

## Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) Change of Circumstance Policy

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### 1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 Postgraduate researchers (PGRs) may encounter changes in their circumstances that impact their research progress for various reasons, such as medical conditions, family or personal matters, or delays related to access to resources, facilities, or equipment.
- 1.2 Since PGRs may spend up to four years full-time on their programme, most short-term issues (such as up to four weeks lost to acute illness) should be managed within this period without adjustments. PGRs are expected to plan their projects to finish within the standard timeframe, allowing some flexibility for minor disruptions and [holiday leave](#).
- 1.3 The University acknowledges that situations may occur which require PGRs to take time away from their research, extend the duration of their programme, or request a change in their mode of study, such as switching from full-time to part-time.
- 1.4 This policy and its associated procedures reflect the University of Manchester's commitment to establishing and maintaining systematic and clear processes for PGRs to request an Interruption to Programme, a Change to Mode of Attendance (full-time to part-time and vice-versa) or an Extension to Programme. It also provides guidance for staff when considering and implementing these requests.
- 1.5 This policy outlines PGR and supervisor responsibilities, available change types, and key considerations for change requests.
- 1.6 In all circumstances PGRs should discuss any change in circumstance with their supervisor(s) and/or the [Faculty Doctoral Academy](#) at the earliest opportunity so that they may advise the PGR on the most appropriate options available and/or refer PGRs to additional support services.

### 2. Scope and definitions

- 2.1. This policy applies to University of Manchester staff and doctoral and master's level PGRs.
- 2.2. This document should be referred to alongside the relevant procedure document (refer to section 4) and any other relevant policies that comprise the [Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#).

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities Prior to a Formal Change Request

#### 3.1 It is the responsibility of PGRs to:

- Make themselves aware of the policies and procedures relevant to a change of circumstance.
- Inform their supervisor(s) and/or Faculty Doctoral Academy of any change in personal circumstances that they feel may affect their progression at the earliest opportunity.
- Understand the potential implications of an approved change before applying (see section 6).
- Make sure that a formal change request is made at the earliest opportunity before the change is to take place, and that details of any relevant mitigating circumstances and required evidence are provided at the appropriate time.

#### 3.2 It is the responsibility of the PGR's Supervisor(s) to:

- Make themselves aware of the policies and procedures relevant to a change of circumstance.
- Discuss options with their PGRs when progression issues arise or a PGR informs them of a change in their personal circumstances.
- Determine, in each case, whether a referral to an appropriate University of Manchester support service is required and make the referral when appropriate to do so.
- Determine whether a statement in support of a formal PGR change request is appropriate, providing a statement as required.

### 4. Reasons to Request a Change

#### 4.1 There are many reasons (mitigating circumstances) why a PGR may need to request an Interruption to Programme, a Change to Mode of Attendance, or an Extension to Programme such as medical / disability issues, family circumstances, or delays caused by difficulties with access to resources, facilities or equipment.

#### 4.2 PGRs should consider their circumstances and refer to the relevant procedure below prior to making a change request:

- **Medical Leave** – health issues affecting PGRs for four weeks or more, including but not limited to the exacerbation or change in impact of a disability or long-term health condition.
- **Family Leave** – including Maternity & Adoption Leave, Partner and Paternity Leave, Neonatal Care Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave.
- **Additional Leave** – including bereavement and pregnancy loss, baby loss - including stillbirth and neonatal death, carer's leave, additional disability leave associated with delayed adjustments, public duties e.g. jury service and the breakdown of equipment or university estate issues.

- [Research / Work Away from the University](#) – including if/when change requests are permitted for periods of fieldwork, placements, internships and institutional exchanges / visits.

## 5. Types of Change Request

### 5.1 Interruptions to Programme

- An Interruption to Programme may be appropriate where a PGR is unable to continue their research for a specific period (over 4 weeks).
- After consulting their Supervisor(s) and Faculty Doctoral Academy and the relevant procedure (see section 4) the PGR should refer to the [PGR Interruptions to Programme Procedure](#) for full details of the application process.

