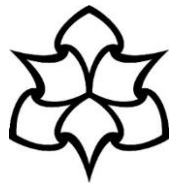


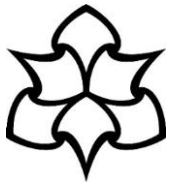
Guidance on Concessions

Contents

New from academic year 2020-2021	1
Introduction	1
1. Interruptions	2
1.1 Definition of Interruption	2
1.2 Summary of Process	2
1.2.1 Length of interruption	2
1.2.2 Leave of Absence	2
1.2.3 Annual Leave.....	3
1.3 Categories of Interruption	3
1.3.1 Interruption for medical reasons (including personal family reasons)	3
1.3.2 Interruption for non-medical reasons	3
1.4 Implications of Interrupting Studies	4
1.4.1 Funding	4
1.4.2 Access to university facilities	4
1.5 International Students	5
1.6 Applying for an Interruption	5
1.7 Failure to return from an interruption	5
1.8 Extension to an interruption.....	5
1.9 Failure to make satisfactory progress.....	6
1.10 Retrospective Applications	6
1.10 Compulsory suspension from the University	6
2. Extensions	6
2.1 Definition of Extension	6
2.2 Applying for an extension to the maximum period of registration	6
2.2.1 Reasons for an extension.....	7
2.2.2 Evidence requirements.....	8
2.2.3 Work plan & Degree Outcomes.....	8
2.3 Extension time limits.....	8



2.4	Outcome of the extension request.....	8
2.5	Implications of extending studies	9
2.5.1	Financial	9
2.5.2	Sponsor or professional requirements	9
2.5.3	Withdrawal of registration	9
2.5.4	International students	9
3.	Support for students.....	9



New from academic year 2020-2021

The Guidance on Concessions (Interruptions and Extensions) are reviewed annually. Changes may be made throughout the year if required, so please refer to the [Graduate School website](#) for the latest version of this document.

The document is owned and updated by the Manchester Metropolitan University Graduate School on behalf of Academic Board. Queries should be directed to the [Graduate School](#).

Introduction

Manchester Metropolitan University produces a suite of documents that outline the formal regulations and procedures for postgraduate research degrees.

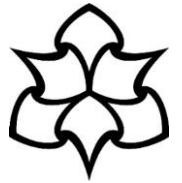
The Guidance on Concessions provides the operational detail to support research students to request a concession to the regulations. Concessions include:

- an extension to their studies. This is where a student requires additional time to submit their thesis due to exceptional factors)
- an interruption their studies (where a student is requires a limited period of time away from their studies due to exceptional factors). For exceptional factors relating to a milestone, research students should refer to the [Procedure for the Consideration of Exceptional Factors](#)

An interruption of study is a break from studies which is requested by a student. In limited circumstances a student may be subject to a compulsory suspension. See section 1.11 for further information.

This document should be read alongside the regulations and the other supporting documentation available on the [Graduate School webpages](#).

Version	1		
Document Title:	Guidance on Concessions		
Author Name:	The Graduate School		
Equality Impact Assessment			
Approved By:	Research Degrees Committee		
Implementation Date	October 2020		
Amendments since approval	Details of Revision	Date of Revision	Revisions approved by:



1. Interruptions

1.1 Definition of Interruption

An interruption is a recognised and approved break from a student's research when no academic engagement occurs.

1.2 Summary of Process

When exceptional circumstances prevent a student from making progress with their research during their period of supervised study, they can request an authorised temporary break of study (known as an interruption) for approval through the Graduate School.

Students should discuss their intention to request an interruption with their Principal Supervisor in the first instance, before completing and submitting an Application for Interruption in SkillsForge. A formal request for an interruption must be submitted no later than 4 weeks prior to the proposed start date of the interruption to allow sufficient time for the request to be considered. In the case of emergencies which unexpectedly require students to interrupt their study, this timescale may be shorter.

Please note a student can request an interruption of study, but there is no guarantee that an interruption will be granted. Approval will be dependent on the circumstances and the evidence provided.

Interruptions are not permitted during a student's writing up or extension period.

