

Interruptions for PGR students

This document sets out important guidance for MPhil/PhD candidates who are considering taking a period of interruption. PGR students (hereafter students) and supervisors should read this guidance alongside the *Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research and Training* before submitting an interruption request, alongside the college-wide Interruption and Withdrawals Procedures. In this document, 'School' will be used to refer to a student's academic School (not the Graduate School). Please note: students who hold a study visa and/or funding from UKRI are advised to consult with the Graduate School when considering interruption, taking into account external guidelines which may impact on the request.

Am I allowed to interrupt my studies?

PGR students with full-time, part-time, completion or continuation status can request to interrupt their studies. Students cannot interrupt once they have submitted their thesis and are under examination, or if they are within 4 weeks of their final submission deadline.

Self-funded students are entitled to take up to 24 months of interruption over the duration of their programme.

Students who request to interrupt for more than 24 months over the duration of their programme will need to submit exceptional circumstances clarifying why they are requesting extra interruption time. Interruptions which exceed the maximum interruption period permitted will be approved at the Graduate School and Registry teams' discretion. The length of the interruption permitted will be determined by the exceptional circumstances provided.

The minimum permitted period of interruption is 2 months. Students can only request to interrupt for up to 12 months at any one time.

Interruptions must be requested within 2 months of the proposed start date of that interruption. Requests submitted further in advance will be rejected.

Can I interrupt and restart my studies at any point in the academic year?

Subject to school approval, students can interrupt and restart their studies at any point in the academic year.

Students requesting to return from interruption in September and early October will have their restart dates automatically amended to align with the start of the academic year.

How do I request to interrupt my studies?

Students should in the first instance discuss interrupting their studies with their main supervisor and inform them of their intended interruption start and end date. If a student needs to interrupt urgently or has not heard back from their main supervisor within 14 days, they should submit the Change of Status form as per the instructions below.

Students can submit an interruption request by filling out a Change of Status form:

<https://www.gold.ac.uk/students/processes/taking-an-absence-changing-leaving/change-of-status-form/>

Students can request an effective date of interruption that is up to 14 days prior to the submission of their Change of Status form. For interruptions with an effective date more than 14 days prior to the submission of the form, please refer to the next section of this guidance.

Students having problems filling in or submitting a Change of Status form should email graduateschool@gold.ac.uk.

How do I submit a retrospective interruption request or a request to interrupt beyond the maximum interruption period permitted?

Students who have already interrupted for the regulatory maximum period of time or did not request their interruption at the appropriate time should contact the Graduate School in the first instance for advice on their specific circumstances and to explore whether the Graduate School can approve an exceptional case based on those circumstances.

In all cases, students who wish to interrupt outside of regulations will be expected to provide a statement of extenuating circumstances (usually on grounds such as health challenges, personal difficulties or other unexpected circumstances that are impacting their ability to work on their thesis), which will be reviewed on a confidential basis by the Graduate School.

How do I request an interruption to take Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave?

Students can request up to 12 months of maternity, paternity or adoption leave per child. This period of interruption will not be counted towards the maximum interruption period permitted.

Students can request maternity, paternity or adoption leave by following the usual process for requesting a period of interruption. Students should specify that the interruption is for the purposes of maternity, paternity or adoption leave either by writing this in the 'I have exceptional circumstances...' box on the Change of Status form, or by emailing graduateschool@gold.ac.uk before they submit the form.

If a request for maternity, paternity or adoption leave is made retrospectively, students should follow usual process for requesting a period of retrospective interruption and will need to provide evidence of exceptional circumstances.

What happens when I submit an interruption (Change of Status) form?

Once submitted, Change of Status forms will be reviewed by the Graduate School. If we require further information from a student in order to process the request, we will contact the student via email.

Once reviewed by the Graduate School, Change of Status forms will be sent to the relevant school PGR lead. If the school is happy to approve the change as requested, then the Graduate School will approve the Change of Status form and it will be sent to the Registry team for final review and processing.

Once the Registry team have processed an interruption on a student's record, the student will receive a Confirmation of Interruption email confirming the change has been made.

