

LAHP Leave-related Studentship Extension Policy and Process

1. Definitions

Leave

The general term for periods of time a student takes time away from their studies. The four categories of leave in the [UKRI Terms & Conditions for Training Grants](#) are: Annual, Family, Medical and Additional leave. Leave can be unpaid or paid, depending on the type.

Leave-related extension (for periods of leave of less than 28 days)

For leave of duration of less than 28 days, a student may be able to request an extension to their studentship without formally interrupting their studies. If approved, the studentship is normally extended by the amount of time the student is on leave. In some circumstances, the extension period may be either shorter or longer than the length of leave taken.

Please note UKRI uses the term “extension” to describe any time added to a studentship, regardless of the duration of the leave or whether there has been a formal interruption. At LAHP, the term ‘extension’ is only used for extensions awarded via the LAHP Research Extension Fund process. The term ‘leave-related extension’ is used to refer to those extensions that have occurred due to periods of leave that last less than 28 days.

Interruption (for periods of leave of 28 days or more)

This is a formal break in studies administered through the student’s home university’s records system. Single periods of leave of 28 days or more must be taken as an interruption. Leave less than 28 days cannot be taken as an interruption, and instead must be logged in real time and if eligible, taken as an extension via the process described in this document. The Funding End Date of a studentship must be updated to reflect the period of interruption.

2. Purpose

This document outlines the policy and process for reviewing and approving leave-related studentship extension requests for students funded by UKRI through the London Arts & Humanities Partnership (LAHP). It ensures fair, transparent, and consistent decision-making in line with [UKRI guidance](#).

3. Scope

This policy applies from 1 October 2025 to those students who are in receipt of funding by the London Arts & Humanities partnership (LAHP DTP 2, grant ref no AH/R012679/1). **The policy only applies to block(s) of leave of less than 28 days that have significant impact on the student's research progress. Any leave of 28 days or over must be taken as interruption and does not fall under this policy.**

4. Key principles

- All leave must have been logged by students via their university's local process, at the time it occurs, with the appropriate supporting documentation provided via the same process. Without a record of leave taken, a studentship cannot be extended.
- The total amount of leave taken must not exceed 28 weeks in a rolling 12 months period and 52 weeks across the whole studentship (excluding maternity / adoption leave).
- Leave periods taken as interruption cannot be grounds to request leave-related extensions.
- Applications for leave-related extensions must be submitted within the funded period.
- Applications must be submitted at the first available opportunity following the leave forming the grounds of the request, unless the full impact of the period of leave is only identified later.
- Approvals are not granted automatically.

5. Leave-related Extension Request Panel

5.1 Composition

- The Leave-related Extension Request Panel will be composed of a diverse group of academic and professional services staff with appropriate expertise in doctoral training, student support, and equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Panel members will be drawn from the eight LAHP consortium partner institutions and will include at least one member with experience in disability support or mental health.

5.2 Conflict of Interest

- Panel members must declare any conflict of interest prior to reviewing applications.
- Where a conflict is identified, the member will be recused from the relevant case, and a substitute will be appointed.

6. Application Rounds

Extension requests will be considered in two formal rounds per year, typically in January/February and July.

Students must submit their applications by the published deadlines for each round.

7. Leave-related Extensions

7.1 Eligibility

Students may apply for a leave-related extension if they experience multiple short absences due to:

- Illness
- Caring responsibilities
- A pre-existing disability or long-term health condition.
- A newly diagnosed disability or health condition during their studentship
- Other personal circumstances,

and the absence results in significant impact on their research progress and cannot be absorbed during the period of their studentship.

IMPORTANT: all people are expected to experience minor illnesses (e.g., colds, flus, stomach bugs etc.) from time to time and these should be accommodated within the duration of the studentship (like annual leave). Leave-related extensions will only be granted for minor illnesses where the student has a documented disability or long-term health condition, which is impacted by minor illnesses.

Students must log all relevant leave in real time to be considered.

7.2 Duration vs. Impact

The length of the extension may differ from the duration of leave if the impact on research is disproportionate or mitigated.

The panel will assess:

- The timing and nature of the leave.
- The impact on research progress.
- Any mitigation measures (e.g., rescheduling, support from supervisors).

Approval of extensions is not granted automatically.

7.3 Mitigation

Students and supervisors are expected to attempt reasonable mitigation. Evidence of mitigation efforts must be included in the application.

7.4 Evidence

We expect that evidence of the circumstances was submitted at the time the leave was logged at the university, or at the beginning of studies for students with long-term conditions, and university teams will be asked to confirm this is available. No additional evidence will normally be required. However, extensions will normally only be granted for circumstances that evidence is available for.

8. Application Process

8.1 Submission

Students must complete the LAHP Leave-related Extension Request Form by the set deadline and submit it to the central LAHP team via the application link available on the [LAHP website](#). The central LAHP team will ask the student's home university for confirmation that appropriate evidence was submitted at the time the leave was logged, or that evidence of a long-term condition was provided to the university earlier.

Note: Any supporting documentation of the leave itself (e.g. doctor's notes) must be submitted to the home university at the time the leave is logged and do not need to be submitted again to the central LAHP panel. Evidence of long-term conditions do not need to be provided again, if the student has already provided it to their home university at the time they agreed on their reasonable adjustments.

8.2 Review

The panel will review applications against the criteria outlined above.

Decisions will be communicated within 4 weeks of the application deadline.

8.3 Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed by the panel in relation to the significance of leave-related disruptions to research and the justifiability of an extension as a means of mitigating those disruptions.

The panel will therefore consider:

- whether the nature, timing, and extent of leave taken had a significant impact on the progress of the candidate's research;
- whether the candidate has made demonstrable attempts to mitigate these impacts such that an extension is now justified.

8.4 Appeals

As all applications will be reviewed by a panel made up of a range of academic and further staff members, and, because decisions will be made on the grounds of academic judgement, it will not be possible to request an appeal if you disagree with the outcome of your application.

However, if you think that the published process has not been followed, you may contact lahp@ucl.ac.uk to raise your concern. Please clearly mark your email Leave-related Extension Appeal in the subject line. Your appeal and application will be reviewed by a panel in light of this new information.

9. Contact and Support

For advice on submitting an extension request, students should [contact the LAHP team](#).

10. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with UKRI guidance and evolving student needs.

11. Data Protection and Privacy Notice

Leave data provided via the student's home university's local processes and information and documents provided on the LAHP leave-related extensions application will be shared with the leave-related extensions panel to inform decision making in relation to extensions.

Medical evidence submitted to the student's home university will only be held by the university and will not normally be shared with the leave-related extension panel, unless further information is required to be able to assess the application.

All information and documentation provided, including medical evidence, may be shared with the relevant UKRI team in case these are requested as part of an audit.