken as evidence of a diagnosis);
- a letter or certificate from a complementary therapist;
- a written account from the student's family or friends who have directly witnessed the circumstances, or their impact on the student's wellbeing or ability to study;

- for students running their own business, their own statement about the situation.

7.11 The following types of evidence are unlikely to be accepted:

- a letter from the student's academic supervisor, module tutor or another academic contact regarding the student's circumstances;
- a written account from the student's family or friends, if they have not directly witnessed the submitted circumstances or their impact upon the student.

7.12 Students should not wait for evidence to be available before submitting a Repeat Study request. Where evidence is not available at the time of application, students will be given four weeks from submission of the application to submit it. Where evidence is not received by this deadline, the Repeat Study request will be reviewed as set out in sections 8.1 and 8.2.

7.13 The University reserves the right to check the authenticity of all supporting evidence submitted. Where it is suspected that a student has submitted evidence that is not genuine, they may be referred for consideration under the University's [Regulation 7: student discipline procedure](#).

7.14 Where a student states that they were given misleading advice or incorrect information by an employee of the University, or of YUSU or the GSA, or an individual or company employed or contracted to act on the University's behalf, the York Online Support Team may attempt to verify the claim by requesting copies of emails or telephone recordings from the employees concerned.

8. Approval

8.1 Requests for Repeat Study will be checked by the York Online Support Team. Where a student has not provided evidence, a 'good reason' for not taking action sooner, or other information necessary for their Repeat Study request to be considered, they will be prompted to provide the necessary information before any decision to reject the claim is made. Where further information or evidence is required, students should be expected to provide it as soon as possible and in any event no later than four weeks after submitting the Repeat Study request.

8.2 Where it is clear a student has not provided sufficient information about their circumstances, or not met the evidence requirements, or failed to demonstrate 'good reason' by the stated deadline, their request will be rejected by the York Online Support Team.

8.3 Where a student has a case for their request to be considered, approval will be required from the Chair of the Board of Studies.

8.4 Where the period of requested Repeat Study totals more than 10 weeks, or where teaching occurred more than 20 weeks prior to the request, additional approval will be required from the Special Cases Team.

8.5 Where a request for Repeat Study is rejected or partially rejected, the student may submit a Formal Stage Academic Appeal to the Special Cases Team. The student will be informed of the reason for the decision, their right to appeal the decision and any deadline for doing so when they receive the outcome for their Repeat Study request.

9. Reasons for rejection of Repeat Study requests

9.1 The following will usually lead to a rejection:

- where the student might reasonably be expected to provide evidence of the issue and has not done so;
- where the student has not provided evidence of good reason for not taking action sooner;
- where the timing of the issue would not have had an impact on the module(s) for which Repeat Study is being requested;
- where the student has failed to demonstrate that they were experiencing circumstances which impacted their ability to engage with their studies;
- where the student has been requested to submit further information or evidence and fails to respond by the specified deadline;
- where the module will no longer contribute to the student's degree, for example, if they have transferred to a new route.

9.2 A student may not use this policy to request Repeat Study after their award outcome has been ratified by the Board of Examiners. In such cases the student's request must be submitted as an Academic Appeal.

10. Impact on programme end dates

10.1 Where Repeat Study is approved, the programme end date will be extended by the number of months required to complete the programme. This amendment to the programme end date will be updated in e:vision when the student registers for a module that they have been permitted to repeat.

10.2 In addition to the above, students are likely to need to take additional breaks from study in order to wait for modules they are permitted to repeat to be offered again in order to complete

their programme. Further information about what happens if there is no module available to study can be found in section 5.3 of the York Online Student Registration, Absence and Engagement Policy.

11. Student finance

11.1 Where a student has financial support from a UK regional government funding body, such as Student Finance England, and is taking a break as part of a Repeat Study request, the University is obliged to inform the funding body that the student has suspended their studies. Payments will be paused during the period of absence.

11.2 When a student returns from a Leave of Absence, the University will inform the funding body and payments will resume. Funding body rules require that students be actively studying before payments can resume. This means that students in England, Scotland and Wales are likely to have to pay for their next module before they receive their next loan payment.¹ The exceptions to this are students who have paid in full for their programme or students returning to a module they have already paid for.

