



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Academic Division
Student Services Centre

Letter of guidance for supervisors of UKRI funded doctoral students eligible to apply for a Phase 2 Doctoral funding extension in January 2021

To be circulated by training grant holders as required and also available on the University website: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/postgraduate-students/ukri-covid-19-phase-2-doctoral-extensions> (see Further Information at end)

Dear Supervisor, Co-Supervisor or Advisor

The University has written to students who may be eligible to apply for a Covid-19 related Phase 2 doctoral funding extension to invite them to apply. I am writing to you to provide guidance and to let you know how you can support your students if they wish to apply.

UKRI has allocated Covid-19 'Phase 2' Doctoral Extensions funding to Research Organisations to be used to support funded extensions for their funded doctoral students who are least able to adapt their projects sufficiently to complete in their existing funding period (Note: funding is not provided to compensate for 'lost time' during the pandemic). However, the allocation does not provide funding for all UKRI-funded students and extensions will be allocated on a needs-priority basis. The University is in the position of having to allocate finite resources provided by the UKRI and, unfortunately, there can be no guarantee of funding for all eligible students. The University has established a dedicated Governance Committee under the University Postgraduate Committee to oversee this process, for further information see <https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/postgraduate-students/cambridge-ukri-covid-19-doctoral-extensions-phase-2-governance-committee-gcp2>

The Governance Committee has decided to allocate the funding through a single gathered field in Lent Term 2021 in order to ensure that all students can be compared fairly against each other. Students will need to apply during the application window of 11 January – 1 February 2021. We are not permitted to ring fence funding between disciplines; instead the Committee will need to consider how well students make their case for additional funding and how well this is supported by their supervisor and their training grant holder. You will note that this is quite different to the previous round of extensions offered under Phase 1 where funding was not subject to a cap that had to be tensioned across different Research Councils.

We expect this to be the final opportunity for students to apply for a funding extension due to Covid-19 as the UKRI have provided the following statement for those involved with doctoral training:

"The UKRI Review does not indicate a need to provide additional funding beyond this allocation (i.e. Phase 2). Research by its nature requires flexibility and adaptability. We urge all those who are supporting UKRI-funded students to continue fostering and developing mitigation routes and to plan new studentship projects with the current climate in mind as needed".

The University Governance Committee kindly request that you discuss with your student whether an extension is required and if so, to assist them to estimate the minimum reasonable length (bearing in mind that extensions should normally be up to 3 months). It is important that you provide an 'academic statement of support' if they wish to apply.

Full eligibility details are available on the University website: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/postgraduate-students/ukri-covid-19-phase-2-doctoral-extensions>. We ask students to check they are eligible before making an application. Most of the criteria are based on their studentship type, and dates, which the training grant holder will be able to confirm. However, the key final criterion relates to efforts that have been made to adapt and mitigate the project and we ask you to comment on this in your statement of support:

Extract from Eligibility criteria:

[To be eligible, you (students) need to show that]

“You have tried, and continue to try, to adapt and adjust your research project in order to mitigate the disruption caused by COVID-19, but you will be unable to complete your doctoral research within the funded period”

Students are required to provide an academic statement of support (up to 400 words) from their Supervisor/Co Supervisor or Advisor to attach to their application. We ask students to share key sections of their application with you to allow you to consider the factors that have affected them. Your statement is required by the end of January at the latest. It is suggested that you supply this in the form of an email sent to the student, who should save it as a pdf to upload to the online form. The student is asked to attach this pdf and copy the body of the email into their application form. Your statement will be considered by the training grant holder in making a recommendation of priority to the central decision making committee.

For students who have personal circumstances that have hindered their ability to adapt and mitigate, they may describe these in their application and also attach an optional ‘personal statement of support’. They do not need to share this information with you or their training grant holder if they do not wish to, and may instead send it directly to the Governance Committee offline. We try to make students aware that in choosing this route, the support of their supervisor and training grant holder will not be fully informed. However, we realise that in many cases, supervisors will be aware of a student’s personal circumstances and may wish to comment on these, where relevant, and with the student’s agreement, within the academic statement of support. If the student feels that this is sufficient, they do not need to seek an additional personal statement of support.

If you have any questions, please contact your student’s training grant holder in the first instance (for example the DTP/CDT Director or manager). Training grant holders have agreed to assist the University in this process by providing advice to students and supervisors.

Action to take:

1. Discuss with your student if they are eligible and need to apply for an extension,
2. If your student wishes to apply, agree a minimum length of extension required and provide an academic statement of support in January 2021 including confirmation they meet the key criterion of having completed or intending to complete any adaptations/mitigations to their project required

Yours sincerely



Sally-Ann Gannon

Head of Student Funding, Student Services Centre

Grant Holder for the UKRI Covid-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extensions Grant