If a student's application for interruption is approved, the student will be notified via email. The student will also be notified of their revised thesis submission date. Students will also be notified of their revised thesis submission date.

The student should make contact with the Graduate School and their Principal Supervisor prior to their return to study. If there has been no contact from the student, the Principal Supervisor should make contact with the student four weeks prior to the expected return date.

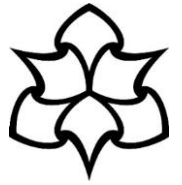
1.2.1 Length of interruption

An interruption will normally only be considered for approval for a minimum period of one month and a maximum period of 6 months at any given time. The total length of interruptions is detailed in the [degree regulations](#) for the degree the student is registered on.

1.2.2 Leave of Absence

For short periods of absence up to 28 days where an interruption is not appropriate (e.g. to return home urgently following an immediate family emergency), students must obtain approval from their Principal Supervisor for an authorised leave of absence. The leave of absence will be recorded as annual leave (see 1.2.3). Students must ensure that they keep the Graduate School up to date regarding their plans.

Prior to submission, international students will need to contact the [International Office](#) to discuss the options available to them depending on how long they would need to be absent. Students will be required to complete and submit a 'Change of Study Address' form (available on request) to the International Office who will be able to guide them on whether they will need to apply for a new visa.



1.2.3 Annual Leave

Postgraduate research students are entitled to apply for seven weeks of annual leave in each year. Students must obtain the prior approval of their Principal Supervisor. Postgraduate research students with funding, for example those sponsored by UKRI, must check whether a lower annual leave limit applies from the funding body.

Prior to arranging annual leave, international students will need to contact the [International Office](#) to discuss the options available to them depending on how long they intend to be absent. Students will be required to complete and submit a 'Change of Study Address' form (available on request) to the International Office who will be able to guide them on whether they will need to apply for a new visa.

1.3 Categories of Interruption

An interruption may be requested due to both medical and non-medical reasons. Each application will be judged on an individual basis. Cases relating to illness should use the interruption procedure rather than extension procedure.

In cases of long-term health issues or disability students should speak with their Principal Supervisor and with the Student Disability Service. The Disability Service will discuss with the student whether a [Personal Learning Plan \(PLP\)](#) would be helpful to identify ongoing support for engagement with their programme of study. The PLP makes recommendations for 'reasonable adjustments' or additional support that can be put in place to assist a student with a disability with their studies.

1.3.1 Interruption for medical reasons (including personal family reasons)

Medical evidence is required for all health-related interruptions. Medical reasons include:

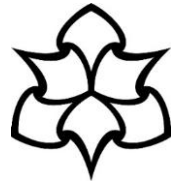
- Ill health (for periods exceeding one month in duration)
- Ongoing health issues which mean the student is not able to make satisfactory progress with their studies

Following an interruption on medical grounds, students will be required to submit a medical certificate confirming that they are fit to return before return to study.

1.3.2 Interruption for non-medical reasons

Examples of non-medical reasons for an interruption include:

- Caring responsibilities
- Illness of a dependent or a close family member
- Maternity, paternity and/or adoption leave. For maternity, paternity and adoption leave, statutory guidelines must be followed in accordance with the [University's Student Pregnancy and Maternity Guidelines](#). As early as possible in the pregnancy/adoption process, students are advised to discuss with a suitable member of staff (for example their Principal Supervisor) the most appropriate options for supporting them. University-funded students should also refer to the [Guidance on Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave for Postgraduate Research Students](#).
- Competitive sports. The category of 'Competitive Sport' should be used where a student needs to take an Interruption to compete at international level, without disadvantaging their academic studies.



- Sabbatical Officer
- Career – a change in work circumstances (e.g. promotion or a new job). Students must demonstrate their increased workload responsibilities, and the adverse impact of this on their studies. A request on these grounds must demonstrate that the increased workload is for a temporary period of time and therefore they will be able to return to their studies.
- Being a victim of crime
- Attendance at court for jury service or as a witness
- Bereavement
- Personal problems, for example court proceedings or separation from a spouse or partner
- Financial hardship

1.4 Implications of Interrupting Studies

1.4.1 Funding

Students in receipt of funding must check their funding agreement and discuss and agree with their sponsor before applying for an interruption of study to understand whether funding conditions permit an interruption and whether an interruption will impact on stipend payments.

