

## Fee Free Periods (FFPs) – Criteria

All students registered at some point in the 2019-20 academic year up to 23 March 2020 (excluding new students starting a research degree programme after 23 March 2020), on any registration status, will be permitted additional time without fees (a fee free period (FFP)). This is tiered support depending on how much additional time is needed and can only be requested when students are approaching the end of your 'normal' period of studies.

- FFP1: up to a 3 month time extension (or 6 months for students who studied for the majority of their course on a part-time basis) with no additional fees. FFP1 is managed by a blanket concession to allow all eligible PGR students an additional 3 months (FTE) which was approved by Research and Postgraduate Committee in May 2020. Students do not need to make a case for the FFP1, they simply request it from School and the School advises PGR Records.
- FFP2: up to a further 3 month time extension (or a further 6 months for students who have studied for the majority of their course on a part-time basis) with no additional fees. To request the FFP2, students must outline a case for impact due to COVID-19. This is requested via the [RDP Exception Request - Registration and Thesis Submission Form \(Microsoft Word\)](#) which needs to be endorsed by the School Postgraduate Research Committee and approved by the Chair of Education Committee (Quality and Standards) (or nominee).

If your funding is terminated before your original funding end date, the FFP will not be applied until you have completed the normal period of studies (eg for a PhD normally 3 year full-time or equivalent).

You should remain registered as a research student, and not be moved to Thesis Only status to avail of this time.

For Tier 4 visa holders, in many cases you will have time on your visa to allow you to avail of the additional three months without a visa extension. However, if you find that you will need to seek an extension to your visa you can contact International Student Support ([immigration@qub.ac.uk](mailto:immigration@qub.ac.uk)) within three months of the expiry date of your visa to discuss options for this.

### **Criteria dependent on registration status (e.g. Thesis Only, corrections)**

- What if I was already on Thesis Only status at the point of lockdown?

If you were already on thesis-only status at the start of lockdown, or have changed to Thesis Only since then, you may have a 3 additional months of registration at the end of your 12 month period (15 months total) by requesting this from your School. You can make a case for up to 6 months total additional time (or 3 further months if you have already requested the FFP1) by completing a concession request with Covid impact.

- What if I was registered at the point of lockdown (23 March), but have since taken a Temporary Withdrawal (Leave of Absence)?

If you were registered at the start of lockdown (including as a returning student), but have since that time taken a temporary withdrawal, then you are eligible for up to six months without fees when you reach the end of your funding or normal period of studies.

- What if I was on a Temporary Withdrawal (Leave of Absence) before lockdown?

If you registered for the 2019-20 academic year (including as a returning student), and have since that time taken a temporary withdrawal, you are eligible for up to six months without fees when you reach the end of your funding or normal period of studies.

You are also eligible for up to six months without fees when you reach the end of your funding or normal period of studies if you were on a temporary withdrawal (Leave of Absence) before the 2019-20 academic year, returned from that Leave of Absence and fully registered during the 2019-20 academic year (up to 30 September 2020). Please speak to your School Postgraduate Office to discuss when and how you request this fee free period.

- What if I am on a taught component of a professional / integrated doctorate?

If you were completing taught elements of professional / integrated doctorates at the point of lockdown (23 March), provisions to mitigate disruption are made within the taught regulations.

- What if I am making corrections to my thesis following my viva examination?

The 6 month FTE extension also applies to students completing corrections post-viva from 23rd March, or who moved to that status during lockdown (up to 3 August). You need to notify your School if this is needed, so your internal examiner can be informed.

- What if I started my research degree after March 2020?

Students who started their research degree after the first lockdown are encouraged to use ongoing discussions with your Supervisor and formal progress points to highlight impacts and how you have adapted your research to address the challenges. This will provide an evidence base for ongoing discussions about impact, to look at support you need now and as you progress your research.

- What if I have been a full-time student but will move to part-time registration when I complete my normal period of studies?

You will be eligible for up to a total of 6 months additional time without fees (a 3 month FFP1 and up to 3 months FFP2, if there is demonstrative COVID impact). Only students who have studied on a part-time basis for the majority of their programme are eligible for up to a total of 12 months additional time without fees.

**You may be in a situation not covered by any of the options below. If you get in touch with your School, they will work with Student Registry, Academic Affairs and Postgraduate Awards to determine how the FFP criteria applies to your status.**