

Postgraduate Research (PGR) Absence and Leave Policy

Document Control

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Version number:	1.0
Approval date:	September 2025
Approved by:	Academic Board
Date of next review:	September 2026
Link shortener:	https://lncn.ac/pgrleave

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Postgraduate Research (PGR) Absence and Leave Policy is to outline the University of Lincoln's approach to leave for postgraduate research (PGR) students. It incorporates guidance from UKRI for students funded by UKRI (effective 1 October 2025) and applies to all PGR students enrolled at the University of Lincoln.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The policy document's scope includes all PGR students enrolled at the University of Lincoln. It includes additional provisions for UKRI-funded students, who should also refer to the separate UKRI Training Grant Terms and Conditions (T&Cs). Students who are also members of staff, such as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and similar roles, may be eligible for different entitlements under the university staff leave policy.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The roles and responsibilities relevant to the policy document.
- 3.2 **Supervisory Team:** Responsible for approving annual leave requests and ensuring that leave does not adversely impact any contractual obligations to funders, collaborative partners, etc. They also support students in recording leave using the PGR Annual leave form. They are in part responsible for ensuring students are aware of their entitlements and for maintaining an audit trail for Final Expenditure Statements for UKRI-funded students.
- 3.3 **Director of Studies:** Plays a key role in discussing and approving compassionate leave requests, as well as ensuring that students notify them of any changes in their expected return date from maternity leave.
- 3.4 **PGR Admin Team:** Students must provide the PGR admin team with a copy of the MATB1 form issued by the NHS when requesting maternity leave.
- 3.5 **Training Grant Administrators:** Ensure students are aware of their entitlements and maintain an audit trail for Final Expenditure Statements for UKRI-funded students.

Ensuring that personal data, such as medical certificates, are handled correctly when students request medical leave.

- 3.6 **International Advice Team:** Provides guidance to students on Student Visas to ensure compliance with UKVI regulations when requesting annual leave or interruptions of study.
- 3.7 **College Research Degrees Board (CRDB):** Oversees formal approvals for leave and ensures compliance with University and UKRI regulations.
- 3.8 **Mitigating Circumstances Panel:** Reviews and approves requests for compassionate leave and interruptions of study beyond the standard two-year cap.
- 3.9 These roles and responsibilities are designed to ensure that the leave policy is implemented fairly and consistently, while also supporting the wellbeing and academic progress of PGR students.

4. Types of Leave

4.1 Annual leave

- 4.1.1 All Full-time PGR students are entitled to 21 days of annual leave per year, excluding [public holidays and University Concessionary Days](#).
- 4.1.2 Part-time students are entitled to leave on a pro-rata basis.
- 4.1.3 Leave must be approved by the supervisory team and recorded using the [PGR Annual leave form](#).
- 4.1.4 Annual leave must not adversely impact any contractual obligations to funders, collaborative partners, etc. Students on Student Visas must comply with UKVI regulations and should contact the [International Advice Team](#) prior to submitting a request for annual leave.
- 4.1.5 The University recognises the importance of taking annual leave for mental health and wellbeing.

4.2 Medical leave

- 4.2.1 Short-term medical leave is permitted and should follow the guidelines for students ([General University Regulations](#) section B), i.e. Most students can self-certify up to five working days absence within one calendar month. All longer absences require an Interruption of Study request.
- 4.2.2 UKRI-funded students are entitled to up to 28 weeks of paid sick leave during a rolling 12-month period. Absences over one week and lower than 28 weeks in any 12-month rolling period can result in an extension to UKRI studentship funding but need to be accompanied by a medical certificate.
- 4.2.3 Please refer to the [Student services A-Z](#) for support available, including that specific to UKRI-funded students.

4.3 Compassionate leave

- 4.3.1 Students may apply for leave through the Mitigating Circumstances Panel. All requests must be discussed and approved by the Director of Studies in the first instance.

- 4.3.2 UKRI-funded students may take up to 10 days of paid compassionate leave, applying in the same way.

4.4 Family leave

- 4.4.1 Students are allowed up to 12 months of shared parental leave, with a mandatory period of 2 weeks. During this period stipend continuation is available for UKRI-funded students. Parental leave does not count towards the 2-year interruption cap. See also the [General University Regulations](#) (section E4).

