COVID-19 Authorised Absence Application Form (Tier 4 students only)

This form should be completed by Tier 4 students who wish to take a period of authorised absence as a direct result of Covid-19 factors. Please read the ‘Important information’ section, found at the end of this form, before submitting your application.

**Overseas students who have entered the UK on a Tier 4 visa:**
Wherever possible, research students are encouraged to adapt their programme of research and seek to continue their studies. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, research students may need to take a short break from their studies. It is important you discuss all options with your Supervisors before making a decision to pause your studies. Students who cannot continue studies as a direct result of Covid-19, can apply for a period of ‘authorised absence’ of either one, two, three, four five or six months for the period between 1st April to 30th September 2020. New applications must start from the beginning of the current month and cannot be backdated.

The University will continue sponsoring Tier 4 Doctoral Researchers during this period.

This form is solely for Covid-19-related authorised absence. Where a research student wishes to temporarily withdraw (intermit) from their studies, we recommend students discuss their situation with the University’s International Student Support team at immigration@sussex.ac.uk first.

During a period of authorised absence, the work restrictions that apply during term time also apply i.e. you must not work more than 20 hours per week.

Please note if you are in receipt of a US Federal Direct Loan, this request may have an impact on your funds. Please seek advice from the Financial Aid Office before proceeding (usfinancialaid@sussex.ac.uk).

If you are in receipt of a scholarship, you are advised to contact your funder before taking an authorised absence. An authorised absence may have an impact on your funding or stipend payments you receive.

**SECTION A – To be completed by the student** (PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY)

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<td>Degree Programme</td>
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<td>School</td>
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<td>Address during authorised absence (PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY)</td>
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Start date of authorised absence (or extension of existing authorised absence) – must be: 01 August 2020 or 01 September 2020

End date of authorised absence – must be: 31 August 2020 or 30th September 2020
Covid-19-related reasons for authorised absence:

(please provide as much context and detail as possible. This must include the Covid-19 related reasons why you are requesting an authorised absence. If appropriate, supporting evidence can be provided).

Funding Status:

☐ Self-funded  ☐ Funded

Please check one box: (please note if a box is not checked, this request cannot be approved)

☐ I am in receipt of, or have been in receipt of, a Federal Direct Loan during my PhD/MPhil
☐ I am not in receipt of, and have not been in receipt of a Federal Direct Loan during my PhD/MPhil

I confirm that the period of authorised absence has been discussed and agreed between the University and myself.

I understand that I am required to contact the RSAO to confirm whether I will be resuming my studies as expected or if I need additional time.

I understand additional periods of authorised absence will be considered on a case by case basis and in line with UKVI guidance.

I understand that the RSAO office will register me immediately after this period of Authorised Absence, unless a further period of authorised absence has been agreed. If I fail to return by the date expected, the University reserves the right to initiate an interruption of study and withdraw sponsorship.

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ________________

(Student)
**SECTION B – To be completed by the lead supervisor**

I confirm the dates of the authorised absence provided by the student are accurate and that the supervisory team supports this request.

I recommend the Authorised Absence for the period stated:

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(Main Supervisor)

**SECTION C – To be completed by the Director of Doctoral Studies**

I confirm the dates of the authorised absence provided by the student are accurate and that the School supports this request.

I approve this application for a period of Authorised Absence as above:

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(Director of Doctoral Studies)

*Once completed, please return to the Research Student Administration Office*
Important information

The following is applicable up until 30th September 2020.

**Application and approval process.**
The Covid-19 authorised absence form must be completed and fully signed (electronically or via email) by the required parties. The form must then be emailed to researchstudentprogress@sussex.ac.uk.

The authorised absence will be logged on the student record and the student will receive confirmation the authorised absence has been approved from the RSAO.

As always, we encourage students who are experiencing personal difficulties to seek advice and support from the University’s Student Life Centre.

**Students’ responsibilities during an authorised absence.**
During an authorised absence, students must continue to meet the conditions of their visa and maintain contact with the University via the main supervisor; this includes keeping contact details up-to-date in Sussex Direct.

**Fees and end dates.**
Research Student fees will cease to be accrued during the period of authorised absence and the course end date will be extended by the length of an absence.

**Right to work during an authorised absence.**
The restrictions on work that apply during term time also apply during an authorised absence i.e. the student must not work more than 20 hours per week.

**Returning from an authorised absence.**
Students are required to contact the RSAO (researchstudentprogress@sussex.ac.uk) to confirm whether they will be resuming their studies as expected or if they need additional time.

Additional periods of authorised absence will be considered on a case by case basis and in line with UKVI guidance.

The RSAO office will register students immediately after their period of authorised absence, unless a further period of authorised absence has been agreed. If a student fails to return by the date expected, the University reserves the right to initiate an interruption of study and withdraw sponsorship.