Application for a period of suspension

Scope
All full and part-time research students, including those registered on a validated research degree programme, academic staff with a responsibility for the supervision of research students and administrative staff who have a role in supporting academic staff in managing research degree provision.

Senate Regulations:
Regulation 24 – Doctoral Programmes
Regulation 23 – Masters Degree by Research

Date approved/re-approved
APPSC 22 April 2009, minor updates Education Committee 15 June 2012

Date for review
To be reviewed on a periodic basis, with allowance for minor annual updates of roles and responsibilities by Graduate School Committee, as required.

To be read in conjunction with Section 9 of the University’s Quality Manual
Application for Periods of Suspension

The following statements are intended to provide further clarity on the policies and processes that assure the quality and enhancement of research degree provision across the University and which are outlined in the Framework for Research Degrees Provision.

The University's Research Degree Framework and Regulations apply equally to partnership provision unless different arrangements have been agreed between the University and the partner institution and have received University approval. Details will be set out in the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership and in information provided to students.

All applications for a period of suspension requires approval from the School Board of Studies on the recommendation of the Senior Tutor for Research. Relevant documentation, such as a medical certificate, must be submitted in support of the application.

Principles

- A student may request a Period of Suspension if it is expected that their research will be significantly interrupted because of any one or a combination of the following reasons:
  - a period of persistent or lengthy illness of their own and/or of their dependants;
  - serious personal or domestic difficulties;
  - the opportunity to take up a temporary, short-term post which can be justified as being highly relevant to their thesis or research training;
  - Maternity, Paternity or Adoption Leave;
  - any other appropriate reason.

- Requests for Periods of Suspension because of financial hardship will not be approved;

- All requests for Periods of Suspension must normally be made in advance. Requests for retrospective Periods of Suspension may only be approved in exceptional circumstances;

- Students may apply for, and have approved, a minimum Period of Suspension of six months and a maximum period of twelve months at any one time;

- A student may only apply for, and have approved, up to two Periods of Suspension during their whole period of candidature and no more than a total of twenty four months suspension will normally be approved. Any applications for periods of suspension that exceed this length of time may only be considered under exceptional circumstances and upon appeal to the DVC;

- A Period of Suspension will not be included in the calculations on duration of candidature but a supervisor should certify that the Period of Suspension will not delay the submission of the thesis by more than the length of the Period of Suspension;

- A student is not expected to carry out any research during a Period of Suspension. Students will not have access to the University facilities during any period of suspension and they will not receive any supervision. Any research carried out during a Period of Suspension will be deducted from the overall period of candidature;

- Students on a period of suspension will remain students of the University and are subject to ordinary student regulations;

- A student on suspension is required to submit an annual progress report during any Period of Suspension indicating both what progress they had made prior to the Period of Suspension and what progress they intend to make when they resume their research at the end of the Period of Suspension;

- Students in receipt of funding (RCUK or University studentship, for example) are advised that their funding may also be deferred during any period of suspension. Students are advised to contact their funding body immediately should they be considering applying for a Period of Suspension;
Students who suspend their period of candidature on the grounds of maternity, paternity or adoption leave are advised to also refer to the University’s policy on Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave.

N.B. International students must contact the Student Centre for clarification on any visa implications during any application for a Period of Suspension.

**Resumption of Studies**

- The University expects that when a student resumes their research candidature after a period of suspension they are fit and able to do so. The supervisory team and the Senior Tutor/Director of Research should meet with the student and confirm that the student is fit to resume their candidature before re-registration is permitted.

- Students who fail to re-register after a period of suspension will be deemed to have withdrawn from the programme and their candidature will be regarded as having lapsed. A student will be advised in writing that their period of candidature has lapsed and may be required to re-apply for admission to candidature before being permitted to continue their research.