

ARIES Policy Document

Policy 2: Medical, Additional and Annual Leave

Reference: [UKRI TGC 8](#)

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Introduction

UKRI recognises that there are several reasons why a student may require leave. Students can access four categories of leave: Family Leave (TGC 8.1); Medical Leave (TGC 8.2); Additional Leave (TGC 8.2.A); and Annual Leave (TGC 8.3). This policy covers three of the four categories, i.e., Medical Leave, Additional Leave, and Annual Leave, and outlines when stipend payments can or cannot continue to be paid, and the Student's responsibility when it comes to managing their leave and notifying their University of Registration about their absence.

For Family Leave please see the separate Policy

1. Medical Leave (TGC 8.2)

- 1.1. Medical Leave should only be used for circumstances where a Student is deemed unfit or, in certain circumstances, unable to study. Examples of leave that can be supported under Medical Leave are:
 - Sickness (including both physical and mental health)
 - Medical appointments where it is not possible to arrange appointments flexibly around study
 - Pregnancy-related illness
 - Antenatal appointments
 - Fertility treatment – where the Student is experiencing fertility issues and has been medically advised that they require leave, including (but not limited to) undergoing fertility treatment
 - Disability-related illness (including chronic illness)
 - Disability-related appointments (including for chronic illness) e.g. diagnosis, therapy or treatment
 - Gender reassignment – where the Student is undertaking gender reassignment and has been medically advised that they require leave
- 1.2. Fully funded students may continue to be paid a stipend for Medical Leave for up to 28 weeks (196 calendar days) **in a rolling 12-month period***, subject to not breaching any UK legislative requirements and restrictions relating to immigration permissions, i.e., international Students whose study in the UK is sponsored via a Student Visa must comply with all visa conditions required by the UK Home Office (see Section 4).
- 1.3. The total cumulative amount of Medical **and** Additional Leave (see Section 2) must not exceed 52 weeks across the whole Studentship.
- 1.4. The limits described under 1.2. and 1.3. apply whether the Student is on a full-time or part-time mode of study.
- 1.5. Where a longer period of absence is needed through an approved period of interruption/intermission/intercalation by the University of Registration, the Student and their supervisors should consider the risk that if the studentship is extended too far then

the Student's research may be substantially overtaken to the extent that it is difficult to demonstrate a novel contribution to research, or a novel application of research, making it difficult or impossible to obtain their degree award. It should be made clear to the Student where it may not be possible to return to the same project. ARIES will work with the Student to identify a suitable alternative project but this cannot be guaranteed.

- 1.6. The following conditions must be met in order for stipend payments to continue:
- a. the Student must be in receipt of a UKRI funded Studentship**, **and**
 - b. the period of Medical Leave must be within a funded period of study, **and**
 - c. the period of Medical Leave should not be subject to Student visa restrictions, **and**
 - d. the Student must be able to demonstrate that the period of leave requested is both necessary and reasonable.

**NOTE: A rolling 12-month policy means the Student's entitlement to sick pay is based on their sickness record over the preceding 12 months, not a fixed calendar year. Each day of sickness adds to the Student's rolling 12-month total, e.g., If the Student commences a period of Medical Leave on 3rd November 2025 all instances of sickness from 3rd November 2024 to 2nd November 2025 are taken into account. When an absence or series of absences from 12 months ago is no longer within the 12-month window, it drops off, and the sick pay entitlement may then be restored*

***NOTE: Students in receipt of a Studentship co-funded with UKRI via a percentage split (e.g., 50:50, 65:35 etc), will also be eligible as UKRI expects the costs of absences to be met equitably between the Student's funders. Where the Student is in receipt of a (i)CASE or other collaborative Studentship which includes a stipend enhancement as a monetary value (i.e., not as a percentage contribution of the award), then the Student and/or their supervisor should contact the collaborative partner organisation for guidance on their sick pay policy. If the collaborative partner is not able to provide additional funding to cover any period of Medical Leave, the DTP will not normally make up the shortfall (see 1.20 below).*

- 1.7. Students should complete a '**Change to Study Dates and Absence Approval Form**' available from the ARIES Administrator as soon as practically possible for block periods of Medical Leave of more than two weeks. Retrospective requests will only be considered in the case of serious and/or unexpected illness, or where the Student can demonstrate to the satisfaction of ARIES that there were reasonable circumstances which prevented the timely submission of the request, e.g., where an extension is being sought for cumulative Medical Leave periods in excess of two weeks.
- 1.8. Part-time Students should expect to receive any payments to which they are entitled on a prorated basis.

