

# University Policy and Guidance on Suspensions/Extensions of Study for Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs)

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## POLICY

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- 1 Where circumstances or events of sufficient gravity occur and adversely impact on a postgraduate researcher's progress consideration will be given by the University to granting a period of suspension or extension of study (see the definitions given below) to mitigate against the difficulties encountered and to ensure the PGR is not disadvantaged.

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## GUIDANCE

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- 2 The University recognises that, during their research degree studies, some postgraduate researchers (PGRs) may be affected by illness and/or other circumstances that are outside of their control, which may significantly affect their

studies. In many cases PGRs will recover any time that is lost during their candidature but where difficulties are sufficiently disruptive this may not be possible. The University mitigates against the difficulties encountered, to ensure the PGR is not disadvantaged, by considering a period of suspension or extension of study which will lengthen the overall candidature and delay the deadline for submission of the thesis for examination. In the case of suspensions of study the date for transfer to a specific research degree category may also be delayed.

- 3 The time limits for each research degree programme including the timescales for transfer are outlined in the [University regulations and individual programme of study specification](#).

*(a) Award of a research degree*

- 4 In all cases the PGR must meet the criteria for award of the research degree. For research degrees there can be no “mitigating circumstances” with criteria for the award. All PGRs must complete an oral examination and the thesis submitted for examination has to reach the required standard for the award of the degree and the specified learning outcomes must be met. Any mitigating circumstances which may have affected the candidate during their period of study should not be taken into account as part of the assessment of the thesis and should never lead the examiners to award a research degree where the work is not felt to be of the appropriate standard<sup>1</sup>.

*(b) Transfer to doctoral study*

- 5 In order to recommend a PGR for transfer the panel must be satisfied that the PGR and their research project have the potential for success at doctoral level and also whether completion of a thesis within the standard period of study for the programme concerned is a reasonable expectation.
- 6 The same academic standards for transfer to a specific research degree must be upheld and mitigating circumstances which may have affected the PGR during their period of study should never lead the panel to recommend transfer where the potential for success has not been demonstrated.
- 7 Such factors might, however, be taken into account when determining what support the PGR may need going forward, including whether any suspension or extension of studies should be considered.
- 8 When considering requests for suspensions and extensions of study the University will take due regard of the University’s regulations and external factors including the Equality Act 2010, Home Office and Research Council requirements. These arrangements are covered by the [University’s Equality and Inclusion Policy](#).

## A [Procedure](#)

### *Postgraduate Researchers*

- 9 If a PGR is unable to study or their progress is significantly disrupted they should let their School know as soon as possible. They can do this by contacting their supervisor or Director of PGR Studies (previously known as the Postgraduate Research Tutor).

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<sup>1</sup> A framework for the consideration of reasonable adjustment for PGR assessment points can be found on the [SES website](#).

Alternatively they may discuss their circumstances with a member of the staff in the Graduate School Office. Failure to take prompt action may lead to the PGR losing the time available to complete their studies. There is a great deal of support available across the University and Schools are best placed to provide advice on who to contact and how.

- 10 PGR's can request a suspension/extension of study in the following ways:
- by completing the University's suspension/extension request form before returning the completed form to their Faculty Graduate School Office/PGR Administrator for consideration by their School. This form is available on [the Student Education Service website](#).
  - by submitting their request via the suspension/extension of study workflow in GRAD. This can be accessed in GRAD via the change request menu. If the grounds for the suspension/extension of study request is confidential, the PGR is advised to discuss their circumstances with the Faculty Graduate School/PGR Administrator before completing the request in GRAD. Requests which include confidential information should be submitted by completing the paper-based form. Further information about the use of GRAD for suspensions/extensions is set out in Annex A.
- 11 When a PGR contacts their School via other means (eg email) and provides confirmation of their intention to request a suspension/extension the School should consider whether the information provided is sufficient for formal consideration of the request without the need for the PGR to make a formal application for the suspension/extension.

#### *Supervisors*

- 12 Supervisors are responsible for alerting the Director of PGR Studies, to:
- any situation where it may become necessary to request a suspension or extension of study for a PGR, in a timely manner;
  - reporting that there has been no contact or missed supervision meetings with individual PGR for a month (unless absence has been authorised for illness or other suspension etc) or where there is a pattern of absences which is affecting the PGR's progress or causing concern for the PGR's well-being in accordance with the [University's Attendance Monitoring Policy](#) (see under "Progress and Monitoring").

#### *Directors of PGR Studies (previously known as Postgraduate Research Tutors)*

- 13 Requests for suspensions and extensions of study for individual PGRs should be considered by the Faculty/School's Director of PGR Studies. If the Director of PGR Studies is supportive of the request they should send a recommendation for consideration by the Programmes of Study and Audit Group. The recommendation can be made by either:
- (a) completing the appropriate [request](#) form which is available on the SES website and returning it to Postgraduate Research and Operations (PGRO) (via email to [pgrprogress@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:pgrprogress@leeds.ac.uk))

The recommendation must be authorised by the Director of PGR Studies (or Head of the Faculty Graduate School). Authorisation may take the form of signature on the pro forma (written or digital) or an email from the Director of PGR Studies (or Head of the Faculty Graduate School) confirming they has authorised the recommendation. In the

absence of the Director of PGR Studies the Head of School may consider and authorise recommendations. PGRO will then arrange for action to be taken to consider the recommendation.

