

Absence Procedure for funded Postgraduate Researchers

(Sick Pay/Parental Leave/Jury Service)

Eligibility

This procedure applies to funded doctoral students, with the specific terms and conditions for UKRI-funded PGRs contained within Appendix A.

Definitions

‘Funded doctoral student’: Funded doctoral students are defined as being currently in receipt of funding that includes a stipend paid by the University. Examples include Research Council funding, University funding, including school and faculty-funded, and industry funding managed by the University.

‘Funding package’: Refers to the elements that make up a funded doctoral students funding package. The composition of the funding package can be found in the funding offer issued prior to commencement of the programme.

Regulations governing absence

1. Under Section A2 of the University’s regulations¹, it is expected that registration for a doctoral degree will be continuously pursued.
2. However, the regulations recognise that, in certain circumstances, a doctoral student can benefit from taking a period of absence from their doctoral degree via the temporary withdrawal process.
3. The grounds, duration, and procedure for applying for temporary withdrawal are codified in Section A2 of the University’s regulations and on MySurrey². Whilst the regulations state that students will not usually be permitted a period of temporary withdrawal in excess of twelve months aggregate over the period of registration, this does not affect temporary withdrawal requests made for the purposes of parental leave.
4. During the approved temporary withdrawal period, students’ programme registration status is changed from “Enrolled” to “Absent”. The “Absent” status means that supervision is not provided, and students are not eligible to participate in the programme of study before resuming their registration; however, their access to Surrey IT facilities will be maintained throughout this period and they will be able to use their Surrey email account and SurreyLearn. Access to chaplains, counselling and mental health advice will remain open for doctoral students to continue to be supported during a temporary withdrawal. The Disability and Neuroinclusion team can also provide information and advice to doctoral students during a period of temporary withdrawal.
5. Funded doctoral students are also entitled to an extension of their funding package when taking a period of absence due to illness (covered by a medical certificate); parental leave; or jury service.

Absence due to illness

6. Payment of a stipend can continue for a period of up to 13 weeks in a 12-month period when a doctoral student takes a period of temporary withdrawal because of a medical-related reason. Medical evidence should accompany the claim.
7. Doctoral students can self-certify sick leave for up to six days. They should inform their supervisors if they need to take such leave. This period is not covered by sick pay provision.

¹ [A2 regulations for research degrees | University of Surrey](#)

² [Guidance and support | Research | MySurrey](#)

Temporary withdrawal is not required for sickness of six days or fewer and will not result in an extension to the registration period.

8. Doctoral students can request a period of sick leave and/or temporary withdrawal for periods of seven days or over. Temporary withdrawal can be requested for longer than 13 weeks, but funding will be suspended from the end of the 13th week up until the end of the temporary withdrawal date approved by the Admission, Progression and Examination Subcommittee (APESC).
9. A doctoral student's registration will be extended by the same duration as the approved period of temporary withdrawal.

Jury Service

10. Doctoral students who take a period of temporary withdrawal due to jury service are entitled to an extension of their funding package to match the period of jury service, up to a maximum of 12 months.
11. A doctoral student's registration will be extended by the same duration as the approved period of temporary withdrawal.

Parental leave ([students studying on a visa should refer to the CAS guidance for doctoral programmes](#))

12. Funded doctoral students are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave if the expected week of childbirth will occur within their funded period. The earliest that maternity leave, taken as temporary withdrawal, can commence is 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth.
13. The first 26 weeks should be paid at full stipend rate, pro-rated for part time doctoral students.
14. The following 13 weeks should be paid at a level commensurate with statutory maternity pay. The final 13 weeks are not paid.
15. Partners are entitled to up to two weeks paid Ordinary Parental Leave on full stipend. Ordinary Parental Leave cannot start before the birth and must end within 56 days of the birth. Partners are also entitled to an extended period of unpaid parental leave, up to a maximum of 50 weeks, with their studentship extended accordingly. Unpaid parental leave must be completed within 12 months of the birth of the child. This leave may be taken in up to three blocks of leave or all at once.
16. Adoption leave should be granted on the same basis as maternity leave. There is no qualifying period for maternity, parental or adoption leave. Additionally, their Studentship end date should be updated to reflect the period of leave.

Absences not related to illness, jury service or parental leave

17. Section A2 of the University regulations permits temporary withdrawal for reasons other than illness, jury service or parental leave.
18. When applying for temporary withdrawal for reasons other than illness, jury service or parental leave, funded doctoral students have the option of continuing to receive their funding package for up to a maximum of 1 month in a 12-month period, unless the temporary withdrawal is a funded internship or paid placement. Funding will be suspended from the end of the 1-month period until they return to their doctoral degree.

