

Changes to the Policy on Interruptions, Extensions and Withdrawal/Terminations for Postgraduate Research Degrees

Synopsis

This paper sets out revisions to the Policy on Interruptions, Extensions and Withdrawal/Terminations for Postgraduate Research Degrees. All changes to the policy were approved by the Graduate Education Group (GEG) on 19th July 2007 or 13th September 2007.

The policy on Interruptions, Extensions and Withdrawal/Terminations for Postgraduate Research Degrees can be found at:

<http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/code/changestodegrees/>

Effective Date of Introduction

13th September 2007

Contact

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Changes to Policy

1. Policy title

Change from:

"Policy on Leave of Absence, Interruptions, Extensions and Withdrawal or Termination of Registration for Postgraduate Research Degrees."

To:

"Policy on Interruptions, Extensions and Withdrawal/Terminations for Postgraduate Research Degrees"

2. Section 1 - Introduction

Add the URL for the University's Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees to the introduction.

3. Section 1 - Introduction

Add:

"For the purposes of this policy, the term 'postgraduate research degrees' refers to doctoral, Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Master of Surgery (ChM) and Doctor of Medicine (MD) degrees."

4. Section 1 - Introduction

Add:

"Non-EU international students should consult the International Advice Team in the Student Services Centre for impartial advice regarding the immigration implications of a particular course of action (see <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/internationalteam> for contact details).

Since April 2007, the University has been legally required to report to the government if non-EU international students, who have been issued a visa or residence permit as a student, interrupt or extend their research degrees or if they withdraw or their registration is terminated. The University is required to monitor the attendance of this group of students and to report any periods of absence lasting more than two weeks."

5. Section 2 – Duration of Study

Change:

"The 'prescribed period of the programme' refers to the study period in which students must complete the research element of their programme. This is normally:"

To:

"The normal maximum duration of postgraduate research degrees at the University of Manchester is as follows:"

6. Section 2 – Duration of Study

Added part-time degree duration equivalents

7. Section 2 – Duration of Study

Change:

"Students are expected to complete all doctoral work, including research and the writing up of the thesis, within the maximum period permitted for their degree. Where further attendance is necessary, it must only be for the purpose of completing the writing up of the thesis. If a student takes the full 12 months to write up their thesis in the submission pending period, they will have reached the maximum period allowable to complete their degree."

To:

"Students are expected to complete all postgraduate research degree work, including research and the writing up of the thesis, within the maximum period permitted for their degree. Where further attendance is necessary, it must only be for the purpose of completing the writing up of the thesis. For this purpose, students are required to register for the submission pending period."

8. Section 2.1 – The Submission Pending Period

Deleted:

"(NB: the student records system and some University documents and web pages may use the term 'Attendance Beyond the Prescribed Period (ABPP) when describing the Submission Pending period)."

9. Section 2.1 – The Submission Pending Period

Change:

"The maximum registration period for submission pending is 12 months. Students may initially register for six months of the submission pending period. If more time is required after the first six month period, students may be permitted to register for a further six months."

To:

"The maximum registration period for submission pending is 12 months for full-time and part-time students. Students who submit within the first six months of the submission pending period are entitled to a partial refund of the submission pending fee."

10. Section 3 – Interruption to a degree

Remove "Leave of Absence" from the section title.

11. Section 3.1 – Interruption of studies

Remove:

"Students may be granted a temporary interruption to their research degree at the discretion of the University where the continuation of research is not possible."

Add:

"Any student experiencing exceptional circumstances (see Section 13) may be permitted to interrupt their degree at any time by prior approval of the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or equivalent."

12. Section 3.1 Interruption of studies

Change:

"International students in the UK on a student visa are not permitted to study part-time and it is essential that they seek immigration advice from the International Advice Team in the Student Services Centre before considering this option."

To:

"International students in the UK on a student visa are not normally permitted to study part-time and it is essential that they seek immigration advice from the International Advice Team in the Student Services Centre before considering this option."

13. Section 3.1- Interruption of studies

Delete section:

"3.2 Requests to interrupt during the submission pending period.

Only in the most exceptional circumstances (see section 13) will permission be given to interrupt during the submission pending period."

