



RESEARCH DEGREES EXTENSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Document Type	Policy and procedure
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Version	2.0
Amendments	<p>October 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short extensions redefined as ≤ 3 months and apply to all deadlines. • Supervisors removed from decision making process. Instead, they are expected to provide letters of support (mandated for upgrading deadline extensions; recommended for other deadline extensions). • Short extensions will be assessed in the Faculty by the student's DRDC and the FRDD. • Extensions of >3 months will be assessed by a panel comprising the DRDC, FRDD and an independent FRDD from another Faculty.
Related Policies & Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Manual Chapter 9: Research Degree Academic Regulations • Interruption of Studies Policy described in the Academic Manual Chapter 7: General Academic Regulations • Students must decide whether to apply for an extension or interruption of studies (IoS). School staff will advise and may refer a request for extension to the IoS procedure, or vice versa.

1. SCOPE

1.1 All research degree programmes

2. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

2.1 This policy and procedure describes the points in a research degree where an extension may be required, the permissible criteria to justify an extension request, and outlines the key steps in applying for an extension and key considerations.

3. EXTENSIONS POLICY

3.1 EXTENSIONS TO SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT DEADLINES



- 3.1.1 Extensions to summative assessment deadlines (e.g.: upgrade from MPhil to PhD; submission of final thesis/portfolio corrections) may be granted in circumstances beyond the control of the student that seriously affect the ability of the student to submit work for assessment and/or participate in the assessment process before the assessment deadline.
- 3.1.2 Application for an extension must be submitted before the assessment deadline unless acute circumstances prevent this, e.g.: sudden severe illness.
- 3.1.3 The duration of the extension should be proportionate to the circumstance(s) necessitating the extension and the nature of the required submission and/or participation in the assessment.
- 3.1.4 In the case of assessment deadlines for the taught phase of the DrPH, responses to requests for extension will be guided by the Extenuating Circumstances Policy described in the [Academic Manual Chapter 7: General Academic Regulations](#), and will be scrutinised by the DrPH Board of Examiners.
- 3.1.5 Completion of the DrPH Review (in preparation for the RSII component of the DrPH programme) is not mandated within a specific timeframe and is not subject to this Extensions policy.

3.2 EXTENSIONS TO THE MAXIMUM PERIOD OF REGISTRATION

- 3.2.1 Extensions to the maximum period of registration (or the thesis/portfolio submission deadline) may be granted in exceptional circumstances that exceed the standard extension provided by the 'writing up' period.
- 3.2.2 Application for an extension should be submitted when the need for an extension is identified. Normally, the School will not consider retrospective applications for extension.
- 3.2.3 Normally, an application for extension must be submitted no less than three months before the student's maximum registration date.
- 3.2.4 The duration of the extension should be proportionate to the circumstance(s) necessitating the extension.
- 3.2.5 Normally, the circumstances should be sufficiently severe as to warrant an extension of at least three months.
- 3.2.6 The duration of the extension will be a whole (integer) number of months.

3.3 MAXIMUM EXTENSION PERIODS

- 3.3.1 An extension will normally be limited to six months unless a compelling case is made for a longer period of up to a maximum of one year.
- 3.3.2 The number of periods of extension is not capped, but the total duration of all periods of extension should not exceed two years.

3.4 PERMISSIBLE GROUNDS FOR EXTENSIONS

- 3.4.1 **Extensions may be granted** in circumstances beyond the control of the student, and in other circumstances of similar gravity:
- Illness
 - Bereavement (death of partner or close family member)



- Loss of essential equipment or other key component of the research degree study, e.g.: through theft, fire, flood, conflict, or removal of third-party access permissions
- Loss of key component of the research degree study due to major change in overarching research programme, e.g.: early termination of a clinical trial
- Termination of employment, prolonged illness or death of the main supervisor.

3.4.2 An extension to the period of study or registration may be an appropriate **reasonable adjustment** under the terms of the Equality Act for a candidate with an assessed disability or long-term health condition.

3.4.3 **Extensions will not be granted** for circumstances within the control of the student, such as:

- Undertaking part-time paid work
- Volunteering
- Seeking and securing promotion or additional work responsibilities
- Inadequate submission to research ethics committee
- Failure to backup files, or use appropriate virus protection software, or similar avoidable IT mishaps.

3.5 INFORMATION FOR ALL EXTENSION REQUESTS

3.5.1 Documentary evidence of the need for an extension must be provided. Confidential documents can be scrutinised by an appropriate member of the Student Advice team ([Student Support Services](#)) in confidence and a recommendation made to support consideration of the extension request.

3.5.2 To support informed decision-making, the extension request must be accompanied by a sufficiently detailed summary of essential work remaining and a viable plan for completing this work within the requested extension period.