I'm not sure if my interruption request has been approved?

Students will receive an automatic confirmation email once they have submitted a Change of Status form. If this confirmation is not received the student should resubmit the form or email graduateschool@gold.ac.uk if they need further assistance.

Interruption requests can take up 28 days to be processed from the date the request is submitted. Processing times may be longer during busy periods. Interruption requests are processed by the Graduate School and Registry team on a first come, first serve basis and cannot be expedited.

Once a Change of Status form has been processed by the Registry team and the student's record has been updated, the Registry team will send the student a Confirmation of Interruption email confirming the change has been made – if an email is not received within 28 days, please email graduateschool@gold.ac.uk and we'll look into this for you.

How will taking an interruption affect my registration timeline and final submission deadline?

When a student interrupts their studies, their registration timeline is effectively paused until they return to their studies. This means that periods of interruption are not counted towards a student's maximum registration period and a student will return from interruption at the same point in their registration timeline as when they began their period of interruption.

Following a student's return from interruption, the student's final submission deadline will be adjusted accordingly. Any other deadlines, including the upgrade deadline and date which the student will become eligible to move to Completion/Writing-up, will be adjusted as appropriate. Students can be in touch with the Graduate School to confirm these amended dates as needed.

What happens when I'm due to return from interruption?

2-3 weeks before a student is due to return from interruption, the Graduate School will contact the student via email to confirm whether they will be returning as planned. Students should respond confirming they will be returning to their studies on their agreed restart date or indicate how they would like to proceed otherwise.

Where a student is returning from interruption as planned, the Graduate School will request that the student's record is set back to 'Live' and will inform the student whether they are required to complete online re-enrolment. Students will need to log in to their MyGoldsmiths account and re-enrol online when instructed to do so. If a student needs to make a payment before they can be permitted to re-enrol, the Graduate School will copy in the Registry team to discuss this with the student.

In some cases, there might be a delay setting a student's record back to Live. Students should recommence study on their restart date regardless of whether they are Live and get in touch with the Graduate School if they have access issues.

If a student wants to extend their interruption they should confirm this with the Graduate School and complete a new Change of Status form.

Can I return from interruption early?

Students who want to return from interruption early should email graduateschool@gold.ac.uk and confirm the date they would like to return to their studies.

Students can return early from a period of interruption provided the minimum interruption period has passed; the minimum period of interruption is 2 months.

Requests to return early can only be approved if the student's school are able to facilitate an early return.

What happens to my fees when I interrupt?

PGR students are not liable for fees during their interruption – in other words, PGR students are not charged fees for the time they are interrupted.

Fees are calculated on a weekly basis, so when a PGR student interrupts Registry will recalculate their fees in line with their expected registration for the academic year and they may receive a revised invoice.

If a student has a credit on their account, this will be retained on their account and can be used upon their return towards future fee payments. If they are in debt to the college, they will not be expected to pay the debt until they wish to return, at which point Registry

will be able to advise what they will need to pay in order to re-enrol. The only exception to this is in instances where a student has debt from a previous academic year.

Can I interrupt if I have a student visa?

PGR students in receipt of a student visa are able to take one 60-day interruption during the course of their programme without their visa being impacted. It is not possible to take additional periods of interruption without their existing visa being cancelled.

If you are a PGR student with a student visa considering a period of interruption and you would like to discuss your options, please be in touch with graduateschool@gold.ac.uk. For detailed advice on your visa status, please contact immigration@gold.ac.uk

I'm a UKRI funded student, can I still interrupt?

UKRI funded students (CHASE, SENSS, AHRC CDAs) are subject to funder rules which supersede existing college regulations. As a rule, most UKRI funded students can interrupt for up to 12 months over the course of their programme; it is encouraged that interruptions be taken in whole months. Any further interruption will be subject to documentation of significant extenuating circumstances and doctoral candidates are advised to refer to the terms of their studentship.

In all instances, if you are a UKRI funded student, please be in touch with our team and we can give you more tailored advice.