

UKRI COVID-19 Grant Extension Allocation - FAQs

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1. Objectives

What is the aim of the UKRI COVID-19 grant extension allocations?

The aim of the UKRI grant extension allocations is to provide UK organisations with resources to sustain UKRI grant-funded research and fellowships affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This can include support for research and technical staff and research infrastructures during the period of pandemic disruption and its immediate aftermath.

The objectives are:

- **To ensure that UKRI grant outcomes continue to be met, and the value of grant investments is realised** by enabling research projects to complete, recognising the challenges faced by the research community during the pandemic disruption;
- **To secure the key talent pipeline of research and technical staff**, securing short-term employment and maintaining the talent pool essential for long-term recovery and growth of the sector, underpinning the post-pandemic national recovery.

We aim to:

- **Provide organisations with flexibility to:**
 - deploy resource rapidly in response to the pandemic disruption recognising that organisations are best placed to judge which projects are most vulnerable, and where support is most needed;
 - adjust the allocation they receive to support those grants most at risk given the variability of COVID-19 impacts. This includes those where there are multiple funders and where those other parties are withdrawing their support.
- **Reduce bureaucracy** in administering this allocation both for grant recipients and for UKRI.

Where has the money come from?

The impact of COVID-19 has impacted delivery plans for some activities and this has enabled us to re-prioritise resources to address COVID-19 pressures'

Will there be an impact on core UKRI funds going forwards?

The package is affordable within UKRI current financial allocation.

2. Calculation of organisational grant values

How have you calculated the allocations? What grants have been included/excluded?

The allocation is calculated by looking at the value of payments that organisations are profiled to receive between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 for competitively awarded grants with a planned end date during the same time period. The total allocation funding will be awarded to organisations pro rata to the total value of profiled payments. There are some grants that have been excluded (see below).

How has the total value of these awards been arrived at (i.e., £180 million for new block grants and £80 million from the existing grant portfolios)?

The £180 million figure for the grant extension allocation is based on a number of factors, including the proportional balance of grant expenditure currently held per organisation in the UKRI system (for grants that end between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021) and assessments of the level of disruption in the research base created by COVID-19. It should allow organisations to target and support those grants most at risk of completing their planned research activities.

Is there a direct correlation between projects included in the financial algorithm and eligibility for use of the money?

No. Given the hugely variable impact of COVID-19 on projects and people in a rapidly evolving situation, UKRI considers that organisations are best placed to judge which projects are most in need of additional support. In making assessments organisations will need to bear in mind:

- The funding maintains the broad disciplinary balance that is reflected in the distribution of an organisation's grant funding ending between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 by Council.
- That at least 35% of the funding is used to provide for directly incurred costs.
- The funding maintains the balance of an organisation's 2020/21 grant funding by protected characteristics, and seeks to mitigate any disadvantages to protected groups if they have been incurred through the pandemic and its impacts.
- Support for co-funded activities is proportionate to UKRI contributions.

Why have you excluded certain types of grant?

Some grants have been excluded from the pool of grants used to determine the allocation and the allocation should not be used to fund these activities. These are activities that are subject to restricted or non-competitive renewals, such as block grants with automatic renewals, strategic funding for Institutes, facilities, capital funding calls, and services, or activities that have been provided for separately such as studentships.

Can we appeal the methodology used to calculate our award, or the level of award?

This is a specific approach to address issues arising in the sector as a result of a national emergency and there is no specific process in place for appealing the methodology. The standard complaints route remains open <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Why hasn't our organisation received an allocation?

Based on the data used to inform the allocations you may not be due to receive sufficient funds in this financial year to be included in the allocation. Only UK based organisations are eligible to receive funding. The calculation was based on grants that end and have expenditure in the year to 31 March 2021 and not on historical or future funding.

Is the allocation to each organisation going to be published?

Yes. We will use our normal processes to make grant funding values publicly available.

3. Grant holders

I have a current UKRI grant, can I apply for a costed extension through this scheme? How do I check if my grant was included in the calculations made by UKRI?

If your grant has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that you could benefit from this scheme. You should approach your organisation to find out. Each organisation will be following a process agreed with UKRI to inform their allocation of funding. UKRI expects organisations to prioritise support for projects ending by 31 March 2021.

