

Financial Support Office: SICKNESS PAYMENT POLICY FOR LSE FUNDED RESEARCH STUDENTS

1. Overview of entitlement

- 1.1. This policy relates to the payment of LSE-funded research degree studentship entitlements during periods of absence due to sickness (“sickness-related entitlements”), subject to the eligibility criteria and approval mechanisms set out in section 2 of this document.
- 1.2. Research students who are also members of staff of the School should also follow the appropriate [HR policy](#) for staff in relation to sick pay entitlements associated with their employment contract.
- 1.3. Eligible students may claim sickness-related entitlements for approved periods of absence lasting up to 13 weeks (91 calendar days, whether consecutive or non-consecutive) in any rolling 12-month period.
- 1.4. During periods of absence due to sickness, eligible research students will continue to receive stipend payments at the current rate of their LSE funded studentship. During this period, their LSE funded studentship entitlement will be paused and replaced by sickness-related entitlements, as detailed below. The Financial Support Office will confirm the full details of changes in funding status to students at the point at which applications are approved.
- 1.5. Sickness-related entitlements commence from the point of the research student’s initial enrolment, until the end of the research student’s LSE funded period.

2. Eligibility Criteria

- 2.1. It is expected that students will experience short periods of sickness on occasion across the total period of their enrolment with the School. The School expects that these will normally be managed without the need for an extension, or interruption, or payment of sickness-related entitlements under this policy.
Accordingly, applications for payment of sickness-related entitlements covering fewer than 14 calendar days will not normally be granted under this policy.
- 2.2. All students enrolled in MRes/PhD and MPhil/PhD programmes who are also currently in receipt of an LSE funded studentship stipend are eligible to apply for payment of sickness-related entitlements under this policy. Part-time or part-funded research students will receive sickness-related entitlements on a pro-rata basis.
- 2.3. Full-time students who receive approval for a change in mode of study from full-time to part-time due to sickness are eligible to apply for payment of sickness-related entitlements for up to 26 weeks at 50% of the current rate of their studentship entitlement.
- 2.4. Holders of the following studentships are defined as LSE funded: LSE PhD Studentship, LSE PhD Studentship on Analysing and Challenging Inequalities, LSE PhD Studentship in Data Science, and ESRC studentship holders in any period of LSE top-up funding.
- 2.5. The following students are ineligible for payment of sickness-related entitlements.
 - 2.5.1. Research students who have already exhausted the available sickness-related entitlements as set out in 1.3 above.
 - 2.5.2. Research students who receive a stipend funded by their academic department or external organisation, including any stipend and fee payments administered but not funded by LSE.
 - 2.5.3. Research students in receipt of LSE funding covering tuition fees only.
 - 2.5.4. Research students who previously received an LSE funded studentship, but are currently funded by a different, ineligible funding source.

2.5.5. Research students in un-funded periods of study.¹

2.5.6. Students enrolled in postgraduate taught programmes *other than* MRes programmes.

3. How to apply for payment of sickness-related entitlements

3.1. Eligible students must apply using the following mechanisms. (Visa holders are asked to note the additional information for visa-holders provided in section 4.) Applicants must state prominently in their application that they are applying for payment of sickness-related entitlements under this policy.

3.1.1. *For MRes students:* the Student Services Centre [How to apply for an interruption](#) guidance.

3.1.2. *For MPhil/PhD students and post-upgrade MRes/PhD students:* the PhD Academy's [Interruption Guidance](#) and apply for an interruption to their studies using the [Change of Circumstances form](#).

3.2. Students are asked to note that the *Regulations for Research Degrees* do not normally permit retrospective interruption applications, and that government rules prevent the School from considering applications for retrospective interruptions submitted by student visa-holders.

3.3. All applications must be accompanied by evidence which conforms to the requirements for standards of evidence listed [here](#).

3.4. Following approval of an interruption request, if a student is eligible for payment of sickness-related entitlements, but wishes to decline it, this should be discussed with [the Financial Support Office](#).

3.5. If the maximum period of sickness-related entitlements has not already been granted as per section 1.3 of this policy, extensions to periods of interruption and payment of sickness-related entitlements will be reviewed upon re-application through the mechanisms set out in section 3.1, up to the maximum limit set out in section 1.3.

3.6. Per 1.4 above, following a period of absence, payment of the LSE funded studentship stipend will resume when the research student is able to return to their studies.

4. Additional guidance for student visa-holders

4.1. Student visa holders are eligible to apply for sickness-related entitlements, but these may only be granted within the limits imposed by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) rules. In all cases, specific advice should be sought from the [Student Advice and Engagement Team](#) as early as possible, and before any application is submitted.

4.2. Student visa holders should note that where interruptions are approved, the government requires the School to curtail support for the student's visa. This can have serious financial consequences, including costs associated with submitting a fresh visa application, and paying a further immigration health surcharge. These costs are not supported under this policy.

4.3. As an alternative to interruption, UKVI allows sponsoring institutions (i.e. universities) to grant permission for student visa holders to be absent from study for up to 60 calendar days.² This can only be granted where the institution confirms that this will not require any changes to the student's submission deadline. Accordingly, this route does not entail any change in the student's submission deadline or extend the student's funded period.

¹ Unfunded periods include periods where the programme of study is longer than the funding offer and the LSE funded studentship has ended; or those who have paused their LSE funded studentship, for example to take up a work or internship opportunity.

² Consecutive/back-to-back periods of approved absence are not permitted. In practice, this means that the School cannot approve 60 day period of absence, followed by another.



Version log

Review interval	New review start date	New review due by
Yearly	30 August 2024	30 September 2024

Version history

Version	Publication date	Approved by	Revisions
23-24.01	18 April 2024	Pam Rolfe, Deputy Head of Scholarships and Financial Support (PGR)	First published version.

Contacts

Query type	Contact	Email
Operational	Financial Support Officer (PGR), Financial Support Office	financial-support@lse.ac.uk
Policy	Deputy Head of Scholarships and Financial Support (PGR), Financial Support Office	financial-support@lse.ac.uk

Communications and Training

Query	Answer	Notes
Will this document be publicised through internal communications?	<u>Yes/No</u>	Doctoral programme directors and managers/administrators via the Doctoral Programme Directors' Forum and the PhD Managers' Forum; student representatives via the Research Degree Students' Consultative Forum; all students via dedicated Financial Support Office communications and the PhD Academy newsletters; published via the FSO and PhD Academy websites.
Will training needs arise from this document?	<u>Yes/No</u>	No