

Short Briefing Document: Periods of Study updates affecting 19/20 starters

A Working Party lead by the [Associate Dean of Postgraduate Research and of the Doctoral College](#) and supported by [College Directors of PGR](#) was formed in 2016-17 for a review of the current arrangements. The working party with broad representation and wide consultation reviewed the practice across the Russell Group and identified areas of good practice within the University, both of which fed into its final recommendations which now have been accepted by the DC Strategic Board and DC Management Group. The changes outlined in brief below will come into existence for PGRs **starting from September 2019 onwards**

Changes arising:

1. Programme duration: maximum period of submission clarified as 4 years for f/t students

- The maximum period of study will be measured to submission and will be 4 years for full-time students. Funded students, and their supervisory team, are asked plan their PhD project to submit within the funded period, to avoid studying during the unfunded period.
- Tier 4 visas will be six months longer than programme lengths.

2. Part-time study options increased:

- **From 19-20 entry**, study will be offered at 0.5, 0.6, 0.7, 0.8, 0.9 and 1.0 FTE to allow for more flexibility within part-time studies.
- Mode of attendance may be changed no more than every six months with the supervisor agreement.

3. Monitoring & supporting progress:

- More effective use of current monitoring to support timely submission.
- Completion of upgrade process to take place within the first 12 months of study (pro-rata for PT) with submission requirements for upgrade being adjusted accordingly. The upgrade will then become more of an assessment of the student PhD potential, the reasons for this change are:
 - PGR Health and Wellbeing – more structured, supportive and timely move to PhD status.
 - Funding reasons – sponsored students are rarely required to repay their sponsorship if they chose to leave within their first year; RCUK scholarships funds can be reallocated if a funded student withdraws within the first year of study.
 - To bring us in line with Russell Group, other competitor groups and potentially the North American market.

NB: AMR has already been moved to January to help accommodate the earlier upgrade.

- Unsatisfactory Student Progress and Engagement procedures will continue to be used as a supportive tool to assist engagement. The DC will put on workshops and connect to the online training in order to improve understanding of UPSE as a supportive measure.
 - The process is only initiated after discussion between the PGR Support Team and the Supervisory team.
 - Students are always sent an initial and supportive email to indicate concerns (pre-USPE) by the PGR Support team
 - ALL USPE communication is supportive and includes achievable goals set in collaboration with the supervisor
 - Any student responding with health and wellbeing issues will be moved directly on to Health, Wellbeing and Support to Study. There is currently extensive dialogue between wellbeing and the DC in relation to the HWSS process.
- Extensions beyond the four year submission date will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances (beyond the control of the student)**.
- **Continuation Status will change to six months from one year.**

For detailed information: Please see the [Doctoral College website](#). If you have any queries please contact your College Director of PGR.