OR

(b) via the recommendation for a suspension/extension of study workflow in GRAD (which is part of the charge requests menu). Authorisation from the Director of PGR Studies is required as part of the workflow. Further information about the use of GRAD for suspensions/extensions is set out in Annex A.

- 14 Where there is a disagreement on the outcome of a request for a suspension or extension of study at School level (for example between the PGR/supervisor and the Director of PGR Studies) the case should be forwarded to the Head of the Faculty Graduate School for adjudication before any recommendation is made to the Programmes of Study and Audit Group.

#### *Programmes of Study and Audit Group*

- 15 Responsibility for considering, and reaching decisions on, requests for suspensions and extensions of study is delegated by the Graduate Board to its Programmes of Study and Audit Group (PSAG). In practice, to ensure decisions are taken without unnecessary delay, action is normally taken on behalf of the Group by its Chair on a weekly basis. When the Chair is unavailable or the recommendation arises from a School within their own Faculty the request will be considered by an alternative member of PSAG. In particularly complex cases the Chair (or alternate) may refer the recommendation for consideration to a sub-Group of PSAG. In such cases the Director of PGR Studies and/or supervisor may be invited to attend a meeting of the sub-group to discuss the candidature.

#### *Confirmation of a suspension/extension of study*

- 16 When a request is approved on behalf of PSAG confirmation of the suspension or extension of study will be sent in one of the following ways:
- (a) where the recommendation from the School is submitted via GRAD a formal email notification to the PGR (to their student email account) will be generated and a copy sent to their supervisor(s);
  - (b) where the recommendation from the School is submitted outside of GRAD PGRO will issue a letter to the PGR confirming the details. The letter will be sent to the PGR c/o their student email account. A copy of the letter will also be scanned and sent to the Faculty/School PGR Administrator. This individual is responsible for ensuring all relevant Faculty/School staff are made aware of the decision including the supervisor(s).
- 17 In all cases the BANNER record will be updated by PGRO to show the suspension/extension and revised maximum time limit (SWARDAT). The suspension/extension information and revised maximum time limit will be displayed in the Graduate Record of Achievement and Development (GRAD).

## B [Suspension of Study<sup>2</sup>](#)

- 18 A “suspension of study” is a period of more than one month when a PGR temporarily leaves the programme and loses their registration status. During this time they are not expected to progress their research or pay academic fees. Access to supervision, the library<sup>3</sup> or other University facilities (such as laboratories) is not available, but access to IT facilities, such as email will continue. Periods of suspension do not count towards the time available for completion of the degree and the “clock” towards the deadline for submission of the thesis/deadline for transfer will stop ticking when the suspension is in place. The University will report suspensions of study for Tier 4 visa holders to UKVI.

The University is required to withdraw immigration sponsorship for Tier 4 student visa holders during the period of suspension (see section J below).

*Examples include: serious illness (supporting medical evidence (eg doctor’s note) is required, significant personal difficulties, bereavement, financial reasons, accident, maternity (for maternity see also the [University’s policy on support for pregnant students and students with very young children](#) ).*

- 19 The PGR is expected to return to study immediately after the period of suspension has ended unless an additional period of suspension has been requested. In all cases the Director of PGR Studies should be satisfied that the PGR is able to resume study and the difficulties have been overcome. Where appropriate documentary evidence should be sought. For example when a PGR resumes study following a period of suspension due to ill-health it will be on the basis that they are medically fit to do so and satisfactory medical evidence should be provided by the PGR (eg through the provision of a fit to return to study note). In more routine cases expiration of the sick note will be sufficient.
- 20 Suspensions will not normally be backdated for more than one month. A request for a retrospective suspension of study will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances and where the PGR can provide a good reason for not disclosing the circumstances sooner. It is, therefore, essential that prompt action is taken by the PGR, supervisor and Director of PGR Studies to formalise requests for suspensions of study.

*Failure to return from a period of suspension*

- 21 PGRs are expected to return to their studies at the end of the period of suspension and to re-register within 4 weeks of their return. If they are unable to restart their studies and require a further suspension they should let their School know immediately. Failure to keep in contact with their School, when the period of suspension has ended, may lead to their losing the time available to complete their thesis/submit for transfer or be presumed to have withdrawn from the University.

## C [Extension of Study<sup>4</sup>](#)

- 22 An “Extension of study” is a lengthening of the candidature to take account of a period of unexpected/unpreventable disruption to studies which has slowed down academic progress significantly. The PGR will not leave the programme of study and will

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<sup>2</sup> Consideration must also be given to the terms and conditions of any studentship held by the PGR

<sup>3</sup> In exceptional circumstances only a School may request PGRO to ask the library to maintain access (enquiries to [rp\\_student@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:rp_student@adm.leeds.ac.uk) )

<sup>4</sup> Consideration must also be given to the terms and conditions of any studentship held by the PGR

continue to progress their research/thesis writing but with some disruption of study over a limited period slowing progress rather than interrupting progress completely.