11.3 The University will not inform the funding body if a student is granted Repeat Study, and the funding body will not take Repeat Study into account when setting funding payment schedules. As a result, students may have a period of time towards the end of their studies where they have received all funds due to them and will still have to pay for modules.

11.4 Where students are in receipt of other types of funding, it is their responsibility to ensure that the Repeat Study request, and any accompanying period of absence, is compatible with the regulations of any granting agency from which funding would normally be received, and that such agencies are informed of the proposed leave and extension to the programme caused by the approved period of Repeat Study.

12. Data protection and safeguarding

12.1 Information and documents provided by students under this policy will be treated confidentially in line with the University of York [Data Protection Policy](#) and the [University's privacy notice for students](#).

12.2 The York Online Support Team typically obtain personal information directly from students e.g. when they contact us by email, telephone or video call, when they enrol on the programme

¹ Student Finance Northern Ireland pays the funding directly to the University so a different process is in place for these students.

or select and pay for a module, or when they submit an online Exceptional Circumstances claim form, a request to take a break or a request for Repeat Study in e:vision. We may also receive information or data from the student's academic department, their Student Success Coordinator or Disability Services.

12.3 Students' personal information is used to prepare and process Repeat Study requests; to inform outcomes (e.g. to establish whether the student's request has grounds) and to process those outcomes (e.g. to ensure to ensure the student record is correctly updated and that their assessments are scheduled appropriately); to plan for and support a student's trajectory; and to establish whether they may benefit from additional support or signposting to other University services.

12.4 Personal information will be available to the York Online Support Team, and may be discussed within the team and with the Student Success Coordinators in order to support the student journey and provide services to students. Special Category data may be discussed within the team when one student case falls under multiple different processes (e.g. the Fit to Sit / Submit process; the Leave of Absence process; the Repeat Study process; or the appeals process). Evidence, which may include special category data, provided under one process may be used in support of a claim submitted through a different process, where applicable, with the student's permission (e.g. evidence submitted in support of a Fit to Sit / Submit claim may be used if a student submits a Repeat Study application on the same grounds, but provides no evidence).

12.5 Where a team member believes a student may benefit from, or requires, additional information or support, personal information, including special category data, will be shared within the York Online Support Team in order to facilitate the provision of appropriate support (e.g. advising a student about other policies that help them in their circumstances or checking in on a student's welfare).

12.6 Outcomes from Repeat Study requests made under this policy may be shared with a student's academic supervisor and / or their Student Success Coordinator to enable them to provide advice about progress and trajectory through the programme. Outcomes may be shared with other relevant members of academic staff where a student needs an alternative assessment when they return to a module. Details of the request itself (i.e. the reason for it and evidence submitted) will not be shared.

12.7 Personal information will be shared with the Chair of the Department's Board of Studies, or their deputy, in order for them to approve or reject a Repeat Study request. Personal information will also be shared with the Special Cases Team in cases requiring their approval. This may include special category data.

12.8 In the event that an appeal is submitted regarding a Repeat Study outcome, personal information will be shared with members of the Special Cases Team considering the appeal; the Chair of the Board of Studies who will approve recommendations about the appeal; and occasionally members of the Standing Committee on Assessment, in order to respond to an appeal. To investigate an appeal, the York Online Support Team may need to request relevant information from module tutors, academic supervisors or Student Success Coordinators; in such cases, the staff concerned will be aware that an appeal has been submitted but will not be provided with personal information.

12.9 In the event that a student submits a complaint about their experience of this policy, the request form, any evidence and the outcome will be reviewed as needed by the Head of Online Partnerships, or their deputy, in order to investigate the complaint and provide a response.

12.10 Where the York Online Support Team has a concern regarding the welfare of a student they may seek advice from the Open Door Team or Disability Services, and may share personal information where it is deemed necessary.

12.11 Where the York Online Support Team has a concern regarding the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult they will seek advice from a Safeguarding Designated Contact, and may submit a safeguarding report containing a student's personal information. Please see the [University's Safeguarding Framework](#) on the University website.