

## Absence payments for postgraduate research students

This policy covers stipend payments during absence for postgraduate research (PGR) students. All entitlements, requirements and processes around absence are in [the PGR code](#). The code should be used in conjunction with this information.

**Note:** absences are managed in different ways and not all impact your end date. [The PGR code](#) contains further information on this, and if you are unsure, contact your PGR School Administration team.

If you are unsure of your funding source, contact your school PGR administrator.

### 1. Who is eligible for stipend payments?

1.1. [UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#) funded students are eligible for payment for medical, maternity, adoption, and paternity leave as specified in this policy.

1.2. Students who are funded by the University of Bristol are eligible for payment for medical, maternity, adoption, and paternity leave as specified in this policy. This includes students funded from University, Faculty and School funds.

1.3. Students who receive external funding either directly from an external organisation or an external award administered through the University of Bristol must consult with their funder to determine whether payments can be made during periods resulting from medical, maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave. If the funder does not provide additional money to fund periods of leave, the University is not liable to provide any payment. Students are still entitled to take leave detailed in [the PGR code](#).

1.4. Students who are self-funded (and those entitled to tuition fee only awards), are entitled to the periods of leave detailed within [the PGR code](#) but will not be eligible for any financial support from the University.

1.5. Payments made to students who are either part-time, or only part-funded by the University, will be subject to a pro-rata adjustment in line with the percentage of funding received.

1.6. Funding to cover periods of absence will not be provided to students during unfunded periods of study.

1.7. Where this policy or [the PGR code](#) differs from that of a student's funder, the terms and conditions of that funder take precedence, and students are advised to contact the relevant School PGR administrator for further information as needed.

## 2. Maternity leave

2.1. The following table outlines a student's entitlement to stipend payments during maternity leave which is dependent upon the source of funding:

Funding source	Leave entitlement	Stipend payments
UKRI funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
University funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
School- or faculty-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
Externally funded	52 weeks	Payments at the discretion of the funder.
Self-funded	52 weeks	No payment.

2.2. The reduced rate refers to an equivalent payment that is available to staff who are entitled to statutory maternity pay. The lower level of statutory maternity pay is set by the [government each year](#).

2.3. Students who are registered part-time will receive their standard pro-rata stipend payments (for the initial 26-week period as stated in 2.1.) followed by 13 weeks of the reduced payment, with the appropriate pro-rata percentage applied.

## 3. Adoption leave

3.1. Students who are planning to or who have become parents as a result of adoption are entitled to the same stipend payments outlined in [the maternity table shown in section 2](#).

3.2. Where two students are jointly adopting, only one member of the couple can be considered as the primary caregiver, see [the PGR code](#) for further information.

3.3. All references to adoption and adoption leave include circumstances where individuals foster a child for adoption or are 'Parental Order' intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement.

## **4. Paternity leave**

4.1. UKRI and University of Bristol funded students are eligible to take up to two consecutive weeks' leave on full stipend.

## **5. Parental and shared parental leave**

5.1. This leave is usually unpaid (including for UKRI and University of Bristol funded students). If your funder supports payment for this type of leave it will be provided based on the funder's terms and conditions, where the University administers your stipend.

## **6. Medical absence**

6.1. Full-time and part-time research students who receive a maintenance stipend funded by the University of Bristol (including the University of Bristol PGR Scholarship and faculty or school-funded students) and/or by a [UKRI Research Council](#) are entitled to up to 13-weeks paid medical absence at their standard stipend value from the first day of certified illness within a rolling 12-month period.

6.2. Research students who receive a stipend from an external organisation or an external award administered through the University of Bristol must follow the regulations of the funder. If the funder does not provide additional money to fund periods of medical absence, the University is not liable to provide any payment.

## **7. Exceptional short term and other absence**

7.1. Students are entitled to exceptional short term absence; during these periods UKRI and UoB funded students will continue to receive their stipend but there will be no impact on their end date, see [the PGR code](#) for further information. This also applies for short periods of self-certified sickness.

7.2. For students funded from external funders, the funder terms and conditions regarding payment will apply.

## **8. Students with UKVI student visas (formerly known as Tier 4)**

8.1. In the case of students sponsored by the University under UKVI student visa (formerly known as Tier 4), suspension as a result of medical or parental absence may require the University to withdraw sponsorship and for the student to return to their home country for the duration of the leave. In such cases, students will thereafter need to apply to the University for a new CAS number to apply for a new visa to resume their studies.

8.2. All requests for leave must be made in good time to permit time for approval of the request and to ensure travel home can be made following the report of the suspension to the UKVI.

8.3. In all cases, advice should be sought from the [Student Visa Team](#) as early as possible (especially in the case of a pregnancy) to ensure compliance with the student visa can be maintained.

## **9. Repayment of stipend payments**

9.1. Should a student not return to their studies after the period of suspension (including medical or parental leave), any stipend paid during that period will normally be recovered by the University. This requirement could be waived in exceptional circumstances, which would be approved on a case-by-case basis, by the Faculty PGR Director.

9.2. Students should return to studies at the University in a full or part-time capacity (at least 50% FTE), for at least 3 months following maternity or adoption leave. Should a student not return to their studies after the period of suspension, any stipend paid during that period will normally be recovered by the University. This requirement could be waived in exceptional circumstances, which would be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Faculty PGR Director. There is no minimum period of return required after paternity leave.