Students who are funded by a UK Research Council must contact the [Graduate School](#) to discuss an interruption request prior to submission.

Students who are funded by a UK Research Council (e.g. White Rose or NorthWest Consortium Doctoral Training Partnerships) should contact the [Graduate School](#) to discuss their eligibility for maternity, paternity, adoption and sick leave payments.

Students who are funded through an internal Manchester Met studentship should refer to the [Guidance on Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave for Postgraduate Research Students](#).

Where a payment has already been made, students may be required to return payments for a period now covered by an interruption.

Tuition fees will not be charged during an authorised interruption.

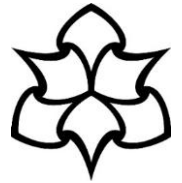
1.4.2 Access to university facilities

During the period of interruption, students will be unable to access the following University facilities/resources:

- Library
- University provision, such as teaching, tutorials and academic supervision
- University accommodation
- University counselling services
- VLE and e-learning
- University student email account. Students are therefore advised to ensure that the Graduate School has been notified of an alternative email address for them.
- Academic support from their supervisory team

While on interruption, students will not be covered by University insurance.

Any pre-existing University processes (such as investigations into plagiarism, fitness to practise, misconduct, etc.) will normally continue during an approved Interruption.



1.5 International Students

The right to remain in the UK for international students will be affected by an interruption. As a Home Office Tier 4 sponsor, the University is legally required to report any changes to a student's status to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). This includes interruptions of study (sometimes referred to as a suspension). Students that are in the UK on a Tier 4 visa sponsored by the University must seek advice from the [International Office](#) prior to submitting a request.

Further advice on visa requirements is available on the [Visas and Immigration](#) webpages.

1.6 Applying for an Interruption

To apply for an interruption, students must complete an Application to Interrupt form in SkillsForge.

All interruption requests must be accompanied by appropriate and sufficient documentary evidence to support the application.

Interruption on appropriately evidenced medical grounds will normally be approved within the limits of the maximum period of interruption. Medical evidence should normally be provided by a UK registered medical professional. Where medical evidence is from a non-UK registered medical professional and is not in English, a certified translation must be provided by the student.

Examples of acceptable evidence for non-medical requests include:

- Death certificates for bereavement
- Crime numbers for victims of crime situations
- Third party medical certificates relating to serious illness in the immediate family

1.7 Failure to return from an interruption

A student will be deemed to have withdrawn from the University if they do not return to study by the approved end date of the interruption, and they have not applied for an extension to the Interruption. See the [Policy for Postgraduate Research Student Withdrawal](#) for further details.

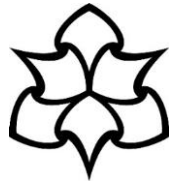
A student's withdrawal in these circumstances shall not affect their liability to pay unpaid tuition fees, other fees or charges.

1.8 Extension to an interruption

An interruption will normally be approved for a maximum period of 12 months. If a student is unable to return to their studies at the end of the interruption, they will need to submit a new Application to Interrupt with new and up-to-date supporting evidence. As the student will not be able to access their student accounts while interrupted, they will need to contact the Graduate School to request the application for interruption form. Please note that the evidence that a student submitted to support their original interruption request cannot be used when requesting a new interruption.

Applications will normally be rejected if the total amount of Interruption exceeds 24 months throughout the duration of their studies.

Requests for an extension to an interruption of studies will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Multiple requests may indicate that the research may be out of date, and that any further interruption is likely to be detrimental to progress. Further interruption requests may be refused.



1.9 Failure to make satisfactory progress

If a student is not making significant progress on their research the [Procedure to Support Postgraduate Progress](#) may be instigated.

1.10 Retrospective Applications

Retrospective applications for interruption will not normally be considered. An application may be considered in exceptional circumstances, and where it was not possible to make an application for interruption prior to the period for which the interruption is requested. A retrospective request for an interruption must include an explanation from the student as to why the request was not submitted within the appropriate timeframe.