### 5.2 Change to Mode of Attendance

- If the programme and funder / visa terms allow it, a PGR may be able apply to switch between full and part-time study at the University.
- After consulting their Supervisor(s) and Faculty Doctoral Academy and the relevant procedure (see section 4) PGRs should refer to [PGR Change to Mode of Attendance Procedure](#) for full details.

### 5.2 Extensions to Programme

- An Extension to Programme may be appropriate for some types of family leave e.g. Partner's or Paternity Leave or for PGR absence due to undertake placements.
- In exceptional circumstances a PGR Extension to Programme can be considered when mitigating circumstances have delayed progress towards the end of the programme and there is a reasonable expectation that the thesis can be submitted within the extended timeframe.
- After consulting their Supervisor(s) and Faculty Doctoral Academy and the relevant procedure (see section 4) PGRs should refer to the [PGR Extension to Programme Procedure](#) for full details.

## 6. Potential Implications of an Approved Change

### 6.1. Student Route Visa PGRs

- [Changes](#) may affect visa and/or ATAS certification. PGRs should seek advice from the [Immigration and Visa team](#) to understand any potential implications before requesting any changes.

### 6.2 Tuition Fees

- Changes may affect tuition fees (e.g. if an Extension to Programme is approved, tuition fees will be charged on a pro rata basis for the period of extension).
- PGRs should contact the appropriate [Faculty Doctoral Academy](#) for advice prior to submitting a change request.

### 6.3 Funding

- PGRs who are funded directly from a UKRI or any other external funding organisation must carefully consult the terms and conditions of their funder before making a change request. PGRs are bound by

the regulations of their sponsor and must therefore check that they are complying with the regulations stipulated by the sponsor and the University of Manchester.

- Eligibility for internal or external funding can be affected by an approved change request. This includes University of Manchester studentships, UKRI studentships and charity funding. PGRs have responsibility to be aware of any implications that changes to their programme may have on their funding.
- PGRs receiving loans to fund their studies should also seek advice on the implications of a change request. PGRs in receipt of a UK government doctoral loan can seek advice from student services.
- PGRs should contact the appropriate [Faculty Doctoral Academy](#) for advice on any potential funding implications prior to submitting a change request.

#### 6.4 University Accommodation

- An Interruption to Programme will have implications for PGRs residing in University accommodation. In some cases a PGR may need to vacate within 28 days of the change being affected.
- PGRs should contact the [Accommodation Office](#) for advice prior to submitting a change request.

#### 6.5 Council Tax

- Changes to a programme may affect PGR eligibility for [exemption from Council Tax](#). Council Tax rules may vary depending on PGR location.
- PGRs should contact the [Student Support](#) with any queries prior to submitting a change request.

[Insert policy content here]Version amendment history		
Version	Date	Reason for change
5	Oct 2025	Scheduled review
4	June 2020	Addition of COVID mitigating circumstances
3	Sep 2018	Scheduled review

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Related policies/procedures/guidance etc.	<p><b>PGR Family Leave Procedure:</b>  <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76396">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76396</a></p> <p><b>PGR Medical Leave Procedure:</b>  <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76397">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76397</a></p> <p><b>PGR Research and Work Away Procedure:</b>  <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76398">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76398</a></p> <p><b>PGR Additional Leave Procedure:</b>  <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76399">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76399</a></p> <p><b>PGR Interruption to Programme Procedure:</b>  <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=39956">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=39956</a></p> <p><b>PGR Change to Mode of Attendance Procedure:</b>  <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76400">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76400</a></p> <p><b>PGR Extensions to Programme Procedure:</b>  <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=39955">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=39955</a></p> <p><b>PGR Submission Pending Policy:</b>  <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76401">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76401</a></p> <p><b>PGR Annual Leave Policy:</b>  <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76402">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=76402</a></p>
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