



Going Off-Books

A guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students

www.tcd.ie/academicregistry

Going Off-Books

Off-books falls into two categories:

- **Off-Books (OBN)**, meaning a break in your studies
- **Off-Books with Assessment (OBA)**, meaning a break in your studies with assessment to complete.

Off-Books (OBN)

Going off-books allows you to take a temporary break from your studies. You can apply to go off-books for various reasons, such as medical or financial concerns.

For undergraduate (UG) students, this break is typically granted for one year only.

Postgraduate (PG) students can request to go off-books only in exceptional circumstances, and the duration varies depending on whether they are in a taught or research programme.

Off-Books with Assessment (OBA)

Students may go off-books while taking exams, placements or other assessments if they failed no more than three modules, not exceeding 20 ECTS.

Certain modules may not be suitable for repeating off-books, as determined by the programme/subject.

Repeating OBA counts as a repeat year. A student may not repeat any academic year more than once within a degree course, and not more than two academic years in total, except by special permission from the University Council.

- [Current Academic Calendar – General Information](#)
- [Current Academic Calendar – Undergraduate Studies](#)
- [Current Academic Calendar – Graduate Studies and Higher Degrees](#)

Going Off-Books



OBN - Undergraduate Students

Before going off-books

Student:

- Discuss the pros and cons with your tutor and submit all relevant documentation.
- Understand the fee implications and loss of access to university services and systems.
- Once approved, note the off-books dates and fee implications noted on your approval letter/memo. Also remember to back up any important data from Trinity IT systems, etc.

Junior Fresh (JF) Students (First Year):

- Normally JF students cannot go off-books before 31 January. If unable to continue, you should withdraw and reapply through the CAO, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., serious illness), where off-books status may be granted.

Non-JF Students:

- If going off-books before 31 January, you will be liable to pay half the tuition fee plus the full student contribution fee when you return, unless granted a fee remission on medical grounds. This **must** be applied for separately using the [Free Fee Initiative form](#). If you have already paid the full student contribution, you can get a refund for the second instalment. You will not be eligible for the SUSI grant unless granted a fee remission on medical grounds.
- Going off-books after 31 January means you will be liable to pay full tuition fees and the full student contribution when you return, unless granted a fee remission on medical grounds. This **must** be applied for separately using the [Free Fee Initiative form](#).

Tutor:

- Submit the completed [off-books form](#) and supporting documentation to Student Cases via studcase@tcd.ie.
- Discuss outcomes with the student and share a copy of the memo with the student.

OBN - Undergraduate Students

Returning from a period off-books

- By **1 August**, submit a [Letter of Certification](#) from a doctor to Student Cases (studcase@tcd.ie) if you were off-books for medical reasons.
- Request a password reset through IT Services (email itservicedesk@tcd.ie or call +353-1-896-2000) to access the Student Portal.
- Complete module selection (if applicable) as instructed via email.
- Register and pay fees upon receiving the email invitation.
- Final-year students must submit an [Application for Graduation form](#) to attend graduation.



OBA - Undergraduate Students

Before going off-books with assessment

Student:

- Discuss the pros and cons of going off-books with assessment with your tutor, and submit all relevant documentation.
- Note that you will not be a registered student during this time, (except for placements, where appropriate) unless specified by the Senior Lecturer.
- You will keep your computer account, email, and access to Blackboard modules for the year you attended. You will be examined on the course delivered during the year you were on-books.
- Apply for a reader's ticket for library access (no borrowing rights).
- Please be aware of the €382 examination/administration fee.

Tutor:

- Submit the completed [off-books form](#) and supporting documentation to Student Cases via studcase@tcd.ie.
- Discuss outcomes with the student and share a copy of the memo.

Returning from off-books with assessment

Student:

- Note the fee implications and consult with your school, department, or course office before the end of Michaelmas term (first semester) to confirm examination and assessment requirements while off-books.
- Ensure your exam timetable lists all registered modules and contact askexams@tcd.ie for queries. The full timetable for exams is published on the website and you should be able to access your timetable in your student portal.
- Complete registration and payment of fees as instructed.
- Final year students must submit an [Application for Graduation form](#) for graduation.

OBA - Undergraduate Students



OBN Postgraduate Students

Taught and Research

Before going off-books

- Discuss with your Supervisor the pros and cons of going off-books, and understand the implications for your fees and your access to university services.
- Application should be made by the student's Supervisor to the Dean of Graduate Studies and must have a strong recommendation from the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate). Students may not apply directly to the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- Discuss the outcomes from Student Cases with your supervisor/research supervisor.
- Once approved, note the off-books dates and fee implications on your approval letter/memo. Also, remember to back up any important data from Trinity IT systems, etc.

Returning from off-books

- Submit a [Letter of Certification](#) from a doctor to Student Cases (pgcases@tcd.ie) confirming that you are fit to return to full-time study, if you were off-books for medical reasons.
- Request a password reset through IT Services (itservicedesk@tcd.ie) or +353-1-896-2000) to access the Student Portal.
- Complete module selection (if applicable) as instructed when you receive the email notification.
- Register and pay fees upon receiving the email invitation.
- If you wish to apply for graduation, submit an [Application for Graduation form](#) to be included in a future ceremony.

