



Approved by
Academic Council
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Policy on Leave of Absence for Research Students

POLICY DOCUMENT



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Coláiste na hOllcoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland

It is preferable for students to progress their research without interruption insofar as possible. However, in some circumstances, for example in the case of illness, financial or family difficulties, it is possible to apply for a formal temporary cessation of registration until these difficulties have been resolved. The following are some of the circumstances under which students apply to cease registration on a temporary basis:

Medical Circumstances

This includes any medical condition for which a medical certificate has been supplied certifying that the student has been unable to attend the University or otherwise fulfil the requirements of their research programme for a specified period of time.

Personal Circumstances

Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, family illness or bereavement, disability, maternity, paternity or adoptive leave, carer duties, child-care issues and/or financial difficulties.

Academic Circumstances

These include, but are not limited to, problems with essential materials or equipment, or unforeseen difficulties which are outside the control of the student and mean that the student is unable to fulfil the requirements of their research for a period of time. Students applying to temporarily cease registration for academic reasons must have a reasonable expectation that these circumstances are of a temporary nature.

Students may apply for a leave of absence for a minimum of **three** months and a maximum of **twelve** months with the endorsement of their Department/School and Faculty/College. Please note that retrospective application for temporary cessation of registration is not normally possible. The ACGSC will consider applications for leave beyond twelve months where there are exceptional circumstances.

During any temporary cessation of registration, the student's participation on the research programme is suspended and any minimum period of registration is extended by a corresponding period. *No tuition fees are payable during this period.* During this time the student will not be entitled to supervision or to use the University facilities including the library. Regular fee payments will be applicable when students are absent from the University for a period of less than three months. If a student can no longer commit to full-time study but does not wish to temporarily cease registration consideration should be given to changing registration from full-time to part-time. A change in registration would require formal approval from the supervisor(s) and Head of Department/School.

Procedure to Apply for a Temporary Cessation of Registration (Leave of Absence)

If a student wishes to apply for a temporary cessation of registration, he/she should first discuss the situation with the supervisor(s) and then complete the *Research Change to Registration Form*, attaching a medical certificate if applying for leave on medical grounds. The student should also be prepared to discuss the implications of the temporary cessation of registration on the research project with the supervisors and any other members of the research group, if appropriate.

Applications will be considered only if supported by the supervisor and the Head of Department/School in advance of leave being taken. In the case of illness, an application should be made as soon as practically possible and accompanied by medical certification. On return from the leave of absence the student will be requested to inform the Graduate Studies Office in order for the registration to be reactivated. When a leave of absence is approved, the approval time for registration will be extended by the period of time for which the leave was granted.

If a student is externally funded, he/she should discuss the situation with the supervisor(s) in the first instance and the sponsoring agency should be consulted if a temporary cessation of study is necessary. Students and supervisors should be aware of any possible implications this temporary cessation may have on the funding and of any additional requirements stipulated by the funding body. Students who fail to re-register for the following year, or withdraw from the year, without an approved temporary cessation of registration, will be deemed to have discontinued their programme and must reapply for entry via the usual pathways if they wish to resume their study at a later date.

Leave Entitlements for Research Students

Normal leave entitlements for research students are 20 days per year, unless otherwise specified by external funding bodies. Any additional leave arrangements should be agreed in advance with the relevant supervisor(s). For international students who may be a great distance from home, it may mean that annual leave is either not availed of or very difficult and they may wish to take a single period of leave as opposed to a few shorter periods. Such arrangements should be discussed and agreed with the relevant supervisor(s) in advance.

<p>For more information on Leave of Absence for research students please contact: pgresearch@ucc.ie</p>
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