

PhD Handbook - Change of Plan?

Leave of absence

A leave of absence allows you to take an authorised break of a month or more from your studies. You may apply for a leave of absence for a documented medical or personal reason. Breaks of less than 1 month can be approved at departmental level, but will not then result in an extension to your progression or final submission deadlines.

Any student can apply for a leave of absence. It can be a good solution for a research student who genuinely finds that medical or personal difficulties are preventing their study for a period of time. However, approval remains at the discretion of the Special Cases Committee (SCC).

As far as possible, you should apply for a leave of absence in advance. Departments should not submit requests to the SCC later than one month after the proposed start date of the leave period. Leave of absence that is entirely retrospective will not normally be considered or approved.

For more information on when and how to apply for a Leave of Absence, visit <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic/change/loa/>.

Students on Tier 4 visas should be aware that a Leave of Absence will impact on their eligibility to remain in the UK, and so should consult with immigration advice before making any decision.

Full-time/part-time

You may be able to switch between full-time and part-time attendance at University. Not all programmes have a part-time option, so you should check with your department first.

Speak with your supervisor and discuss the options available to you. This decision should not be taken lightly. It is essential that you understand the implications that changing your mode of attendance may have.

Changing your mode of attendance will affect the end of your period of registration, your submission deadline and the tuition fees payable for the remainder of your programme. It will alter how you fulfil the University's requirement of a minimum period of registration.

Changing your mode of attendance may also affect your entitlement to:

- Financial support
- Funding
- Student visas
- Accommodation
- Council Tax exemptions.
- Tuition fees and accommodation.

Your funding body may place restrictions on whether and how often you can change status. RSA can give you further guidance.

For more information, visit <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic/change/full-time-part-time/>.

Change programmes

While we do not encourage research students to change programme, situations may arise which make a change worthwhile.

Reasons may include:

- you're progressing well at a lower level and wish to upgrade to a degree at a higher level;
- you have not met the requirements for the degree for which you are registered and are transferring to a lower degree;
- a change in personal circumstances means you need to end your programme early, but still want to receive a qualification;
- your supervisor is moving to a different department.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Reasons for a change of programme are often unique to your situation. If you think a change of programme may be right for you, you should speak to your supervisor.

For more information, visit <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic/change/transfer/>.

Extension

If exceptional circumstances are affecting your ability to work in the final 3 months before your submission deadline, you may be permitted to extend your submission deadline, but only in proportion to the documented impact on your work. You should be planning to submit considerably before the deadline to allow for less exceptional but still unpredictable events that might affect your work.

There is no guarantee that you will be able to extend your programme in this way, especially if the circumstances could have been remedied with a leave of absence at an earlier stage.

Extensions are normally limited to a maximum of six months. In exceptionally compelling circumstances, a longer extension of up to one year may be granted. Multiple extensions exceeding a total period of two years will not normally be granted.

Applications for extensions should be made before your current submission deadline. If you need to apply for an extension of submission date, you should speak to your supervisor. This date should be justified by the circumstances and approved by the departmental Graduate Chair or the Director of Graduate Studies.

For more information, visit <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic/change/extension/>.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal is the term used when a student decides to permanently leave the University before completing their programme of study. If you wish to withdraw from your course and leave the University you must complete the Intention to Withdraw form, available via the link at the bottom of this section.

Leaving the University is an important decision, so we want to make sure that you are aware of all the options available and that you have access to the right advice and support. Therefore, once you submit the form, a Student Advisor will contact you within two working days. If after your conversation with a Student Advisor you still wish to withdraw, you will be asked to complete a Confirmation of Withdrawal form.

For more information, visit <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic/change/withdraw/>. You are encouraged to speak to your supervisor if you are considering withdrawing, and support is also available from the GSA.

