



This is the Student Advice Centre's guide to applying for additional funding on the basis of Compelling Personal Reasons (CPR).

A student may have to suspend / withdraw/ repeat part of / change their course for many reasons. If the reasons are due to a personal situation, usually unforeseen, this is known as being due to 'Compelling Personal Reasons' (CPR).

Compelling personal reasons could be:

- Bereavement
- Mental health issues
- Health issues
- Family crisis
- Caring responsibilities
- Pregnancy

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

It is not usually considered to be CPR if a student just doesn't like their course - the reasons must be beyond the student's control and relate to their personal circumstances. However, each case will be considered on its merits, so it is a good idea to speak to an adviser about your reasons for repeating or changing course.

How will claiming CPR help?

Living costs / maintenance

Student Finance England (SFE) should extend your funding for up to 60 days (includes weekends) after you suspend your studies, if you have CPR. This can be applied for each time you are unable to complete a year due to CPR.

Tuition fees (tuition fee loan)

Students are, generally, entitled to tuition fee loan funding for the length of the current course plus one year (a 'gift year'), minus any years or part years of previous study. Therefore, repeating part of a course or changing course can mean that you don't have enough years of tuition fee loan funding to cover all years of your current course. In this case, funded years are usually applied to the later years of the current course.

However, SFE have discretion to award an additional year of tuition fee funding, in addition to the standard entitlement to be allocated, if you were unable to complete a year (or more than one year) due to compelling personal reasons. A CPR year will not be treated as a year spent on a previous course when calculating funding entitlement for a future course, e.g. if you change course again. If additional tuition fee funding is awarded on this basis, it will be allocated to the first available year(s) that you don't currently have fee support for on the current course.



You can apply for as many of these years as applicable, if you have suitable evidence of the CPR for each year.

Also, if you have withdrawn from a previous course (before completion) due to compelling personal reasons, fee support is available for the first year of your new (current) course. Provided that it was the most recent course that you withdrew from for compelling personal reasons, it does not matter how long ago you withdrew from that course.

Student Finance regulations state:

As far as is reasonably practicable, evidence should be obtained from the student or elsewhere to support a claim that the withdrawal was for compelling personal reasons or the need to repeat a year is for compelling personal reasons. For instance, the student might be able to provide medical evidence from his GP; or perhaps a HEI's student support advisory service could (with the student's permission) attest to a personal or family crisis. Other possible sources might include social services or the clergy.

Note that there are some exceptions to these rules, such as if the year in question is a bursary or Erasmus year.

How to apply for CPR support

As soon as you've applied for student finance, you should send a letter to SFE, with appropriate evidence, asking for your compelling personal reasons to be taken into account for your funding entitlement, explaining what your compelling personal reasons were and how they affected your ability to study at the time (i.e. how they led to you needing to repeat a year, or led to you leaving your most recent previous course).

You should include the following:

- Your details – name, DOB, Customer Reference Number, and course title / university name
- Which academic year you would like SFE to consider your CPRs for (and details of that course/ university, if different from your current one), i.e. which year(s) was affected by the CPR
- Date(s) of your interruption/suspension/withdrawal, if applicable.
- An outline of the reasons why you are requesting additional discretionary funding as a result of your CPRs (e.g. if you have already used your gift year, and don't have sufficient funding for the whole of your current course, or you did a previous course but left for compelling personal reasons). For example, "I am writing to apply for compelling personal reasons to be taken into account, and ask that discretion be applied to my funding entitlement so that I can receive funding for this academic year, as due to circumstances beyond my control I was prevented from successfully completing my studies during (*relevant academic year*)".

