

Sick Leave Policy for NTU PhD Candidates (PGRs)

Doctoral candidates may experience periods of illness within their NTU Studentship and require a leave of absence from their studies. This policy is for PhD candidates in receipt of an NTU stipend or bursary and applies after an initial six-month period of study. If a situation arises where a doctoral candidate needs to take some time out from their studies due to ill health, then the following guidance is provided. Pay and time off become effective after the six-month date, with the policy effective from day one of study but the entitlement to pay commences after six months.

If a doctoral candidate becomes unwell, in excess of seven calendar days, and is unable to continue with their studies for a period of time they will be required to provide a medical certificate from their doctor or medical adviser to certify the illness. Providing medical evidence has been received, award payments will continue to be paid for any single period of absence of **up to 13 calendar weeks in any 12-calendar month rolling period of the Academic Year**, subject to certain criteria being met.

Sick pay can only be applied for if the absence has gone or is expected to go beyond a block of 4 consecutive calendar weeks. Sick pay would then commence on the first day of absence up to a maximum of 13 calendar weeks. An application to extend the award for the period of sickness can be made as per NTU Quality Handbook Section 11.

Whilst recognising that doctoral candidates are not employees, PGR Sick Leave payment of an NTU Studentship must continue for absences covered by a medical certificate for up to thirteen weeks within any 12-month period. If the illness lasts for more than thirteen weeks a doctoral candidate must suspend the NTU Studentship for the period beyond the thirteen weeks and additional time would be added back at the end of the award as per NTU Quality Handbook Section 11.

What is a doctoral candidate able to claim?

Sickness period	Eligibility to claim
Less than 4 consecutive weeks	No claim can be made for sick leave.
Several short blocks (less than 4 weeks each) that add up to 13 or more weeks but are not consecutive	No claim can be made for sick leave*.
4 – 13 weeks consecutively	PGR candidates are eligible to claim sick pay for the period of absence of up to 13 calendar weeks
More than 13 weeks consecutively	No further sick leave, doctoral candidate must suspend their studies.

* If the doctoral candidate is having ongoing trouble with attending on a long-term basis, they should contact their School for welfare advice.

Procedure:

- Doctoral candidates can only apply for sick pay once their absence has exceeded or is expected to exceed **4 consecutive calendar weeks**.
- Once a doctoral candidate has been absent for approaching 4 weeks and does not think they will return at the start of the fifth week, they are eligible to commence the request procedure.
- Complete Sickness Leave application form. The form cannot be processed by the NTU Doctoral School until fully complete and is supported by satisfactory medical evidence.
- NTU Doctoral School to write confirmation email [or letter] to the doctoral candidate, confirming: **1)** dates of approved absence, **2)** what this means to their funding, **3)** a proposed new Annual Review date and **4)** a new end date for funding.

If a doctoral candidate is unable to resume their studies after the agreed period of suspension of study, the University will expect to be repaid any funds that have been overpaid during leave.

Application for Sick Pay

You can only apply for sick pay if your absence has gone [or is expected to go] beyond **4 consecutive weeks**.

Sickness payments will be paid for a maximum period of **13 calendar weeks** in any **12-calendar month period**.

After this time, you will be required to suspend your studies.

Please note that your expected thesis submission date will not be extended following sick leave.

Please return your completed form and medical evidence in support of your claim to doctoralschool@ntu.ac.uk where this will be processed confidentially.

Your Details

Doctoral candidate N Number	
Surname:	
Forename:	
School <i>and</i> Department:	
Email address:	
Supervisor(s)	
Date absence began:	
Date of intended return:	
Reason for absence, and how it has impacted on your ability to study:	

Checklist	Please mark (x)
I have included appropriate medical evidence to support my claim	

Declarations

Doctoral candidate Signature		Date	
Lead Supervisor Signature (on behalf of supervisory team)		Date	