

RESEARCH DEGREES EXTENSIONS POLICY & PROCEDURE

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1. SCOPE

1.1 All research degree programmes.

2. DOCUMENT OWNERSHIP, REVISIONS AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 Document owner: Head of Doctoral College
 Approved by SRDC: 27 April 2016
 Review: Spring term 2017 and two-yearly thereafter.
 Updated: October 2017 (John Peck, Academic Registrar. Appeals Policy included and minor updates to terminology).
 October 2018 (amendments to procedure to incorporate RDR system)
 May 2019 (simplifying approvals especially short extensions to upgrading)

3. DEPENDENCIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

3.1 This policy relates to the School's Research Degrees Regulations contained in the [Academic Manual Chapter 9: Research Degree Academic Regulations 2019-20](#) (pdf)

3.2 This policy sits alongside the [Interruption of Studies Policy](#).

3.3 Students must decide whether to apply for an extension or interruption of studies (IoS). School staff will advise and may refer a request for extension to the IoS procedure, or vice versa.

EXTENSIONS POLICY

4. EXTENSIONS TO SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT DEADLINES

4.1 Extensions to summative assessment deadlines (e.g. upgrade from MPhil to PhD; submission of final corrections) may be granted in circumstances beyond the control of the student that seriously affect the ability of the student to submit work for assessment and/or participate in the assessment process before the assessment deadline.

4.2 Application for an extension must be submitted before the assessment deadline, unless acute circumstances (e.g. sudden severe illness) prevent this.

4.3 The duration of the extension should be proportionate to the circumstance(s) necessitating the extension and the nature of the required submission and/or participation in the assessment.

4.4 In the case of assessment deadlines for the taught phase of the DrPH, responses to requests for extension will be guided by the extensions policy for taught postgraduate programmes.

5. EXTENSIONS TO THE MAXIMUM PERIOD OF REGISTRATION

5.1 Extensions to the maximum period of registration may be granted in exceptional circumstances that exceed the standard extension provided by the 'writing up' period.

5.2 Application for an extension should be submitted when the need for an extension is identified. Normally, the School will not consider retrospective applications for extension.

5.3 Normally, an application for extension must be submitted no less than three months before the student's maximum registration date.

5.4 The duration of the extension should be proportionate to the circumstance(s) necessitating the extension.

5.5 Normally, the circumstances should be sufficiently severe as to warrant an extension of at least three months.

5.6 The duration of the extension will be a whole (integer) number of months.

6. MAXIMUM EXTENSION PERIODS (ASSESSMENT DEADLINES AND MAXIMUM PERIOD OF REGISTRATION)

6.1 An extension will normally be limited to six months, unless a compelling case is made for a longer period of up to a maximum of one year. The number of periods of extension is not capped, but the total duration of all periods of extension should not exceed two years.

7. PERMISSIBLE GROUNDS FOR EXTENSIONS

7.1 **Extensions may be granted** in the following circumstances, if they are beyond the control of the student, and in other circumstances of similar gravity:

- Illness
- Bereavement (death of partner or close family)

- Loss of essential equipment or other key component of the research degree study (e.g. through theft, fire, flood, conflict or removal of third party permission to access)
- Loss of key component of the research degree study due to major change in overarching research programme (e.g. early termination of clinical trial)
- Termination of employment, prolonged illness or death of main supervisor

7.2 Reasonable Adjustment

An extension to the period of study or registration may be an appropriate reasonable adjustment under the terms of the Equality Act for a candidate with an assessed disability or long-term health condition.

7.3 Extensions will not be granted for circumstances within the control of the student, such as:

- Undertaking part-time paid work
- Volunteering
- Seeking and securing promotion or additional work responsibilities
- Inadequate submission to research ethics committee
- Failure to backup files, or use appropriate virus protection software, or similar IT mishaps

8. INFORMATION FOR ALL EXTENSION REQUESTS

8.1 Documents to be considered alongside the application for an extension

Documentary evidence of the need for an extension must be provided. Confidential documents can be scrutinised by an appropriate member of staff (normally the Student Advice team) and a recommendation made to support consideration of the extension request.

8.2 To support informed decision-making, the extension request must be accompanied by a sufficiently detailed summary of work remaining and a viable plan for completing this work within the requested extension period.

8.3 Scrutiny of the extension request

The level of scrutiny of the request will vary depending on the type of extension that is required:

8.4 Extensions to the upgrade deadline only which are of no more than two months:

8.4.1 Extension requests should be reviewed by the main supervisor, Departmental Research Degree Coordinator (DRDC) and the Faculty Research Degrees Director (FRDD)

8.4.2 The decision to approve or reject an extension request rests with the FRDD.

8.4.3 Substitutions can be made for the roles of main supervisor, DRDC and FRDD if this is necessary to mitigate conflicts of interest or if there is a prolonged period when the main supervisor, DRDC or FRDD is unable to discharge this duty.