1.10 Compulsory suspension from the University

A student may be suspended by the university for reasons of academic or personal misconduct or non-payment of fees. Postgraduate research students should refer to the [regulations](#) for their programme for further details.

2. Extensions

2.1 Definition of Extension

An extension is a recognised and approved period beyond the end of a student's maximum period of registration.

Postgraduate research students are expected to submit within the maximum period of registration for their programme as detailed in the [regulations for the programme](#). Extensions beyond the maximum registration period are only allowed in exceptional circumstances.

Extensions to the period allowed for revisions or resubmission are covered by the [Procedure for Consideration for Exceptional Factors](#).

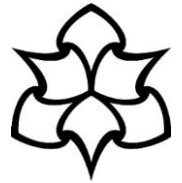
Extensions to milestones, assessments for taught units and corrections are covered by the [Procedure for the consideration of Exceptional Factors](#).

2.2 Applying for an extension to the maximum period of registration

Where for exceptional reasons a student is unable to submit by the maximum period of registration and requires a short period of additional time, they must complete the Extension of Period of Registration form in SkillsForge. The form must be accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence to support the application.

An application for an extension to the deadline date should normally be submitted at least three months before the end of the maximum registration period. Where there are exceptional circumstances, a retrospective request for an extension may be considered, and must include an explanation from the student as to why the request was not submitted within the appropriate timeframe.

To apply for an extension, a student will need to demonstrate that they are very near to submitting their thesis and that a short period of extension will allow them to submit. The request must clearly outline that the majority of [degree outcomes](#) have already been met and outline how the remaining



outcomes will be met during the extension period. This will include the submission of a detailed work plan. Students should provide this information using the [Extension Request Form](#) and upload it in the supporting documentation field of the Extension of Period of Registration form in SkillsForge.

Funded students should confirm with their funding bodies if there is any impact on funder requirements before applying for an extension.

2.2.1 Reasons for an extension

The reasons for an extension should be based on severe, unexpected, relevant and evidenced exceptional factors around the time of the deadline. These should be unforeseeable, and outside of the student's control. Any factor which occurred earlier in the student's registration which could have been addressed at the time, for example by a Leave of Absence or Interruption are unlikely to be considered as an acceptable reason for an extension.

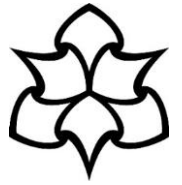
Students with long-term health issues or a disability should speak with their Principal Supervisor and contact Disability Services at an early stage of their studies to explore whether they would be eligible for a Personal Learning Plan (PLP). The PLP makes recommendations for 'reasonable adjustments' or additional support that can be put in place to assist a research student with a disability with their studies.

Some examples of what might be considered a valid exceptional factor are listed below. These would need to be fully evidenced and must have affected the student's ability to submit the information by the maximum registration period, and should have occurred during the write up period.

- Delays in progress with research studies due to the lack of required University resources (e.g. essential laboratory equipment, software etc.), or changes in supervision which are outside of the student's control. Any problems must have been reported at the time, and alternatives explored in order to avoid an extension being requested
- Sudden illness or injury during the period near the submission date
- A significant worsening of a long-term health condition or disability
- Bereavement of a close relative or friend near the submission date
- Unexpected illness of a close family member which requires the student to look after them or significantly impacts the student's health or well being
- Being the victim of a crime.

The following are not considered exceptional factors and will not be accepted as valid grounds for an extension:

- Inadequate time management, not submitting chapters or drafts in time for the supervisor to review, not allowing sufficient time to address any issues raised in Turnitin reports
- A history of poor academic progress
- To carry out additional primary research or studio/laboratory work
- Writing papers or carrying out additional work for the supervisory team or department
- Non-availability of books or journals
- Not backing up the thesis electronically; students are expected to take appropriate precautions to back their work up.



- A long-standing condition for which the student has a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) in place where reasonable adjustments have been put in place which fully mitigate the impact of the long-standing condition
- Financial problems
- Visa issues
- Holidays, house moves, family celebrations or other events where a student has control over the date or could choose not to participate
- Problems with postal delivery of the thesis (students are advised to obtain receipts if submitting by post)
- Normal work commitments reducing time available for research
- Long-standing appointments (legal, medical, etc.) which could be re-arranged
- Ongoing caring responsibilities
- Requirement to improve language skills.