My organisation has not given me any additional funding through this scheme, can I still apply to UKRI directly for a costed extension?

UKRI considers organisations best placed to make the decisions regarding need and allocation. UKRI will not consider direct requests for costed extensions for COVID-19 related issues during the period covered by the allocation. Requests for no-cost extensions can be made at any time. For extensions beyond 30 September 2021, investigators should approach the Council concerned.

How will receiving a costed extension impact on any reporting requirements for my current award?

You should continue to report your outputs and outcomes through Researchfish as normal. For Innovate UK award holders, please see Innovate UK specific information further below.

Are UKRI Fellowships covered?

Yes, all Fellows based at a UK organisation in receipt of an allocation may benefit if their Fellowship has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Fellows should approach the holding organisation in the first instance to find out. Each organisation will be following a process agreed with UKRI to inform their allocation of funding. UKRI expects organisations to prioritise support for projects ending by 31 March 2021.

My work is co-funded by another UK government funder / charity / business. How do I claim support from them or are UKRI going to coordinate this?

UKRI is not in a position to make commitments on behalf of other funders who may be subject to different constraints and pressures. Whether it is possible to claim support from another funder is a matter for that funder to decide.

UKRI has already approved a no-cost extension for my grant but my organisation has not allocated me a costed extension.

There is no direct relationship between UKRI having awarded a no cost extension and being allocated a costed extension for the same grant. Each organisation will be following a process agreed with UKRI to inform their allocation.

4. Use of the allocation

Who will be the Principal Investigator?

We expect each organisation to nominate an appropriate senior individual.

Who can benefit from the allocation? Which grants?

The funding is to provide organisations with resources to sustain UKRI grant-funded research, research and technical staff and research infrastructures during the pandemic disruption and its immediate aftermath. The allocation can be used to support costed extensions to grants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. UKRI expects organisations to prioritise support for projects ending by 31 March 2021.

How can the money be used?

The allocation provides organisations with resources to sustain UKRI grant-funded research, research and technical staff, and research infrastructures during the period of pandemic disruption and its immediate aftermath. We expect organisations to use funds to ensure that UKRI grant outcomes continue to be met, and the value of its grant investments continue to be realised.

Can the university spend the money on a project that has not been used to calculate the award?

UKRI considers organisations best placed to make the decisions regarding need and allocation and the use of funds must be traceable to supporting the stated objectives as set out at the start of the document, This will be in accordance with organisational governance agreed with UKRI. The allocation should not be used to support other activities including; generic estates and infrastructure costs not associated with grants, permanent RO administrative staff, studentships or undergraduate activity, research funded entirely by non-UKRI funders, new research, activities subject to uncompetitive grant renewal processes, or gathering preliminary data for new research bids. Funds should not be used for purposes usually categorised as 'exceptional'.

What is the relationship to the coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS)? Can the funding be used for a grant that received a no-cost extension as staff were furloughed?

Where staff have been furloughed under Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), our expectation is that the CJRS should fund the extension of their time spent on the grant. CoA funding should not be used to pay for individual staff costs (including the top-up of salaries) where staff – whose costs have been charged against the grant – have subsequently been furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wages-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>. This will form part of the reporting and monitoring arrangements to UKRI.

What is the UKRI expectation for dealing with requests from grants where only part of the research is undertaken at the lead organisation (e.g. Hubs or Centres)? Should funding be issued from this allocation to other universities in line with collaboration agreements?

UKRI expects organisations to already have an appropriate collaboration agreement in place for these types of awards and, in line with this, the lead organisation should consider providing funding to other organisations in order to allow projects to meet their objectives. The process for making decisions related to these types of grants should be outlined in the institute's Governance statement.

Are GCRF and Newton awards able to benefit from this funding?

Yes, GCRF and Newton awards are eligible for consideration to receive a costed extension. Change of use of funds from these Official Development Assistance (ODA) grants is not allowed under any circumstances. Funds should not be used to support staff employed by overseas organisations, but UKRI should be informed about the impacts on overseas organisations through the usual council contacts for ODA.

How should suspended grants be considered?

