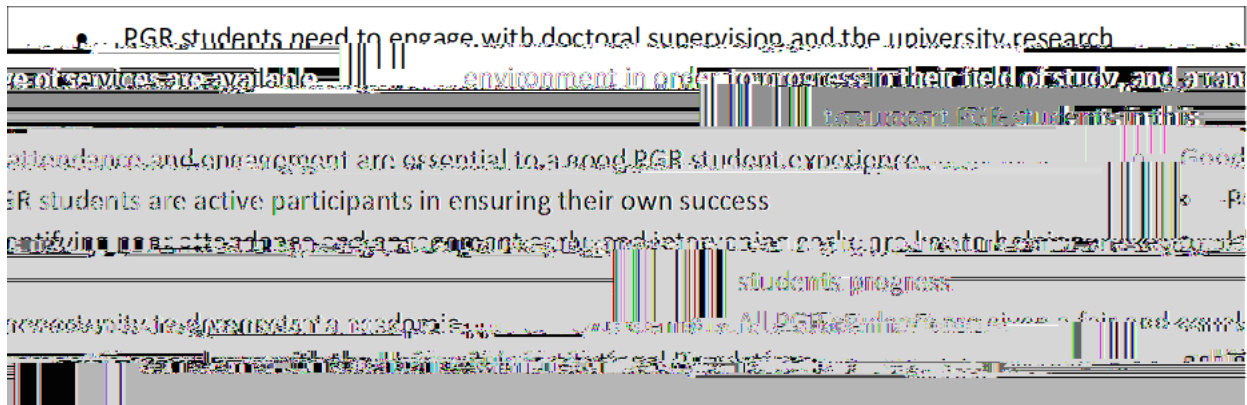


Poor attendance and engagement can put Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) at risk academically. The University monitors attendance and engagement in order to ensure PGRs are successfully progressing, and to be supportive and anticipatory in its approach to carrying out its duty of care to all students. The University aims to ensure that students receive information, advice and guidance at the earliest opportunity to support their efforts in overcoming barriers to their research and reduce the chance of issues escalating.



Good PGR attendance and engagement is also a requirement of external bodies such as Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), funders or sponsors, and the UK Visas and Immigration department of the Home Office.

The University is able to deliver courses, administer funds to students, and grant Student Route/Tier 4 sponsorship, by fulfilling its responsibilities in relation to these bodies.

Any sanctions for poor attendance and engagement for students benefitting from arrangements with these bodies will be the same as for other students, however further consequences could mean withdrawal of registration, sponsorship or funding, and/or the PGRs being required to return to their home country. Notes on any specific requirements are included in this policy.

Further information on the Student Route/Tier 4 for staff can be found [here](#) and information for international students

can be found on the International Student Support pages
www.sussex.ac.uk/internationalsupport/immigration

Advice on loans and scholarships can be found here: <https://student.sussex.ac.uk/money/funding>

In addition to the above, for those sponsored under the Student Route, UKVI require that where the student fails to re-engage with their studies within 60 days (30 days for distance learning) of the first contact from the university regarding their lack of academic engagement, the University must withdraw sponsorship except in exceptional circumstances.

Supervisors are responsible for reporting to the REC/DDS/UKVI Compliance Team when there has been no contact or missed supervision meetings with individual PGR students for a month (unless the PGR student is on an authorised leave of absence) or where there is a pattern of absences which

- To take maternity/paternity leave (birth certificate or official medical certificate required)
- Illness which would not ordinarily result in an absence exceeding 60 days (medical certificate required)
- Illness of a close family member/dependent (medical certificate)

Authorised absences cannot be used to undertake employment, and the reason a leave of absence is required should not be so great that a student would be required to suspend their studies.

Authorised absences will only be permitted where we as the sponsor can assure ourselves it will not have any negative impact on the student's academic progression, the student will be able to complete their studies within their current leave to remain and the University can continue to meet its engagement responsibilities with the student and keep records of how the authorised absence was authorised and monitored.

Like intermissions (temporary withdrawal) retrospective applications are not permitted. If a student cannot return to studies after taking a period of authorised absence (up to a maximum of 60 days) the student will be required to intermit and the University will withdraw sponsorship resulting in the curtailment of the student's visa. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the University can continue sponsoring a student for more than 60 days and this is normally where a student is too ill to travel.

Where students require an absence exceeding 60 days they will be required to intermit and the University will withdraw sponsorship resulting in the curtailment of the student's visa. Please refer to the intermission policy for more information.

Students can request the authorised absence application form from email researchstudentvisas@sussex.ac.uk. The application form needs to be approved by the lead supervisor and Director of Doctoral Studies. Where students are requesting authorised absences on medical grounds, students must provide medical evidence to support their application and prior to returning to their studies medical evidence which confirms they are fit to return to studies must be provided. We encourage students who are experiencing personal difficulties to seek advice and support from the University's Student Advisors.

The authorised absence will be logged on the student record and the student will receive confirmation the authorised absence has been approved from the Records Team/UKVI Compliance Team.

Only one period of authorised absence will be permitted during a course of study.

During an authorised absence students must continue to meet the conditions of their visa and maintain contact with the University via the main supervisor, this includes keeping contact details up-to-date in Sussex Direct.

PGRs fees will cease to be accrued during the sole permitted period of authorised absence, and the course end date will be extended by the length of an absence.

The restrictions on work that apply during term time also apply during an authorised absence i.e. the student must not work more than 20 hours per week.

Ten working days before the student is due to resume their studies, they should contact the