

Sickness Procedure for Postgraduate Research Students

September 2018

**Research Degrees and Researcher Development
Directorate of Research and Business Engagement**

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1. Purpose and Scope

- a. This Procedure should be considered in relation to the [**Change of Circumstances for Postgraduate Research Student policy**](#) .
- b. The purpose of this Procedure is to provide guidance to Postgraduate Research Students on reporting sickness absence and the necessary steps to be taken on return.
- c. For details of student eligibility criteria for receiving stipend payments during absence for sickness see section 9.1 of the [**Interruptions Procedure for Postgraduate Research Students**](#).

2. Sickness

- a. Any student who has been absent for longer than two months due to illness is required to provide confirmation from their General Practitioner on official headed documentation that they are fit to resume their studies.
- b. [**Occupational Health**](#) and/or the [**Disability Advisory and Support Service \(DASS\)**](#) [<http://www.dso.manchester.ac.uk/>] should be consulted if additional support needs are required for students returning from long-term sick leave.
- c. If a student's return to programme is conditional on obtaining health clearance, the school/faculty will be required to complete a formal Occupational Health referral outlining the reason for interruption and the advice requested of the Occupation Health team at least 9 weeks in advance of the students return.
- d. If a student declares a condition which may constitute a disability, formal referral to DASS must be discussed with the student in line with the [**University's guidance**](#).

3. Procedure for reporting sickness

- a. Any period of absence due to illness, accident or injury should be reported by the student to their supervisory team and the appropriate School or Faculty Graduate Office prior to their return. Students returning may be referred to the University Occupational Health Service if there are concerns about a student's fitness.
- b. For absence of seven days or less, students are required to provide self-certification of their illness by completing the relevant form available from their School/Faculty, which must be submitted on the day of return to the University to the appropriate School or Faculty Graduate Office.

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- c. For illnesses of more than seven calendar days, students are required to produce a Statement of Fitness to Work, available via their General Practitioner, which also relates to students' fitness to study. The GP will complete the statement to show either that the student is unfit for study and must stay off sick or that the student may be fit for study with some support. .
- d. When calculating an absence period, note that weekends and public holidays are counted as days of absence.

4. Sickness during pregnancy

- a. If during the pregnancy, a student is unable to attend studies due to illness, the normal procedures for sickness absence reporting should be followed.
- b. However, any period of pregnancy related sick leave beyond the 36th week of pregnancy may automatically trigger commencement of the period of interruption maternity leave. The supervisor(s) or School or Faculty Graduate Office may require confirmation from the student's doctor that they are fit to return to study.
- c. The School/other organisational unit in which a pregnant student works is responsible for risk assessments in relation to her work and environment. Any health and safety concerns should be raised immediately within the appropriate School or Faculty Graduate Office. Occupational Health may be consulted for confidential advice and guidance.

5. Returning to study after sickness

- a. Students must keep their supervisor and appropriate School or Faculty informed of any changes in their circumstances that may result in them returning to their studies earlier or later than originally stated. Students who are interrupting and want to return to their studies later than originally stated must apply for another period of interruption using the appropriate application form.
- b. Any student who has been absent for longer than two months due to illness is required to provide confirmation from their General Practitioner that they are fit to resume their studies.
- c. Occupational Health and/or the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) should be consulted if additional support needs are required for students returning from long-term sick leave.
- d. Students may be referred to the [Fitness to Study](#) policy and procedure on their return from absence.

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Document Control Box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Sickness Procedure for Postgraduate Research Students
Lead contact email	Alex.hinchliffe@manchester.ac.uk
Date updated:	September 2018
Approving body:	MDC
Version:	1
Supersedes:	N/A
Previous review dates:	N/A
Next review date:	September 2023
Equality impact outcome:	
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students
Related policies/procedures/guidance etc.	Change of Circumstances for Postgraduate Research Students Policy (Sep 2018)
Policy owner:	Helen Baker, Head of Research Degrees & Researcher Development
Lead contact:	Alex Hinchliffe, Research Degrees & Researcher Development Officer