



Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) Submission Pending Policy

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1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the eligibility and process for a postgraduate researcher (PGR) to apply for a submission pending period or an extension to an already approved submission pending period.

2. Scope and definitions

2.1 This policy is applicable to all full and part-time PGRs and all relevant University of Manchester staff.

2.2 This policy forms part of the [Code of Practice](#) for Postgraduate Researcher.

3. Submission Pending – General Principles

3.1 PGRs should complete their programme within the standard period of registration. However, PGRs who are unable to submit their thesis within the registered period may be able to apply for an additional unfunded submission pending period.

3.2 There is no University-expected time commitment during a period of submission pending, and the former mode of attendance is not taken into consideration. If approved, the length of time allocated must only be used for preparing the thesis and the time committed to this activity is at the PGRs discretion.

3.3 Both full and part-time eligible PGRs can submit an application for submission pending usually no later than 3 months prior to their programme end date. Late applications may be refused.

3.4 Most four-year doctoral degrees do not allow a period of submission pending and the thesis must be submitted within the fourth year of the degree unless an [extension to programme](#) has been approved (PGRs should check their letter of admission, their programme handbook or with their CDT lead for eligibility).

3.5 PGRs must have completed all research and laboratory work before commencing an approved period of submission pending.

3.6 All PGRs granted a submission pending period must pay the [appropriate fee](#).

- 3.7 PGRs who successfully register for the submission pending period will be entitled to some use of University facilities including library and computer access. PGRs will not be entitled to facilities for primary research, such as laboratory use.
- 3.8 Supervision expectations in this period vary between disciplines and it is the responsibility of the PGR to come to an understanding with their supervisor(s) about the frequency and duration of supervision meetings in this period. The minimum requirement during the submission pending period is that the PGR and supervisor(s) will have meaningful contact (e.g. via phone, email, face-to-face meetings, online meeting etc.) at least every month and that this contact should be recorded in the University's progression monitoring system.
- 3.9 The maximum possible registration period for submission pending is 12 months for PGRs who were previously both full-time and part-time, but the period approved will be dependent on the completion and submission schedule submitted as part of the application and the overall length of the original programme for which the PGR is registered:

| Registered Period of Programme | Maximum Submission Pending Period |
|---|--|
| One year full-time and normally no more than two years part-time (e.g.: Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Master of Science (MSc) by Research) | 6 months |
| Two years full-time and normally no more than four years part-time (e.g.: Doctor of Medicine (MD)) | 12 months |
| Three year full-time doctoral degree programmes (or part-time equivalent) | 12 months |
| Three and a half year doctoral degree programmes (or part-time equivalent) | 6 months |
| Four year doctoral degree programmes (or part-time equivalent) | Submission pending not permitted without exceptional approval via MDCSG. |

- 3.10 In some cases a PGR's funding body's regulations may stipulate a period of registration permitted for the purpose of thesis preparation. In these cases consideration will be made on a case-by-case basis, not exceeding the University's maximum Submission Pending Period permitted.

4. Submission Pending Application Process

- 4.1 The PGR is responsible for submitting the relevant application form to the appropriate [Faculty Doctoral Academy](#) usually no later than 3 months before their programme end date. PGRs should contact the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy for access to the relevant form.

- 4.2 PGRs must include a plan for the preparation, completion, and submission of their thesis, agreed and approved by their supervisor(s), with the application. Supervisors will be asked whether they 'support' or 'reject' the application. If they are unsupportive reasons must be provided.
- 4.3 Applications will be considered by either a School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or equivalent.
- 4.4 It is expected that approval will not be withheld unreasonably. However, the decision of a postgraduate research degrees panel or equivalent is final. If refused, the applicant will not normally be permitted to reapply. Appeals are allowed under [Regulation XIX](#).

5. Extensions to PGR Submission Pending Period - General Principles

- 5.1 Interruptions are not permitted during submission pending as PGRs are no longer registered on a programme of study.
- 5.2 In exceptional circumstances, PGRs with mitigating circumstances can submit a request for an extension to their submission pending period.
- 5.3 If approved, the time permitted to submit the thesis will be extended by the period of the granted extension.
- 5.4 The total period/s of extension to the submission pending period must not normally exceed the maximum allowance according to programme (see 3.9).
- 5.5 If a PGR does not submit their thesis within the submission pending period and has not formally arranged an approved extension with the University, the [Faculty Doctoral Academy](#) will refuse to accept the thesis and take appropriate action to discontinue the registration.

