

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH HANDBOOK

Chapter 5 - Periods of registration and changes to registration status for Postgraduate Research students

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement provides information regarding changes pertaining to a student's registration status, and in particular, specifies options open to students and their Faculties when problems arise in the management of the research, with reference to the timeframe for completion of postgraduate research degrees, which it lays out in detail.
- 1.2. Where students are funded by a Research Council, or other sponsorship body, the procedures outlined in this document are necessarily subordinated to those of the sponsor.
- 1.3. Where International Students are granted a visa to study in the UK, the procedures outlined in this document are necessarily subordinated to those of the UK Home Office.

- 1.4. Students enrolled on Professional Doctorate programmes **should** also refer to the [TQA LTS Handbook](#) regarding changes to their programme (including interruptions, extensions, changes to mode of attendance etc.) as any changes in study may impact progression on taught modules.

2. Periods of Study (for students starting before the academic year 2019-20)

See [Appendix 1](#) for students who commenced their studies before October 2009

- 2.1. The following scheme will apply:

Periods of Study ¹ for PGR degrees starting before the 2019/20 academic year				
	PT: Min	PT: Max	FT: Min	FT ² : Max
PhD ³	n/a	7 years ⁴	n/a	4 years ⁴
PhD by Publication	n/a	2 years	n/a	2 years
MPhil	n/a	5 years ⁴	n/a	3 years ⁴
MPhil by Publication	n/a	2 years ⁴	n/a	2 years ⁴
MbyRes	n/a	3 years ⁴	n/a	2 years ⁴
MbyRes by Publication	n/a	1 year	n/a	1 year
EdD	n/a	7 years	n/a	4 years
EngD	n/a	7 years ⁴	n/a	4 years ⁴
DClinPsy	n/a	n/a	3 years	3 years
DClinRes/DClin Prac	3 years ⁵	6 years ⁵	n/a	n/a
MD ³	n/a	5 years ⁴	n/a	3 years ⁴
MS ³	n/a	5 years ⁴	n/a	3 years ⁴
DEdPsy	n/a	n/a	3 years	3 years
DD/DEng/LLD/DLitt/DSc	No stipulated period of study			

¹ Your period of study is measured from the date of your initial registration until award of your programme, disregarding any interruptions or withdrawal from the programme.

² FT will include for this purpose, Postgraduate Research Assistants on Research Grants registered for PT PhDs; Postgraduate Research Assistants; Postgraduate Teaching Assistants.

³ Students on Four Year PhD programmes must observe the minimum period of study requirements associated with the Regulations governing the Masters programme specified in the Programme of Study.

⁴ All maximum periods of study may include up to twelve months continuation status.

⁵ Candidates for the DClin Res/DClin Prac register on a part-time basis: candidates registered on these programmes will be health professionals who will undertake research as part of their working duties, which will contribute towards meeting the programme outcomes.

3. Period of Study (for students starting from the academic year 2019-20)

3.1. The following scheme will apply:

Periods of Study for PGR degrees starting before the 2019/20 academic year		
Full-time ⁶ :	Min (years)	Max (years)
PhD (Doctor of Philosophy)	n/a ⁷	4
PhD (Integrated Doctor of Philosophy - with 1 year Taught Phase)	1 year: Taught Phase N/A: Research Phase	5
PhD (Integrated Doctor of Philosophy) - with 2 year Taught Phase	2 years: Taught Phase N/A: Research Phase	6
PhD by Publication	n/a	2
MPhil	n/a	3
MPhil by Publication	n/a	2
MbyRes	n/a	2
MbyRes by Publication	n/a	1
EdD	n/a	4
EngD	n/a	4
MD	n/a	3
MS	n/a	3
DEdPsy	3	3
DClinPsy	3	3
DClinRes/ DClinPrac/ DClinPrac(Res)/ DPPClinPrac	These part-time programmes have a minimum study period of 4 years and maximum of 6 years ⁸	
DForenPsy	3 years full-time	
DBA	Maximum 5-years part-time	
DD/DEng/LLD/DLitt/DSc	No stipulated period of study	

⁶ FT will include for this purpose, Postgraduate Research Assistants on Research Grants registered for PT PhDs; Postgraduate Research Assistants; Postgraduate Teaching Assistants.

⁷ Students on Four Year PhD programmes must observe the minimum period of study requirements associated with the Regulations governing the Masters programme specified in the Programme of Study.

⁸ Candidates for the DClin Res/DClin Prac/DClin Prac (Res)/ DPPClinPrac register on a part-time basis: candidates registered on these programmes will be health professionals who will undertake research as part of their working duties, which will contribute towards meeting the programme outcomes.

