Covid-19 Amendments to PGR Student Policies

1. Introduction

1.1. This document outlines exceptional adjustments to the policies relating to Postgraduate Research students enrolled on MPhil/PhD programmes (hereafter PGR students) introduced by the Graduate School to mitigate for the effects of the COVID-19 crisis.

1.2. The purpose of these exceptional adjustments is to ensure that PGR students are not disadvantaged because of circumstances beyond their control during, or as a result of, the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated disruptions.

1.3. This document sets out amendments to regulations contained in The Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research and Training; the College’s Interruption and Withdrawal Procedures; and CG1 - Guidelines for Research Degree Candidate and Supervisors.

1.4. The amendments outlined in sections 2 and 3 of this document are effective from 01 April 2021; those outlined in section 4 have been in operation since 07 April 2020. Where an amendment is in effect for a limited time period, this is specifically stated.

1.5. In this document, the 2020-21 Academic Year refers to the period from 05 October 2020 to 24 September 2021.

1.6. Specific policies being amended are highlighted in grey text boxes throughout this document.

1.7. All amendments to existing policies have been made with principles of equality and inclusion in mind.

2. Intermittuations
2.1 The Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research and Training outlines the following conditions for PGR students taking a period of interruption:

2.2.4. Where a student requests an interruption, the following conditions apply:
- During any period of interruption, a student will not be liable for tuition fees. They will not be entitled to use College resources or receive supervision. However, their College email address will remain active.
- The minimum period of interruption is 2 months; students may return early from a period of interruption provided the minimum interruption period has passed.
- Cumulative periods of interruption cannot normally exceed 24 months over the duration of a student’s programme.
- Certain student visas do not permit interruptions; visa holders are expected to contact the Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) to discuss possible visa implications prior to requesting an interruption.

2.2 The College’s Interruption and Withdrawal Procedures additionally outlines the following requirements for PGR students wishing to take an interruption:

6.13 The following requirements apply to research degree students:
- Students may take an interruption of study at any point in the academic year for a minimum of 2 months to a maximum of 2 years, during which time they would not be expected to be working on their thesis or receiving supervision.
- A student’s expected completion date will be adjusted accordingly on their re-enrolment following a period of interruption.
- Students must be registered for a minimum of 3 months after a period of interruption before submitting their thesis.

2.3 Any interruptions taken by PGR students from 23 September 2019 until 24 September 2021 do not count towards the regulatory maximum 24 months normally permitted. For the avoidance of doubt, this means that a PGR Student who has reached or exceeded the maximum period of interruption normally permitted for periods of interruption prior to 23 September 2019 is permitted to take further periods of interruption between 23 September 2019 and 24 September 2021.

2.4 PGR students returning from interruption during the 2020-21 Academic Year are not required to be registered for a minimum of 3 months before submitting their thesis for examination. For the avoidance of doubt, this means PGR students can immediately submit their thesis for examination at the point of return from an interruption.

2.5 During the 2020-21 academic year, PGR students in Completion or Continuation status are permitted to take periods of interruption.
2.6 Certain PGR students (for example those in receipt of UKRI funding, or those who hold a Tier 4 visa) may be subject to other requirements relating to interruption periods, and they are responsible for checking any implications with the relevant body prior to requesting a period of interruption.

3. Completion periods

3.1 The Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research and Training outlines the maximum registration periods for the submission of MPhil and PhD theses as follows:

2.1.7 The registration periods for submission of MPhil theses are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Registration</th>
<th>Minimum period</th>
<th>Maximum period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time MPhil</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>36 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time MPhil</td>
<td>48 months</td>
<td>72 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.8 The registration periods for submission of PhD theses are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Registration</th>
<th>Minimum period</th>
<th>Maximum period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time PhD</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>48 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time social science or science PhD with integrated research training</td>
<td>48 months</td>
<td>60 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time PhD</td>
<td>48 months</td>
<td>96 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time social science or science PhD with integrated research training</td>
<td>96 months</td>
<td>120 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 The Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research and Training furthermore outlines completion periods as follows:

2.5.1. Completion status, also referred to as ‘Writing Up status’, is a reduced fee status available to students who are confirmed to be in the ‘writing up’ phase of their programme.

2.5.2. FT students are entitled to maximum of 12 months registration in Completion status, while PT students are entitled to a maximum of 24 months of registration in Completion status.