8.5 Extensions to all other deadlines:

8.5.1 Extension requests should be reviewed by the main supervisor, the DRDC and a panel made up of the student's FRDD plus another member of academic staff involved in RD student management, e.g. FRDD, DRDC. The FRDD must take care to ensure that members of the panel do not have conflicts of interest in relation to the student case under consideration. The panel will normally include a member of academic staff from outside the student's Faculty.

8.5.3 The decision to approve or reject an extension request rests with the panel. If the panel cannot agree then the request will be forwarded to the Head of Doctoral College

8.5.4 Substitutions can be made for the roles of main supervisor, DRDC and FRDD if this is necessary to mitigate conflicts of interest or if there is a prolonged period when the main supervisor, DRDC or FRDD is unable to discharge this duty.

8.7 Fees for periods of extension

Since extensions are reserved for circumstances beyond the control of the student, additional tuition fees will not be charged during an extension period.

8.8 Interface with UKVI and funders' requirements

Any visa implications arising from an extension request must be considered and adherence to UKVI reporting requirements ensured.

8.9 For funded research degree studies, contractual obligations to funders should be checked and an appropriate response made¹.

9. APPEALS

9.1 Students who believe that their extension request has not been considered in line with this policy may submit an appeal against the decision via the School's Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure. Students may only submit an appeal based on the grounds outlined in the Appeals Policy.

EXTENSIONS PROCEDURE

Students and staff are advised to read all sections of the following procedure.

10. APPLICATION INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

10.1 Read policies

Prior to submitting an extension request, students should read the Research Degrees Extensions Policy and the Interruption of Studies Policy & Procedure. Furthermore, they are advised to discuss the available options with their supervisor(s), Departmental Research Degrees Coordinator and, if applicable, the School's Student Advice team. In some cases, an application for Interruption of Studies may be more appropriate.

10.2 Complete Extension Request Form

The form is available [here](#).

10.3 Assemble supporting documents

The supporting documents (see Section 8.1 of the Research Degrees Extensions Policy) will need to be submitted with the Extension Request Form, except for any documents that the student wishes to remain confidential. Confidential documents can be submitted to the Student Advice team for review. If this occurs, the student should note this on the Extension Request Form.

10.4 Submit form and documents

¹ Some funding contracts (e.g. Research Councils UK Terms and Conditions for Training Grants) contain requirements relating to extensions that may add to, or take precedence over elements to this policy. Most commonly, this will be a requirement for the School to inform the funder of the extension.

The Extension Request Form and accompanying documents should be submitted to the student's FRDM. Students should keep original copies of any paper documents, as they may be asked to present these at a later stage in the process.

10.5 External funding

Students who are in receipt of a studentship or other funding should be aware that an approved extension does not necessarily mean that they will receive additional funding. Students are strongly advised to liaise with the School's Scholarships team and their funding provider to confirm arrangements.

10.6 Visa issues Overseas students are responsible for checking their Visa status, discussing their circumstances with the School's Immigration Advisory Service and ensuring full compliance with Home Office requirements at all times – visa-enquiries@lshtm.ac.uk.

10.7 Reasonable Adjustment Students wishing to apply for an extension as a reasonable adjustment under the terms of the Equality Act should seek advice from the Student Advice Team before completing the Extension Request Form.

11. APPROVAL PROCESS

11.1 Application Scrutiny

Scrutiny of an extension request will consider the rationale for the request, the appropriateness of the duration requested and supporting documentation in order to determine if these are satisfactory.

11.2 The extension request should be scrutinised sequentially as follows:

11.2.1 For requests made under 8.4: by the student's main supervisor, the DRDC, and the FRDD. Normally, each stage of scrutiny should be completed within four working days.

11.2.2 For requests made under 8.5: by the main supervisor, the DRDC and a panel made up of the student's FRDD plus another member of academic staff involved in RD student management, e.g. FRDD, DRDC.

11.3 If necessary, reviewers can request guidance or clarification from the Student Advice Team in relation to a student's disability or any confidential supporting documentation that the student has submitted.

11.4 Conflict of interest

If a reviewer has a conflict of interest, this should be declared at the earliest opportunity and the FRDD should nominate a suitable replacement.

12. ROLES IN THE APPROVAL PROCESS

12.1 Faculty Research Degrees Manager (FRDM)

Upon receipt of a completed extension request the FRDM will log the request and monitor the timeliness of its progress through the approval process.

If the request is made under the terms of para 8.5 they will also notify the FRDD who will begin arranging an extensions panel.

FRDMs should also contact the Student Adviser to request guidance if the student has indicated that they have a disability or have submitted confidential documents to support their request on their Extension Request Form. FRDMs should ensure that this guidance is readily available to reviewers at any stage of the approval process.