- 23 Examples include: equipment breakdown, serious illness or recovery from accident/surgery, significant personal difficulties or family illness which have substantially affected progress.
- 24 During periods of extension PGRs will have access to Library and IT facilities and will be entitled to supervision. They will not normally be entitled to laboratory or other resources provided by the School. All research work, including experiments, should have been completed within the standard period of study and any period of extension granted should be for writing up the thesis.
- 25 Extension requests will normally only be considered after the completion of the standard period of study and at a point when it is clear how much of the time lost has been compensated for during the standard period of study.
- 26 Cases will be expected to show that some unexpected/unavoidable circumstances have arisen which have significantly and adversely affected the progress of the research and against which precautions could not reasonably have been taken.
- 27 Research projects require careful time management. Delays to the delivery of equipment and/or equipment breakdown are not uncommon. During periods of such inconvenience consideration should be given to the other aspects of the research the PGR can progress to avoid impact on the length of the overall candidature. In such cases waiting until the end of the standard period of study to assess the impact of delays is appropriate.
- 28 Where an unexpected event/disruption to study occurs during the overtime period the extension request should be made at the point the event occurs. The PGR and the supervisor(s) should agree a timetable/work plan for completing the thesis which includes milestones. In some case the Chair of PSAG may require sight of the timetable for completion before considering an extension request.
- 29 *Masterships by Research*  
  
In the case of Masterships by Research the maximum period of extension permitted on academic grounds is 3 months.
- 30 *Integrated PhD and Master*  
  
In the case of Integrated PhD and Masters candidates, during the taught components of the degree, a case for mitigating circumstances may need to be submitted alongside a suspension / extension request. Information regarding the mitigation process can be found on the [student services website](#).

#### D [Extensions and long-term medical conditions and disability](#)

- 31 The University acknowledges the practical difficulties related to individual circumstances resulting from long-term medical conditions and disability. Disclosure at an early stage is encouraged as this will enable the University to identify needs and put in place appropriate support. Where a needs assessment recommends that a reasonable adjustment is to provide an extension to the candidature, consideration can then be given to the length of time required. Faculties/Schools should liaise with the PGR and the Disability Service before submitting requests for extensions in these circumstances.

## E Postgraduate Student Exchange (Study Abroad)

- 32 Any time spent by a PGR at a host institution will be included within the standard period of study. No period of suspension or extension of study will be considered as the expectation is that supervision and the research project will continue during this period.

## F Limits to the Length of Suspensions/Extensions of Study

- 33 (Research Council award holders and those sponsored by external funding should also refer to the section M below)
- 34 Bearing in mind that Faculty/School structures change with time, supervisors leave for various reasons, and a topic, once original may not remain so indefinitely requests for suspensions of study will not be granted indefinitely. The norm at present is for a period of up to 12 months suspension to be considered by the University at any one time, with a review at the end of that period if necessary. The minimum period of suspension is one calendar month.
- 35 No PGR, commencing study from session 01 August 2012, will normally be granted periods of extension and suspension totalling more than two calendar years for a full-time student or three calendar years for a part-time student by the University. In the event of a PGR wishing to exceed this period, unless exceptional permission from PSAG is granted (see below), they will be required to withdraw from the research degree candidature, but may be permitted to apply to commence a new candidature.

*Exceptional Permission for suspensions/extensions in excess of the total length normally permitted*

- 36 Requests for exceptional permission for suspensions and extensions of study in excess of the total length permitted under the University's regulations will be considered by at least two members acting on behalf of PSAG (normally the Chair and one other member, neither of which will be from the same Faculty as the PGR).
- 37 When considering such exceptional requests the Group will take the following into account:
- the individual mitigating circumstances
  - the academic progress made to date and whether the PGR is in good academic standing
  - the currency of the research
  - the availability of continued supervisory support and any resources required to complete the work within the School
  - a comprehensive timeline to completion which includes milestones/formal structure for monitoring progress agreed between the PGR and supervisor
  - whether the context of the research remain academically current
- 38 In all cases the Group must be satisfied that there is a reasonable prospect of submission of a thesis of the appropriate standard for examination if the additional period of suspension/extension requested is to be granted.

## G [Guidance on Evidence](#)

- 39 The Programmes of Study and Audit Group wishes to ensure that decisions made about suspensions/extensions of study are well founded and therefore PGRs are normally required to provide independent documentary evidence to support requests. Documentary evidence would normally be an original document on headed paper and signed by an appropriate third party, giving details of the circumstances, its dates and or duration and, where possible, its impact. Original documentation can be returned to the PGR where requested. An appropriate third party would be one who knows the PGR in a professional capacity, or one who can verify the circumstances and who is in a position to provide objective and impartial advice. Electronic evidence will only be accepted from verifiable addresses. All evidence must be provided in English. It is the PGR's responsibility to provide translations of any non-English documentation, and any documents not in English or without translation will not be accepted as evidence. The translation must be certified as accurate by a Public Notary or translated by an accredited translator. This evidence should be retained by the Faculty/School and not forwarded to PGRO. PGRO will check that the Faculty/School holds supporting documentary evidence and may, in some cases, request sight of the documentary evidence.
- 40 Where illness is proposed as the grounds for suspension or extension of study the PGR must provide the school with satisfactory medical evidence (eg full medical certificate) as evidence in support of the request. The medical certificate might take the form of a fit to study note, letter or report from a medical practitioner (eg GP or doctor).
- 41 The School should advise the PGR to produce the original document for them (within a set time frame) prior to them making a decision.
- 42 If the PGR fails to produce the original document or the School remains unclear as to the authenticity of the document on receipt of the original document, the School should (a) advise the PGR that they do not accept the evidence and ask the PGR to provide additional or further evidence in support of the application for a suspension or extension of study. They should remind the PGR that unauthorised absence may lead to formal warnings and can even result in the PGR being excluded from the University; and (b) formally refer the matter to the Head of the Student Cases Team as the nominee of the University Secretary<sup>5</sup>.
- 43 It is the PGR's responsibility to provide up-to-date objective evidence to support requests for suspensions/extensions of study.