3.2. Your period of study is:

3.2.1. Measured from the date of your initial registration, disregarding any interruptions, until submission of your thesis, or withdrawal from the programme.

Where the maximum submission date falls on a date upon which the University is not open it will not be counted as a failure to submit if submission takes place on the first working day after the closure period.

3.2.2. Calculated as a pro-rata equivalent of the full-time period of study for the programme upon which the student is registered, if registered on a part-time basis.

3.2.3. Calculated on the basis of a 37.5 hour working week for full-time students, and the pro-rata equivalent for part-time students.

3.3. Where the student's funding period is shorter than the maximum period of study given, the student and supervisory team **should** plan for submission by the funding end date. Disciplinary norms **may** also dictate planning to submit within a shorter time-period than the maximum periods given above for self-funded students.

3.4. The periods of study given above provide the maximum period of study for the programme in question, unless an extension to the maximum period of study (and to your period of continuation status, where applicable) has been granted (see [Extensions to Study](#) below). As extensions are only granted under exceptional circumstances students are expected to plan appropriately to manage their research project within the time period given. Students who have not received an extension and have not submitted within their maximum period of study **should** normally be deemed to be making unsatisfactory progress (see [Students deemed Withdrawn](#) below).

4. Interruption of Studies

International Students who are Student visa holders: interrupting your studies can have serious consequences for your immigration status as the University **may** be required to report this interruption to the Home Office. This will lead to the curtailment of your visa. It is important that you receive advice on the implications of your decision, which you can access by contacting [International Student Community & Support](#). The circumstances in which the University will report your interruption to the Home Office are outlined [here](#).

In cases where a student subject to immigration control is unable to demonstrate that they have valid immigration permission, the student will be advised to take a period of interruption until they can demonstrate that they have obtained this permission. If the student does not take a voluntary interruption, the University **may** invoke a period of interruption. This will be initiated by the Immigration Compliance Unit but will then follow the standard interruption request procedure. The period of interruption will end when the student is able to demonstrate that they have valid immigration permission. If the student is not able to demonstrate this within 28 days then the student will be referred for withdrawal.

All students in receipt of funding, whether that is through the University of Exeter, a Research Council, a Student Loan or any other financial sponsorship, **must** check whether interruption of studies is allowed under the terms and conditions of their funding. It is the student's responsibility to check these conditions ahead of requesting to change status.

Students enrolled on a Professional Doctorate programme are advised to also refer to the [TQA LTS Handbook](#) regarding interruptions as any breaks in study may impact progression on taught modules.

- 4.1. The University defines interruption of studies to mean an entire of cessation of academic work for a specific period. Periods of interruption do not count towards the timeframe for completion of the degree and can be considered as a suspension of normal academic requirements. During a period of interruption, a student does not undertake academic study, and will not receive supervision. A student's registration will be suspended until they re-register and resume their studies.
- 4.2. The University permits interruptions of study with good cause, which normally means of positive benefit to a programme of study for personal, pregnancy/family, financial, medical or disability-related circumstances. Students should note that interruptions of study **should** only be granted when academically viable, where this is not the case a student **should** be required to withdraw but **may** apply to reinstate their registration at a later date (see [Reinstatement of Registration](#) below).

- 4.3. Interruptions on medical grounds **should** be supported by clear medical evidence which covers the dates of the absence; and, where this is not in English, an authorized translation is required.
- 4.4. For interruptions for reasons related to a disability that is formally disclosed to the University and where the student has an ILP for their current programme that supports absences, additional medical certification will not be required when applying for an interruption. Interruptions that are unrelated to a disclosed disability will require medical certification as above.
- 4.5. Students on full-time, part-time and continuation status are eligible to interrupt their studies. Full-time students **should** consider that in difficult but less critical circumstances, a change to mode of attendance to part-time status might also be an appropriate alternative.
- 4.6. It is not appropriate to apply for an interruption to go on holiday, see Annual Leave, below.
- 4.7. Interruption does not imply a [Termination of Registration](#), but marks a period of voluntary suspension of study. For periods of interruption students will remain students of the University and be subject to the normal student regulations. The University requires that [TQA PGR Handbook Chapter 7: Annual Monitoring Review](#) reports are completed. However, the student's circumstances will be considered, and necessary processes will be handled in an appropriate way.
- 4.8. Some student services will continue to be accessible during a period of interruption, including the Chaplaincy, Students' Guild and Students' Union the Health Centre. Wellbeing Services and Living Support are able to provide continued support for the first 4 weeks of an interruption, and where appropriate, the last 4 weeks prior to return, see 4.12 below. A student will normally retain access to Library facilities and their IT account will normally remain active during their interruption. Access to the University finance system, T1, will be suspended during periods of interruption. Students who need access to T1 whilst interrupted **must** contact their PGR Support team in the first instance.

