

Compassionate Policy

Compassionate Airfare and Extension

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) has a policy on:

- Compassionate airfare for Scholars and Fellows returning to their home country following the death of a partner or first-degree relative*
- Compassionate leave for Scholars and Fellows following the death of a partner or first-degree relative or following a miscarriage.

This policy does not cover the ill-health of family members but please get in touch with the CSC if you feel you need support.

Compassionate Airfare

The policy on compassionate airfare applies to all Scholars and Fellows following the death of a partner or first-degree relative in their home country

1. In the case of the death of a Scholar or Fellow's partner or first-degree relative, the CSC will arrange a return flight to the Scholar's home country or a reimbursement of the cost of a return flight purchased by the Scholar as long as this is in line with [CSC's travel policy](#).
2. If the CSC arranges the return airfare for the Scholar, the Scholar must forward to the CSC a copy of the death certificate within 4 weeks of their return to the UK.
3. To request a reimbursement of the cost of the flight, the Scholar must forward to the CSC a full payment receipt and a copy of the death certificate within 4 weeks of their return to the UK.
4. A compassionate airfare may be granted to a PhD Scholar on deferment, though no extension will be granted.

Compassionate Extension

The policy on compassionate extension is subject to the agreement of the Scholar's or Fellow's university** and applies to:

1. PhD Scholars (undertaking a doctoral degree at a UK university) following the death of a partner or first-degree relative during the 36-month award tenure

2. PhD Scholars (undertaking a doctoral degree at a UK university) following a miscarriage during the 36-month award tenure
3. Other Scholars and Fellows dependent on circumstances and visa restrictions

Section 1: PhD Scholars (undertaking a doctoral degree at a UK university) following the death of a partner or first-degree relative

1. The maximum duration of an extension on compassionate grounds without a suspension of stipend is 2 weeks.
2. An extension is not granted if a Scholar's award has ended and they are on deferment.
3. The CSC must be informed of the compassionate circumstances as soon as is practicable, and no later than 8 weeks of the bereavement. Any later notification may affect the compassionate extension being granted.
4. For an extension on compassionate grounds to be authorised, the scholar must forward a copy of the partner or relative's death certificate to their Programme Officer.
5. The CSC must be informed in writing when the scholar returns to work.
6. The CSC will notify the scholar in writing whether an extension has been granted, and if so the length of an extension.

Section 2: PhD Scholars (undertaking a doctoral degree at a UK university) following absence from studies due to miscarriage

1. Requests for an extension are considered individually.
2. The maximum duration of an extension on compassionate grounds without a suspension of stipend is 2 weeks.
3. An extension is not granted if a Scholar's award has ended and they are on deferment.
4. For an extension on compassionate grounds to be authorised, the Scholar must forward to their Programme Officer: a copy of a medical letter from the doctor looking after the Scholar. The medical letter should confirm that the Scholar has had a miscarriage.
5. In addition, the Scholar must forward to the CSC written confirmation from the university of the length of the absence
6. The CSC must be informed of the compassionate circumstances as soon as is practicable, and no later than 8 weeks of the miscarriage. Any later notification may affect the compassionate extension being granted.
7. The CSC must be informed in writing when the Scholar returns to work.
8. The CSC will notify the Scholar in writing whether an extension has been granted, and if so the length of an extension.

Section 3: Scholars and Fellows on awards of less than 18 months

1. The CSC will consider an extension of award for other Scholars and Fellows on compassionate grounds. This is dependent on individual circumstances, the course of study and visa restrictions.
2. The maximum duration of an extension on compassionate grounds without a suspension of stipend is 2 weeks.
3. For an extension on compassionate grounds to be authorised, the Scholar must forward a copy of the partner or relative's death certificate to their Programme Officer.
4. In addition, the Scholar must forward to the CSC written confirmation from the University of the length of the absence and agreement to an extension.
5. The CSC must be informed in writing when the scholar returns to work.
6. The CSC will notify the scholar in writing whether an extension has been granted, and if so the length of an extension.

Please note that the Commission reserves the right to change its policies for its own reasons or in response to external changes. All of the above is subject to the agreement of the UK Host University and UK Home Office whose policies are subject to change.

* A first-degree relative is defined as a parent, sibling or child.

** UK visa restrictions mean that it is at the discretion of the institution sponsoring a Scholar or Fellow's visa whether they support an absence from studies for compassionate reasons. We recommend that you speak to an International Student Adviser at your university as soon as possible to discuss your options.