



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Academic Division
Student Services Centre

To: UKRI funded students 7 December 2020

Re: Important information about support for UKRI funded students affected by Covid-19

Dear UKRI doctoral student,

Following the UKRI's letter to you of 11 November, (attached), I am writing to provide further information on the allocation of the UKRI COVID-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extensions Grant.

The UKRI has asked the University to apply for this grant and, if successful, allocate it to eligible students. In the expectation that our application will be successful, I am writing to let you know what the process for allocating the funds will be, and what you need to do. Further information on the University's Governance Committee that will oversee this process is at the end of this letter.

1. Eligibility for Phase 2 funding

You will be eligible to apply to receive Phase 2 funding if:

- You are a registered doctoral student at the University of Cambridge¹
- Your funding start date is before 1 March 2020
- Your funding end date is after 31 March 2021
- You have not yet submitted your thesis (soft bound)
- You have not already received extended funding from your training grant as part of Phase 1 (check with your training grant holder if you are not sure)
- You have a full award including stipend² either fully or partly provided by the UKRI
- 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.

As you have seen from the UKRI letter to you, Phase 2 funding *“is **not intended to cover ‘time lost’ due to COVID-19, but rather to address circumstances where, even with adjustments and mitigation, (students) will be unable to complete their doctoral research within the funding period”***.

2. Length of Phase 2 extensions

UKRI guidance suggests that students should normally apply for up to 3 months' stipend extension.

3. Prioritisation of Phase 2 funding

The UKRI has also informed you that it will not be possible to provide funded extensions for all UKRI funded students and have identified two priority groups as follows:

- a) Students with funding end dates between April-September 2021
- b) Students with a disability, long-term illness, neurodiversity, caring responsibilities etc.

¹ However, you may be studying at a different University by agreement with your Cambridge UKRI Training Grant.

² Fees-only students may still apply in order to gain a letter of support for an application to any other funding body which is providing a stipend; this may require a separate application.

We hope that there will be some funding available to support students not in the priority groups above, who face exceptional difficulties in adapting their research sufficiently. We encourage all students who believe they are eligible to apply, however we are 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.

To support your application, you will need to supply a level of information about your circumstances. We will work with the University's support services (e.g. DRC) to share information that students have already provided to reduce the burden to provide evidence afresh. We will also ask for your research supervisor's input for your application, but you do not need to disclose personal information to them if you would prefer not to. We will also ask training grant holders to review their students' applications and make recommendations to the central committee about priority.

4. Expected Timeline for Phase 2 Funding

The expected timeframe for the allocation of funding is:

- January 2021– applications open for students and supervisors to apply for extended funding by the end of January
- February 2021 – applications are collated and reviewed by training grant holders
- March 2021 – central Governance Committee allocation process
- End March/early April 2021– decisions sent to students, supervisors and training grant holders
- April 2021 onwards– payments authorized for students who have been awarded an extension.

I realise that the scheme that UKRI has asked the University to implement is not what many students and their supervisors would have wished. I would suggest that you approach your supervisor(s) in the first instance for advice about your research project if you have not already done so. Please approach your training grant holder if you wish to confirm your eligibility to apply. I have sent you this letter via your training grant holder as they are committed to supporting you through this process and helping you to access other available forms of support.

If you are not eligible to apply for this scheme, there are several other sources of support that you may wish to consider – further information is provided on the next page.

5. Application Process

We hope to open the application process in early January 2021 and will publish details on our website at the following link: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/postgraduate-students>
We will also ask training grant holders to contact all eligible students to give them the opportunity to apply.

If you have questions about the process in the meantime, please contact your Training Grant holder in the first instance, who can refer on questions to the central funding team as necessary.

Yours sincerely



Sally-Ann Gannon
Head of Student Funding, Student Services Centre
Grant Holder for the UKRI Covid-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extensions Grant

Further information

A. Other Support Available

- If you have a disability, you may be entitled to a **Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)** on top of your studentship: for more information, see <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/developing-people-and-skills/find-studentships-and-doctoral-training/get-a-studentship-to-fund-your-doctorate/>. DSA helps to cover the cost of any additional support that a student studying for a doctorate might need as a result of a disability, mental health problem or specific learning difficulty. The allowance covers:
 - non-medical personal assistance
 - specialist equipment
 - extra travel costs
 - general expenses.

You may be able to access this funding if you have a new or altered disability. You should make contact with the Disability Resource Centre to speak to a disability advisor to assess your needs. <https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/>. The DRC can help put the right support in place, including a DSA application if necessary. You cannot claim DSA directly from UKRI.

- For students who cannot access extended funding or other financial support through their Research Council, it may be possible to access hardship funding towards the end of the funding period from either your college or the University <https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/all-students#hardship>
- There are other forms of support available to students within the University, free of charge, through the Student Counselling Service <https://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/> and the Student Union Student Advice service from Cambridge Students Union <https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/support/advice/>. Your college can also provide advice and support.
- Your training grant holder will be able to provide advice about how to support your research and training.

B. Information on the University's Governance Committee

UKRI has asked the University to allocate this grant in a fair, open and transparent way. The University submitted a Governance Plan to UKRI on 7th December 2020 to provide assurance on its processes for doing this. The UKRI will respond by the end of December 2020 to let the University know if it has been successful in securing the grant. If successful, we plan to open the application process as soon as possible in January 2021.

In expectation of a positive outcome, and to allow the Governance Plan to be approved, the University has set up a dedicated Governance Committee under the Postgraduate Committee to oversee the allocation of the UKRI Covid-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extensions Grant. To ensure that it will be able to take decisions in the fairest possible way, the Committee will include representation from the academic disciplines and from our disability and inclusion support services. We will also consult with the Cambridge Student's Union on the design of our processes and policies. The UKRI guidance that we will adhere to is published here:

<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/UKRI-11112020-COVID-19DoctoralExtensionsPolicyPhase2GovernancePlanGuidance.pdf>