- 4.9. Care **should** be taken to ensure that only appropriate communication with the student takes place during the interruption period as they are advised not to engage with study for the duration of their interruption. Therefore, any urgent/important communications with the student requiring response or attention **should** be sent to the student's personal email address, where appropriate.
- 4.10. Students returning from interruption will be subject to the University regulations for the academic year for which they re-register.
- 4.11. The minimum period of interruption is one month (28 days).
- 4.12. The maximum period of approval for an interruption is one year. In exceptional circumstances, the start date of a period of interruption **may** be backdated to a maximum of four weeks prior to the date of application. Any addition to a period of interruption previously granted **must** be made on the basis of a reconsideration of the student's circumstances. The maximum period of approval that **may** be granted for interruptions in total across the course of a programme **should not** exceed 2 years. Exceptions beyond this time-period **may** be made with the approval of the Dean of Postgraduate Research (or nominee). Where a continued interruption is not approved a student will be required to re-register or withdraw but **may** apply to reinstate their registration at a later date (see [Reinstatement of Registration](#) below).
- 4.13. Where a student fails to re-register or extend their period of interruption, they will be deemed to have withdrawn and will have their registration terminated. Subsequent requests for reinstatement will be considered under the terms of [Reinstatement of Registration](#).
- 4.14. Maternity, adoption and family leave following birth/adoption: Students who apply for interruption on the grounds of maternity, adoption and family leave following birth/adoption will not have the period of interruption for these types of leave counted towards their maximum number or total period of interruptions. Please also see

the [TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 25: Student Pregnancy and Family Leave Policy](#) and the [TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 18: Postgraduate Student Absence Policy](#).

4.15. Prior to resumption of their studies, all students who interrupt due to medical circumstances are responsible for completing a [PGR Self-Assessment Return from Medical Interruption form](#) which will ask the student to provide details of their current state of health and for details regarding further support that they may require.

4.16. Any students who:

- a. have interrupted following [Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study](#) at level 2 or above or [Fitness to Practice Procedures](#),
 - b. have been interrupted for 12 months or more,
 - c. have had more than one instance of medical interruption during their studies,
 - d. and/or have demonstrated exceptional circumstances under which it has been deemed necessary for a student to demonstrate their fitness to return to study,
- must** also complete a [PGR Enhanced Return from Medical Interruption form](#) and meet with the PGR Education Welfare Advisor upon their return or within 1 month prior to their return date in order to ensure that their ongoing support requirements during their studies can be assessed. If a student is unable to obtain medical evidence or arrange for completion of the Medical Practitioner evidence form, the Wellbeing team **may** convene a Case Management Panel to assess whether the student is fit to resume studies. If the Case Management Panel cannot be reassured of an improvement in the student's health and their safety in a University environment, a further interruption **may** be considered or if this is not possible, referral to the [HWSS level 3 process](#). Students who have an ILP for their current programme which supports absence as a reasonable adjustment and who interrupt for reasons linked to their disability **may not** need to provide medical evidence upon their return from interruption.

4.17. Applications for interruptions to study **should** be made by the student through [MyPGR](#): prior to doing so students **should** speak to their supervisor and international students **should** also speak to [International Student Community & Support](#). The request shall be passed for consideration and support to the student's lead supervisor, and for approval

by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor or nominee⁹ via [MyPGR](#). PGR students returning from interruption **must** meet with their supervisor prior to their return to studies and complete a return to study checklist and update the supervisory agreement (if applicable).

- 4.18. Students living in University accommodation **should** note that interruptions to their programme of study **may** result in the termination of their accommodation contract. Students **should** also note the terms and conditions of their accommodation contract and will be expected to vacate with immediate effect (normally within 7 days). If there are extenuating circumstances for requiring accommodation during an interruption period, students **should** contact the Accommodation Office via the [Student Information Desk](#) in the first instance.
- 4.19. Students in receipt of studentship funding **should** ensure that they are aware of the implications for their funding of a period of interruption and **should** check their financial offer letters for more information. Where students are in receipt of funding, they **should** refer to the [TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 25, Annex C: Student Pregnancy & Family Leave Funding Policy](#), and the [TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 18, Postgraduate Student Absence Funding Policy](#).
- 4.20. Students are encouraged to refer to the [TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 25: Student Pregnancy and Family Leave Policy](#) and the [TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 18: Postgraduate Student Absence Policy](#) for further information about other kinds of absences, such as cumulative short term absences, phased return to study or pregnancy/parental leave, where interruption may not be appropriate. Students and supervisors **should** contact their [PGR Support Team](#) to discuss their options.