4.4.2 Maternal leave

- i. It is the responsibility of the student to notify their Director of Studies of their pregnancy and to provide the PGR admin team with a copy of the MATB1 form that is issued by the NHS (typically via a midwife or GP). Where the student is a member of staff, they must also notify People, Performance and Culture (formerly Human Resources) and refer to the [Supporting New and Expectant Families Policy and Procedure](#).
- ii. Students must also notify Student Administration by requesting maternity leave through the current interruption process. This should be done at least 15 weeks before the due date. Students should notify their Director of Studies and Student Administration as soon as possible of any change in their expected return date.

4.4.3 Paternal or partner leave

- i. Students are entitled to up to two weeks of Paternity leave taken in one-week blocks which must be agreed by their Director of Studies. Where a student is also a member of staff this must be recorded on their annual leave record.
- ii. Students in the early stages of fatherhood and are fulfilling the role of primary carer (i.e., caring for a child during the first 12 months of their childhood) can access additional paternity leave up to the child's first birthday. This additional leave must be taken in one continuous block and be agreed in advance with the Director of Studies, normally with a minimum 8 weeks' notice.

4.4.4 Adoption Leave

- i. This follows the same process as for shared parental leave.

- 4.5 Further information on leave types and implications for studentships is available in the [Student services A-Z](#) for support available, including that specific to UKRI-funded students.

5. Interruption of study

- 5.1 Interruptions are also covered in the [Postgraduate Research Regulations](#).

- 5.2 Students may interrupt their studies for up to 2 years in total. Interruptions beyond this require approval from the Mitigating Circumstances Panel. Student visa holders must consult the [International Advice Team](#).

- 5.3 Except in exceptional circumstances, interruption applications cannot be backdated and must be approved by the Director of Studies (as well as dated outside the month the interruption request is submitted any organisation sponsoring your studies, where relevant) before the form is submitted.

- 5.4 Before submitting your interruption request, please check the fee implications of a potential interruption. For additional questions, please contact the [Student Finance team](#).
- 5.5 If you hold a Student Visa (formerly Tier 4) the University will have to report your interruption of studies to UK Visas and Immigration (Home Office). UK Visas and Immigration will then curtail (cancel) your Tier 4 visa and write to you directly to advise you of the date you will need to leave the UK. This is usually 60 days from the date the UK Visas and Immigration issue your curtailment letter.

6. Leave Recording and Approval

- 6.1 All leave must be recorded via the [PGR Annual leave form](#) and approved by the supervisory team. This information will be collated and monitored by the School. For funded students, stipend continuation must be confirmed.
- 6.2 The College Research Degrees Board (CRDB) oversees formal approvals.

7. Return from Leave

- 7.1 Return from extended periods of leave should be agreed between the student and the Director of Studies, and take into account relevant medical evidence if necessary.
- 7.2 [Student Wellbeing](#) and the supervisory team can support with reasonable adjustments, including a change to the mode of study (Full vs Part time).
- 7.3 Phased returns are encouraged and these can be arranged by the student and supervisory team in four-week blocks before being reviewed.

8. UKRI-funded Students

- 8.1 As noted above, UKRI-funded students are entitled to paid leave for sickness, disability related illness and appointments, parental, and compassionate reasons. Students and supervisors must maintain an audit trail for Final Expenditure Statements. Refer to the UKRI Training Grant T&Cs (TGC 8) for full details.
- 8.2 UKRI-funded studentships will be extended when the total amount of Medical Leave and Additional Leave exceeds one month, and will also be extended for any period of Family Leave

9. Studying on a Student Visa

- 9.1 If you are studying on a Student Visa, we must follow the rules of your Student Visa. This means that your entitlements and payments may depend on the specific conditions of your visa. Refer to the [International Advice Team](#) to discuss the specifics of your case.

10. Governance and Oversight

- 10.1 The CRDB is responsible for ensuring compliance with University and UKRI regulations.
- 10.2 All leave-related decisions must be documented and auditable.

10.3 Supervisors and administrators must ensure students are aware of their entitlements.