You need to give enough information for SFE to be able to understand **what your situation was** and **how and when** it impacted on your studies. For example:



- If your CPR are due to ill health: think about your symptoms and how they affected your ability to study (e.g. physical, psychological, emotional), and how they prevented you from completing the year at University.
 - Here is an example for depression - but you should write something that is appropriate for your situation:
e.g. "I suffer from depression and anxiety. My health problems affected me during the academic year 2014-2015 from... until ... (give dates). My illness has affected my ability to leave the house so I have been missing lectures that I needed to attend at University. I have also had problems motivating myself to complete the work and have found it very difficult to focus and process information because of my depression, and therefore have missed deadlines. My panic attacks have often prevented me from attending lectures and seminars. Because of the impact of my depression on my studies, I have to repeat the year. Please see my supporting evidence (and submit this - see below)"
- If your CPR are due to personal issues: try to explain what has happened and how it has affected you. For example, if a family member has died you might explain the emotional and practical implications it has had on you.
- If your CPR relate to another family issue: describe how practical implications or the need for providing / receiving emotional support have affected your ability to study successfully, for example if you had to return home a lot, explain why you had to and how it affected your studies.

You could also explain what has changed about the circumstances, which means you feel you are likely to be successful when you return to your studies e.g. "I now see my GP regularly and am receiving treatment and support in managing my depression. As I am now much improved under this treatment, I don't anticipate such a negative impact on my studies when I return to my studies in (enter date of return)".

What supporting evidence to send regarding your circumstances

It is vital that you send documentary evidence to SFE to back up your claims; without it SFE will refuse your application for CPR. It is important that the evidence you get states the academic year that was affected and the period affected during that year. Acceptable evidence could include:

- A letter on headed paper from a professional person or agency. This could be from a doctor, social worker, other health professional, solicitor or counsellor. It should confirm the difficulties you had, when you had them, and the effect they have had on your studies.



- A letter on headed paper from your University Student Support Adviser or tutor (including from a previous university if the CPR relates to a previous course), if they are able to confirm what your situation was / why you approached them for support, when this was, and that you were having difficulties with your studies (including confirmation of your withdrawal / failure, as appropriate).
- If applicable, (e.g. if you are suspending your studies due to CPR), send proof you are not currently able to work due to your difficulties. If you are getting evidence from a doctor, you should ask for a 'fit note'. This is an official document which confirms your limited capacity for work. It can cover a future period as well as a past period. Ask your GP to confirm your limited capacity for work for as long a period as they feel able to. You could also ask your GP to explain if it is likely to affect you in the future.
- In the case of bereavement, provide a death certificate (photocopy).
- In the case of pregnancy, provide a birth certificate (photocopy).
- If you do not have any of the evidence listed, you should send a cover letter explaining your situation in as much detail as possible, along with any evidence you feel supports your application. However, it is much more difficult in this case to get an application for CPR accepted.

Where to send your letter and documents:

The Discretionary Payments Team
Student Finance England
PO Box 210
Darlington
DL1 9HJ

Remember to send your letter and evidence all together and use a recorded / special delivery postal service. Keep photocopies of original documents.

We understand that CPR applications generally take between 6 - 8 weeks to process.

Additional information and guidance about submitting an application for additional funding due to CPR can be found here:

<https://www.ucas.com/finance/student-finance-england/going-back-uni-or-repeating-year>

If your application for CPR is accepted

You should receive an email advising you that your CPR application has been accepted and what year this additional year of support has been awarded to.

Money

STUDENT
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If you were applying for multiple years affected by CPR, check whether you have had additional funding granted for more than one year. If this is not clear, contact SFE or the Student Advice Centre.

The email should be followed up by a new notification of entitlement letter sent to you via the post, advising you of your new entitlement

If your application for CPR is not accepted

You can seek further advice from the Student Advice Centre.

You may be able to appeal or submit additional evidence.

However, if your CPR application is still not accepted, you would need to self-fund your tuition fees for the year(s) you are not entitled to a tuition fee loan. You can discuss this with an adviser, but you will need to consider carefully how you will afford to do this. It is advisable to consider and make a realistic plan for this before you enrol and become liable for the fees.

Also, enrolling will count as a further year of study, and so will be taken into account when assessing your entitlement to funding. Therefore, it's important to be sure of how you can pay your fees before you enrol.