⁹ The following roles may be specified as nominees: Department Director of PGR, relevant PGR Manager, the Head of PGR Support. Faculties (or delegated Schools) must specify who this nominee is in Faculty PGR handbooks.

5. Temporary Visa Interruption

The Home Office requires the University, as a Student Visa Sponsor License holder, to ensure that all of our students have valid immigration permission which allows them to study in the UK. In cases where a student does not have this permission, the University will need to demonstrate that he or she is not studying during this period.

All students in receipt of funding, whether that is through the University of Exeter, a Research Council, a Student Loan or any other financial sponsorship, **must** check how a temporary visa interruption will affect their funding – this **should** be detailed in the Terms & Conditions of the funding. It is the student's responsibility to check these conditions ahead of requesting to change status.

- 5.1. Where a student subject to immigration control is unable to demonstrate that they have valid immigration permission, the student will be advised to take a period of voluntary interruption (see [Interruption of Studies](#) above) until they can demonstrate that they have obtained this permission. If the student does not take a voluntary interruption, the University **must** invoke a Temporary Visa Interruption, during which time a student's access to the University and its services is limited in accordance with the limitation specified in [Interruption of Studies](#) above. This will be initiated by the Immigration Compliance Unit.
- 5.2. The Temporary Visa Interruption will end when the student is able to demonstrate that they have valid immigration permission. If the student is not able to demonstrate this within 28 days, they will be deemed withdrawn (see [Students deemed Withdrawn](#), below), unless it is appropriate to transfer their mode of attendance to distance learning, and approval to do so is granted. The 28-day period will start from the day that the Temporary Visa Interruption is invoked by the Immigration Compliance Unit and recorded on the student record.
- 5.3. During a period of Temporary Visa Interruption a student will still be able to access [International Student Community & Support](#), who will work with the student to try and ensure that they obtain valid immigration permission as quickly as is possible.
- 5.4. Where a period of Temporary Visa Interruption is initiated, the Immigration Compliance Unit will seek advice from the student's College as to the academic implications of this interruption and communicate these to the student, identifying where possible the

requirements of the student upon their return to study and the available support mechanisms.

- 5.5. For appeals documentation and guidance, please visit the [Procedures Relating to Student Academic Appeals](#).

6. Annual Leave

International Students who are Student visa holders only: Students **should** be aware that if a period of leave is followed or preceded by a period of interruption [International Student Community & Support](#) **may** be required to report their absence from their studies to the Home Office.

All students in receipt of funding, whether that is through the University of Exeter, a Research Council, a Student Loan or any other financial sponsorship, **must** check whether annual leave is allowed under the terms and conditions of their funding. It is the student's responsibility to check these conditions ahead of requesting to change status.

- 6.1. It is important that students take time out from their studies for a break in order to maintain an appropriate work/life balance. Periods of study for research degrees are calculated with an allowance for periods of annual leave during the registration period, as such taking a period of annual leave does not alter the end date of research programmes.
- 6.2. Research students are expected to take active steps to manage their studies, to not take more than four weeks of leave at a time, and to take due consideration to the timing and management of any periods of leave to ensure that it does not impact on their studies or upon maintaining regular contact with their supervisory team. As such, absence for periods of leave **must** be discussed in advance with the supervisory team. Students **must** also ensure that they comply with any requirements of their funding body with regard to taking leave. Annual leave **should** be taken in the calendar year in which it is accrued.
- 6.3. Students are entitled to take up to 8 weeks of annual leave a year, inclusive of public holidays and University closure days, and are encouraged to make full use of this entitlement in accordance with the conditions outlined above. Annual leave is calculated

in weeks according to a student's FTE. A week of leave for a full-time student will be 5 days, and a week for a student working at 0.6FTE will be 3 days.

6.4. Students **should** record all periods of annual leave in the [iTrent PGR Absence Record](#).

7. Changes to Mode of Attendance: Full-time and Part-time Status

International Students only: Student visa holders will be required to apply for a new Student visa before switching to full-time or part-time mode of attendance. Students considering changing their mode of attendance **should** discuss the immigration implications of this change with [International Student Community & Support](#) and **should** be aware that a switch to part-time in particular means a more restrictive visa. All requests from international students to change their mode of attendance to full-time or part-time **must** be signed off by a member of the Immigration Compliance Team.

All students in receipt of funding, whether that is through the University of Exeter, a Research Council, a Student Loan or any other financial sponsorship, **must** check whether changes to mode of attendance are allowed under the terms and conditions of their funding. It is the student's responsibility to check these conditions ahead of requesting to change status.