3.3 From 01 April 2021, eligible PGR students are permitted to opt into an extension to their Completion period, of a period of 6 months for FT PGR students, and 12 months for PT PGR students.
3.4 Eligible PGR students who opt into an extension to their Completion period are therefore entitled to the following maximum registration periods for the submission of MPhil theses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Registration</th>
<th>Maximum period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time MPhil</td>
<td>42 months, including 18 months in Completion status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time MPhil</td>
<td>84 months, including 36 months in Completion status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Eligible PGR students who opt into an extension to their Completion period are therefore entitled to the following maximum registration periods for the submission of PhD theses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Registration</th>
<th>Maximum period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time PhD</td>
<td>54 months, including 18 months in Completion status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time social science or science PhD with integrated research training</td>
<td>66 months, including 18 months in Completion status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time PhD</td>
<td>108 months, including 36 months in Completion status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time social science or science PhD with integrated research training</td>
<td>132 months, including 36 months in Completion status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 The following PGR students are eligible for extensions to their Completion periods:
- PGR students who started their MPhil/PhD programme prior to 01 March 2020
- PGR students who have been approved for Completion status
- PGR students who have not yet submitted their thesis for examination
- PGR students who have already been granted extensions to their maximum registration periods and are currently in Continuation status

3.7 PGR students who have been granted UKRI funding extensions of less than 6 months (for FT students) or 12 months (for PT students) are eligible to opt into the extension to their Completion period. Where a UKRI-funded student has been granted a funding extension, any period of extension to their Completion period will be reduced by the length of their funding extension, such that the overall additional registration time will not exceed 6 months for FT PGR students or 12 months for PT PGR students.
3.8 PGR students enrolled on the PhD by Publication programme are not eligible for Completion status, and therefore not eligible for this scheme.

3.9 PGR students ineligible for extensions to Completion periods are nonetheless able to apply for extensions to their maximum registration periods through the normal Graduate School process.

3.10 From 01 April 2021, the Graduate School will contact Academic Departments on a quarterly basis with information about PGR students eligible to opt into extensions to their Completion periods. Academic Departments will be responsible for confirming whether or not those PGR students wish to opt into the scheme. The Graduate School will then liaise with Fees and Enrolments and Records accordingly.

3.11 In line with the Tuition Fee Policy and Procedures, during Completion periods, PGR students are liable for fees at the Completion rate.

3.12 This amendment will remain in force until all eligible students have been offered the chance to opt into an extension to their Completion period.

4. Examinations

4.1. CG1 - Guidelines for Research Degree Candidate and Supervisors outlines the following requirements for thesis submission:

3.1.1 When submitting a thesis for a first examination, or for re-examination following a ‘Not Pass’ outcome, Candidates are required to submit:

- 2x soft-bound copies of the thesis
- 1x digital copy of the thesis
- 1x CF2 - Research Degree Thesis Submission Form

4.2. As of 07 April 2020 and during 2020-21 Academic Year, Candidates are not required to submit bound copies of the thesis, unless this is specifically requested by the Examiners.

4.3. Where an Examiner requests a bound copy of the thesis Research Degrees liaises with the Candidate, Supervisor, and Examiners to arrange this.
4.4. **CG1 - Guidelines for Research Degree Candidate and Supervisors** specifies the following regarding the holding of viva examinations:

| 4.2.4 | Where an in person viva cannot be held, for example, due to temporary restrictions affecting travel or face-to-face contact, it is permissible for the viva to be held via videoconference. In such a case, all parties should have regard for **GG1 - Good Practice Guidelines for Video-conference Viva Voce Examinations**. |

4.5. As of 07 April 2020 and during 2020-21 Academic Year, all vivas are expected to be held via videoconference.

4.6. **CG1 - Guidelines for Research Degree Candidate and Supervisors** specifies the following regarding the final thesis deposition:

| 7.1.1 | In order to finalise their award following a ‘Pass’ outcome or after the formal approval of any required amendments, Candidates are required to deposit:
| 1x hard bound copy of the final thesis |
| 1x digital copy of the final thesis |
| 1x completed CF3 - Deposit and Access Agreement for Goldsmiths Research Degree Theses form. |

4.7. As of 07 April 2020 and during 2020-21 Academic Year, Candidates are not required to deposit hard-bound copies of the thesis to finalise their award.

**Document history**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Approved</th>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>01 April 2021</td>
<td>Lauren Sperring Marie-Alix Thouaille</td>
<td>Approved by PGR board</td>
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