

[PGR Sick Leave and Parental Leave Policies for University-funded Scholarship holders](#)

This is information about the newly introduced funded sick leave and parental leave policies for University funded PhD students, which come into effect from 1st August 2022. Here you can find information about eligibility criteria, amounts of funding available and how to apply for these funds.

1. Eligibility

From 1st August 2022, matriculated PhD students in receipt of a School, College or University-funded PhD Scholarship are eligible to receive Sick Leave, Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Adoption Leave or Unpaid Parental Leave. This includes the following PhD scholarships:

College Research Award
Edinburgh Doctoral College Scholarship
Principal Careers Development Scholarship
Arts and Humanities Research Council Scholarships
Economic and Social Research Council Studentships
HCA School Doctoral Scholarship

Students are also eligible where they are in receipt of a scholarship where the stipend is administered by the University, e.g. funding from an industrial partner or charity, and the funder has indicated that funded leave cannot be provided. The funder must be asked whether they can cover this in first instance; paid leave will only be provided where they have confirmed that they cannot do so.

Eligibility applies from the point of initial matriculation on the relevant programme, until the end of the approved funding period. Students must be fully matriculated at the point of submitting their request. Students who remain fully matriculated and on programme but are beyond their funded period are not eligible for paid leave. If the initial submission of the thesis is made during the funded period, the requirement to provide funded leave under this policy ends at the point of submission.

The policy comes into effect from 1st August 2022 for all new requests and the policy does not apply to retrospective claims for leave taken before 1st August 2022. Students who started their leave prior to 1st August 2022 will not be entitled to funding under these policies, even if the leave extends beyond 1st August 2022.

Part-time or part-funded students should expect to receive any payments to which they are entitled on a pro-rata basis and in the case of part-funded students, they will only be entitled to funding for the part of the studentship provided or administered by the University.

Students are only eligible to receive one type of paid leave at a time. For example, a student who is in receipt of paid maternity leave is not eligible to also receive paid sick leave during that same period.

Visa Sponsored Students

Students with a Tier 4 or Student Route visa who request leave under these policies **should contact the [Student Immigration Service](#) as early as possible for guidance** as to any impact that taking leave will have on their visa and to ensure that compliance can be maintained.

Students with a University of Edinburgh Staff Contract

Students who are paid a salary from the University in addition to receiving a studentship, e.g. those employed as Tutors and Demonstrators or Research Assistants, will be entitled to receive full paid

leave through the relevant staff policy in addition to receiving the full provision of paid leave that they are entitled to under these policies. Leave does not need to be split between the two routes.

Students who are paid their studentship as a salary, e.g. those with a Marie Curie Fellowship, Clinical Research Fellows and ECAT Fellows, are only eligible for paid leave through the relevant staff policy. They are not eligible for paid leave under the Research Student Sick Leave or Maternity and Parental Leave Policies.

Students with a staff contract should review the relevant University HR policies below and should contact the relevant School HR contact to discuss further.

Research Student Sick Leave Policy

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/policies-guidance/leave-absence/absence>

Research Student Maternity and Parental Leave Policy

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/policies-guidance/leave-absence/family-leave>

2. Sick leave and Parental leave funding

Sick leave

Eligible students who are unfit to study may receive stipend payments at their current payment rate for a period of absence, of **longer than 7 days** and up to a **maximum of 13 weeks within any 12-month period** and where the absence is supported by a medical certificate.

This applies both to students who fall sick and to those with a long-term condition for which an acute episode requires that they take time off their study. Multiple periods of sick leave within the 12-month period are permitted up to a combined total of 13 weeks and do not need to run consecutively.

Sick leave funding is not a direct payment made to the student at the point of illness. Instead, the policy allows the normal stipend payment to continue during the absence (up to 13 weeks) and the funding is extended at the end of their funded period to account for all periods of approved sick leave taken, rounded down to the nearest whole month.

A medical certificate must be provided for sick leave to be approved. This should be from a GP or an appropriate professional relative to the medical issue, e.g. a letter from a psychologist would be appropriate for a mental health issue. Medical certification must be signed (electronic signatures are accepted), in English, and cover the entire duration of the period of sick leave (less the first week, where self-certification will be accepted).

If an eligible student on a current period of sick leave requires that period of sick leave to be extended, additional medical certification covering the additional period of sickness absence is required.

Where sick leave specifically relates to a disability that is formally disclosed to the University via a Schedule of Adjustment, additional medical certification is not required to be provided. Requests for funded sick leave that relate to a disclosed disability will be considered in conjunction with any Reasonable Adjustments already in place through the Student Disability Service.

Sick leave cannot be provided where a student is not sick themselves and needs to be absent to care for a sick dependent. In this situation, you can request an interruption of studies through the usual process. Sick leave also cannot be provided where a student has suffered from a bereavement, except where the bereavement has had a detrimental impact on the student's health, as evidenced by an appropriate medical certificate.

Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Unpaid Parental Leave

There is no qualifying period for maternity, paternity or adoption leave but only new requests submitted from 1st August 2022 onwards can be considered under this policy. For parental leave, the expected week of childbirth must occur during the student's funded period.

Maternity leave - Students are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave if the expected week of childbirth will occur during their funded period. The earliest Maternity leave can commence is 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. Depending on how long a student interrupts for maternity leave, the first 26 weeks will be paid at full stipend rate, pro-rated as necessary for part time students. The following 13 weeks will be paid at a level commensurate with statutory maternity pay (£156.66 per week for full-time students and 90% of weekly stipend for part-time students) and the final 13 weeks are unfunded.

Paternity leave - students are entitled to up to two weeks paid Ordinary Paternity Leave on full stipend. Ordinary Paternity Leave cannot start before the birth and must end within 56 days of the birth.

Adoption leave – this will be granted on the same basis as maternity leave.

Unpaid parental leave - Students are entitled to take up to a maximum of 50 weeks' unpaid parental leave and the leave must be completed within 12 months of the birth of the child. Your stipend payments will be paused during the leave and then resumed upon your return to study. Therefore, you will not receive any additional stipend payments but the length of the leave requested will extend your funding end date.

3. Application process

In order to request these funds, students must apply for an Authorised Interruption of Study.

Students with a Tier 4 or Student Route visa must contact the [Student Immigration Service](#) as early as possible for guidance as to any impact that taking leave will have on their visa and to ensure that compliance can be maintained.

Sick leave – Students should apply to their School for an [Authorised Interruption of study](#) and provide medical evidence as part of this application. Where sick leave claims are less than 1 month, the concession will still be considered by College. If approved, students will be notified and although no interruption will be recorded on EUCLID, local funding notes will document the extension of the award by the weeks approved as funded sick leave.

All parental leave – Students should apply to their School for an [Authorised Interruption of study](#) and supply the relevant supporting documents e.g MATB1 form / Maternity Certificate / letter from the adoption agency.

4. Notification

The University team responsible for administering your stipend payments will notify you, via email, with the outcome of your request.

5. Contact us

If you have any queries about the policy or application process, please contact the Graduate School Office by emailing GradSchool.HCA@ed.ac.uk.