# Authorised interruption of study or extension of study – Postgraduate Research

## Purpose of Guidance

Working Guidelines for the granting of authorised interruption of study or extension to study permitted as concessions under the postgraduate regulations.

## Scope: Guidance is not Mandatory

Academic and support staff involved with concessions to postgraduate research study. Postgraduate research students.

## Contact Officer

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## Document control

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<tr>
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## Approving authority

Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) – approval of Degree Regulations & Programmes of Study

## Consultation undertaken

Postgraduate Degree Regulations review panel, Senatus Researcher Experience Committee

## Section responsible for guidance maintenance & review

Academic Services

## Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

- Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/)

## UK Quality Code

UK Quality Code Chapter B11 Research Degrees

## Guidance superseded by this guidance

Previous versions of this guidance

## Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 2138.

## Keywords

- Interruption of study
- Extension of study
- Extension to study
- Postgraduate interruption
- Postgraduate research interruption
- Postgraduate research extension
- Postgraduate extension
Authorised interruption of study or extension of study – Postgraduate Research

Authorised interruptions of study may be granted when a student is unable to engage with their programme of study for 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 period of study, plus any permitted submission period, set by the University.

Authorised interruptions of study can only be authorised by the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters. A student’s period of study may also be extended in certain exceptional circumstances, and extensions can only be authorised 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.

These circumstances can include, amongst others,

- Medical and health problems
- Personal and family problems
- Bereavement
- Problems experienced because of deficiencies in the provision of supervision or facilities
- Registration for another degree, diploma or professional qualification

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. Under Home Office regulations, there are no circumstances in which a Tier 4 student can be granted an interruption of studies to take any paid or unpaid employment of any description.

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 documentation). 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.
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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 supporting documentation will be required. The committee reserves the right to refuse to grant continuous applications.

On receiving the application the College committee 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.

The student must provide evidence to support their application. The College may extend a student's period of registration by up to two years. Extensions beyond this time are not permitted. Thesis resubmission periods may require a student to be given an extension. Further extensions to agreed thesis resubmission periods are not permitted.

Circumstances for consideration of an extension 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 analysing 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 submission 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. 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 College committee 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.

Further advice

For further advice with regard to interruptions and extensions please contact the relevant College Postgraduate Office.

College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
[www.ed.ac.uk/arts-humanities-soc-sci](http://www.ed.ac.uk/arts-humanities-soc-sci)

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/medicine-vet-medicine/](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/medicine-vet-medicine/)

College of Science and Engineering
[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/science-engineering](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/science-engineering)

25 October 2016