## H [Guidance on what constitutes satisfactory medical evidence](#)

- 44 The evidence should help the Faculty/School to understand how the PGR's medical situation is affecting their ability to study and contain objective medical evidence (not just "the patient told me that ..."). In the case of a suspension it should cover the period for which the suspension is required.

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<sup>5</sup> In accordance with 5.2 of the General University Disciplinary Regulations the nominee of the University Secretary will write to the PGR with a statement of allegation of falsification of evidence in support of an application to the University in breach of the University General Academic Regulations and inviting the PGR to comment in accordance with 6.5 of the General University Disciplinary Regulations.



- 45 Faculties/Schools should advise PGRs to obtain information which includes:
- (i) The dates and duration of any period when the PGR's health has completely prevented or will completely prevent them from studying/when they are not fit to study;
  - (ii) The dates and duration of any period when the PGR "may be fit for study" if their doctor thinks that returning to study will help them recover. The doctor should be asked to advise on how the PGR student's health may affect their ability to study (for example unable to use a keyboard for long periods or decreased mobility so difficult to get onto campus);
  - (iii) For international PGRs studying in the UK on a Tier 4 student visa only confirmation of whether the student is fit to fly.
- 46 The presentation of a prescription or the box cover of medication or the submission of a series of medical appointments is not acceptable evidence as this gives no professional opinion of the PGRs capacity to study.
- 47 Care should be taken by the Faculty/School to ensure that any suspension or extension request on the basis of illness reflects the severity and duration of the illness as described in the medical evidence.
- 48 In all cases it is the responsibility of the PGR to ensure that the evidence provided addresses these requirements.
- 49 PGRs who have taken suspensions of study on medical grounds will be required to provide their parent Faculty/School with evidence that they are medically fit to resume study at the end of the period of suspension (eg doctor's note).

#### I Grounds for Suspensions/Extensions of Study

- 50 Approval of requests for suspensions/extensions of study is not guaranteed. Poor academic progress is not reasonable grounds for a suspension/extension.
- 51 Cases where the PSAG is likely to be sympathetic to an application for suspension/extension include (provided that the length of time requested is reasonable in the sense that it bears close relation to the events experienced by the PGR) :
- Accidents
  - Death or illness of someone the PGR is close to eg parent, grandparent, guardian, partner, sibling, child
  - Serious personal illness or injury (of the PGR) (accompanied by medical evidence (eg doctor's note).
  - 
  - Unexpected events e.g. theft, (accompanied by a police report/crime number), equipment not being delivered or equipment breakdown.
  - Maternity (the PGR must make a request before the maternity leave is due to begin)
  - Significant personal difficulties
  - Systemic catastrophe in home country (eg war, natural disaster)
  - Unexpected and serious financial hardship
  - Placements (where the request falls within the standard period of study, is no longer than 3 months in duration and is supported by the supervisor)

52 Cases where PSAG is unlikely to be sympathetic to a request for suspension/extension include:

- When the PGR has completed the standard period of study on a full-time basis and is now in the overtime period and is now in employment and is making a request on the basis of “pressures of work”
- Where the request is based on the grounds that the PGR has got married/honeymoon period. The Group is of the view that this should normally be taken from the PGR’s annual leave entitlement
- Where there is no clear relationship between the amount of extra time being requested and the problem being encountered by the PGR
- Where permission has been granted for the PGR to register concurrently for another programme of study and a request is based citing academic or other commitments linked to the other registration.
- Where an extension of study is requested on the basis of poor English language skills.
- Where the delay to submission is caused by the engagement of a proof-reader.

53 In all cases the length of time requested needs to be specified and reasonable, in the sense that it bears close relation to the events experienced by the PGR. For example, it is unlikely that a 6 months suspension of study will be granted for a minor illness. Requests for suspensions of study will be considered in whole months only. For administrative purposes suspensions will begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month and end on the last day of the month.

#### J [International Students in the UK on Tier 4 \(General\) Student Visas](#)

54 There are additional requirements placed upon the University by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) in relation to international students who are in the UK on a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa under the Points-Based System. Any adjustments made to a research degree candidature must continue to satisfy the conditions set by UKVI if the University is to continue to sponsor the PGR.

These include:

- the PGR remains registered as a full-time candidate and makes progress with their research, attending all supervision meetings, seminars, research training and other research events;
- if the PGR stops studying the University is required to make a report to the Home Office and their leave may be curtailed. In this event the PGR is required to leave the UK. PGRs whose study is suspended should be referred to International Student Office for advice;
- any short periods of authorised absence must not have an effect on the PGR’s ability to meet deadlines for their research studies, including the transfer deadline and the maximum time limit for submission of the thesis.