Students enrolled on Professional Doctorate programmes **should** also refer to their programme handbook and the [TQA LTS Handbook](#) regarding changes to their programme as there may be limitations on the options available. In addition, any changes in study may impact progression on taught modules.

- 7.1. A change to mode of attendance means a change from one to another of the following statuses: full-time, part-time, or variance in part-time hours.
- 7.2. Permitted part-time registrations: 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent), 0.6 FTE, 0.7 FTE, 0.8 FTE, 0.9 FTE. Please note that the nature of some programmes or the research project **may** limit which FTEs students may register at (e.g. credit-based programmes).
- 7.3. Changes between full-time and part-time modes of attendance **should** be used to assist students who are either unable to devote a full working week to study for good reasons, or to allow part-time students who find themselves able to devote extra time to study to do so.

7.4. Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Executive Deans or nominees¹⁰ **should** be sympathetic to requests for changes to mode of attendance and have due regard to the student's changed circumstances as well as the Faculty's (or delegated School's) continued ability to offer appropriate supervision and facilities.

7.5. Applications for changes to mode of attendance between full-time and part-time or to change part-time hours:

7.5.1. Applications to change from full-time to part-time and vice versa result in a change of programme and **should** be made by the student on the appropriate form, available from [PGR Support](#) (for students entering prior to the academic year 2019-20) or online (applies to students entering from the academic year 2019-20).

7.5.2. International Students Only: the student **must** make an appointment to see [International Student Community & Support](#) for approval. Students who are abroad **should** email the [International Student Community & Support](#) Office to seek email support which can be sent to the Faculty for onward approvals.

7.5.3. The form **should** be signed by the student and passed, for consideration and approval, to the student's first supervisor and Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (who will consider the resource implications of the request). Manual forms **must** be supported by email from the relevant signatories.

7.5.4. Requests to change status **may** not be made more frequently than at six-month intervals, without an exceptional case being made.

7.5.5. On approval by all parties, the Faculty (or delegated School) **should** send a copy of the form to the [Postgraduate Administration Office](#) via email to update the

¹⁰ The following roles may be specified as nominees: Department Director of PGR, relevant PGR Manager, the Head of PGR Support. Faculties (or delegated Schools) must specify who this nominee is in Faculty PGR handbooks.

student's record, and the student and supervisors **should** review the supervision agreement and update as needed.

7.5.6. A review **should** take place no later than 3 months after the change to mode of attendance had taken effect. The student and supervisory team **should** undertake this review during a contact event to confirm that the change in arrangement was working. If there were problems with the arrangement that cannot be resolved by the student and supervisory team the lead supervisor **should** refer this to the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean or nominee (normally the person who approved the request) for further consideration with a recommendation for action.

8. Continuation Status

8.1. A move to Continuation Status is not an automatic right for a student, however, all students are encouraged to apply to transfer at the appropriate point in their studies. Continuation Status is granted on the basis of a decision by the Faculty (or delegated School) that the student:

8.1.1. No longer requires normal levels of supervision.

8.1.2. Will not undertake any significant additional research.

8.1.3. Will be expected to make minimal use of University resources (see also the [TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 4: 'Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students: Code of Good Practice'](#)).

8.2. For entrants prior to 2019-20:

8.2.1. A move to Continuation Status is not an automatic right for a student, but only granted on the basis of a decision by the Faculty (or delegated School) that the student no longer requires normal levels of supervision, and will be expected to submit within 12 months.

8.2.2. Students **may** be permitted to transfer to Continuation Status where the Faculty (or delegated School) is able to assure itself that the student has completed their research and will not undertake any significant additional research. Such students

are not charged normal full-time or part-time fees. Students on Continuation Status are not returned in the Research Activity Survey, and therefore do not attract quality-related research (QR) funding. Academic grounds are the primary consideration; however, students who have transferred to continuation status will be expected to make minimal use of University resources.

8.3. For entrants from 2019-20:

8.3.1. Successful progression **should**, for the majority, mean that they are ready to transfer to continuation status three to six months ahead of submission. As such monitoring applications to transfer to continuation status provides indicative evidence of which students may not be making adequate progress. As such, failure to transfer or to apply to transfer to continuation status **may** result in assessment of whether action needs to be taken under the [TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: 'Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance: Code of Good Practice'](#).