- 1.9. It will be the Student's responsibility to notify their University of Registration (or Host Institution where appropriate) of their leave in accordance with the internal policies and procedures of their University of Registration (or Host Institution). Similarly, CASE Students should also inform their CASE supervisor of any Medical Leave where this will impact their placement.
- 1.10. Medical Leave shall not be used as a means to extend the studentship, i.e., the Student must not continue their studies whilst on a period of Medical Leave. The Student should continue to have access to key facilities such as Student/Disability Services, email and, if appropriate, Library services. The Student must not access technical/lab facilities or be expected to attend supervisory and or/ lab group meetings whilst on Medical Leave.

Medical Evidence

- 1.11. Where a student is unfit to study, ARIES may request a medical certificate or other suitable evidence, where this is a proportionate way to determine that a student's need for leave is necessary and reasonable. For example, where significant periods of leave (i.e., of four weeks or longer) are being requested due to physical or mental ill health, a Statement of Fitness for Work, or Fit Note, from a medical practitioner or other may be requested.
- 1.12. Where the Medical Leave relates to an ongoing chronic health condition or disability which has already been disclosed to the University of Registration, further evidence will not be required if the University of Registration can verify the disclosure.

Medical Leave that will not be funded

- 1.13. If the period of leave extends beyond the limits described under 1.2. and 1.3. above, the period in excess of the limits will not be funded and the Studentship will be put into abeyance. The Student will need to apply for a period of interruption/intercalation/intermission using their University of Registration's internal processes.
- 1.14. Students affiliated/associated to ARIES but not directly funded by the programme must follow their funder's terms and conditions for Medical Leave.
- 1.15. Students in unfunded periods of registration are not eligible to receive additional stipend payments due to Medical Leave.
- 1.16. Students will not be permitted to return to a period of Medical Leave directly following a period of interruption/intermission/intercalation.

Extension to Studentship and University Registration

- 1.17. Subject to not exceeding the UKRI limit for Medical and Additional Leave of 52 weeks, the studentship will be automatically extended by a commensurate period for Medical Leave more than two weeks where a submitted '**Change to Study Dates and Absence Approval Form**' has been approved for support **and** the extended Studentship end date

will not exceed the end date of the training grant. Where the extended Studentship end date will exceed the end date of the training grant, ARIES will need to apply to the Research Council for guidance on the appropriate action to take and an extension is not guaranteed.

- 1.18. **The extension to a studentship will not automatically extend the period of study or thesis submission deadline for the Student's programme of study.** Following ARIES approval, the Student must apply for an extension to period of study and registration/thesis submission deadline using their University of Registration's extension concession process. This should normally be applied for as soon as possible after the period of absence once the Student has returned to full-time or part-time study. The Student should contact their University of Registration for further guidance on the relevant extension concession process.
- 1.19. UKRI expects training grants to meet the costs of medical absences from the grant. To minimise any impact on the grant, ARIES recommends that, where possible, a request for a tuition fee waiver on the grounds of ill health for the extension period is included with any extension concession request. Advice on the applicable concession process should be sought from the relevant Postgraduate Research team at the University of Registration if required.
- 1.20. **CASE / Collaborative Studentships:** The extension of funding because of Medical Leave will be paid at the minimum UKRI rate (including London weighting where applicable) and will not normally include an extension of any stipend enhancement paid by non-academic CASE/collaborative partners. If a stipend enhancement applies, the Student and/or their supervisory team should inform the non-academic partner of the Medical Leave, and the consequent extension, to update the Studentship agreement where necessary and to request whether, if applicable, the CASE/collaborative partner is able to consider extending the stipend enhancement component of the Student's funding to cover for sick pay and the consequent extension. ARIES will not normally approach CASE/collaborative partners on the Student's behalf.

Medical Leave that will not normally require an extension

- 1.21. In the case of self-certified and short-term illnesses of up to two weeks (14 calendar days), the stipend will continue to be paid as normal but ARIES will not normally expect a funded extension to be provided as ARIES expects that this time lost will be able to be made up over the period of the Studentship, unless the University of Registration's regulations specifically requires it or the absence occurs at a critical point in the studentship, e.g., within three months of the funding end date for a 3.5-year studentships or six months of the funding end date and thesis submission deadline for 4-year studentships.

