

Guidelines for requesting an extension to the thesis deadline for PhD, MPhil, MD[Res] and EngD candidates

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document provides guidance to departments and candidates on the College's procedure for requesting an extension to the thesis submission deadline and applies to all students registered on the College's postgraduate research programmes.
- 1.2. This procedure is to enable candidates to seek an extension to the thesis submission deadline, in cases where circumstances beyond their control has affected progress towards their final submission deadline.

2. General Principles

- 2.1. The College requires postgraduate research candidates to submit their thesis for examination within the agreed timeframe noted in the [Academic Regulations](#). This is normally 48 months from the programme start date for full-time candidates, and 72 months from the programme start date for part-time candidates.
- 2.2. The thesis deadline extension procedure allows candidates to request an extension to the final thesis submission deadline logged by the College on their central student record. As part of a thesis extension request, candidates are expected to provide details of any circumstances affecting their progress towards their final submission deadline.
- 2.3. Prior to the submission of a thesis deadline extension request to the Registry Assessment Records Team, departments are advised to consider whether an Interruption of Study is appropriate and in the best interest of the candidate.

For further guidance on the College's Interruption of Study procedure, please refer to the [Guidelines for Interruption of Studies for Research Students](#). Tier 4 students and their supervisors are reminded to contact the International Student Support Office immediately if they are considering taking an interruption.

- 2.4. Approval of a thesis deadline extension will extend the candidate's thesis submission deadline and programme registration. **International students on a Tier 4 visa are advised to contact the International Student Support Office if they have any queries about the impact of this on their visa.**
- 2.5. Approval of a thesis deadline extension will allow candidates to proceed to thesis examination in the usual way, with no detriment to their academic record.

- 2.6. Departments are expected to monitor their thesis submission rates against a submission benchmark of 4 years, as part of the College's quality assurance and review processes. This benchmark provides an internal mechanism for the College to ensure that there are no underlying issues which are affecting overall student performance within the department. Departments are reminded that theses submitted within an agreed extension period will be recorded as 'late' on the College's formal record as far as the College's Performance Indicators are concerned.
- 2.7. The department, in consultation with the candidate, should ensure that the proposed new deadline is realistic and achievable for submission. One thesis deadline extension per candidate is expected to be sufficient. Subsequent extension requests may not be approved.

3. Thesis Deadline Extension Procedure

- 3.1. All requests to extend the thesis deadline must be made using the appropriate Thesis Deadline Extension Request Form, which is accessible via the [Research Degree Examinations](#) section of the Registry website.
- 3.2. All extension requests must include a supporting statement from the candidate's main supervisor. A detailed and agreed plan for completion should accompany the request, along with a proposed new submission deadline as agreed by the candidate and main supervisor
- 3.3. All requests should be submitted in advance of the thesis submission deadline. In cases where this has not been possible, the department will be asked to comment on the circumstances leading to the retrospective extension request.
- 3.4. Requests resulting in an extension period of 12 months or more to the candidate's original thesis deadline must be accompanied by an independent statement from an expert in the field confirming that the research is still novel and valid.
- 3.5. All thesis deadline extension requests are subject to departmental approval by the Director of Postgraduate Studies. Upon approval, requests must be submitted to the Registry Assessment Records Team for processing.
- 3.6. It is expected that the majority of thesis deadline extension requests will be made in the final year of student registration and writing up period.

Further information on the College's writing up policies can be found here: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/registry/academic-governance/public/academic-policy/research-degree-examinations/Writing-up-period.pdf>.

- 3.7. In seeking an extension to the thesis deadline, appropriate supporting evidence should be provided by the candidate to their main supervisor and Director of Postgraduate Studies.

Any supporting documentation submitted alongside the completed Thesis Deadline Extension Request Form will be held on the candidate's record, in accordance with the College's [retention schedule](#).

- 3.8. A panel comprising of the Director and Deputy Directors of the Graduate School (or nominees) may be required to consider and approve requests, particularly those resulting in an extension period of 12 months or more to the initial thesis submission deadline.
- 3.9. Once processed, the confirmed outcome will be communicated to the departmental postgraduate administrator by the Registry Assessment Records Team.
- 3.10. All requests for extensions to the thesis submission deadline will be recorded by the College. Information relating to all thesis deadline extension requests received will be reported to the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee annually.

4. **Appealing the outcome of a thesis deadline extension request**

- 4.1. Candidates are reminded that failure to submit a thesis deadline extension request within a reasonable time-frame, or rejection of a retrospective request, may result in withdrawal from the programme.
- 4.2. All students required to withdraw have the right of appeal through the Academic Registrar to an Appeal Committee of the Senate. The right of appeal relates only to the withdrawal decision and not to the results of any examination or academic assessment on which the decision may be based.
- 4.3. For further information on the relevant appeal procedure, candidates should refer to [Appendix 1](#) of the *General Regulations*.

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