8.3.2. In order to assess whether or not a student meets the conditions stated above, evidence will normally be required that:

- a. The student is in a position where formal submission of the thesis within three-six months is demonstrably possible. For part-time students this period **should** be calculated on a pro-rata basis.
- b. The student **should** be in a position where formal submission within their maximum period of study is demonstrably possible.
- c. The student has provided a project timeline to submission with their application.
- d. The supervisory team have received a complete or near complete (as determined by the Faculty (or delegated School) and specified in the Faculty (or delegated School) Code of Good Practice) draft of the thesis.
 - i. Requirements specific to the MbyRes/MPhil/PhD by publication: all publications comprising an element of the thesis **should** be published, and the supervisory

team **should** have received a complete or near complete (as determined by the Faculty (or delegated School) and specified in the Faculty (or delegated School) Code of Good Practice) draft of the integrating chapter (as specified in 5.1 of the ['Regulations Governing the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy/ Master of Philosophy/ Master of Arts by Research and Master of Science by Research by Publication'](#)).

- e. There are not any outstanding actions in place under the [TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: 'Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance: Code of Good Practice'](#) (e.g. a warning, the conditions of which the student has not met).

8.3.3.If a student fails to submit their thesis within six months of transferring to continuation status (or the pro-rata equivalent for part-time students), action will normally be taken under the [TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: 'Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance: Code of Good Practice'](#).

8.3.4.Such students are not charged normal full-time or part-time fees. Students on Continuation Status are not returned in the Research Activity Survey, and therefore do not attract quality-related research (QR) funding. Academic grounds are the primary consideration; however, students who have transferred to continuation status will be expected to make minimal use of University resources.

- 8.4. [Applications for transfer to continuation status](#): Applications **must** be made through [MyPGR](#) following discussion with the supervisor. The Supervisor will be requested to support the application and confirm that the student meets the requirements as defined above. Approval will be required from the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (or nominee).

9. Extensions to Study

International Students only: An extension to the length of a programme **may** require the student to extend their visa. In all cases the student **should** make an appointment to see [International Student Community & Support](#) for the correct procedures to follow.

All students in receipt of funding, whether that is through the University of Exeter, a Research Council, a Student Loan or any other financial sponsorship, **must** check whether an extension to study is allowed under the terms and conditions of their funding. It is the student's responsibility to check these conditions ahead of requesting to change status.

Research Council Students only: AHRC and ESRC students, who require an extension to their submission date, **must** submit an application to the University's nominated contact in the [Postgraduate Administration Office](#) via email. Applications **must** be received 3 months before the submission deadline date and will be forward to the AHRC or ESRC for approval. Applications **should** be supported in writing by the supervisor and be fully supported by medical evidence if the request is based on an illness. For BBSRC, EPSRC, MRC, NERC and STFC please refer to specific [Terms and Conditions](#).

Students enrolled on Professional Doctorate programmes should also refer to their programme handbook and the [TQA LTS Handbook](#) regarding changes to their programme as there may be limitations on the options available. In addition, any changes in study may impact progression on taught modules.

9.1. Extensions are an approved increase in the overall duration of the period of study for the research programme. Extensions **should** be used in cases where a student will exceed the maximum period of study (entry prior to 2019-20, entry from 2019-20) for the degree for which they are registered. See [Students deemed Withdrawn](#) (below) with regard to taking action when a student has exceeded the maximum period of study for the degree for which they are registered without good cause. For applications for deferral of internal deadlines, e.g. for the transfer of registration from MPhil to Doctoral Study please see the [TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 9: Upgrade from MPhil, MA by Research or MSc by Research to Doctoral Study](#) (and also see [Annex 1: Applications for deferral](#)).

9.2. An extension to the maximum period of study will only be granted by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (or nominee) in very exceptional circumstances, and where deemed academically viable (i.e., that the remaining work can realistically be completed within the extension period). In cases of illness, excessive personal, work or other commitments, or other difficult circumstances it is expected that the student and

Faculty will follow the advice on [Interruption of Studies](#). In the case of problems with their research, students are expected to have built in a time allowance for addressing for problems and as such failure to do so will not normally be sufficient grounds for an extension. If they have not done so, it is unlikely that an extension of registration will be permitted.

- 9.3. Where necessary, an extension **may** be granted in concert with issuing a warning under the [TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: 'Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance: Code of Good Practice'](#).
- 9.4. Students wishing to apply for an extension to the overall duration of the programme can do so by completing the appropriate form, available from the Faculty and the [PGR Support Team](#). The form **should** be supported and signed by the student's lead supervisor and then forwarded to the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (or nominee) for consideration, together with an outline of work completed against each chapter heading, and a work-plan and schedule. Approval **should not** be given without these documents being provided to the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean's (or nominee's) satisfaction.
- 9.5. Extensions to Study for students entering from the 2019/20 academic year:
- 9.5.1. Approval for extensions will not be given later than six months prior to the maximum date of submission (or re-submission) unless exceptional circumstances justify consideration of a later application.
- 9.5.2. Extensions will not be given for longer than a year, pro-rata for part-time students, and the length of the extension requested **should** be justified.
- 9.5.3. Normally, only one extension request for a particular deadline will be approved.
- 9.6. On approval by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (or nominee), a copy of the extension form **should** be forwarded to the [Postgraduate Administration Office](#) via email. The [PGR Support Team](#) will notify the student of the outcome.

