

Sickness Policy for RVC PGR Students

Postgraduate research students must inform their supervisor from the outset of any period of sickness absence and maintain regular contact with him/her, especially if their health problem is likely to lead to long term absence from study.

For absences of more than 5 consecutive working days, students are required to inform their supervisor and the Graduate School. Medical certification from their doctor on official headed paper must be forwarded to their supervisor and a copy sent to the Graduate School so that a record can be kept on the student's file.

Students who accumulate frequent short-term periods of absence ([Bradford Factor trigger hit](#)) over the course of a year may be referred to Occupational Health and/or the Advice Center on the recommendation of their supervisory team/Graduate School.

For periods of sickness absence exceeding 4 weeks, the student must inform the Graduate School and request an interruption to study (which will require the approval of the Student Performance and Development System (SPDS). This must be approved by their supervisor and supported by medical certification. Consideration (by supervisors and SPDS) will be given as to whether referral to Occupational Health may be needed (<http://estates.rvc.ac.uk/Health-And-Safety/Occupational-Health>)

Interruption of study will normally be granted for a certified period of sickness absence that exceeds 4 weeks up to a maximum of 12 months. Interruptions beyond 12 months require a suspension of regulations which can only be granted by the Principal. A student must attend any referral appointments (medical or otherwise) and regular follow up appointments that are scheduled for after their return to study.

Students must keep their supervisor and the Graduate School informed of any changes in their circumstances that may result in their returning to their studies earlier or later than originally stated. Each application for a further interruption must be accompanied by new medical certification.

A re-entry interview will be arranged with SPDS for sickness absence {normally} of more than 6 months.

Occupational Health and the Student/Disability Advisor should be consulted if it is thought to be likely that additional support needs will be required for students returning from a long-term absence.

Student eligibility criteria for receiving sickness absence pay.

Postgraduate research students who receive an annual maintenance stipend from an external organisation (e.g. Research Councils, Wellcome Trust, Charities and Government/Embassies,) must follow the terms and conditions of the funder. If the funder does not provide additional funds to cover sickness pay, the College is not liable to provide any payment.

For postgraduate research students who receive an annual maintenance stipend from the Royal Veterinary College, the following applies.

- During periods of sickness absence that are covered by medical certification in any academic year, payment will be continued at the full rate for 8 weeks.
- If the period of sickness absence exceeds 8 weeks, no further payments will be made.
- A student who has had a period or periods of absence through certified illness will be eligible to apply for an extension to their studentship of up to 8 weeks. They must apply for the extension 3-6 months before the end of the studentship, their application must be supported by their supervisor and the relevant medical certification must be on file. Extensions will need to be approved by the Head of the Graduate School and the Vice Principal for Research and Innovation.

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