

Withdrawal policy

Policy owner	Chief social worker
Policy version number	2026.01
Date	Applicable from 1 July 2026
Next review date	June 2027
Applicable to	All participants

Contents

Section 1: Overview	2
1.1 Purpose and general principles	2
1.2 Withdrawal definitions	3
Section 2: Procedure	3
2.1 Year 1: voluntary withdrawal	3
2.2 After entering employment as a social worker: voluntary withdrawal from entire programme	4
2.3 After entering employment as a social worker: withdrawal from dissertation year only	5
2.4 Deemed withdrawn	5
Section 3: Relevant references	7
3.1 Frontline policies and documents	7



Section 1: Overview

1.1 Purpose and general principles

- 1.1.1 This policy details the processes related to participant **withdrawals** from the Frontline programme or Approach Social Work. [Section 1.2](#) defines what withdrawal means for the purposes of this policy.
- 1.1.2 Children and families value consistency when it comes to having a social worker involved in key decisions in their lives. By accepting a place on the programme participants commit to complete the full programme (of two or three years) and to be placed in any of the regions within which Frontline works.
- 1.1.3 Frontline recognises, however, that there may be instances whereby a participant can no longer or does not wish to continue with the programme, and therefore must withdraw. Before a withdrawal is confirmed, Frontline will aim to explore whether any additional support or other options would enable the participant to continue.
- 1.1.4 If participants withdraw from the programme (including being deemed withdrawn), they are terminating their place on the programme and will not be eligible to return at any point in the future. Participants are urged to discuss their thoughts about withdrawal as early as possible with their consultant social worker (CSW)/line manager and practice tutor/dissertation supervisor.
- 1.1.5 A requested withdrawal does not mean that other policy proceedings, such as Fitness to Practise, will cease.
- 1.1.6 Participation in the programme, including, where relevant, registration and enrolment with Lancaster University, end on the confirmed date of withdrawal.
- 1.1.7 Participants who have submitted assessments during the academic year up to the effective date of their withdrawal will receive marks for them. Participant eligibility for any exit awards will be considered as appropriate at the next examination board.
- 1.1.8 No credit will be awarded for any partially completed modules at the point of withdrawal.
- 1.1.9 Prior to the commencement of the Readiness for Practice stage, an applicant who has a conditional offer may request that their place on the programme is deferred to the following entry year. Please refer to the [recruitment and admissions policy](#) for details of the process to request a deferral. Deferral does not constitute a withdrawal and, therefore, the following section does not apply in cases of deferral.



1.2 Withdrawal definitions

1.2.1 **Voluntary withdrawal:** This is where a participant, at their request, chooses to leave. In year 1 and 2, participants withdraw from the programme in its entirety (see 2.1 and 2.2). During the dissertation year participants may withdraw from the programme in its entirety, *or* they can withdraw from the academic element of the programme *without* withdrawing from the programme (see 2.3).

1.2.2 **Exclusion:** where a participant is excluded from the programme and, if they are at that time registered as a student of Lancaster University, ceases to be so registered. This will be in rare circumstances where a participant has failed to meet the requirements of the programme, for example:

- academic failure following reassessment, or in an assessment where there is no right of reassessment;
- under the Attendance and Engagement Policy, where there are persistent concerns around a participant's attendance and/or engagement with little to no improvement following supportive intervention;
- under the Participant Discipline, Fitness to Practise or Supported Study and Fitness to Study policies, following investigation and a hearing as set out in those policies;
- where the participant has not met the conditions of return following a period of intercalation or extended leave, or where after all reasonable attempts, a placement cannot be secured following a period of intercalation or extended leave.

The decision to exclude a participant can only be taken as the outcome of one of these formal procedures, and where the participant is registered as a student of Lancaster University, it must be ratified by a Lancaster University examination board, Lancaster University's Standing Academic Committee, or the Lancaster University Board of Discipline. See individual policies for more details.

1.2.3 **Deemed withdrawn:** where a participant is assumed to have ceased to engage with the programme and is therefore withdrawn. See 2.4.

Section 2: Procedure

2.1 Year 1: voluntary withdrawal

Withdrawal during the Readiness for Practice stage

2.1.1 Following the start of the Readiness for Practice stage, a participant who is considering leaving the programme should discuss their concerns with a practice tutor (contacting



frontlineops@thefrontline.org.uk if they have not yet received contact details for their allocated practice tutor), who may be able to help them consider potential solutions that can prevent withdrawal from the programme.

- 2.1.2 Where a participant decides to leave the programme, they will need to submit a withdrawal request through the [following link](#).
- 2.1.3 Participants should refer to the Frontline [bursary and financial guidance](#) for the financial implications of their decision.
- 2.1.4 Withdrawals will be confirmed in writing.
- 2.1.5 Participants will normally be offered the opportunity to undertake an exit interview.