- 9.7. Students living in University accommodation **should** note that extensions to the programme of study do not automatically extend the accommodation contract, and that students wishing to remain in University accommodation **must** obtain the permission of the Director of Campus Services through the [Accommodation Office](#), subject to normal student regulations and contracts.

10. Withdrawal from Study

International Students only: Withdrawal is always a difficult choice, but for international students it can also have serious immigration implications of which students are often not aware. The immigration rules are not lenient, and very rarely make allowances for compassionate circumstances. It is vital that international students are aware of the ramifications of their decision before it is finalised and understand what actions they **must** take after the withdrawal to ensure that they are allowed to study in the UK in the future. It is a requirement of the Immigration Office that only authorised University personnel in [International Student Community & Support](#) interview and sign off forms for students who wish to withdraw from their studies.

All students in receipt of funding, whether that is through the University of Exeter, a Research Council, a Student Loan or any other financial sponsorship, **must** check whether withdrawal from study is allowed under the terms and conditions of their funding. It is the student's responsibility to check these conditions ahead of requesting to change status.

- 10.1. Where a student has failed to demonstrate that they have valid immigration permission within 28 days of the start of the period of invoked interruption, as described above, the Immigration Compliance Unit **may** recommend to the Dean of Postgraduate Research that the student be withdrawn from study. For appeals against withdrawal on this basis, please visit the [Procedures Relating to Student Academic Appeals](#).
- 10.2. Students are permitted to withdraw from their programme of study at any time and for any reason but are reminded that any fees or fines outstanding **must** still be paid.
- 10.3. On withdrawing from a programme, registration is terminated, and the student ceases to be a student of the University. Students considering withdrawal from study due to adverse personal circumstances **should** ensure that they have first considered an [Interruption of Studies](#).

10.4. To aid the University in understanding the reasons for student withdrawals, and to formally tell the University about the decision to withdraw, students are asked to complete a form, available from the [PGR Support Team](#) and the [Postgraduate Administration Office](#).

10.5. The form **should** be signed by the student and passed to the student's first supervisor and Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (or nominee¹¹).

International Students only: Following Faculty approval the student **must** make an appointment to see [International Student Community & Support](#) (ISCSO) for final approval. Students who are abroad **should** email the ISCSO with details of their withdrawal and the Faculty **should** obtain the signature on the form on behalf of the student.

10.6. Once all parties have signed the form, the Faculty (or delegated School) **should** write to the student and a copy of the form and letter **should** be sent via email to the [Postgraduate Administration Office](#).

11. **Students deemed Withdrawn**

11.1. The University **may** de-register a student and initiate the [Termination of Registration](#) for good and documented reasons. A student retains the right to [appeal](#) such a decision under the University's normal procedure for academic appeals.

11.2. In order for a student to be de-registered, one of the following **must** apply:

11.2.1. Students who do not re-register after the end of a period of interruption will be de-registered and registration terminated. Subsequent requests for re-instatement of registration **may** be considered.

11.2.2. In cases where a student makes unsatisfactory progress, the Faculty **may** make a case to the Dean of Postgraduate Research for termination of registration, as

¹¹ The following roles **may** be specified as nominees: Department Director of PGR, relevant PGR Manager, the Head of PGR Support. Faculties (or delegated Schools) **must** specify who this nominee is in Faculty PGR handbooks.

set out in the [TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: 'Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance: Code of Good Practice'](#). Students who have not submitted their thesis by the end of their maximum period of study **should** be deemed to be making unsatisfactory progress¹².

- 11.2.3. The University retains the right to terminate registration in cases where a disciplinary offence has been committed, a regulation has been broken or a student fails to complete or comply with a University procedure.
- 11.2.4. Where a student has failed to demonstrate that they have valid immigration permission within 28 days of the start of a period of invoked interruption, the Immigration Compliance Unit **may** recommend to the Dean of Postgraduate Research that the student be withdrawn from study.
- 11.2.5. Students who have had sanctions for four weeks or who have been unable to register due to debtor status will be deemed to have withdrawn and will have their registration terminated. Subsequent requests for reinstatement will be considered under the terms of [Reinstatement of Registration](#) once any debt has been settled.
- 11.2.6. Students who do not re-register within 4 weeks of the designated registration period will be deemed to have withdrawn and will have their registration terminated. Subsequent requests for reinstatement will be considered under the terms of [Reinstatement of Registration](#).
- 11.2.7. Students who fail to submit their thesis by the end of their period of study, including the end of a period of resubmission and where the Faculty, PGR Support or PGR Administration Teams have not been notified ahead of the deadline, **may** be recommended to the Dean of Postgraduate Research (or

¹² Exceptions **may** apply where it would be more appropriate to address progress concerns via the ['Health Wellbeing and Support for Study Procedures \(HWSSP\) – Exeter and Penryn Campuses'](#).

nominee) that the student be withdrawn from study. Subsequent requests for reinstatement will be considered under the terms of [Reinstatement of Registration](#).

