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# Intermitting

## and support from the Counselling Service

Intermitting is the term used in Cambridge to describe taking time out from your studies. It is a process available to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. It actually means the disregarding of terms for the purpose of calculating your standing to take an examination. The length of time away will vary according to your needs and the detailed situation regarding your studies, but is typically one or two terms.

There are many reasons why you may want to intermit. While you are not able to continue with your studies, the underlying factor might be an illness, a bereavement, a traumatic event or another physical or psychological cause.

### Applying to intermit

Before applying you may well want to talk through the benefits and disadvantages with your supervisor or tutor, Director of Studies, a student advisor at the Student Union, friends and family, your GP, counsellor or mental health advisor.

While you may feel a range of conflicting feelings such as worry, guilt, shame, embarrassment, regret and loss, it is common, too, to feel a sense of relief whatever decision you make a crisis usually passes, and sometimes more quickly than you think. It can be reassuring to know that many students return from intermitting each year.

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Your tutor is the most likely person to help you make a formal application and will discuss whether or not the college will back your application. The application will usually need supporting evidence in the form of a letter from your GP, mental health advisor or counsellor, if you were engaged with our service. The formal decision to grant intermission is with the University Applications Committee

## **While you are away from Cambridge**

If you are granted intermission you usually have to leave Cambridge and do not have continued access to university support services, such as the Counselling Service.

It is important to think about how you will look after yourself while away to help resolve the underlying issues to your intermission. For some people, time itself will help, or attending to practical matters away from university. Sometimes, too, counselling is helpful. This can be arranged via your local GP or local agencies.

## **Returning to study**

When you intermit, you will probably have agreed with your tutor when you expect to return. Your college should be able to let you know what procedure to follow to return from intermission.

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You may feel relief or excitement at getting back. It may also be you feel anxious and worried: 'Will I be able to work again?' 'What if I can't cope?' 'Will I link up with my old friends or will they have moved on?' You may feel guilty or not accept that intermitting was a positive and helpful step for you to take.

### **Returners' workshops at the Counselling Service**

The Counselling Service runs workshops specifically for students returning from intermitting. There are often similar feelings about coming back. Hearing how it is for others and talking about your experience can be reassuring. The workshops, at the start of Michaelmas and Lent Terms, are designed to address the most common issues and can help you ease back in more smoothly.

You can find more details on our website:

[www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/studentcouns/studentgroups/returnersgroups](http://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/studentcouns/studentgroups/returnersgroups)

If you are interested in attending these workshops, please contact the Counselling Service Reception on 01223 332865, or email [counsellingreception@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:counsellingreception@admin.cam.ac.uk)

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# University Counselling Service

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