12.2 Supervisor, Departmental Research Degrees Coordinator (DRDC) & Faculty Research Degrees Director (FRDD)

Upon receipt of a completed extension request, these role holders will review the request in accordance with Section 10 of this procedure.

Once the request has been reviewed, they should make a recommendation to approve or reject this.

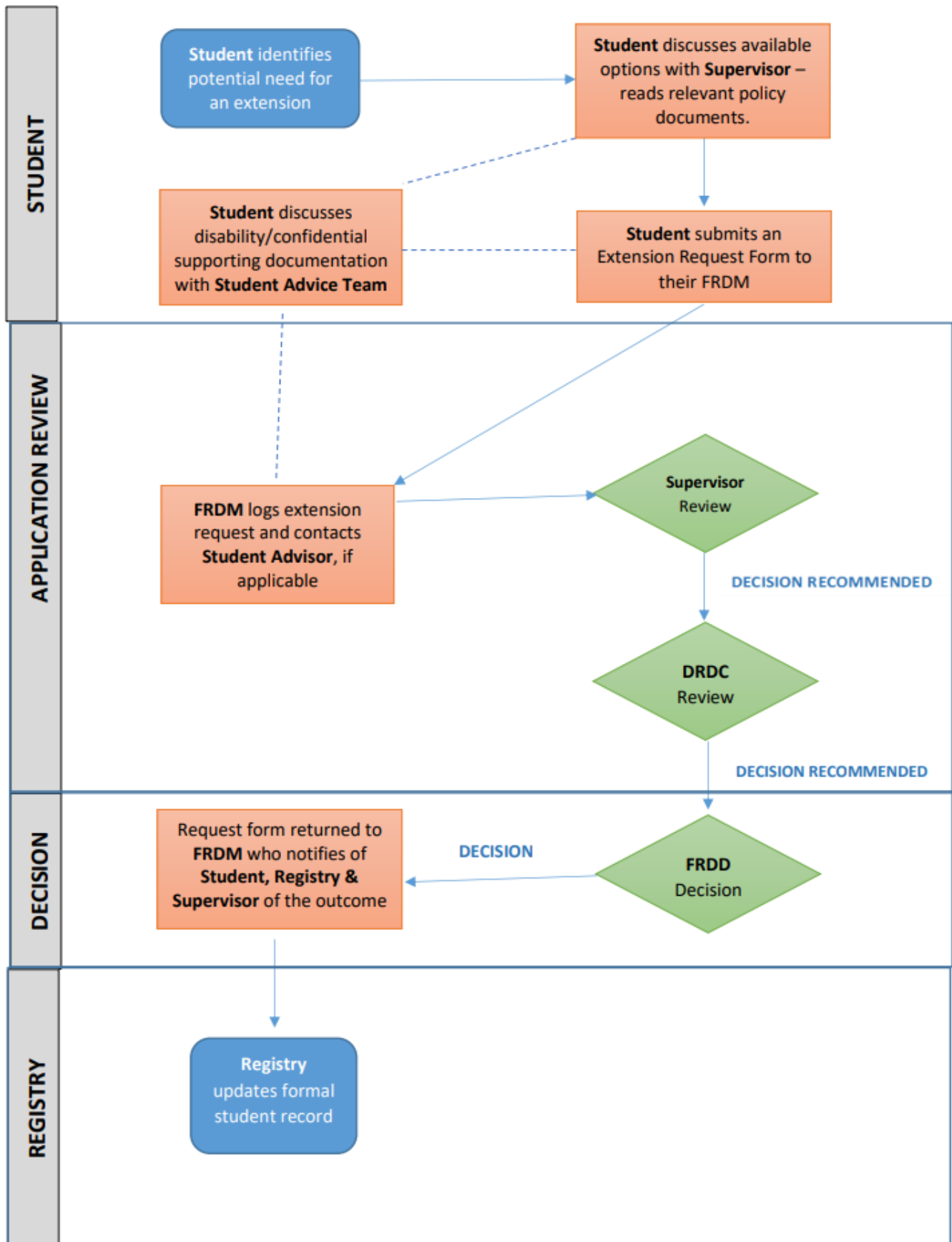
12.3 Extensions Panel (for requests under para 8.5)

The Extensions Panel should review the extension request in accordance with Section 10 of this procedure. Once the Extensions Panel have reviewed the request, they should make a recommendation to approve or reject this. If the panel cannot agree the request will be referred to the Head of the Doctoral College.

12.4 Registry

Where applicable, the Student Records team will update the student's formal record to reflect an approved extension period.

FLOWCHART FOR EXTENSION REQUEST TO UPGRADING DEADLINE OF ≤ 2 MONTHS ONLY
 (paragraph 8.4)



FLOWCHART FOR EXTENSION REQUEST FOR ALL OTHER EXTENSIONS
(paragraph 8.5)