Return to Study and Phased Return

- 1.22. ARIES expects the University of Registration to have processes in place to manage and support students returning to study following periods of Medical Leave, such as return to study interviews, to ensure that any additional support that might be needed can be identified and the Student signposted to the relevant university service. Depending on the nature of the absence, an occupational health referral may be appropriate to support short-term or ongoing support to facilitate a return to study.
- 1.23. Students returning to study from a long-term period of Medical Leave (normally for periods of 28 consecutive days or longer) can request a Phased Return up to four weeks (30 days) subject to the provisions outlined in 4.2 below. In exceptional cases, an additional four-week period of Phased Return may be considered where the Student and their supervisory team can demonstrate that this additional Phased Return period is both necessary and reasonable.
- 1.24. The Student should use available Medical Leave for any Phased Return. Where the Student has exhausted all available Medical Leave then Annual Leave accrued during the period of Medical Leave should be used.
- 1.25. The additional days/weeks of Phased Return may be included in the total extension being applied for through the University extension concession request but only where available Medical Leave has been used to account for the Phased Return, i.e., no additional extension will be provided where the Phased Return has been accounted for from Annual Leave.
- For example, a full-time Student returning after 8 weeks Medical Leave on Phased Return at a part time rate (50%) over 4 weeks will receive an equivalent of 2 additional weeks of funded extension on top of the 8-week Medical Leave extension period, i.e., an extension of 10 weeks in total. Conversely, a Student using accrued Annual Leave for a Phased Return after having exhausted the maximum 52 weeks of Medical Leave at a part time rate (50%) over 4 weeks will only receive the maximum 52-week extension.
- 1.26. Where the Student is unable to return to their normal mode of full-time or part-time study even after a period of Phased Return, then the Student may consider changing their mode of study or other appropriate options such as flexible working arrangements, on a permanent or temporary basis*.
- 1.27. A Phased Return will provide a stipend at the Student's usual full rate of pay even if they subsequently change their mode of study at the end of the Phased Return period, subject to the limits described under 1.2. and 1.3. above.
- 1.28. To request a Phased Return to study, the Student should submit a written request to ARIES including:

- A brief Phased Return statement, written in consultation with the supervisor, including confirmation of the amount of time (fraction of FTE) that the Student will study during the period of Phased Return; and
- The start and end date of the Phased Return to study period, which will normally be up to a maximum of 4 weeks (see 1.23.).
- Depending on individual circumstances, ARIES may request a medical certificate confirming the Student's fitness to return to study and stating that a Phased Return is required.

**NOTE: TGC 7.1 permits multiple changes in mode of study from part-time to full-time or vice-versa without prior approval from UKRI.*

2. Additional Leave (TGC 8.2.A)

- 2.1. Additional Leave may be used to cover specific instances where a Student may need to be absent from study that are not covered by Medical or Family Leave. These include:
- **Special leave:** including bereavement, pregnancy loss, dependants leave, domestic emergencies.
 - **Baby loss:** including stillbirth and neonatal death (see also 2.5.).
 - **Carer's leave:** for care arrangements for dependants with long-term care needs, including a dependant with a disability, an elderly dependant, or a dependant who has suffered an illness or injury resulting in care arrangements for more than 3 months.
 - **Additional disability leave:** associated with delayed adjustments where a student is unable to study due to a delay in putting in place Reasonable Adjustments.
 - **Health and safety:** where a health and safety concern means that a student is temporarily unable to study.
 - **Public duties:** such as jury service.
- 2.2. The amount of paid leave that will typically be supported is 5 working days (pro rata for part-time), except for the circumstances outlined under 2.3. where Students will normally be entitled to paid leave up to 10 working days (pro rata for part-time).
- 2.3. Students are entitled to up to 10 working days paid Special Leave (pro rata for part-time) in the event of the following circumstances:
- the death of a parent, spouse, child or close family member;
 - pregnancy loss before 24 weeks, whether the Student experiences this directly or is the mother's partner or loses a baby via surrogacy.
- 2.4. Where an absence longer than 5 days is required, or 10 days for circumstances outlined under 2.3., then the Student should consider the use of Medical Leave, if the Student is

unable to return because of physical or mental health and where they meet the conditions outlined under Section 1, or Annual Leave if available, or unpaid leave. A period of Phased Return, subject to the conditions outlined under Section 1, or flexible working arrangements may also be considered.

- 2.5. Where the Student is unable to study due to **baby loss**, they will be entitled to this leave **in addition** to Special leave. In circumstances where the Student would have been entitled to a period of Family Leave (i.e., had the child survived) those arrangements should continue unless the Student expressly requests to return to study early (*refer to separate Family Leave Policy*).

- 2.6. With the exception of Additional Disability and Health and Safety Leave (see 2.7.), ARIES will not normally expect a funded extension to be provided for periods of Special Leave of up to 10 days as ARIES expects that this time lost will be able to be recovered over the period of the Studentship, unless the University of Registration's regulations specifically requires it or the leave occurs at a critical point in the studentship, e.g., within three months of the funding end date for a 3.5-year studentships or six months of the funding end date and thesis submission deadline for 4-year studentships.

