Taught Degrees

Suspension Request

Where a student is unable to study and/or their academic performance may be affected adversely by exceptional circumstances, they should consider applying for a suspension of studies. Students do not have the automatic right to suspend their studies; a formal request to do so must be submitted to the University on the approved Special Cases Request form.

Students who have suspended studies are NOT entitled to use the following services:

- Collaborative Centre and University Library services;
- Collaborative Centre Computing Services/ Network System;
- Students' Union;
- Workspace provided by the Collaborative Centre, and
- To seek support/advise from academic staff on studies

Changes in the student's status may affect funding/benefits for which the student may be eligible. Students should be responsible for determining these matters, for example, students who have suspended their studies may not be entitled to Council Tax exemption.

If a student is from overseas, a suspension from studies may have serious implications for his/her immigration status and he/she may not be permitted to remain in the UK for the duration of the suspension of studies. It is the responsibility of the students to seek appropriate advice on these matters.

Grounds for suspension

The following grounds for suspension are recognised regularly by the University:

- Health or Medical grounds (including periods of illness exceeding 12 weeks);
- Maternity leave (9 months in the first instance, but can be up to 12 months);
- Jury service or compulsory military service;
- Compassionate leave (including bereavement and serious domestic difficulties);
- Exceptional Professional Commitments (including periods where the student has worked over and above the normal expectation by the employer);

Procedure for requesting a suspension

The University will receive and consider suspension requests sympathetically but a detailed case has to be made in every case. The student must first discuss his/her situation with the Collaborative Centre at which they are registered before making the decision to submit an application. The student must complete all relevant sections on the form and ensure that the grounds for suspension are clearly marked and that appropriate independent supporting evidence is provided including a schedule of completion. Any documents submitted in a language other than English must be translated by a translator and be certified by them as being accurate..

In the first instance, the Collaborative Centre must stipulate, with reasons whether they support the application. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

All requests must be made in a timely manner and received before the student has exceeded the programme duration. Normally, applications for suspension should not be made retrospectively.

Usually, students will be permitted a maximum of up to 12 months approved suspension over the total length of candidature. If a period of suspension of greater than 12 months is required, it is recommended that the student should consider a voluntary withdrawal from the programme.

If the suspension is approved, its period of duration will be added to the total programme duration and a new time limit of completion will result. Centres should be sure that students understand this, and that they are given confirmation of the new deadline.

A student who suspends studies should be aware that it may not be possible to continue to work with exactly the same supervisory team upon resumption of studies, and that neither the University nor Centre can guarantee that the Collaborative Centre will be operating upon any return to studies. In such cases the University will endeavor to ensure that the student is provided with a transcript and/or exit award, where applicable to help the student seek to transfer to a new institution of their choice to complete their studies, should they wish to do so.

Applications for an Extension to Suspension

If a student wishes to extend the period of suspension beyond the specified return to study date, a further application must be submitted which gives a detailed explanation of the need for the further period of suspension.

The University will receive and consider such requests sympathetically but cannot guarantee that it will be accepted.

Return to study

If a student wishes to return to study earlier than the specified return to study date, the University must be informed, so that the student's record can be updated.

If a student has suspended studies for health reasons, confirmation that he/she is fit to resume his/her study must be provided by the student's GP or hospital department.

Failure to Resume Study

Where a student fails to resume study by the specified return to study date, the University will assume that the student has withdrawn from the University and the student's record will be closed. In such cases the University will endeavor to ensure that the student is provided with a transcript and/or exit award, where applicable to help the student seek to transfer to a new institution of their choice to complete their studies, should they wish to do so.

Extension Request

Where a student is studying actively and where their performance is not necessarily adversely affected but the time the student is able to dedicate to studies is affected by changes to their circumstances, an extension request should be considered.

The expectation is that the overwhelming majority of students will complete their programme within the time limit laid down by regulation. A student's time limit may be extended in exceptional cases only and such an extension can only be authorised by the University's Special Cases Committee.

Grounds for Extension

Requests for an extension to candidature typically may be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- Health or Medical Grounds;
- Compassionate Leave (including serious domestic difficulties);
- Exceptional Professional Commitments (including periods where the student has worked over and above the normal expectation by the employer);

Procedure for requesting an extension

The student must first discuss the deadline for studies with the Collaborative at which they are registered and ensure that all possible steps are being taken to allow that the student is able to complete within the time limit. If both the student and Collaborative Centre feel that there is a need for an extension (and that all necessary criteria can be met), the student must complete a Special Case Request form.

The University will receive and consider extension requests sympathetically but a detailed case has to be made in every case.

The student must complete all relevant sections on the form, the following documentation **must** accompany all requests:

- a clear statement from the Collaborative Centre providing an evaluation of the student's progress to date, and the situation as a result of the exceptional circumstances;
- a work plan detailing how the student will be ready for submission by the end of the requested extension period;
- independent evidence supporting the need for an extension;

Any documents submitted in a language other than English must be translated by a translator and be certified by them as being accurate.

The documentation should indicate how the grounds cited have adversely affected the student's work and progress. General statements that do not link the grounds cited to the student's ability to work and progress would not be considered as acceptable evidence.

In The first instance, the Collaborative Centre must consider the request and stipulate, with reasons, whether they support it. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

All requests must be made in a timely manner and received before the student has exceeded the programme duration. Normally, applications for extension should not be made retrospectively.

The University would expect a maximum of one extension request to suffice in most circumstances and, if the student wishes a further extension beyond the original extension, a further application accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation must be submitted which gives a detailed explanation of the need for a further period of extension. The University will receive and consider such requests sympathetically but cannot guarantee that they would be accepted.

Normally, students are only permitted a maximum of 12 months approved extension over the total programme duration. If an extension greater than 12 months is required, the documentation must be explicit and address the reasons for this.

The Research Degrees Committee will monitor and manage students and supervisors with extension requests in order to ensure that they are being adequately supported, but also that they are continuing to work towards completion.

The University will aim to review requests within 6 weeks of receipt.