The University is required to report suspensions of study to UKVI within 10 working days of the start of the suspension. Some changes reported by the University to UKVI will result in visas being curtailed (shortened). If this happens the PGR will be notified by email and will be given 60 days’ notice from the date of the curtailment notice. Depending on their circumstances, they should either leave the UK, make an application to the UKVI to remain in the UK in a different immigration category or resume their studies promptly so that the University can update the report it has sent to

them. If they leave the UK they will need to apply for a CAS to enable them to apply for a new visa (entry clearance) from their home country before returning to the UK.

- 55 It is, therefore, **essential** that international PGRs holding Tier 4 (General) student visa are aware of the following in the event of a suspension to their studies:
- The University of Leeds will report their suspension of study to the UKVI
  - The UKVI may in turn curtail their visa
  - They may be required to leave the UK
  - If they leave the UK, they will need to request a new CAS and apply for entry clearance before returning to the UK to resume their studies
- 56 The PGR should seek immigration advice from the International Student Advice Team.
- 57 In exceptional cases the University may report absence to the UKVI but not recommend that a PGR leave the UK. Examples of this are where there is civil unrest in the PGR's home country or extreme medical incapacity. The PGR may then be advised to make an immigration application outside the rules. This would usually involve a referral for specialist immigration advice outside the University.
- 58 Schools must not wait for the PGR to submit medical evidence before contacting PGRO.
- 59 Where appropriate, PGRO will report the absence to UKVI and inform both the PGR and School concerned that a report to the UKVI has been made. Failure to comply with this requirement could jeopardise the University's UKVI sponsor licence as well as causing the PGR to fall outside the immigration regulations.
- 60 During an extension of study attendance should be monitored in accordance with established University policy. If the PGR fails to attend action should be taken in line with the Attendance Monitoring Policy.

## K [Authorised Absence](#)

- 61 In some cases a period of suspension of study may not be necessary and a period of authorised absence is more appropriate subject to the following requirements:
- if the period of absence will be for a short period (up to four weeks) in addition to any period of annual leave (five weeks) in any one calendar year and
  - the time away from studies will have no impact on the PGR's ability to meet deadlines (eg transfer, maximum time limit for submission of the thesis).
- 62 In such cases the supervisor and the PGR must agree that the short period of absence can be absorbed into the candidature with no allowance made for the PGR to meet academic deadlines for submission of work. A record of the agreement should be kept in writing (eg email).
- 63 The University is not required to report short periods of authorised absence for international PGRs holding a Tier 4 (General) student visa to the Home Office provided they do not impact on the overall time limit for completion of the programme of study.

## L [Sponsor/Awarding Body](#)

- 64 Please note that it is the responsibility of the PGR to check the implications of a suspension or extension of study with their scholarship awarding body or provider.
- 65 PGRs in receipt of Research Council funding are normally only permitted, by the relevant Research Council, to a total of 12 months suspension in the lifetime of the award. Other limits may be placed on the length of suspension/extension by external funders and PGRs are responsible for checking the implications of suspensions/extension on their funding.

## M [Research Councils](#)

- 66 Set out below is further advice on arrangements for candidates holding research council funding.

(a) [Research Councils –Doctoral Training and Doctoral Training Centre Grants \(AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC and STFC\)](#)

- All suspensions and extensions are managed internally by the University
- Research Council funded PGRs are not entitled to receive maintenance payments while suspended
- Total periods of suspension must not normally exceed one calendar year (12 months) during the lifetime of the award
- School may wish to take advice from the Postgraduate Scholarships Office about the implications for suspensions/extensions of study for individual candidates holding Research Council awards and the payments they are entitled to receive (enquiries to ext 34007 or [pg\\_scholarships@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:pg_scholarships@leeds.ac.uk) )

(b) [AHRC - Block Grant Partnership Studentship Regulations](#)

### *Suspensions*

- All requests to be sent to PGRO (with a copy to the Postgraduate Scholarships Office). Requests should be made at the time the problem arises and certainly no later than the end of July in the year the PGR is due to submit.
- Approval is not required by AHRC, however, AHRC require suspensions to be recorded on Je-S within one month of their commencement.

### *Extensions*

- All requests to be sent to PGRO (with a copy to the Postgraduate Scholarships Office) no later than the end of July in the year the PGR is due to submit.
- AHRC will not grant retrospective extensions and they can only be approved by AHRC once a PGR has entered their overtime period.
- Maximum period of extension 12 months.

(c) [ESRC](#)

*Suspensions*

- Suspension requests do not require prior approval by ESRC and are handled according to standard University procedures. The period of suspension must not exceed one calendar year in any one instance. Total periods of suspension must not exceed one calendar year during the lifetime of the award (standard period of study). Please note, however, that if a PGR is in the overtime period, ESRC will expect a PGR to request an extension 2-3 months before the submission date deadline following normal University procedures – prior approval from ESRC is no longer required.

*Extensions*

- Overseas University Visits, Internship Schemes, Difficult Language Training are treated by ESRC as extensions but do not require prior approval by ESRC. If successful, the Director of PGR Studies should submit a request for the appropriate extension to PGRO. The request should be made as soon as the Overseas University Visit/Internship scheme has been formally approved.
- Where a PGR experiences problems relating to an accident, illness or exceptional personal circumstances during the course of study, the ESRC will consider a case for extending the submission deadline. Extensions to the submission date cannot be considered in retrospect. Any request for an extension to the submission date due to illness cannot be considered unless evidence of illness has been provided at the time of illness. To apply for a submission date extension, normal University procedures should be followed, 2-3 months before the submission date deadline.

