

Frequently Asked Questions for UKRI funding for six month extensions for doctoral students in their final year

UPDATED 10 April 2020

Q Which students will be offered the additional six months funding? (UPDATED)

UKRI-funded doctoral students in their final year of study whose funded period ends between 1 March 2020 and 31 March 2021 are eligible for this extension. For avoidance of doubt, this does not include students who were writing up on 1 March 2020 after their studentship stipend has ended.

Q Why is this extension only being offered to final year doctoral students? (UPDATED)

We understand that the current situation is impacting everyone across the research and innovation landscape but recognise that the impact for students in their final year of their studies, and who are expected to submit within their funded period, is significant.

For our funded students whose end date is after 31st March 2021, UKRI is committing to reviewing the situation later this year. For the time being, the advice remains that given on 26th March 2020, which outlines the expectation that extensions be considered on a case-by-case basis, with the costs being met from training grant underspend.

Q I am in my final year and my doctoral work has been impacted by caring responsibilities, so will I be eligible for an extension?

Yes, we expect training grant holders to consider the range of impacts students are experiencing now, including personal circumstances.

Q What will the additional funding be for?

The additional funding is to cover stipends and fees only. It is not covering other costs such as the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) or other research costs that may have arisen as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic

Q From when does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all students who are due to complete their funded period from 1st March 2020 onwards.

Q How will this funding be provided to research organisations?

Further details on this will be provided to Training Grant holders in due course. As outlined in previous guidance, UKRI continues to expect its Training Grant holders to maintain sufficient information/evidence on extensions.

Q My studentship is funded in partnership with another organisation. Will they pay for an extension too?

Where a studentship is co-funded with partners from HEI's or partners in the public, private and voluntary sector we are only able to cover the costs of the UKRI contribution. We hope that the funding partner will be able to offer the remainder of the additional funding required. We expect the HEI to have this dialogue with partners, not the student.

Q We fund doctoral students in partnership with UKRI. Will we be expected to find additional funding?

In normal circumstances, we would agree our approach with partners and agree co-funding arrangements. However, the issue of PhD extensions for students nearing the end of their UKRI support is urgent. HEIs are having to make difficult choices in circumstances of financial pressure. We hope that funding partners will be able to provide additional funding to support extensions for co-funded students but understand many partner organisations are facing uncertainty and financial constraints too.

Q My studentship is co-funded but the partner organisation won't contribute to the additional costs of the extension, what should I do?

Where the funding partner is unable to contribute to the costs of the extension, you should speak with your Training Grant holder to explore alternative support.

Q As a training grant holder, what are my options when a partner is not able to find their contribution to the fees and stipend costs?

We may consider flexibility in the extension duration as long as it can be shown to be in the interest of the student, and further guidance will be provided in due course. Flexibility will only be considered on length of extension, not on reducing stipends.

Q My funding does not come from UKRI, will I be offered a funded extension too?

Regrettably, UKRI is not able to provide support for students we do not directly fund.

Q What if I can finish my project and don't need any/all of the six month extension?

We are offering the extension to all final year students, however if you have already completed your PhD, or will be able to within your existing funding period or with a shorter period of extension, you should inform your RO who will report the need for reduced or no additional support.

Q I am a UKRI funded student but not in my final year of funding, what support is available for me?

In line with [the guidance](#) issued on the 26th March, COVID-19 related extensions for those not in their final year will be considered on a case by case basis.

Q How will the cost of extensions for those not in their final year be met?

In line with [the guidance](#) issued on the 26th March, costs associated with extensions for students not in their final year will be funded in the first instance through any underspend in the Training Grant. Clear records of the length and reasons for the extension must be kept and JES records kept up to date. UKRI will work closely with Training Grant holders to understand the impact of these extensions. Further guidance will be provided to Training Grant holders in due course.

Q We don't need to use all the funding for these extensions, can we redeploy the funding to meet the needs of other students or cover contributions from partners that cannot not be met now?

This offer of additional funding is only to support the stipend and fees of the cohort of UKRI students in the last year of their studies, as part of the UK COVID-19 response. It cannot be used for anything else, and should not be claimed for purposes other than this. Any under-spend will be recouped from institutions at FES stage, if necessary.

Q I need longer than six months, as I need to arrange facility time, access to another laboratory, field work or an international visit or similar arrangements.

The need for additional time should be considered on a case by case basis, as outlined in previous guidance. UKRI has committed to reviewing this extension on a regular basis, but at the moment the extension is limited to six months; anything more than this will need to be sourced from existing Training Grant underspends.

Q I have redeployed to work on COVID-19 related research or other action, so does this cover extending my doctoral studies?

Yes, this funding would cover this, so long as your original funded period was due to end by 31st March 2021. Otherwise, the previous guidance on extensions published on 26th March should be referred to.

Q What happens if the current situation preventing me from continuing my doctoral work carries on for more than six months?

UKRI is keeping this policy change under review to reflect further developments and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q I'm part-time, so how does this apply to me?

All students in their final year and impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic will be offered a six-month extension. For part time students this will be pro-rata.

Q I am due to undertake an internship/placement during the final part of my studies, can the extension be used to cover this?

This extension is intended to enable students to complete their studies and cannot be used to cover internships/placements unless they are directly related to completion of the research project. The exception is redeployment onto COVID-19 work. Students due to undertake a placement (e.g. a UKRI Policy Internship or BBSRC Professional Internship for PhD Students) should contact their host and/or Training Grant holder to discuss further.

For further information:

Students, please contact your supervisor or training grant holder
Training grant holders, please contact your normal Research Councils contacts
Partner organisations, please contact your normal training grant or Research Council contacts