The allocation funding should maintain the balance of an organisation's 2020/21 grant funding by protected characteristics, seeking to mitigate disadvantages to protected groups incurred through the pandemic and its impacts. We expect organisations to include grants suspended due to parental leave, sickness or other long-term absence in their consideration of grants that can receive CoA support. This should be included in the organisation's Governance Plan. Organisations may need to seek additional advice from the appropriate UKRI Council on individual cases where the suspension is for other reasons.

What are the expectations for ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion?

Our expectation is that the community of researchers (Investigators, postdoctoral researchers, technicians and software engineers, project managers and other research team members) supported by this additional funding will reflect the population funded through UKRI grants, whilst recognising some groups of people or individuals have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and so may need additional support.

If the population of researchers to which this additional funding is distributed is less diverse than the population usually funded by UKRI in your institution, please provide a rationale for this reduced diversity. If the population of researchers to which this additional funding is distributed is more diverse than the population usually funded by UKRI in your institution, or if this funding is targeted at researchers who have been disproportionately negatively affected by the pandemic, then there is no need to provide a rationale for this increased diversity.

We expect monitoring to be in line with data you currently hold and in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Specific Information for Innovate UK grant holders

I want to use the allocation to complete an Innovate UK project: do I have to submit a claim to Innovate UK for both the grant extension allocation and my original award? I submit claims to a set schedule, on incurred and defrayed basis, into IUK's _Connect grant platform, has this changed?

No. Please keep the administration of the original award and the grant extension allocation separate. You should submit your claim, monthly or quarterly as applicable, on an incurred and defrayed basis, through Innovate UK's _Connect grant system, and separately account for the additional costs against the allocation managed by EPSRC.

Do the grant extension allocation terms and conditions replace the terms and conditions set out in Innovate UK's grant offer letter?

No. The intent behind the grant extension allocation is to assist in the completion of projects where additional funding is deemed crucial. The allocation does not supersede the rules and regulations as well as obligations, aims and objectives contracted to be delivered in the grant agreement and for example collaboration agreement, during and in some cases after end date of a project. To further illustrate this point: there is still the expectation that an Independent Accountants Report (IAR) will be submitted at end of the project restricted in scope to the original grant. A percentage of grant, as set out in the grant offer letter, will be retained by Innovate UK until the IAR condition is satisfied. If you have been involved in a collaborative R&D project and there is an exploitation agreement the expectation will be for you to act on the results of the project and seek to build on the outcomes of the collaboration between partners.

How does the grant extension allocation impact on my state-aid status in relation to Innovate UK projects I am a participant in?

State-aid regulation will continue to apply to your project irrespective of whether it is being funded by Innovate UK or the grant extension allocation. In most cases RTOs and HEIs ability to claim costs within the relevant thresholds will remain as is, for example if the aim is still wide dissemination of knowledge on non-discriminatory and non-exclusive basis. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the grant participant to ensure there is continued compliance with state-aid regulations throughout the life of a project, and to reassess as appropriate, particularly if the funding envelope or the terms change.

The scope of my project has changed as a result of COVID-19 and this additional funding. How do I check if I am eligible to carry on?

Please speak to your monitoring officer in the first instance. The Innovate UK project change request (PCR) process should be used to advise of a material change, whether financial or otherwise.

What role will the project monitoring officer have going forward if the project is being funded both from Innovate UK and EPSRC grant extension allocation?

The expectation is the monitoring officer will monitor the project covering Innovate UK's funding, and continue their monitoring to ensure the project is delivered to a satisfactory conclusion this financial year. If this requires additional monitoring the monitoring officer should advise Innovate UK and seek agreement for the additional reporting required, and an estimate of costs. There is no expectation the monitoring officer will sign off claims for the grant extension allocation – the relevant institution is responsible for ensuring compliance with the grant extension allocation's condition of use.

Which Innovate UK grants have been excluded?

OLEV, ATI, APC and CCAV grants are not part of this scheme. Please approach Innovate UK or the organisation concerned directly.

5. Change of use of funds

What does change of use mean specifically for RC funding?

In this instance change of use refers to the ability to transfer funding from other grants in the allocation to support extensions of research and fellowship activities under the CoA Terms and Conditions. It is anticipated that this may come from underspends in travel, consumables, etc. This does not mean change of use to support COVID-19 related research for which there are other UKRI schemes available.

What does change of use mean specifically for Innovate UK funding?

