

***** IMPORTANT – ACTION REQUIRED *****

**To: All EPSRC-funded DTP / Industrial CASE / NPIF PhD students in final year of funding
c.c. Supervisors**

Subject: UKRI support for potential Covid-19-related PhD extensions

Date: 30th April 2020

Dear EPSRC-funded PhD student,

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused huge disruption to us all, both personally and, to different degrees, professionally. Both the University of Edinburgh and UKRI (the umbrella body for the EPSRC and other research councils) are acutely conscious that this will pose particular problems for some PhD students currently completing their degrees, and that extra support may be required in some cases to ensure degrees are completed successfully.

Many of you have seen the UKRI announcement on stipends:

<https://www.ukri.org/news/government-announces-support-for-phd-students-as-a-result-of-coronavirus-disruption/>. Guidance on implementation has now come from UKRI. In addition, UKRI has written a letter to all their PGR students and has asked us to forward this to you (see attached pdf). As you'll have seen, UKRI has indicated they will support up to six months additional funding for students whose UKRI funded period ends between 1 March 2020 and 31 March 2021. Such funded extensions will be supported when there is clear evidence of need, and UKRI expects its Training Grant holders to maintain information and evidence on extensions, as per normal practice.

UKRI do not expect grant funding to cover placements, except where integral to completion of the research, or to provide additional resources to carry out more research beyond the doctoral work or time for writing papers once doctoral work is complete. UKRI have also stressed that this funding is only to enable students to complete their doctoral work. It should not be used, for example, to provide additional resources to carry out more research beyond doctoral work or time for writing papers once doctoral work is complete.

Where extensions are approved, additional funding will be made available from the EPSRC grant. Some of you (though not all) are only partly funded by EPSRC and so would be eligible for an additional stipend for a shorter period (e.g. those who are 50% funded by EPSRC would be eligible for up to 3 months additional stipend from EPSRC). The University is urgently evaluating its financial situation to assess whether it is able to provide additional funds where needed.

We are required to report to UKRI how many students that they fund will require extension, and for how long.

To do this we have put in place the following process **which requires action**:

- **Attached is a form that we require all students to return to igs@inf.ed.ac.uk by 5pm Fri 8 May, after discussion with their supervisor, whether or not they plan to seek support for any extension.**
- **Where support for an extension is being sought, we require students, with the help of their supervisors, to justify this carefully using the structured section of the form provided**
- **The form must be signed students and their supervisors (or PGR Advisors or equivalent)**
- This form will be sent on to the College Office and we will assess each application for support in consultation with directors of other UKRI-funded training programme across the university to ensure an even approach.
- Approved bids will be forwarded to UKRI by the end of May and the research council will then make adjustments to the grant funding as required to provide the support.
- Outcomes of any unsuccessful applications will be fed back to student and supervisor, before the return to EPSRC, with the opportunity for further discussion if desired.
- We will get back to you individually to confirm awards once we have confirmation from UKRI.

If labs remain closed for a very extended period (which we hope they will not), we/UKRI will have to re-review the situation.

If you have any questions at all, please contact us at pgrcse@ed.ac.uk Please also contact us if there is anything of a personal or sensitive nature that you would rather not discuss within your supervisory team. Alternatively, you may prefer to contact your PG Advisor (or equivalent) or Graduate School.

With Best Wishes,

Dr Antony Maciocia

Dean, Postgraduate Research and Training Grant Holder
College of Science and Engineering