N [Suspensions and extensions during the thesis examination process](#)

- 67 The Graduate Board's Examinations Group is responsible for considering, and reaching decisions requests for (i) suspensions/extensions to the resubmission deadline for candidates whose thesis has been referred for resubmission and (ii) extensions to the deadline for corrections of editorial and presentational corrections or minor deficiencies for candidates recommended for award.
- 68 Requests for PGRs during the thesis examination process are considered by the Examinations Group in accordance with the arrangements outlined in the main body of this document for suspensions/extensions during the period of study prior to submission of the thesis. Faculties/Schools should therefore ensure they have consulted the relevant section of this document before submitting a request.
- (i) Suspensions/Extensions during the referral period
- 69 Cases where the sympathetic consideration is likely to be given to an application for a suspension or extension are outlined in the relevant sections of the main body of this document. In addition to these, the Examinations Group may give exceptional consideration to requests made where the PGR is now in full-time employment and is making a request on the basis of "pressures of work". Full details must be included in the case. Requests should be made using the pro forma provided.
- (ii) Extensions to the period for editorial and presentational corrections/minor deficiencies

- 70 For PGRs who have been recommended for award<sup>6</sup>, it is important that clear deadlines are in place for the corrections to the thesis in order to act as a motivator for completion. Therefore the PGR normally has 4 weeks (for editorial and presentational corrections) or 12 weeks (for minor deficiencies) from the date of the oral examination to complete and return the corrections to the internal examiner for checking.
- 71 Cases where sympathetic consideration is likely to be given to an application for an extension are outlined in the relevant section above.
- 72 The University does not prescribe whether a PGR is expected to work full-time on their corrections or the number of hours per day. It is acknowledged that at this point in the candidature many PGRs will already have taken up other responsibilities and commitments. In keeping with this the Examinations Group may consider an extension to the normal correction period if PGR's experience difficulties during the correction period and need extra time because of, for example, work/family reasons.
- 73 A case for an extension to the correction period must be made by the Director of PGR Studies by email to [rp\\_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk) (there is no need to complete the full suspension/extension form for these requests).
- 74 For PGRs recommended for the award of the degree and completing either editorial and presentational corrections or minor deficiencies, please bear in mind that, given the correction periods themselves are only 4 and 12 weeks respectively, requests for long extensions are **unlikely** to be given sympathetic consideration, unless the circumstances are exceptional.

#### O. [Suspensions during the appeal process](#)

When a PGR submits an appeal against the decision to refer their thesis for resubmission at the final examination stage or to transfer their registration to M Phil status at the transfer stage their studies will normally be suspended pending the outcome of the appeal. This will ensure they do not lose any study time whilst their appeal is under consideration.

A referred PGR who wishes to make the corrections required by the examiners to their thesis or a PGR who wishes to continue with M Phil studies pending the outcome of their appeal should discuss this with the Student Cases Team in the first instance.

#### P. Additional Information/Useful Websites

[LUU Student Advice Centre](#)

[Attendance Monitoring Policy for PGR students](#) (see under "Progress and Monitoring")

[International Student Office](#)

#### Q. Use of GRAD to support the suspension/extension process (Annex A)

/ST, Ext 35778, 21/09/18

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<sup>6</sup> Where the learning outcomes have been met and the thesis satisfies the requirements for award but is found to contain either editorial and presentational corrections or minor deficiencies

## Suspensions and Extensions of Study

### Using GRAD to support the suspension/extension of study processes

From January 2018 GRAD includes two separate workflows to support the suspension/extension of study process:

- **Workflow One: For PGRs to request a suspension/extension** (*mirrors the [paper-based form](#) used by PGR's to request a suspension/extension*)
- **Workflow Two: For Directors of PGR Studies ([previously known as PGRTs) to recommend a suspension/extension** (*mirrors the [paper-based form](#) used by Directors of PGR Studies to recommend a suspension/extension to PGRO for consideration on behalf of PSAG*)

Use of GRAD for making requests/recommendations is not compulsory but is intended to complement existing processes. The paper-based forms will continue to be available for use.

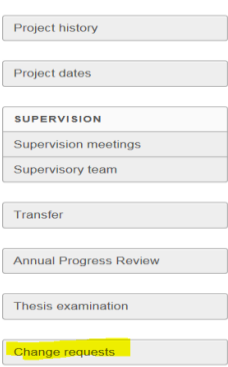
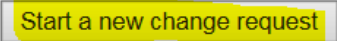
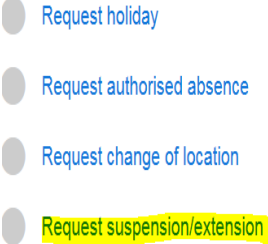
**PGRs, Directors of PGR Studies and PGR Administrators are advised not to include confidential information in GRAD.**

#### Workflow One: For PGRs to request a suspension/extension

*(this workflow involves the PGR (initiating the request) and the PGR Administrator (confirming receipt of the request and then managing consideration of the request outside of GRAD)*

##### 1. Initiating the request

PGRs can submit requests for suspensions/extensions of study in GRAD. The PGR can access the relevant workflow via the change request menu:

<p>(i). Select the change request menu</p> 	<p>(ii). Start a new change request</p> 	<p>(iii). Select Request suspension/extension</p> 
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##### 2. Confidential Information

The PGR is advised that if the grounds for their request are confidential they should discuss their circumstances with the Faculty Graduate School/PGR Administrator before completing

the request in GRAD. When requests will include confidential information the PGR should be advised to submit their request outside of GRAD using the [paper-based form available on the SES website](#).