- 2.7. Where there are delays in putting in place Reasonable Adjustments, or where there is a health and safety concern, and where reasonable efforts taken to mitigate the issue means that the Student is still unable to study, an extension may be provided for disruption to study over 5 days for up to 4 weeks. Where the Student is unable to study temporarily due to delays in putting in place reasonable adjustments (**additional disability leave associated with delayed adjustments**), or as a result of a **health and safety** concern, even after all reasonable mitigations have been considered and put in place, the stipend can continue to be paid. ARIES expects that the Host Institution and/or University of Registration will take all reasonable steps to ensure that disruptions to study of this nature occur infrequently and where they do occur that they do not exceed 5 days. Where the disruption exceeds 5 days the studentship may be extended up to a maximum of 4 weeks in consultation with ARIES on condition that the Student does not study while on this leave type. Where an extension longer than 4 weeks is required, the DTP will need to consult with UKRI in the first instance.

3. Annual Leave (TGC 8.3)

- 3.1. ARIES expects all Host Institutions and/or Universities of Registration to have a clear policy on annual leave entitlement and appropriate systems in place to record annual leave. The UKRI expectation is an entitlement to paid annual leave of a minimum of 30 days up to a maximum of eight weeks (including public holidays and Host/University closures) during any 12-month period.

- 3.2. Annual leave should be taken subject to prior agreement with the supervisory team. Students undertaking work in collaboration with non-academic partners are expected to consider their obligations to those partners in planning leave.

- 3.3. Leave not taken in any annual leave year will not normally be permitted to be carried over to the following annual leave year, nor will it extend the studentship.
- 3.4. Annual Leave will be accrued while a student is on Medical, Family or Additional leave, but Annual Leave will not be accrued where the studentship is suspended due to interruption/intermission/intercalation.

4. International Students

- 4.1. Students whose studies in the UK are sponsored by their University of Registration via a Student visa should refer to their Institution's policies on attendance and academic engagement. In all cases, advice should be sought from the University of Registration's Student visa compliance team as early as possible to ensure that compliance with the immigration conditions of the Student visa is maintained.
- 4.2. In most cases, the maximum period of authorised absence which is permitted for students studying via a Student visa is 60 days. Absences of more than 60 days will normally require the Student to interrupt/intermit/intercalate their studies and to return to their home country. In this case the studentship will be suspended for the period of interruption/intermission/intercalation. The Student's visa sponsorship will cease and they will normally be required to reapply for a Student visa prior to returning to study. ARIES will not support any resulting visa application costs.
- 4.3. Students who fail to fully engage with their programme of study can have their Student sponsorship withdrawn which will result in the termination of the ARIES studentship and they will be required to return to their home country.

5. General Notices

- 5.1. **Variations.** This policy may be subject to amendment in the future, for example to reflect developments in relevant legislation or related policy/operational changes within the DTP. Any changes or updates which have a material impact on DTP students and/or supervisors will be notified to students and/or supervisors (as applicable) in advance and may be subject to appropriate consultation. It is expected that this policy will be reviewed not less than every 5 years.
- 5.2. In this document, the following verbal forms are used:
 - "shall" and "must" indicate a requirement;
 - "should" indicates a recommendation;
 - "may" indicates a permission;
 - "can" indicates a possibility or a capability

Version Control

Version	Date	Note
1.0	3 June 2026	

Change to Study Dates or Absence Approval Form

PGRs must complete a ‘Change to Study Dates or Absence Approval Form’, available from their DTP Administrator, as soon as practically possible for periods of absence and/or changes to study dates (i.e. change in mode from full-time to part-time). Please ensure that you have referred to the relevant DTP Policy and UKRI Training Grant Conditions when completing this form.

Please note that DTP approval of a change to your **studentship does not automatically extend** the period of study or thesis submission deadlines for your programme of study. Following DTP approval, **you will need to apply for an extension to period of study and registration/thesis submission deadline using your University of Registration’s extension concession process**. This should normally be applied for as soon as possible. Please contact your University of Registration for further guidance on the relevant process.

It is your responsibility to notify your University and/or Host Institution of your period of leave in accordance with their internal policies and procedures. The DTP will not inform them for you.

PGR Details	
Name	
Email address	
University of Registration	
If you are based at an organisation different from your University of Registration, please specify	

Request Details
Please provide a brief description of the reason for your request:
Please provide specific dates of absence:
We may need to request supporting evidence from you in order to approve your absence. As such, please indicate if you have any supporting evidence:

PGR Declaration
Please type a signature below and submit this form to [insert dtp email address] via your University of Institute email address. By signing and submitting you are confirming that you have primary supervisor approval.

Signature:	Date:
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DTP completion only

DTP Manager recommendation/decision	
Decision:	Approved/Not Approved
Comments (if applicable)	
Signed:	
Date:	

DTP Director confirmation/decision	
Decision:	Approved/Not Approved
Comments (if applicable)	
Signed:	
Date:	