Year 1: Voluntary withdrawal once the practice learning has started

- 2.1.6 Following the start of the practice learning experience, a participant who is considering leaving the programme should discuss their concerns with both their CSW and practice tutor, who may be able to help them consider potential solutions that can prevent withdrawal from the programme.
- 2.1.7 Where, following discussion with their CSW and practice tutor, a participant still wishes to leave the programme, they will need to submit a withdrawal request through the [following link](#).
- 2.1.8 Participants should review their practice learning experience agreement and consider the needs of their placement provider, the unit and the children and families they are in contact with when deciding a leaving date. Participants are expected to be reasonably flexible in agreeing to a leaving date that minimises disruption.
- 2.1.9 Participants should refer to the Frontline [bursary and financial guidance](#) for the financial implications of their decision.
- 2.1.10 Withdrawals will be confirmed in writing.
- 2.1.11 Participants will normally be offered the opportunity to undertake an exit interview.
- 2.1.12 Participant eligibility for any exit awards will be considered as appropriate at the next examination board.

2.2 After entering employment as a social worker: voluntary withdrawal from entire programme



- 2.2.1 Before confirming their intention to leave the entire programme, participants must discuss this with both their line manager and practice tutor/dissertation supervisor, who may be able to help them consider potential solutions that can prevent withdrawal from the programme.
- 2.2.2 Where participants decide to formally request a withdrawal from the programme, they will need to submit a withdrawal request through the [following link](#).
- 2.2.3 The Partnerships and Placement Manager (PPM) will normally share the participant's wish to withdraw with the team manager, local authority project manager, and any other relevant local authority staff as necessary.
- 2.2.4 Withdrawals will be confirmed in writing.
- 2.2.5 Participants withdrawing from the entire programme must honour the notice period and any contractual commitments stated in their employment contract with their local authority or children's trust employer.
- 2.2.6 Participants will normally be offered the opportunity to undertake an exit interview.
- 2.2.7 Participant eligibility for any exit awards will be considered as appropriate at the next examination board.

2.3 After entering employment as a social worker: withdrawal from dissertation year only

- 2.3.1 Participants may request to withdraw from the dissertation year only, if they do not wish to complete the Masters degree by submitting a dissertation.
- 2.3.2 Where a participant decides to withdraw from the dissertation year, they should submit their withdrawal request via the [following link](#).
- 2.3.3 Withdrawals will be confirmed in writing; participants will no longer be students of Lancaster University.
- 2.3.4 Participants will normally be offered the opportunity to undertake an exit interview.
- 2.3.5 Participant eligibility for any exit awards will be considered as appropriate at the next examination board.

2.4 Deemed withdrawn



- 2.4.1 In year 1 a participant would normally be deemed withdrawn if, in breach of the [attendance and engagement policy](#) and without reasonable explanation, they:
- fail to respond to multiple communications; and/or
 - stop attending teaching days without first discussing this with Frontline and then fail to respond to multiple communications; and/or
 - leave/stop attending their placement/employment without first discussing this with Frontline and their placement provider and then fail to respond to multiple communications.
- 2.4.2 In years 2/3 a participant would normally be deemed withdrawn if, in breach of the [attendance and engagement policy](#) and without reasonable explanation, they:
- fail to respond to multiple communications; and/or
 - leave/stop attending their employment (as a child-focused social worker) without first discussing this with Frontline and their line manager and then fail to respond to multiple communications; and/or
 - stop attending teaching days without first discussing this with Frontline and then fail to respond to multiple communications.
- 2.4.3 A participant may also be deemed withdrawn if they do not wish to take up a reasonable alternative placement offered following an intercalation or if they fail to respond to multiple communications during the return to study process (see [Intercalation Policy](#)).
- 2.4.5 If a Year 1 participant stops attending all taught and practice-based elements of the programme without reasonable explanation Frontline will discontinue the payment of the participant's bursary, and this may take effect before the withdrawal or deemed withdrawal is confirmed.
- 2.4.6 Participants who have been deemed withdrawn will be contacted by Lancaster University to confirm this.
- 2.4.7 Participant eligibility for any exit awards will be considered as appropriate at the next examination board.
- 2.4.8 Participants who have been deemed withdrawn in years 1 or 3 by a Lancaster Examination Board may be eligible to have their case reviewed through [Student Casework Review Procedures](#).



Section 3: Relevant references

3.1 [Frontline policies and documents](#)

3.1.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidance:

- Attendance and engagement policy
- Recruitment and Admissions Policy
- Bursary & financial policy
- Suitability for professional training policy
- Fitness to study policy
- Pregnancy and parenting policy
- Transfer policy
- Intercalation policy
- Exceptional circumstances Policy
- Fitness to practise Policy
- Student Casework Review Procedure