### 3. Sharing information with supervisors

If the request is not confidential then the PGR can make the request in GRAD. During the workflow the PGR will be asked the following questions:

**Are your supervisor(s) already aware of this request? \***

Yes  No

**I agree that the information included in this request may be shared with my supervisor(s). \***

Yes  No

**Note:** If you select no, your supervisor(s) will not be notified of any details, but they will be still be able to see that a request has been made

Please note that the supervisor will not be able to view the information input into GRAD by the PGR but they will still be able to see a request has been made.

The PGR Administrator should respect the PGR's stated preference when managing the request outside of GRAD and only share information when they have been given permission to do so.

### 4. Tier 4 Student Visa Holders

For PGRs who hold a Tier 4 Student Visa additional questions will appear in GRAD as part of the declaration process at the end of the workflow:

For Suspensions	For Extensions
<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Request Evidence <b>Declaration</b></p> <hr/> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I hereby declare that all information provided on this form and associated documents is honest and accurate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I understand that all information supplied may be shared with my Postgraduate Research Administrator, Postgraduate Research Tutor, Postgraduate Research &amp; Operations, the relevant University committee for the purpose of reviewing this request and my supervisor (if permission was given to share this with my Supervisor).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I understand that for international students in the UK with a Tier 4 (general) student visa who are applying for suspension of study only: The Tier 4 Sponsor Guidance states that if a student defers (suspends) their studies after they have arrived in the UK and is no longer actively studying, then their permission to stay is no longer valid and they must leave the UK.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> By submitting this request I confirm my understanding that by requesting a suspension of study:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The University will report a suspension to my studies to the UKVI</li> <li>2. The UKVI may in turn curtail my visa</li> <li>3. I may be required to leave the UK</li> <li>4. If I leave the UK, I will need to request a new CAS and apply for entry clearance before returning to the UK to resume my studies, and</li> <li>5. I should seek immigration advice from the <a href="#">International Student Advice Team</a></li> </ol> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Request Evidence <b>Declaration</b></p> <hr/> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I hereby declare that all information provided on this form and associated documents is honest and accurate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I understand that all information supplied may be shared with my Postgraduate Research Administrator, Postgraduate Research Tutor, Postgraduate Research &amp; Operations, the relevant University committee for the purpose of reviewing this request and my supervisor (if permission was given to share this with my Supervisor).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have read and understood the following advice: You should seek immigration advice from the International Student Advice Team on the implications of extending your period of study: <a href="http://students.leeds.ac.uk/#international-students">http://students.leeds.ac.uk/#international-students</a></p> </div>

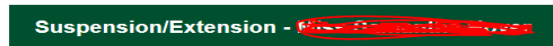


### 5. Automated Email Confirmation to the PGR

Once the PGR submits their request in GRAD they will receive the following automated email:

Dear [REDACTED]

Your suspension/extension form has been submitted to your School PGR Administrator. Your School PGR Administrator will be in contact with you shortly about this request.



### 6. Automated Email and Task for Graduate School

An automated email will also be generated to the generic School email account and the associated task will appear in the named PGR administrator's task list.

The PGR Administrator will have the option to delegate the task, return it to the submitter (the PGR) or to confirm receipt. You can use this functionality, for example, to obtain more information from the PGR.

To complete the task in GRAD the PGR Administrator must confirm receipt of the request and add any notes they wish to make to the workflow. If comments are included in the "Notes" field below these will appear in an automated email to the PGR:

Notes made by PGRA in "notes" field	Email to PGR which include details of the notes made
<p>You have chosen to acknowledge the request made by the submitter.</p> <p><input type="button" value="Confirm: Confirm receipt"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/></p> <p><b>Notes</b> (Notes can be seen by the applicant and all staff reviewing this application, including the Supervisor, PGR administrators, PGRT and PGRO.)</p> <p>Please come to see me on Tuesday at 10.00 am.</p> <p><b>Administrative notes</b> (Seen only by staff reviewing this application, not seen by the applicant unless specifically requested. The intended purpose for Administrative Notes is to facilitate administration of PGR processes and operation of the work flows. They are not intended to be used for recording academic or progression comments. These should be recorded in the supervision meeting notes and progression reports which are visible to all parties. Please note that whilst text entered here will not be visible on GRAD to the PGR these notes are accessible by the PGR on request.)</p>	<p>Dear [REDACTED]</p> <p>Your suspension/extension form has been acknowledged your School PGR Administrator.</p> <p>Please come to see me on Tuesday at 10.00 am.</p>

**The workflow is now closed and consideration of the request should be managed outside of GRAD.**

## **Workflow Two: For Directors of PGR Studies to recommend a suspension/extension to PGRO for consideration by PSAG**

*(this workflow can be initiated by either the PGR Administrator or Directors of PGR Studies, requires confirmation of the recommendation from the Director of PGR Studies before the task is sent to PGRO for action. When a recommendation is approved the workflow will generate email confirmation of the suspension/extension to the PGR and interested parties)*

### 1. Initiating the Workflow

The PGRA or Director of PGR Studies can initiate the workflow via the change request menu in the individual PGR's Research Project Page.

