UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PROCEDURES FOR EXTENSIONS TO STUDY PERIODS

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Code of Practice applies to all Registered Students, Students on Leave of Absence and Externally Registered Students undertaking Undergraduate (UG) , Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Postgraduate Research programmes (PGR), hereafter referred to as "Students", who require an extension to the maximum period of study and for PGRs to the deadline for submission of a corrected or revised thesis.

1.2 Students are expected to complete their Award within the prescribed maximum period of study as set out in Regulation 6.2. PGRs are expected to submit their corrected or revised thesis by the specified date.

1.3 Where circumstances arise during the normal period of study that affect the student's ability to continue with their studies, it is expected that these are raised and dealt with under the Code of Practice on Leave of Absence Procedures. Any periods of Leave of Absence shall be excluded from the calculation of the maximum period of study.

1.4 In this Code of Practice "extension to maximum period of study" means an extension to the maximum period of study as set out in Regulation 6.2 and an extension to the date for submission of a revised or corrected thesis.

1.5 Application for an extension to the maximum period of study should be submitted at least two months before the expiry of the maximum period of study and as early as possible before the deadline for submission of corrections or a revised thesis.

2. Definition

2.1 An extension to the maximum period of study may be granted to enable the student to complete the requirements of their programme of study. For PGRs an extension may be granted to the maximum period of study, the deadline for submission of corrections or resubmission of the thesis for a further examination.

2.2 An extension is not the same as Leave of Absence. The latter relates to a period of time when the student temporarily withdraws from their study and is dealt with under the Code of Practice on Leave of Absence Procedures.

2.3 An extension to maximum period of study is considered exceptional, rather than the norm. An extension is not a right and therefore it may be refused depending upon the circumstances, for example, where inadequate reasons are given for seeking an extension, where acceptable evidence has not been provided, where a work plan has not been provided or the work plan does not provide sufficient details to justify the requested extension period or where the extension request has not been through the School's internal approval mechanisms or signed by the authorised signatory for extension requests.

2.4 Where the maximum period of study or deadline for submission of corrections or a revised thesis has lapsed and the requirements for the Award have not been completed, the Student will be deemed to have withdrawn. The Student may be eligible for the award of an alternative qualification based on the marks for modules that the student has already completed.

2.5 Where the request for an extension to the maximum period of study is refused for a UG or PGT student, the original completion date will stand. If the student is unable to complete by this date, a recommendation will be made at the next meeting of the Board of Examiners based on the marks for modules that the student has already completed. This will normally mean the award of an alternative qualification.

3. Reasons for an Extension

Approval of requests for extension of time is not guaranteed. Poor academic progress in itself is not reasonable grounds for an extension.

3.1 Reasons that are likely to be approved include:

Accidents
Bereavement of an immediate family member
Serious ill health
Illness affecting an immediate family member
Serious unforeseen events , e.g. theft, disruption to facilities
Significant personal difficulties
Unexpected serious financial hardship

3.2 Reasons that may not be approved include:

Work commitments/pressure of work (except for students on some CPD programmes or programmes developed for a range of professionals/practitioners, particularly in social work or educational settings)
Unrealistic time plan
Holidays or periods of absence taken earlier in the registration
Improve language skills
Requests in excess of 12 months

4. Evidence Requirements

4.1 All applications for extensions should be accompanied with appropriate supporting evidence of impact and shall be submitted promptly.

4.2 Evidence in a language other than English should be translated and certified.

5. Work Plan

5.1 All applications for extensions must be accompanied by a work plan to demonstrate how the requested period will be used effectively in order to complete the outstanding work for the Award.

5.2 The work plan should provide a schedule of the outstanding work and the time frame for completing each section.

5.3 Extension requests without work plans, with incomplete work plans, work plans that do not provide sufficient detail or are considered unrealistic will not be approved.

6. Extension Time Limits

6.1 In all cases the length of the extension requested must be specified and reasonable in the sense that it bears close relation to the grounds cited as the reasons for applying for an extension.

6.2 Students should make themselves aware of any additional accreditation, professional, disciplinary or sponsor-related requirements that may impact on their extension request.

6.3 Sponsored students are responsible for notifying their sponsor of their request and the revised end date if approval is granted.

6.4 It is expected that an application for an extension will be submitted at least two months before the expiry of the maximum period of study and as early as possible before the deadline for submission of corrections or a revised thesis.

6.5 Retrospective requests for extensions must include an explanation as to why the request was not submitted at the appropriate time.

7. Processing Extension Applications

7.1 Applications for extensions for taught programmes are considered by the University's Progress & Awards Board and for research programmes the Research Progress & Awards Sub Panel.

7.2 Applications for extensions should be downloaded or collected as and when they are required to ensure that the most recent version of the extension request form is being used and thereby avoid delays from invalid applications being returned. Extension request forms are available from the Taught & Research Student Administration web pages.

7.3. Applications must be completed by the Student who is requesting the extension and forwarded to the appropriate signatories within the School/College.

7.4 Applications should be submitted at least two months before the end of the maximum period of study and as early as possible for those requesting an extension to the corrections/ revised thesis submission date.

7.5 Supporting evidence should normally be submitted at the same time as the request form, but if this is not possible, the reasons for the delay should be provided on the request form. The authorising signatory should indicate where the supporting has been provided by the student and is being stored at local level.

7.6 International students should include a copy of their current passport and visa and, if they extended their visa in the UK, a copy of both sides of the pink biometric resident permit.

7.7 Forms can be submitted in paper format or electronically, but the latter should have authorising signatures.

7.8 The completed request form and supporting documents should be submitted to Registry for processing.

7.9 Requests without a work plan will not be processed and will be returned.

7.10 Once processed, Registry will notify the student of the outcome of the application by e-mail.

7.11 Where the application is approved, the e-mail will include the revised completion/submission date and any tuition fee liability.

8. International Students

8.1 In this Code of Practice "International Students" means international, non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) students who require immigration permissions to study in the UK.

8.2 In accordance with the Code of Practice on Student Visa Requirements, international students intending to stay in the UK for the duration of the requested extension must ensure that they have appropriate leave to enable them to continue their studies.

8.3 The University of Birmingham has been granted a Home Office Tier 4 Sponsor Licence and must ensure that it complies with the conditions of the Tier 4 Sponsor Licence.

8.4 International Students who are sponsored by the University under its Tier 4 Sponsor Licence are required to meet monthly contact points during the extension period and keep their contact details up to date via www.my.bham.ac.uk.

8.5 International students who return home during the approved extension period must notify Taught or Research Student Administration and must update their contact details (address, telephone and e-mail) at www.my.bham.ac.uk accordingly**.**

8.6 Where an international student's visa expires before the end date of an approved extension and the student intends to remain in the UK for the duration of the extension period, they must renew their visa before the current visa expires.