OBA Postgraduate Students

Taught

Before going off-books

- Discuss the pros and cons of going off-books with assessments with your supervisor, and submit all relevant documentation.
- Application should be made by the student's Supervisor to the Dean of Graduate Studies and must have a strong recommendation from the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate). Students may not apply directly to the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- Note that you will not be a registered student during this time, except for placements, but you will still have access to your computer account, email, and to Blackboard modules.
- You will be examined on the course delivered during the year you were on-books.
- Apply for a reader's ticket for library access (no borrowing rights).
- Please be aware of the **€382 examination/administration fee**.
- Discuss outcomes from Student Cases with your Supervisor.
- Note the fee implications and consult with your school, department, or course office before the end of Michaelmas term (first semester) to confirm examination and assessment requirements while off-books.

Returning from off-books with assessment:

- Make sure your exam timetable lists all registered modules. Contact your School or Programme Office or email askexams@tcd.ie for queries. The full timetable for exams is published on the website and you should be able to access your timetable in your student portal.
- Complete registration and payment of fees when you receive the email invitation.
- Submit an [Application for Graduation form](#), if applicable.

Exceptions

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students

Exceptions

- Permission to remain off-books for more than one year must be applied for.
- Health Sciences students are rarely permitted to stay off-books for more than a year due to the clinical nature of their programme.
- Some courses run joint modules for two consecutive years (e.g., Senior Fresh and Junior Sophister). It is therefore not possible for students in these courses to go off-books between those years. They may need to go off-books for two years.
- Students who do not complete a year may request a fee waiver in their repeat year to avail of the Free Fees Initiative (FFI) for EU students only. The FFI does not apply to students transferring to a different course.
- The [FFI application form](#) must be completed by the student, tutor, and treating doctor, if off-books for medical reasons.
- The FFI is granted on the condition that the student will resume their original course. If the student changes course, the FFI may not apply.
- Both the FFI and [Letter of Certification](#) forms must be signed and stamped for review by the Medical Board.
- Off-books on medical grounds is not equivalent to a medical repeat. Students may be granted off-books status for medical reasons but may not be eligible for the FFI.
- Students granted off-books status for non-medical reasons must re-register for the academic year they return and may need to undertake professional re-orientation for certain courses.

Fee Implications

Fee Implications

[Payment of Fees and Refunds - Academic Registry - Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#)

Dates for withdrawal/off books	New Undergraduates	Postgraduates & continuing students
Up to 31st October	EU students: Refund of all fees minus a fee of €212 Non-EU students: Refund of all fees minus deposit and a fee of €212	N/A
After 31st October & before 31st January	Liable for first term Refund of second instalment if already paid	N/A
After registration & before 31st January	N/A	Liable for first term Refund of second instalment if already paid

Key Dates

- [Key Dates for First Year Undergraduates](#)
- [Key dates for continuing Undergraduates and Postgraduates](#)

Off Books Checklist

1. Assess the Situation

Identify the Reason: Clearly understand why you need to go off books (e.g., health issues, personal reasons, financial difficulties).

Consider Alternatives: Explore other options or supports that might allow you to continue studying.

Check Registration Status: Ensure you understand how your registration will be affected while off books.

2. Inform Relevant Parties

Notify Academic Advisors: Speak with your tutor or research supervisor to discuss your situation and explore options.

3. Accommodation and Campus Services

Notify Accommodation Services: If you live on campus, inform the Accommodation Office about your departure and understand the terms of your contract options.

Return Library Materials: Return any borrowed books or materials to the library to avoid late fees.

Handle Student ID Card and IT Access:

- **OBN Students:** Understand the loss of access to university services and systems. Remember to back up any important data from Trinity IT systems, etc.
- **OBA Students:** You will keep your computer account, email, and access to Blackboard modules for the year you attended.

Off Books Checklist

4. Financial Considerations

Review Tuition Liability and Tuition Refund Policies: Check if you are eligible for a partial refund of tuition or fees.

Check Impact on Scholarships / Loans etc: Determine how going off books might affect scholarships, grants, and loans, and contact Student Finance (academic.registry@tcd.ie) for support.

5. Personal and Practical Considerations

Seek Support: Consider reaching out to counselling services or support groups if you're dealing with stress or other challenges.

Arrange Personal Belongings: If you're living in Trinity Accommodation, arrange for the storage of your personal belongings.

6. Final Steps

Undergraduate students: Confirm with your tutor that your off books application has been approved.

Prepare for transition: Make plans for what you'll do during your time away, whether it's work, travel, or taking care of personal matters.

Keep in touch: Stay in contact with Trinity, especially regarding any changes to your plans or updates on your situation.matters.

7. Plan for return

Coming back to Trinity: Learn about the process for registration following your off books period.