

Ill-Health Leave Policy

Introduction

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) will consider extension of the awards of PhD Scholars and of Split-site Scholars where they have been absent from their studies and unable to work for reasons of ill-health, **subject to the agreement of the Scholar's university**.*

Scope of Policy

1. Requests for an extension are considered individually. Agreement from the university to a leave of absence on grounds of ill-health does not necessarily mean that the Commission will fund an extension.
2. The maximum duration of an extension on grounds of ill-health during an award is 13 weeks.
3. An extension is not granted for illness lasting less than 4 weeks, during which time the Scholar has been unable to complete PhD work.
4. Scholars will continue to receive their regular stipend during ill-health related absences for up to 13 weeks, as long as they remain in the UK.
5. If you are in hospital for more than 28 days your regular stipend will be reviewed.
6. Confirmation of any ill health extension will only be made once the Scholar has returned to studies and the length of absence has been verified.
7. The Commission does not expect fees to be charged for any extensions granted on the basis of ill health.

Process

8. The CSC must be informed as soon after the onset of illness as is practicable, and no later than 4 weeks after the onset of illness. Any later notification may affect the length of ill-health extension granted.
9. The CSC must be informed in writing when the award-holder returns to work.
10. In order for an extension on the grounds of ill-health to be authorised, the Scholar must forward to the CSC written confirmation from their university of the dates of absence, approved by them, and confirmation that they were unable to work on their PhD/research during this period.
11. The CSC must also receive appropriate medical evidence from an independent and verifiable source, such as a doctor or registered medical practitioner that confirms

the Scholar's circumstances and covers the full period of absence which they are claiming an extension for.

12. The CSC will notify the award-holder in writing whether or not an extension has been granted, and if so the length of an extension, within 2 months of the receipt of the medical evidence and confirmation from the university of the dates of absence.

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

** UK visa regulations mean that it is at the discretion of the institution sponsoring a Scholar's visa whether they support an absence from studies for 'ill-health' and for how long a period of leave will be granted.*

We recommend that you speak with an International Student Adviser at your university as soon as possible to discuss your options and obtain immigration advice before contacting the CSC regarding your eligibility for an extension on the grounds of ill-health leave.