



Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	<p>Guidance issued on 24 April 2020 on implementation of funding for up to six-month extensions for UKRI doctoral students due to finish their funded period between 1 March 2020 and 31 March 2021 (in their final year) who have been affected by the pandemic.</p> <p>The guidance and additional web page information also addresses case-by-case extensions for students not in their final year.</p>
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>Provide UKRI training grant holders with details on the implementation of the offer of an extension of up to six-month funding for all UKRI doctoral students in their final year of study and case-by-case consideration of extensions for other doctoral students.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>Using input from Research England, from the EPSRC EDI Strategic Advisory Group, from conversations with university, other partners and UKRI advisory groups, ONS reports etc.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>UKRI doctoral students in their final year; other UKRI doctoral students, possibly other doctoral students in the UK if universities and other funders follow a similar policy of offering extensions.</p>
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>Input on extension will be requested from training grant holders. This input will be linked to the student details already on Je-S to allow monitoring by age, disability, sex (gender) and ethnicity. Training grant holders are asked to ensure the Je-S diversity data is up to date. The first information will be captured in June 2020, with more detail in the autumn of 2020.</p>

Summary of issues that may lead to disadvantage

Issues	Mitigation
<p>Disruption of doctoral programmes through, for example, loss of access to labs, field work, data gathering, specialist computing and facilities, travel to work with collaborators, placements in the UK or internationally. The amount of work possible from home will vary.</p> <p>Doctoral students will experience different household environments with some finding it difficult to find quiet or private space to work. They may have less access to equipment to support home working.</p> <p>Students with caring responsibilities may have less or no time available to continue their doctoral work.</p> <p>Vulnerable and very vulnerable groups may be shielding or otherwise more cautious about engaging with research work in shared environments.</p> <p>Some students or their families may be ill with Covid-19</p> <p>Some students may be marginalised or less connected with their research groups and research communities.</p> <p>Greater impact on lower income families; family members more likely to be at risk of Covid-19 working in public-facing roles.</p> <p>Loss of income from other family members, leading to the need to find higher paid work.</p> <p>Potential loss of co-funding from some partner organisations</p>	<p>Offer of funding for extensions of up to six months to final year students; longer extensions possible according to need and considered on a case-by-case basis. Case-by-case extensions for all other doctoral students.</p> <p>Section 2: Guiding principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to ensuring all doctoral students are supported in completing their research projects to doctoral level and are funded to do so. • All students should be treated fairly, using flexible, generous and inclusive processes that are sympathetic to the disruption caused to academic programmes and recognise the impact of the pandemic on individual personal circumstances of students. <p>Section 2: We expect all training grant holders and research organisations to take action to make sure students, particularly those in under-represented groups, are not disadvantaged at this difficult time.</p> <p>Section 3: provides guidance on supporting students who have had periods of long-term absence.</p> <p>Section 4: Training grant holders should provide students with contact details of alternative professional staff in case students do not wish to disclose sensitive personal issues to training grant holders and/or supervisors.</p> <p>Includes time for placements critical for completing the research project or an integral part of the training scheme.</p> <p>We encourage funding partners to prioritise support for current students above the co-funding for future studentships. If a funding partner is not able to contribute, training grant holders can consider flexible use of UKRI funding so long as the stipend level remains at the level the student normally receives.</p> <p>Web guidance issued 24 April: Additional costs include costs for home working.</p>

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Possible	<p>May have a negative impact on any student who is now forced to declare a disability which they might not have otherwise needed to declare e.g. mental health or invisible disabilities which may now require additional new support in a home environment.</p> <p>There is potential for a negative impact on those with ill-health that may be subject to shielding and/or more susceptible to Covid-19.</p> <p>Potential for negative impact for those with mental health and wellbeing issues feeling that they are unable to speak-up to requesting an extension and therefore not getting the support they need.</p> <p>They may be less able to keep in touch with their research group and community.</p> <p>They may need additional support to be able to work from home or be less able than others to resume their doctoral work.</p>	<p>Expectations on training grant holders to be inclusive and engage with all students to identify needs.</p> <p>Guidance on supporting students who have had periods of long-term absence.</p> <p>Training grant holders need to identify an alternative professional if the student does not want to disclose information to their training grant holder or supervisor.</p> <p>Web guidance issued 24 April: Additional costs include costs for home working and for students with a disability and for additional needs they may call on the Disabled Students Allowance.</p>
Gender reassignment	Possible - unlikely	It is possible that the need for extension may have a negative impact on those who had scheduled to transition upon the completion of their PhD which may now not be	Mitigated by the offer of an extension and through a case by case approach.

		possible or be forced to declare this to their supervisor.	Training grant holders need to identify an alternative professional if the student does not want to disclose information to their training grant holder or supervisor.
Marriage or civil partnership	Unlikely	It is not expected that this will have an impact.	
Pregnancy and maternity	Possible	<p>It is possible that there may be a negative impact on those students who are pregnant or are expecting that will now fall during any extension period and may need to now declare to their supervisor.</p> <p>It is possible that there may be a positive impact on those who are pregnant that may now receive maternity pay owing to the extension which they might not have received if their PhD completed as planned.</p>	<p>Mitigated by the offer of an extension (not mandatory) and through a case by case approach.</p> <p>Guidance on supporting students who have periods of long-term absence.</p>
Race	Possible	<p>It is possible there may be a negative impact on those with cultural differences to remain engaged with their research team/community including if they have returned to their home country.</p> <p>Students from a minority ethnic background, or their families, may be more likely to suffer serious ill health due to Covid-19, in part due to more likely to work in public-facing roles.</p> <p>They may be more likely to live in an overcrowded or multi-family household.</p>	<p>Training grant holders are asked to be inclusive and to consider the individual personal circumstances of students.</p> <p>Mitigated by the offer of an extension and through a case by case approach if longer is needed.</p> <p>Web guidance issued 24 April: Additional costs include costs for home working.</p>

Religion or belief	Unlikely	It is not expected that this will have a major impact, although some people may be more marginalised with their research group and community.	
Sexual orientation	Unlikely	It is not expected that this will have a major impact, but people may be less comfortable working from home or be worried about disclosing information on their personal life not previously shared.	
Sex (gender)	Possible - likely	It is possible that there will be a negative impact on women who are more likely to have caring/childcare responsibilities.	Mitigated through the offer of an extension and additional support on a case by case basis. Training grant holders are asked to be inclusive and to consider the individual personal circumstances of students.
Age	Possible – likely	There is a possible negative indirect impact in terms of future career progression owing to completing later than originally expected. There is a possible negative impact to those who are older if they are needing to shield at home. There is a potential negative impact to older students who may have taken a pay cut to carry out doctoral work and have financial responsibilities (e.g. mortgage).	Mitigated as an extension if not mandatory and the length is flexible. Mitigated in part as still paying stipend and fees.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	The Covid-19 pandemic will affect doctoral students differently. This policy seeks to support all doctoral students to complete their doctoral studies and to be funded to do so.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .	X	The implementation has been developed and modified based on the EIA. The policy will be monitored and reviewed after four months.
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Not initially, published with the May update to the web pages.
Date completed:	Initial EIA carried out by members of the Research Careers Network and UKRI EDI strategy team on 24 April 2020. Link to text in the guidance added for publication 18 May 2020.
Review date (if applicable):	Review by early August 2020 as part of the four-month review of doctoral student extensions

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
	When published	1	