6. Mitigating Circumstances

- 6.1 The University defines mitigating circumstances as 'unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances that could have, or did have, a significant adverse effect on the academic performance of a PGR'. The circumstances will prevent the PGR from working altogether or severely affect their ability to work effectively.
- 6.2 Schools must ensure that PGRs are made aware of the definition of mitigating circumstances and the procedure for applying for an extension to the submission pending period.
- 6.3 In order to extend the submission pending period, the mitigating circumstances should normally have arisen within the submission pending period.
- 6.4 PGRs should submit their application for an extension to their submission pending period as soon as possible after the mitigating circumstances arise. Retrospective applications for an extension will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

7. Examples of Mitigating Circumstances for Extension to Submission Pending

7.1 Examples of mitigating circumstances that can be considered for an extension to submission pending include:

- i. Significant illness or injury; or worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions and acute stress;
- ii. On-going medical treatment (including but not limited to fertility treatment or gender reassignment) where the PGR has been medically advised that they require leave;
- iii. Personal / family circumstances such as taking on caring responsibilities or a sudden increase in existing caring responsibilities;
- iv. Delays in progress due to public service, for example, jury service;
- v. Maternity and adoption leave, partner's / paternity leave and neo-natal care leave (refer to the PGR [Family Leave Procedure](#));

7.2 Examples of circumstances not normally regarded as grounds for an extension to submission pending include:

- i. Further primary research and/or laboratory work;
- ii. Voluntary service overseas;
- iii. Expeditions/sport;
- iv. Long-term holidays/vacations;
- v. Inadequate planning and time management;
- vi. Pregnancy (excluding maternity leave and events which may arise during pregnancy that may constitute a mitigating circumstance);
- vii. Difficulties with English language (including delays as a result of proofreading);
- viii. Computer or other equipment failure or theft where use of an alternative is possible or any loss of work was avoidable, except where the work is lost through the failure of University of Manchester (UoM) systems as confirmed by UoM;
- ix. Change in employment conditions;
- x. Lack of sufficient funds;
- xi. Holidays, moving house and events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected;
- xii. The act of religious observance;
- xiii. Consequences of paid employment.

8. Evidence to Support an Application

8.1 Evidence demonstrating the impact of circumstances on the PGR will be required. Applications for an Extension to Submission Pending should therefore normally be accompanied by an appropriate independent supporting document.

- 8.2 Requests for an Extension to Submission Pending for health reasons would normally be expected to be supported by medical evidence from an appropriate medical professional. This may be evidence dating from the time of disruption of study earlier in the programme.
- 8.3 If a PGR needs extension of time due to a disability or long-term health condition, and evidence of the condition has already been provided to the University (e.g. to the [Disability Advisory and Support Service](#)), it will not always be necessary to provide new medical evidence.
- 8.4 Evidence to support an Extension to Submission Pending for personal/family reasons will vary depending on the circumstances. It is appreciated that in some circumstances providing any evidence may be difficult, and that a PGR may only be able to provide a statement as part of their application. However, in some cases it may be possible for a PGR to provide relevant evidence, which could be a statement from someone within the University aware of the PGRs circumstances (e.g. a supervisor or pastoral advisor).
- 8.5 The University will consider what kind of evidence might be provided for other circumstances on an individual case-by-case basis.
- 8.6 All evidence must be written in English, or translated to English by an official transcription service and must relate to the time the circumstances changed.
- 8.7 The PGR can request to withhold the submitted evidence from their supervisor as part of the application process. The supervisor will still be able to view all other information on the application.

9. Extension to Submission Pending Application Process

- 9.1 The PGR is responsible for formally submitting the relevant application form to the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy. Please contact the appropriate [Faculty Doctoral Academy](#) for access to the relevant form.
- 9.2 In some cases, where the PGR is unable to submit the form due to their current circumstances, the Faculty/School may accept an application from a representative who has written permission to act on the PGR's behalf.
- 9.3 The application should include details of what stage the thesis has reached, the reason/s for the delay including details of the mitigating circumstances, an assessment of the time required for completion of the thesis with a full completion plan and an assurance that the thesis will be submitted by a stipulated deadline.
- 9.4 The application should include the relevant evidence as detailed in section 8.
- 9.5 The supervisor can submit a statement of support, giving reasons for the extension, details of the length of time required and assurances that such an extension will be sufficient for the PGR to complete the revisions and submit their thesis. This statement can be requested separately where the PGR prefers not to disclose full details of the application with the supervisor / supervisory team.

- 9.6 A PGR cannot submit the same individual request for mitigation more than once unless the circumstance has exacerbated in some way or the effect on the PGR has lasted longer than expected. In such cases, additional evidence must be supplied alongside a further extension application.
- 9.7 Applications will be considered by either a School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or equivalent.
- 9.8 The decision of a postgraduate research degrees panel is final. Applicants may re-apply for an extension after a refusal has been made only if they have new or additional information and/or evidence to add to their application which was not originally considered. If the request is refused again, the applicant will not normally be permitted to re-apply.
- 9.9 If refused, appeals are allowed under [Regulation XIX](#).

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