3.5.3 Applications requesting an extension of either MPhil to PhD upgrading deadline (report submission or upgrading completion) must be accompanied by a letter of support from the main supervisor.

3.5.4 Letters of support from the main supervisor are recommended for extensions to other deadlines but are not mandated.

3.6 SCRUTINY OF EXTENSION REQUESTS

3.6.1 The level of scrutiny of the extension request will vary depending on the type and duration of extension that is required.

3.6.2 **Extensions of three months or less**

3.6.2.1 Requests to extend the MPhil to PhD upgrading report submission or upgrading completion deadlines or the thesis/portfolio submission deadline (the maximum registration period) will be reviewed by the Departmental Research Degrees Coordinator (DRDC) and the Faculty Research Degrees Director (FRDD).

3.6.2.2 Requests to extend the deadline for submission of final corrected thesis/portfolio will be reviewed by the FRDD.

3.6.2.3 The final decision to approve or reject an extension request rests with the FRDD.



- 3.6.2.4 Substitutions can be made for the roles of DRDC and FRDD to mitigate conflicts of interest or if there is a prolonged period when the DRDC or FRDD is unable to discharge this duty.
- 3.6.3 **Extensions of more than three months**
- 3.6.3.1 Extension requests will be reviewed by a panel made up of the student's DRDC, their FRDD, and an FRDD from another Faculty. The Panel members should avoid conflicts of interest in relation to the student and supervisory team.
- 3.6.3.2 The decision to approve or reject an extension request rests with the panel. If the panel cannot agree, the request should be reviewed by the Head of Doctoral College, who will make a final decision.
- 3.6.3.3 Substitutions can be made for the roles of DRDC and FRDD to mitigate conflicts of interest or if there is a prolonged period when the DRDC or either FRDD is unable to discharge this duty.

3.7 FEES FOR PERIODS OF EXTENSION

- 3.7.1 Since extensions are reserved for circumstances beyond the control of the student, additional tuition fees will not be charged during an extension period that goes beyond the student's initial agreed registration (accounting for previously approved interruptions of study).

3.8 UKVI REQUIREMENTS

- 3.8.1 Any visa implications arising from an extension request must be considered and adherence to UKVI reporting requirements ensured.
- 3.8.2 Students should seek advice from the [Visas and Immigration Team](#).

3.9 FUNDER REQUIREMENTS

- 3.9.1 Before applying for an extension to the maximum registration period, funded students, such as those on UKRI-funded doctoral programmes, should contact their funder or the local programme management team regarding relevant funder conditions.
- 3.9.2 Some funding contracts contain requirements relating to extensions that may add to or take precedence over elements of this policy, such as a requirement for the School to inform the funder of the extension.

4. EXTENSIONS PROCEDURE

4.1 PREPARING AND SUBMITTING AN EXTENSION APPLICATION

- 4.1.1 Read policies and the accompanying FAQ document.
- 4.1.2 Prior to submitting an extension request, students should read the Research Degrees Extensions Policy, above, and that relating to Interruption of Studies, outlined in the [Academic Manual Chapter 7: General Academic Regulations](#).
- 4.1.3 Students are advised to discuss the available options with their supervisor(s), DRDC and, if applicable, the School's Student Advice team. In some cases, an application for Interruption of Studies may be more appropriate.
- 4.1.4 [Complete the Extension Request Form](#).



- 4.1.5 Assemble supporting documents (see Section 3.5 of the Research Degrees Extensions Policy, above)
- 4.1.6 Submit the completed Extension Request Form and supporting documents (except for any documents that the student wishes to remain confidential) to the FRDM.
- 4.1.7 Confidential documents should be submitted to the Student Advice team ([Student Support Services](#)) for review, and this should be noted on the Extension Request Form.
- 4.1.8 Students should retain original copies of any paper documents, as they may be asked to present these at a later stage in the process.
- 4.1.9 The supervisor should separately submit their letter of support to the FRDM.

4.2 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4.2.1 **Students in receipt of studentship or other funding**

- 4.2.1.1 Approval of an extension to the maximum period of registration does not automatically lead to a commensurate funding extension.
- 4.2.1.2 Not all funders allow unfunded extensions to the maximum registration period.
- 4.2.1.3 Students should consult with their funder and the local programme management team before submitting an extension application.

4.2.2 **Visas**

- 4.2.2.1 Students are responsible for checking their Visa status and ensuring full compliance with UKVI requirements.
- 4.2.2.2 Students should liaise with the School's [Visas and Immigration Team](#).

4.2.3 **Reasonable Adjustment**

- 4.2.3.1 Students wishing to apply for an extension as a reasonable adjustment under the terms of the Equality Act should seek advice from the Student Advice Team ([Student Support Services](#)) before completing the Extension Request Form.