2.2.2 Evidence requirements

All applications for extensions should be accompanied by appropriate and sufficient supporting evidence of impact.

Supporting evidence should normally be submitted at the same time as the application form. If this is not possible, students must clearly indicate the reasons for the delay on the form. Where a student does not wish to submit the evidence with the form due to the sensitive nature of the evidence they should state it on the form and contact the [Graduate School](#) for advice.

Supporting evidence should normally be provided in English. Where supporting evidence is not in English, a certified translation must be provided by the student.

2.2.3 Work plan & Degree Outcomes

All applications for extensions must be accompanied by an [Extension Request Form](#) and work plan to demonstrate how the requested period will be used effectively in order to meet the [degree outcomes](#) for the award.

A student's work plan should provide a schedule of the outstanding work and the timeframe for completing each section.

Extension requests without an [Extension Request Form](#), a completed work plan, or insufficient detail, will not be rejected and the student asked to resubmit with the appropriate evidence.

2.3 Extension time limits

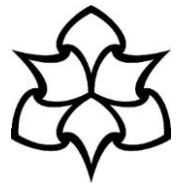
Extensions are normally for periods of up to three months. The length of the extension request must bear a close relationship to the grounds cited, and appropriate documentary evidence must be provided.

The maximum total extension period is a total of 12 months. 16. Application outcomes

2.4 Outcome of the extension request

Where the application is approved, the student will be notified via email of the revised deadline date.

Extension requests may be refused where, for example:



- Inadequate reasons are given for seeking an extension
- Acceptable evidence has not been provided
- A work plan has not been provided or the work plan does not provide sufficient details to justify the requested extension period
- The [degree outcomes](#) have been met and the additional time would be used for supplementary work

2.5 Implications of extending studies

2.5.1 Financial

A student's tuition fees will be adjusted in accordance with the [Regulations for the Payment of University Fees and other related Financial Information](#).

Details of the fee and other University fees can be found in the Financial Services document [Regulations for the Payment of University Fees and other related Financial Information](#) for Postgraduate Research Students.

2.5.2 Sponsor or professional requirements

The extension period is beyond the student's maximum period of registration, and is therefore not generally funded by sponsors. Students who have been in receipt of funding during their studies should confirm with their funding body any implications of an extension in advance of applying.

Students should make themselves aware of any additional accreditation, professional, disciplinary or sponsor-related requirements that may affect their extension request before they apply.

2.5.3 Withdrawal of registration

Where the student does not meet thesis submission or resubmission deadline date, or the deadline for submission of corrections or a revised thesis, and the requirements for the award have not been completed, students will be deemed to have withdrawn. See the [Policy for Postgraduate Research Student Withdrawal](#) for further details.

2.5.4 International students

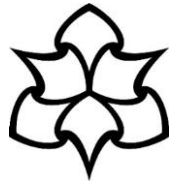
Manchester Metropolitan University has been granted a Home Office Tier 4 Sponsor Licence and must ensure that it complies with the conditions of the licence.

International Students who are sponsored by the University under its Tier 4 Sponsor Licence are required to meet monthly contact points during their extension period and keep their contact details up to date via the Graduate School. International students who are intending to stay in the UK for the duration of the requested extension must contact the [International Office](#) for guidance in advance of applying for an extension to ensure they do so in accordance with the requirements of their visa.

For international students who return home during the approved extension period, they must notify the [Graduate School](#) and the [International Office](#) and update their contact details (address, telephone and email).

3. Support for students

Students can get further support from the following University services:



- [Students' Union Advice Centre, s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk), +44 (0)161 247 6533
- [Student Hub](#)
- [Disability Service, disability.service@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:disability.service@mmu.ac.uk), +44(0)161 247 3491
- [International Office Visas and Immigration](#), +44 (0)161 247 2000 (students should provide their Manchester Met Student ID number in any correspondence).
- [Counselling Service](#) +44 (0)161 247 3493