14. Section 3.1 – Interruption of Studies

Add:

"In the case of international students in the UK on a student visa or residence permit, the University is legally required to report to the government any interruption of studies."

15. Section 3.3 – The application process for interruptions

Add:

"Non-EU international students may need to apply for an extension to their permission to stay in the UK (visa or residence permit) as a consequence of an interruption. The immigration application must include a letter from the appropriate Graduate Office or a member of the supervisory team stating the reasons for the interruption and the length of time required to complete the degree. This letter must be supported by relevant medical and/or other evidence (see Section 14). Please contact the International Advice Team if further information is required (see <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/internationalteam/> for contact details and sample letters). Please refer also to Section 12."

16. Section 4 – Unauthorised absence and short term absence

Change:

"Students should note that if they wish to formally interrupt, they may only do so from the point which their formal request reaches the appropriate Graduate Office as retrospective requests will only be considered under the most exceptional circumstances (see Sections 3 and 13)."

To:

"Students should note that if they wish to formally interrupt, they may only do so from the point which their formal request reaches the appropriate Graduate Office. Retrospective requests will only be considered under the most exceptional circumstances (see Sections 3 and 13)."

17. Section 4 – Unauthorised absence and short term absence

Add:

"In the case of non-EU international students, the University is required to notify the government if students are absent for longer than two weeks. The University's Records Management Office is responsible for reporting to the government as required."

18. Section 4 - – Unauthorised absence and short term absence

Add:

"Non-EU international students whose research is delayed will need to apply to the Home Office for an extension of stay in the UK to enable them to complete their studies. Medical certificates and other relevant documents (see Section 14) must be accumulated as these will form an essential part of the immigration extension application. Please refer also to Section 12."

19. Section 5 – Official leave of absence/study leave/fieldwork

Change:

“STUDY LEAVE

Students may be permitted to devote part of their research programme to study and research outside the University, in addition to fieldwork or short laboratory work. If the study or research is not related to the research topic, students will be advised to apply for an interruption to their research programme. The relevant individual degree programme ordinances and regulations give circumstances in which study leave may be permitted (see: <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/policies>).”

To:

“OFFICIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE/STUDY LEAVE/FIELDWORK

Students may be permitted an official leave of absence in order to study at another approved institution or to undertake fieldwork. Students are not permitted to spend more than 50% of the degree away from the University of Manchester. A reduced fee will be charged during this period. Details of the Official Leave of Absence/Fieldwork fee are available at <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/tuitionfees/tuitionfeedue/>

If the study or research is not related to the research topic, students will be advised to apply for an interruption to their research degree. The relevant individual degree ordinances and regulations give circumstances in which study leave may be permitted, see: <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/ordinancesandregulations/>.”

20. Section 7 – Maternity Leave

Add:

“Non-EU international students will need to apply for an extension to their permission to stay in the UK (visa) as a consequence of an interruption for maternity leave. Please see Section 3.3 for further information.”

21. Section 10.1 – Extension of Studies

Change:

“The time permitted in order to write up the thesis in the submission pending period the degree will subsequently be extended by a corresponding period. Full fees will be charged on a pro rata basis for extensions in the prescribed period of the degree.”

To:

“The time permitted in order to complete the degree will subsequently be extended by a corresponding period. Full fees will be charged on a pro rata basis for extensions to the degree.”

22. Section 10.1 – Extension of Studies

Add:

“Students will not normally be permitted to interrupt during an extension.”

23. Section 10.1 – Extension of Studies

Add:

"The total period/s of extension **must not normally exceed 12 months** during the full period of the degree, and any further extensions beyond 12 months will only be permitted under the most exceptional circumstances (see Section 13)."

24. Section 10.2 – Extensions to the submission pending period

Add:

"If a student does not submit their thesis before the end of the submission pending period and has not formally arranged an extension with the University, the School or Faculty may refuse to accept the thesis or may accept the thesis and impose the late submission fee (see 10.4)."

25. Section 10.3 – Extensions to the resubmission period

Change:

"If a student does not submit their thesis within one year of the first examination and has not formally arranged an extension with the University, they will fail their degree."

