# Postgraduate Research Student Working Hours Guide

This document provides guidance on the working rights of postgraduate research students sponsored on a Student visa, in alignment with UKVI regulations and St Mary’s University’s academic structure. This guidance applies to students on MRes, MPhil and PhD programmes.

## Work Eligibility Overview

Postgraduate research students are entitled to 30 days of annual leave per academic year, which are considered as recognised vacation periods. During this time, they are permitted to work more than 20 hours per week. This leave can be taken as one continuous 30-day block or spread across the year, provided the total does not exceed 30 days. Unused leave cannot be carried over to the next academic year.

Provided their Student visa remains valid, students may work full-time after submitting their thesis and before the viva—so long as no other academic commitments remain—and again once their degree has been officially awarded.

At all other times between the course start date and the official submission of the final academic component, students must not work more than 20 hours per week. This restriction includes periods of thesis corrections, viva preparation, and other academic responsibilities.

The academic calendars and term dates published on St Mary’s University’s website do not apply to most postgraduate research students.

## Important Notes for Employers

- Student visa holders must not undertake full-time permanent roles under any circumstances.  
- Full-time contracts must conclude before the start of the next academic engagement and prior to visa expiry.  
- Part-time roles may be held continuously, as long as hours remain within the permitted limits during term time.

## Institutional Disclaimer

This document is a general guide and does not serve as an individualised term-time or right-to-work verification letter. Employers are responsible for complying with UK immigration law when employing Student visa holders.