SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS & EXTENSIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

How this guide can help you

Special Considerations are how you inform the University when your studies are impacted by unforeseen circumstances beyond your control (see section 2.1.2 for a non-exhaustive list of circumstances that may meet the general definition).

These regulations for Postgraduate Research (PGR) students may allow for:

- a suspension of candidature;
- an extension to candidature;
- an extension to the deadline for the submission of a Progression Review Report;
- that a Progression Review or a viva voce, is rescheduled;
- an extension to the deadline for the submission of minor or modest amendments to a thesis following a viva voce;
- an extension to the deadline for the submission of a revised thesis following a viva voce;
- special consideration to be given to the outcome of an assessment (see regulations for caveats)
- that extenuating circumstances are logged where the situation does not warrant an immediate request for special consideration (further information relating to the circumstances and the period affected may also be required at the time of the later request).

The process for Special Considerations & Extensions can be key to helping you manage the impact of those circumstances, and to inform the University of the impact on your studies sooner rather than later.

We have some top tips to help you with some of the challenges that this process may present.

Special Considerations – help & support

You can contact your supervisor, Faculty Graduate School Office, and Advice Centre Advisers, for further guidance and support. Therefore, reading and following this guide will help you make a solid start to your application which can be helpful if you are close to the deadline.
The University Regulations Governing Special Considerations and Suspension of Candidature for Postgraduate Research Students outline the process, timescales, provide a non-exhaustive list of the situations that are considered ‘extenuating circumstances’, as well as the potential outcomes that are available.

You will also find basic information about the process on the Doctoral College website: Special Considerations | Doctoral College | University of Southampton

Which Special Considerations?

The University Regulations Governing Special Considerations and Suspension of Candidature for Postgraduate Research Students outline two different Special Considerations applications:

**SC1** – for requests for special consideration that are related to extenuating circumstances, which are unexpected and unplanned.

**SC2** – for suspension of candidature requests that are unrelated to extenuating circumstances (for example maternity, paternal leave, employment commitments, placements or other planned breaks).

Top tips – the basics...

**STEP 1 - READ**

The first step is to take time to read the Special Considerations regulations to better understand the processes and possible outcomes better.

**STEP 2 - REFLECT**

Start with some **basic questions before starting the process:**

- Which form do I complete (see above)?
- What are the potential outcomes offered by this process?
- Do your circumstances meet the key principles and purpose set out in
theregulations?

- What are the deadlines for applying?
- Are there any implications for my visa? (international students)

**STEP 3 - COMPLETE**

The Special Considerations form’s section:

“**Please describe your circumstances and how they have impacted upon you and your studies?**”

**Top tips - describing the circumstances**

This is a process where your application is likely to be compared to the aims and criteria of the process. What are the key words in the regulations? Can you use the words from the regulations in your description of your circumstances?

You may find it helpful to look at our guide: [Wellbeing; describing it’s impact](#)

If completing the SC1 Form what do I tick on “Part 3: The request (select all that apply)”?

Consider which of the listed options best addresses your needs? Do you need more time to submit a progression review? Do you need to reschedule a viva, or more time to submit corrections? If in doubt, discuss it with your supervisor, who should be able to guide you on the most appropriate option for you.

**Conclusion**

It is normal and understandable that applying for this process will seem challenging when you have already faced tough times. It is well worth reading through this guidance, contacting the support on offer and submitting the strongest possible application. The Special Considerations process may be part of more generally opening up about challenges faced, reaching out for help and support and managing difficult circumstances as best you can.

**Important relevant links & forms**

- Regulations Governing Special Considerations and Suspension of Candidature
for Postgraduate Research students: Regulations Governing Special Considerations and Suspension of Candidature for Postgraduate Research Students

- Doctoral College information on Special Considerations: Special Considerations | Doctoral College | University of Southampton
- Special Considerations form for extenuating circumstances: SC1 form
- Special Considerations form for planned suspension: SC2 form

Further help and guidance
For further guidance on the Regulations Governing Special Considerations, contact The Advice Centre. Tel: 02380 592 085 Email: advice@susu.org

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