Visas

19. Doctoral students on a Student Visa are advised to check the terms and conditions of their visa before applying for temporary withdrawal. The terms of the visa take precedence over this procedure.

Appendix A- Terms and Conditions for UKRI-funded PGRs

This appendix refers to specific information for **UKRI-funded PGRs** which outlines the terms and conditions from UKRI, related to absence, effective from **1st October 2025**.

Detailed information can be found here ([Terms and conditions for training funding – UKRI](#)) and the references below e.g. Training Grant Condition (TGC) 8 relate to the relevant clauses within the UKRI terms and conditions.

Absence (TGC) 8)

Students can access four categories of leave: Family Leave; Medical Leave; Additional Leave; and Annual Leave. A Student must not be expected to study during leave absences.

Family Leave (TGC 8.1)

TGC 8.1.1 Maternity Leave. Maternity Leave can commence up to 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. A Student is eligible for Maternity Leave if (1) the maternity leave is planned to commence (or does commence) before the end of the Student's funded period and (2) they are the birth parent of the child. A Stipend may be drawn at the full rate for the first 26 weeks of Maternity Leave; at a level commensurate with Statutory Maternity Pay for the next 13 weeks of Maternity Leave. A Stipend may not be drawn for the final 13 weeks. The Studentship may be extended to account for periods taken as Maternity Leave.

TGC 8.1.2 Partner's or Paternity Leave (leave for partners following the birth of a child). A stipend may be drawn for two weeks of leave for a Student who is the partner of a mother or birth parent following the birth of their child. A Student is eligible for this leave if the following conditions are met:

- (1) the leave is planned to commence (or does commence) before the end of the Student's funded period and the leave commences within 52 weeks of the birth of a child AND
- (2) the Student is either (i) the father or non-birth parent of the child or (ii) partner of the child's birth parent AND
- (3) the Student must also have or expect to have the main responsibility (apart from any responsibility of the mother/birth parent) for the upbringing of the child.

For these purposes, "partner" means a person who lives with the birth parent and the child in an enduring family relationship but is not the birth parent's parent, grandparent, sibling, child, aunt or uncle. A partner may be married to or be a civil partner of the birth parent but this is not a requirement.

TGC 8.1.3 Adoption Leave. A Student is eligible for Adoption Leave if the Student has been newly matched with a child through an adoption agency, or if the Student has used a surrogate during their Studentship. Leave during the studentship for a main adopter of a child in the UK begins when the child's placement starts, or an agreed period of time before the child's placement starts to support preparation. The support available for the main adopter is commensurate to Maternity Leave. The support available for a Student who is the partner (as defined in **TGC 8.1.2**) of the main adopter of the child or is the coadopter, is commensurate with Paternity Leave. The Studentship may be extended to account for the period of Adoption Leave. A Stipend may also be drawn for Students attending adoption appointments after being matched with a child. The Studentship should not be extended for these appointments.

TGC 8.1.4 Neonatal Care Leave. A Student is eligible for Neonatal Care Leave if: (1) the birth of the child is within the funded period of the Studentship or a planned period of Maternity Leave and the child is receiving neonatal care in a hospital and (2) they are either (i) the mother/birth parent of the child or (ii) a father/non birth parent or partner of the mother/birth parent as defined in **TGC 8.1.2**. One week of Neonatal Care Leave should be provided for each week or part-week in which the child is in neonatal care, up to a maximum of 12 weeks. This is additional to Maternity or Paternity Leave and a stipend should be drawn at the usual rate. The Studentship may be extended to account for periods taken as Neonatal Leave.

TGC 8.1.5 Parental leave (no stipend). A student may take leave in order to provide care to a child for to whom they are a parent/carer of up to 1 month each year. No Stipend may be drawn during this period, but the end date of the Studentship should be modified accordingly. Alternatively the Studentship can be suspended.

TGC 8.1.6 Death during a period of maternity. A partner is eligible for leave on the same basis as the mother or main adopter if the mother or main adopter dies during or shortly before the period of maternity or adoption leave. For pregnancy loss or the loss of a child, see Additional Leave.

