## Guidance notes for staff

## Extensions for MPhil/ PhD submissions and interruptions

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## Interruptions

## The College’s *Research Degree Regulations* (Section 5) permit students to interrupt up to a maximum of two years of study on financial, health and personal grounds if supported by appropriate supporting documentation. With effect from 1 February 2013 all requests for interruptions of study irrespective of year of study should be submitted via the [Online PGR Request Form](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/iquad/services/academicdevelopment/guidanceforacademicstaff.aspx). Before filling in this online form departments should ensure that the [Extension/ Interruption of Studies Request Form](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/iquad/documents/doc/academicdevelopment/pgrextensionstudentandsupervisorstatements.docx)  is filled in and signed. The completed form plus supporting documentation need to be uploaded when the online form is filled in.

1. In the writing-up year interruptions will only be permitted for long term/ serious extenuating circumstances where these are such that the student is unable to undertake work at all. This will enable the College to approve interruptions should there be serious illness (e.g. cancer, heart attack, difficult pregnancy). Any other illnesses, temporary problems, e.g. death of parent, will be dealt with by an extension, which is in line with practice at other HEIs.

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# Extensions to submission deadline

## If a student’s ability to submit a completed thesis by the submission deadline is affected by circumstances beyond the student’s control, e.g. short-term illness and where there is evidence that the student is working on the thesis and meeting deadlines set for the completion of work, the Department must submit a request for an extension via the [Online PGR Request Form](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/iquad/services/academicdevelopment/guidanceforacademicstaff.aspx)*,* normally at least two months before the submission deadline. Before filling in this online form departments should ensure that the [Extension/ Interruption of Studies Request Form](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/iquad/documents/doc/academicdevelopment/pgrextensionstudentandsupervisorstatements.docx) is filled in and signed. The completed form plus supporting documentation need to be uploaded when the online form is filled in.

1. The Vice-Principal (Education), as Chair of the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee (CBEEC), will be responsible for considering extension requests and making the decision on whether to approve the request in the light of the evidence presented. Extensions will normally be for only one period and for a maximum of 6 months in the first instance. If a Research Council has agreed to a longer extension, the College will approve an extension for the same period. If the student needs more than 6 months the Department will need to re-apply and make a case for another extension, which will only be granted in except*io*nal cases up to another six months giving a total of one year’s extension.
2. External funding bodies may have their own rules regarding the approval of extensions. It is the responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies to confirm that the funding body has been contacted and approval for the proposed extension gained. In the case of College Studentships the Director of Graduate Studies needs to confirm that the College has been alerted.
3. It is recognised that students holding Tier 4 visas who request an extension to the submission deadline may also be eligible to apply for a new Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to renew their student visa. However, the College will **not** support an application for a new CAS unless there are significant and severe extenuating circumstances associated with the student’s request for an extension that are supported by adequately documented evidence as appropriate. Where there are no significant and severe extenuating circumstances the CBEEC may approve an extension, but require the student to complete his/her studies in the home country, returning to the UK on a visitor visa for the viva. Extension requests for students holding Tier 4 visas will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Vice-Principal and the relevant Faculty Dean. **Their decision will be final and not open to appeal.** Supervisors are therefore strongly encouraged to ensure that such requests are submitted on time so that in cases where students have to return to their home country they have enough time to make the necessary arrangements. They are also encouraged to provide detailed information as part of the extension request so that a decision can be made with all relevant facts to hand.
4. In cases where students are not producing work prior to the submission deadline and are not meeting deadlines set, the department should invoke the formal warning process (cf. webpage for template warning letters: <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/iquad/services/academicdevelopment/guidanceforacademicstaff.aspx>). If a student fails to submit and an extension is requested after the submission deadline, any approval of an extension will include as a condition that the formal warning process be invoked with a view to terminating the student’s registration within 6 months should the student not submit within this time. An extension will initially be granted for 6 months as in the case of students for whom an extension application was submitted prior to the deadline (see 2 above).

**Extensions to resubmission deadline**

The College **does not permit extensions to resubmission deadlines**. Supervisors should therefore ensure that they carefully monitor the progress of students who need to resubmit to ensure that they meet the deadline set by the examiners.