### 2. Tier 4 Student Visa Holder

GRAD will recognise those PGRs who hold Tier 4 student visas and additional relevant questions will appear in the workflow:

For Suspensions	For Extensions
<p>Request for Details <b>Visa</b></p> <hr/> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please confirm by ticking the box that the following information has been brought to the attention of the PGR: (1) The University will report a suspension to their studies to the UKVI, (2) the UKVI may in turn curtail their visa; (3) they may be required to leave the UK; (4) if they leave the UK they will need to request a new CAS and apply for entry clearance before returning to the UK to resume their studies; (5) they should seek immigration advice from the <a href="#">International Student Advice Team</a></p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Request for Details <b>Visa</b></p> <hr/> <p>The information provided below will be used to determine whether the University can (a) continue Tier 4 sponsorship during the period of extension and, (b) if requested to do so by the PGR, issue a CAS to support an application to UKVI for an extension to the visa.</p> <p><b>Does the PGR wish to remain in the UK during the period of extended study? *</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>If no, please ensure that a change of study location request is completed in GRAD before the PGR leaves the UK.</p>

### 4. Director of PGR Studies (previously known as the Postgraduate Research Tutor)

Once the recommendation is submitted by the PGRA an automated email will be sent to the Director of PGR Studies with the associated task. When the Director of PGR Studies is the supervisor the task will be sent to an alternate Director of PGR Studies (in those Schools where more than one Director of PGR Studies has been appointed). In those Schools where only one Director of PGR Studies is appointed the PGRA must add an alternate Director of PGR Studies to the PGR's GRAD record to progress the workflow. In the absence of a Deputy Director of PGR Studies in the School it is suggested that this might be the Head of School.

The Director of PGR Studies will have the following options:

<b>STATUS</b> Waiting for Postgraduate Research Tutor to review
<b>CURRENTLY WITH</b> ██████████
<input type="radio"/> Edit change request form
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Approve
<input type="radio"/> Return to Postgraduate Research Administrator

Once the Director of PGR Studies approves the recommendation the task will be forwarded to PGRO (Fran Miles) for consideration and approval on behalf of PSAG.

## 5. PGRO

Once approved on behalf of PSAG an automated email will be generated to the PGR (this contains the information in the standard extension/suspension of study letter) sending copies of the email to interested parties (Student Fees, Scholarships, Student Records).

## WHEN CAN I USE GRAD TO RECOMMEND AN EXTENSION OR SUSPENSION OF STUDY TO PGRO?

**REMINDER:** In all cases the Director of PGR Studies is responsible for confirming that the length of time recommended is reasonable – in the sense that it bears relation to the circumstances of the PGR

## USE OF GRAD TO REQUEST SUSPENSIONS

GROUND	LENGTH	Detail Required
ACADEMIC REASONS	12 months or less	Tick box - Additional information will be required*
PERSONAL	12 months or less	Tick box
FINANCIAL	12 months or less	Tick box - Additional information will be required*
ILLNESS	12 months or less	Tick box
FAMILY OBLIGATIONS	12 months or less	Tick box
FAMILY BEREAVEMENT	12 months or less	Tick box
MATERNITY	12 months or less	Tick box
PLACEMENT	3 months or less	Tick box
PLACEMENT	4 months or longer	Tick box – Additional information will be required*
EMPLOYMENT	12 months or less	Tick box - Additional information will be required*
OTHER	12 months or less	Tick box - Additional information will be required*

Example of tick boxes

<b>Request made on the grounds of:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic reasons <input type="checkbox"/> Personal <input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Family obligations <input type="checkbox"/> Family bereavement <input type="checkbox"/> Maternity <input type="checkbox"/> Placement <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Other
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Example of additional information to be provided in GRAD:

**Please provide a brief summary of the grounds for this request. PGRO will contact you separately if further information is required. \***

The lab was unavailable due to refurbishment.

\* If confidential please use paper-based form

### USE OF GRAD TO REQUEST EXTENSIONS

GROUND	LENGTH	Detail Required
ACADEMIC REASONS	Up to 2 months in total	Tick box - Additional information will be required*
PERSONAL	Up to 2 months in total	Tick box
FINANCIAL	N/A	Use paper copy
ILLNESS	Up to 2 months in total	Tick box
FAMILY OBLIGATIONS	Up to 2 months in total	Tick box
FAMILY BEREAVEMENT	Up to 2 months in total	Tick box
MATERNITY	N/A	N/A
PLACEMENT	N/A	N/A
EMPLOYMENT	N/A	N/A
OTHER	Up to 2 months in total	Tick box - Additional information will be required*

\* If confidential please use paper-based form

### USE OF PAPER BASED FORM

Please use the paper based form if the following applies:

- grounds for request are confidential (not appropriate to store on GRAD record)
- total periods of suspension/extension exceed 24 months (for a full-time PGR) or 36 months
- period of suspension/extension longer than limits stated in tables above