

## Working Guidelines for the granting of Authorised Interruption of Study or extension to study permitted under the Postgraduate Regulations

Authorised interruptions to study (previously known as suspension of study) may be granted for stated reasons such as medical grounds, registration of the candidate for another degree, diploma or professional qualification or for other good cause. It should be noted however that the Senatus Researcher Experience Committee places considerable emphasis on prompt completion of the thesis within the prescribed and maximum periods set by the University. Authorised interruptions to study can only be authorized by the College committee with responsibility of postgraduate research matters. A student's period of study may also be extended and extensions can only be authorized by the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters.

### Definitions

#### Authorised interruption of study

An interruption of study concession is applicable where a student is **unable to work** on the thesis for a significant period of time due to circumstances that are largely beyond their own control. Periods of interruption do not count towards the student's total permitted period of study.

These circumstances can include, amongst others,

- Medical and health problems
- Personal and family problems
- Bereavement
- Problems experienced because of failure of university equipment or lack of access to equipment for good reasons that are outwith the control of the student
- Problems experienced because of deficiencies in the provision of supervision or facilities
- Registration for another degree, diploma or professional qualification
- Undertaking distinct time-limited specialized training that would be beneficial to the students project or generic skills training
- Undertaking distinct time-limited employment that would be beneficial to the students project or generic skills training

Interruptions are not appropriate where the student is able to work on the thesis but is not progressing at the expected rate where the reasons are foreseeable or to allow a student to undertake long- term periods of paid employment. In addition interruptions are not available to permit students to take extended annual/holiday leave or to effectively extend the period available to the student to complete their thesis.

All applications for interruption must be supported by the supervisor, agreed by the School Postgraduate Director and be supported by documentation where appropriate, for example medical or hospital certificates. If supervisors are discussing requests for an interruption for paid employment with overseas students, they should be aware that the student's visa may restrict the number of hours that can be worked. Where a supervisor or School Postgraduate Director does not support the application they are required to state their reasons. Applications should be submitted as soon as possible after the problem has emerged or been discussed.

Retrospective interruptions can be applied for where the reasons for late disclosure or applications are for good reason

The schools should note that second or further applications for interruptions for a student will be subjected to greater scrutiny and a higher level of supportive documentation will be required. The committee reserves the right to refuse to grant continuous applications. On receiving the application the CPGSC will consider each individual case on its merits within the context of the University's regulations. The committee has the authority to reject an application or to impose conditions as it deems appropriate, for example shorter time limit, change to an extension of studies or notification that a further interruption would not be granted.

## **Extension to maximum period of study**

An extension to a student's period of study is exceptional and a strong case is required before an extension will be considered. The principal supervisor is expected to submit a request prior to the completion of the maximum period of study or as soon as the problem has been disclosed or discussed.

These circumstances include

- Where progress has been hampered by unforeseen difficulties with facilities or equipment and hence completion of the thesis has been delayed
- Where progress has been hampered by unforeseen difficulties in obtaining or analyzing data

Retrospective requests will be subject to greater scrutiny and the supervisor would be required to make a special request for consideration. The committee reserves the right not to grant such requests.

- An application for extension must be supported by the supervisor and agreed by the School Postgraduate Director and be supported by documentation where appropriate. The supporting documentation **MUST** include a plan for project completion and thesis submission and clear evidence for expecting completion within the period of the requested extension.

Where a supervisor or School Postgraduate Director does not support the application they are required to state their reasons. Applications should be submitted as soon as possible after the problem has emerged or been discussed.

Schools should note that it is often presumed that the student will be working in full time employment during the period between prescribed and maximum period and that the student is responsible for managing their time to complete by the maximum period. The committee may not consider requests for extensions based solely on the need for more time to complete. The schools should also note that second or further applications for extensions for a student will be subjected to greater scrutiny and a higher level of supportive documentation will be required. The committee reserves the right not to grant continuous applications. On receiving the application the CPGSC will consider each individual case on its merits within the context of the University's regulations. The committee has the authority to reject an application or to impose conditions, as it deems appropriate.

It should be noted that following the approval of an extension a student will become liable to pay an appropriate proportion of the continuation fee (currently £450 per annum).

## **Other relevant information**

The postgraduate regulations:  
<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>

The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

## **Contacts**

For further advice with regard to interruptions and extensions please contact the relevant College Postgraduate Office. For information on contact details please see:

College of Humanities & Social Science  
<http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/Postgraduate/index.htm>

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine  
<http://www.mvm.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/index.htm>

College of Science and Engineering  
<http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/>

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