- 11.2.8. Students who fail to submit amendments to their thesis by the deadline stipulated in the examiner's report and where the Faculty, PGR Support or PGR Administration Teams have not been notified ahead of the deadline, **may** be recommended to the Dean of Postgraduate Research (or nominee) that the student be withdrawn from study. Subsequent requests for reinstatement will be considered under the terms of [Reinstatement of Registration](#).
- 11.3. Re-registration following completion of the maximum period of study will only be granted by the Dean of Postgraduate Research (or nominee) in very exceptional circumstances. In cases of illness, excessive personal, work or other commitments, it is expected that the Faculties (or delegated Schools) will recommend to students that they interrupt their studies at that time. If they have not done so, it is unlikely that an extension of registration will be permitted. Faculties (or delegated Schools) **should** also be aware that for students funded by Research Councils, it is the responsibility of the Faculty to seek permission for an interruption to a student's studies (except ESRC where matters **should** be referred to the [Postgraduate Administration Office](#) in the first instance).

12. Termination of Registration

- 12.1. On termination of registration, a student ceases to be a student of the University, and all academic rights and responsibilities are ended. Students are reminded that any fees and fines owed to the University at withdrawal remain due.
- 12.2. Students living in University accommodation **should** note that withdrawal from the programme of study does not automatically terminate the accommodation contract. Attention **should** be given to the section of the withdrawal form dealing with this matter.

- 12.3. Graduate research students withdrawing from a programme **may** have accumulated enough credit, through taking taught modules, to be awarded a qualification other than that for which the student was registered. This will depend on the modules taken, and the credit accumulation and award rules for the programme.

13. Reinstatement of Registration

- 13.1. Reinstatement after withdrawing voluntarily or being deemed withdrawn:

In exceptional cases a student **may** request reinstatement after withdrawing voluntarily or being deemed withdrawn. The student will need to request reinstatement in time to ensure that they are **re-registered within 2 years from the date of withdrawal**. Such a request will be considered by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (or nominee) and will take account of the student's circumstances, the resources available within the Faculty (or delegated School) and the academic feasibility of continuing study after a prolonged absence.

- 13.2. Reinstatement after withdrawing voluntarily or being deemed withdrawn following completion of the maximum period of study:

Where a student had already completed the maximum period of study at the time of withdrawing or being deemed withdrawn, an outline of work completed against each thesis chapter heading, and a work-plan and schedule **should** be enclosed with the application. Approval by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (or nominee) and the Dean of Postgraduate Research is required.

- 13.3. In cases where reinstatement is permitted, the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (or nominee) will determine the period of further study required, in line with the normal period of study for the relevant programme.

- 13.4. Reinstatement is not automatic and will depend upon the Faculty's (or delegated School's) continued ability to offer appropriate supervision and facilities and whether or not there remain academic grounds for continuing the student's research.

13.5. Due to the exceptional nature of reinstatements, cases **should** be handled in consultation with the [Postgraduate Administration Office](#) via email

13.6. Where students miss the 2 year window for reinstatement, they will be required to apply for a new programme. The Faculty **may** consider those students for entry into a later stage in the programme (e.g., entering directly to a PhD without the need for upgrade, starting at year 3 etc.), subject to the parameters in section 13.4 above.

13.7. Where reinstatement is approved, payment of a [reinstatement fee](#) will be required.

14. Appendix 1

For students who commenced their studies before October 2009, the maximum period of study is counted as the period between initial registration and thesis submission.

MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM PERIODS OF STUDY FOR THE DEGREES OF MPhil & PhD			
		FT ¹³	PT
PhD	Min	3 years	6 years
	Max ¹⁴	4 years	7 years
MPhil	Min	2 years	4 years
	Max ¹⁴	3 years	5 years
EdD	Min	2 years	4 years
	Max ¹⁴	4 years	7 years

¹³ FT will include for this purpose, Postgraduate Research Assistants on Research Grants registered for PT PhDs; Graduate Research Assistants; Graduate Teaching Assistants.

¹⁴ All maximum periods of study **may** include twelve months continuation status (see [Continuation Status](#)).