To:

"If a student does not submit their thesis within one year of the first examination and has not formally arranged an extension with the University, the Faculty may refuse to accept the thesis or may accept the thesis and impose the late submission fee (see 10.4)."

26. Section 10.3 – Extensions to the resubmission period

Add:

"Non-EU international students should also seek advice from the International Advice Team, Student Services Centre (see <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/internationalteam/> for contact details)."

27. Section 10.4 – The late submission fee

Add:

"10.4 The late submission fee

If a student is outside of their registration period but requests to submit their thesis, exceptional approval will first need to be sought from the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or equivalent. Only if approval is given can the thesis be accepted and the student will normally be charged a late submission fee. A postgraduate research degrees panel may decide to reject a thesis that is submitted late.

Students will normally be charged a fee of £500 to submit their thesis late."

28. Section 10.6 – The application process for extensions

Add:

"Non-EU international students may need to apply for an extension to their permission to stay in the UK (visa or residence permit). The immigration application must include a detailed letter of support similar to that submitted to

the postgraduate research degrees panel by the appropriate Graduate Office or a member of the supervisory team. This letter must be supported by relevant medical and/or other evidence (see Section 14). Please contact the International Advice Team if further information is required. Contact details and a sample letter are at <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/internationalteam/>. Please also refer to Section 12."

29. Section 11 – International students and the submission pending period

Add:

"In order to extend their visa for a further period, students must obtain a letter to submit to the relevant visa authorities. This will normally be provided by the student's supervisor although in some cases this may be provided by the appropriate Graduate Office. This letter will comment on the student's progress and attendance and state when the student will be expected to have their oral examination. Sample letters are available from the International Advice Team website (<http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/internationalteam/>)"

30. Section 12 – Students sponsored by funding organisations or overseas sponsors

Add:

"Non-EU students with a student visa who are funded by the British government, any other government, or an international funding body will need a letter of support from their sponsor when applying to extend their stay in the UK. Sample letters are available from the International Advice Team website (<http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/internationalteam/>)."

31. Section 13 – Exceptional Circumstances

Change:

"13. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Students may request any of the following *only* if their circumstances are considered exceptional by the appropriate postgraduate research degree committee:

- An interruption to the programme of study during the period of Submission Pending;
- Any extension to the prescribed period of the programme or the Submission Pending period;
- An extension to the one year period allowed for students to make major corrections to their thesis and resubmit after referral in the first examination;
- Any retrospective request for an interruption or an extension.

Each request will be considered on an individual, case by case basis and any decision made will be at the discretion of the University. Students should only report circumstances that they feel have had a serious adverse affect on their research and must consult their Supervisor, other appropriate member of their supervisory team or the appropriate Graduate Office as soon as the requirement for an interruption or extension becomes apparent."

To:

"13. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Students may only request an interruption or an extension if their circumstances are considered exceptional by the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or equivalent. Each request for an interruption or an extension will be considered on an individual, case by case basis and any decision made will be at the discretion of the University. Students should only report circumstances that are unforeseen and/or unpreventable and that have had a serious adverse affect on their research. Students must consult their supervisor, other appropriate member of their supervisory team or the appropriate Graduate Office as soon as the requirement for an interruption or extension becomes apparent."

32. Section 13.1 – Examples of Exceptional Circumstances

Add:

"Delays in progress due to unforeseen problems (eg, moving of offices/buildings, supervisor changes etc) which are outside of the student's control."

33. Section 13 – Exceptional circumstances

Add:

"Before applying for an interruption or extension, non-EU international students need to check whether their immigration status will be affected by consulting the International Advice Team, Student Services Centre (see <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/internationalteam/> for contact details)."

34. Section 15 – Withdrawals and terminations

Add:

" ...and that the University is legally required to report the withdrawal and termination of study to the government."

35. Section 15 – Withdrawals and terminations

Add:

"Non-EU international students should also consult the International Advice Team, Student Services Centre (see <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/internationalteam/>)."

36. Section 15.2 – Termination of registration

Add:

"In addition, the University is legally required to report to the government that their registration has been terminated."

37. Remove all occurrences of 'prescribed period'

38. Change all occurrences of 'committee' to 'panel or equivalent'