

Official Leave of Absence Procedure for Postgraduate Research Students

October 2022

Research Degrees and Researcher Development

1. Purpose and Scope

- a. This Procedure should be considered in relation to the [Change of Circumstances for Postgraduate Research Student policy](https://bit.ly/2Cox7Kz) [https://bit.ly/2Cox7Kz]
- b. This Procedure defines the different options available to a postgraduate research student (PGR) for an official leave of absence (fieldwork, placement, exchange, overseas institutional visit (OIV), and holiday) and their implications on a student's individual study.

2. Definition of an official leave of absence

An official leave of absence is when a PGR is away from their programme for any of the reasons outlined below. An official leave of absence will not require a period of interruption from study:

A PGR may be required as a mandatory part of their programme or request during their programme to undertake the following types of leave of absence which shall be applied as outlined below (NB: some of these activities may also be grounds for an interruption depending on funder terms and conditions):

- i. **Fieldwork:** A period of time, integral to the programme, allocated to research data collection. Fieldwork may or may not be off campus but will be limited to a distinct period of time.
- ii. **Placements:** An opportunity to undertake a period of work within the period of the programme which may or may not be funded, and which may enhance future career prospects. A placement should be related to and part of the programme of study or a discrete activity that enhances experience.
- iii. **Exchanges:** An approved period of time where a student visits another institution, which has a formal reciprocal arrangement in place with the University of Manchester, to conduct research related to their programme of study (examples of an exchange might be to learn new research techniques; access archives; use specific pieces of equipment etc.)
- iv. **Institutional visits:** A short term visit to another institution related to the student's programme of study. It may or may not be part of a formal partnership agreement with external organisation.
- v. **Holiday:** PGRs may, with the prior agreement of their supervisor, take up to eight weeks in each year (pro rata for parts of year), inclusive of any public holidays. All holiday allowance taken should first be discussed with and approved by the supervisor. Students receiving sponsorship are expected to bear in mind their obligations to the sponsor and consult the policy of their sponsor when planning leave.
- vi. **Special / Compassionate Leave:** With Supervisor agreement PGRs are eligible to take up to 5 days special / compassionate leave (in addition to their holiday leave entitlement) per academic year. PGRs would be eligible for this leave due to the unforeseen breakdown of care arrangements for a person for whom the PGR has primary responsibility (please refer to the [PGR Carers' Policy](#)), the serious illness of a domestic partner, child or other person, whether related or not who plays a significant part in the life of the PGR and the death of a close relative (which would normally include a

spouse or significant partner, parent, brother, sister, in-law, grandparent or grandchild).

The relevant individual degree [ordinances and regulations](#) give circumstances in which study away from the University may be permitted.

Depending on funder terms and conditions, where the leave of absence is not a mandatory part of a programme, it may be possible for students to request an extension to accommodate official leave of absence. Students are advised to check their funder terms and conditions to confirm whether an extension to submission deadline is permitted. Students will then be required to make a formal application to extend and the decision will be at the discretion of Schools/Faculty.

PGRs who also have Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) duties should liaise with [P&OD](#) and the T&L coordinator within their school/division/department/faculty at the earliest opportunity if the leave of absence is likely to impact any of their GTA duties.

Document Control Box	
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