TGC 8.2 Sick Leave Medical Leave

TGC 8.2.1 Medical Leave should be used for any circumstances by which a Student is deemed unfit to study. It may also be used to provide paid leave to attend medical appointments where flexible study is not possible. Examples of leave that can be supported under Medical Leave are: • Sick leave (including both physical and mental health)

- Pregnancy-related illness
- Antenatal appointments
- Fertility treatment – a Student experiencing fertility issues and has been medically advised that they require leave, including (but not limited to) undergoing fertility treatment
- Disability-related illness (including chronic illness)
- Disability-related appointments (including for chronic illness) e.g. diagnosis, therapy or treatment
- Gender reassignment – a Student undertaking gender reassignment and has been medically advised that they require leave.

TGC 8.2.2 A stipend may be drawn for Medical Leave for up to 28 weeks in a rolling 12-month period. The total cumulative amount of medical leave must not exceed 52 weeks across the whole studentship.

(Evidence must be provided via a certificate, letter or equivalent from a medical professional which determines that the student is unfit to study)

TGC 8.2.A Additional leave

TGC 8.2.A.1 Additional leave may be provided to cover specific instances where a Student may be required to be absent from study that are not covered by other types of leave. These include:

- Special leave (including bereavement and pregnancy loss)
- Baby loss (including stillbirth and neonatal death)

- Carer's leave
- Additional disability leave associated with delayed adjustments
- Health and safety
- Public duties
- Regulation leave

TGC 8.2.A.2 Special Leave (including bereavement and pregnancy loss). This covers paid leave on compassionate grounds (compassionate leave) in addition to emergency situations such as serious illness or injury involving a Student's dependant or to deal with any domestic emergency or emergency situation at home, such as flooding or *other such events that create significant disruptions that cannot be accommodated through flexible working such as non-medical appointment (e.g. legal).*

Typically, a stipend may be drawn for up to 5 days leave pro rata, *(and at the universities discretion up to 10 day's paid leave pro rata may be drawn).*

In the following circumstances 10 days' paid leave pro rata will be provided

- (1) in the event of the death of a parent, close relative or a child
- (2) in the event that a pregnancy is lost before 24 weeks whether the Student (i) experiences this loss directly or (ii) is the partner, as defined in **TGC 8.1.2**, of someone who experiences the loss; or (iii) loses a baby via surrogacy.

Absences beyond these allowances may be taken as Medical Leave where they meet the conditions set down in **TGC 8.2**. The Studentship may be extended to account for periods taken as Special Leave.

TGC 8.2.A.3 Baby loss (including stillbirth and neonatal death). A Student is entitled to this leave, in addition to Special Leave, if the Student is (1) the mother/birth parent or (2) the father/non-birth parent/partner of the birth mother (**as defined in TGC 8.1.2**) and (3) the baby is stillborn or born at any stage of pregnancy in or beyond week 24 of the pregnancy but dies within the first 52 weeks of being born. This is irrespective of whether the child was stillborn, dies within the first 28 days (neonatal death) or dies at any other time in the first 52 weeks. The Student should be provided the same amount of Family Leave as they would have been provided had the child survived. If the Student is already on Family Leave, this should continue unless the Student expressly requests to return to study early.

TGC 8.2.A.4 Carer's leave. A stipend of up to 5 days per year pro rata may be drawn by a Student who needs to give or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need. This is defined as a dependant with a disability under the Equality Act 2010 (or DDA in Northern Ireland), care need related to old age, or an illness or injury likely to need care for more than 3 months. The studentship may be extended to account for periods taken as carers leave.

TGC 8.2.A.5 Additional disability leave associated with delayed adjustments. A Stipend may be drawn while the Student is unable to study as the result of a delay in putting in place reasonable adjustments. An extension to the Studentship may be provided for disruption over 5 days. An extension of up to 4 weeks can be agreed by the Training Grant Holder or RO without consultation with UKRI. Above this amount, the RO must contact UKRI. Students must not study while on this leave type. It should not be used merely to extend the period available to study nor should it replace or enhance the provision available through Medical Leave (**TGC 8.2**).

TGC 8.2.A.6 Health and Safety. Where a health and safety concern means that a student is temporarily unable to continue with their studies and the RO has made all other reasonable efforts to mitigate the issue, a Stipend may be drawn while the Student is unable to study (see also: TGC 3.3). The Studentship may be extended to account for periods taken as leave related to Health & Safety over 5 days. An extension to the Studentship of up to 4 weeks can be agreed by the Training Grant Holder or RO without consultation with UKRI. Above this amount, the RO must contact UKRI. The situation will be kept under regular review to ensure that new mitigations to allow the return of the Student to study are not possible.

TGC 8.2.A.7 Public Duties. Leave may be provided for jury service and an extension may be provided.

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