



University of
St Andrews

Discounted time for postgraduate research students

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Purpose	This policy details when a student may request discounted time, the process for submitting a request and the evidence required.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.2	Appeals section added. Link inserted for new Discounted Time Guidance.	Approved	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	16/Mar/21

Discounted time for postgraduate research students

1. Purpose

This policy:

- defines discounted time
- details situations that are likely to result in discounted time
- explains the process of requesting discounted time
- defines the types of evidence needed to support a request
- describes how fees and funding are calculated during discounted time
- outlines the appeal procedure

2. Discounted time

Discounted time is a way to accommodate serious disruptions to postgraduate research studies which are unforeseeable and unpreventable. It allows students to remain registered and to be able to engage with their studies, while also having extra time added to their end date. Students on discounted time will continue to receive supervision, although it may be appropriate adjust supervisory arrangements based on the specific disruption. The student and supervisory team should discuss and agree a supervision plan before applying for discounted time.

When discounted time is granted, a 'year' of academic study becomes 12 months + any additional discounted time. For example, if the current end date is 26 January 2021 and 3 months of discounted time is granted, the student's current 'year' is extended to 15 months, and the new end date becomes 26 April 2021. No additional fees are charged for discounted time.

Discounted time will be awarded in month-long intervals. Applications can be for a minimum of one month and a maximum of 6 months in the first instance.

3. Situations likely to result in discounted time

Discounted time is used when events outside the student's and University's control prevent access to necessary resources such as laboratories, Library or archival resources, or data sets.

Discounted time may be used to accommodate:

- Natural disasters
- Pandemics
- Loss of a significant instrument or set of data integral to the student's research

Discounted time will not be granted for:

- Individual ill health (in such cases a [Leave of Absence](#) may be more appropriate)
- Short term delays or diversions which are to be expected in a substantial research project
- Minor research setbacks such as loss of data or instruments that are not integral to the project

Students on a co-tutelle programme or Global PhD may not be able to utilise the discounted time provision, unless there is agreement to do so by the partner institution.

4. Requesting discounted time

A student should discuss the possibility of discounted time with their supervisor or the [Registry Student Support Officer \(PGR\)](#) in the first instance. Together with the student, the supervisor or Registry Support Officer will assess the situation and agree whether a period of discounted time is appropriate. They will then make a recommendation to the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies (DoPGR). If they have not already been consulted, the Registry Student Support Officer should be consulted at this point to provide advice and investigate other aspects of the request.

Discounted time should be discussed at the point of the disruption. Retrospective requests for discounted time will not normally be considered. Students nearing their end date should also consult the [extension policy](#) as this may be more appropriate.

International students on a visa should speak to the [International Advice team](#), as the addition of discounted time will not automatically result in an extension of the visa period.

The application process may be amended when discounted time allowances are aligned with a particular phase in a funding scheme, or where a discounted time scheme linked to a particular source of disruption is winding down. Please consult the [Discounted Time Guidance](#) for more information about the process for applying for the second round of discounted time to address the Covid-19 pandemic (effective from March 2021)

5. Evidence to support a discounted time request

Students must present a compelling case when requesting discounted time. This should include:

- information about the nature of the disruption to the studies (e.g. access to labs, Library, etc)
- details about how the research programme was affected
- information about how the student was affected
- the time needed to complete doctoral work.

6. Fees and funding

Students are not charged any additional tuition fees for discounted time.

Funded students will continue to receive their stipend while on discounted time, but must speak to their funders to determine whether their stipend will be extended to accommodate the later end date.

7. Appeals

A student may appeal against a decision not to award discounted time in accordance with the guidelines laid out in the policy on [Student Academic Appeals](#). Appeals can only be made on the following grounds:

- extenuating personal circumstances materially affecting academic performance of which the University was not aware when the academic decision was taken, and which could not reasonably have been disclosed by the student (an explanation for earlier non-disclosure is always required);
- irregular application of academic regulations, that has materially impacted on the result awarded.

Appeals against a School decision can be made using the Stage 1 Appeal process. Appeals against a University Discounted Time Board decision will follow the Stage 2 process.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	New policy	Approved	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	07/07/2020
1.1	Amendments to the periods of discounted allowed and addition of supervision expectations.	Approved	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	18/Dec/20
1.2	Appeals section added. Link inserted for new Discounted Time Guidance.	Approved	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	16/Mar/21