

To: UKRI funded students 11 November 2020

Header: Important information about Covid-19 support for UKRI funded students

Support for UKRI doctoral students affected by COVID-19

Dear UKRI doctoral student,

I am emailing you today as you are a doctoral student funded by UK Research and Innovation through our research councils, to update you on UKRI's support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April, we announced some financial support would be available to final year UKRI students. If your funded period ends before 31 March 2021, you should already have had a decision from your grant holder (your university or other host) on extending your UKRI funding.

We also said at that point that we would review the ongoing situation.

Today we have published the outcome of our review. We have also released a policy statement telling your research organisation and grant holder what action we expect them to take for students in other years.

What you need to do now

As a result of the pandemic, it is very unlikely that as a doctoral student, you will be able to have the training experience you expected. Whilst this is certainly disappointing, a priority now for us all is to help adapt and adjust research projects to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

If you haven't done so already, you should now talk to your supervisor in order to plan your project in a way that allows you to complete it within your funded period. You should look at any adaptation or adjustments that could be made to ensure you are able to do so.

You may need to make decisions around changing your approach, collecting different data, or changing the way you had planned to work with people, labs, archives or facilities, for example. This could result in your research project or thesis plan being different from that originally proposed and we know that this causes uncertainty and possibly, disappointment.

We also know that research organisations (ROs) have thought carefully about what is required for the award of a doctoral degree and many already have guidance in place to take account of the impact of the pandemic on your research, including on your thesis or other outputs.

We will give ROs some additional funding to help those students who are least able to change their projects, but it is not possible to provide funded extensions for all UKRI funded students.

This limited additional funding is mainly intended to support students whose funding end date is before or on 30 September 2021 and have not already received a UKRI funded extension under

the initial policy (announced in April this year). ROs will also have the flexibility to provide support for disabled students, those with long-term illness, those who are neurodivergent, or those with caring responsibilities. We have asked ROs to support students within these groups who are not able to adapt their project in order to be able to finish within their funding period.

This update won't affect anyone whose grant holder has already confirmed that they can have an extension to their funded period under the initial UKRI COVID-19 extension policy.

We fully understand that the extraordinary disruption of recent months, and the additional COVID-19 restrictions recently announced will cause continuing uncertainty and anxiety for you. However, I hope this information gives clarity on UKRI's approach to supporting our students during this difficult time.

With best wishes for your studies.

Professor Rory Duncan
UKRI Director, Talent & Skills

EMAIL FOOTER/ DATA PROTECTION:

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is contacting you because your grant holder has registered you as a student funded by UKRI or one of its councils on the Joint-electronic Submissions (Je-S) system. If you believe this registration to be incorrect please contact your research organisation. All personal data provided to UK Research and Innovation by your research organisation is processed in accordance with current UK data protection legislation and the EU General Data Protection Regulations 2016/679 (GDPR). Further information on how we use personal data, and how you can exercise your rights as a data subject, can be found in the UK Research and Innovation Privacy Notice (www.ukri.org/privacy-notice).