In this instance change of use refers to the ability to transfer funding from Innovate UK collaborative (CR&D) grants to support extension of Innovate UK projects under the CoA Terms and Conditions. It is a pre-requisite to gain the approval of all participants in a project before taking advantage of the change of use option. For the avoidance of doubt there can be no unilateral decision to transfer funding. A project change request (PCR) must be submitted to Innovate UK before this option can be used. The first point of contact should be your Monitoring Officer, and the process will be the same as the fast track 3 month no cost extension already in place. The completion of the CoA Final Report Template in respect of change of use will still be required. Change of use cannot be used to support COVID-19 related research for which there are other UKRI schemes available.

Which grants are eligible for a change of use?

Any grants that end on or later than 1 April 2021 are eligible for a change of use, except those types listed in the exclusions. Change of use of funds from Official Development Assistance (ODA) funded grants are not allowed under any circumstances. Exclusions include studentships, organisational based block grants, strategic funding for Institutes, facilities, capital funding calls, services and substantive ongoing investments where there is an expectation of non-competitive renewal. For grants with an ongoing financial contribution from a non UKRI partner, change of use should only be proportional to the UKRI contribution unless there is agreement from the partner.

What percentage of each individual grant can be permitted to have a change in use? Are there any limits on change of use, or any additional actions or permissions that need to be sought?

The maximum limit to the change of use of existing funding to an organisation is stated in the Offer Letter document sent via Je-S. There is no specific percentage that should be applied to each grant. The organisation must take into account:

- UKRI does not expect projects to be put at risk by this action.
- Change of use of funds for directly incurred costs must be done with the approval of the Principal Investigator.

How does UKRI expect organisations to manage the change in use funding?

UKRI will require organisations seeking to change the use of existing grants to make an internal charge against the existing grants and a corresponding internal credit to the allocation. This can only be applied to transfers which do not involve an Innovate UK grant. Any change of use of funds redirected to the COVID-19 grant extension allocation from existing UKRI grants must be auditable. UKRI reserves the right to investigate and review the allocation after it has finished.

Can I move funding from suspended grants?

You will need to seek advice from the appropriate UKRI Council on individual cases on suspended grants depending on the reason for the suspension.

6. Use of the funding

Can we use the funding for estates costs, indirect costs and capital?

Subject to maintaining a minimum of 35% of directly incurred costs, the funding may be used to cover estates or indirect costs if this is deemed appropriate by the organisation (e.g. if related to staffing costs). The funding cannot be used to purchase new equipment. Maintenance of existing research infrastructure and equipment that is required to achieve the objectives of funded projects are included.

Can I use money to fund my overseas Co-I/ collaborator/ partner if they are listed in the original grant?

The additional money can be used to support

- UK organisation employees working overseas during the duration or a portion of the grant
- UK organisation employees working in an overseas centre/ out-post where they are employed by the UK organisation

The additional money cannot be used to support

- Overseas Co-Is, collaborators even if named on a grant, if they are not employed by an UK RO; including GCRF and Newton grants
- Overseas sub-contracts

Do we have to spend the funding by 30 September 2021 or can we keep some back in case we need it later to support COVID-19 related issues?

The funding must be spent by 30 September 2021 in line with the scheme's purpose

Should we be looking to support students funded on research grants?

No students are being supported by an alternative process. See <https://www.ukri.org/research/coronavirus/guidance-for-the-research-and-innovation-communities1/#collapse6>

Can the money be used to extend students who have a job within the RO on a UKRI grant but can't start it yet due to non-completion of the PhD?

No students are being supported by an alternative process. See <https://www.ukri.org/research/coronavirus/guidance-for-the-research-and-innovation-communities1/#collapse6>

[communities1/#collapse6](#)

How long can a costed extension be?

UKRI considers that organisations are best placed to determine the duration of any costed extensions as this is dependent on the project and its specific needs. UKRI anticipate that the needs of projects will vary and so too will the funding extensions they require. The total length of extension cannot extend beyond the lifetime of the UKRI allocation funding.

Can this funding be used to support COVID-19 protection within the organisation e.g. PPE?

The funding may be used to support project specific COVID-19 protection, i.e., where this is required to allow the research receiving a costed extension go ahead. Such costs cannot be classified as directly incurred. ROs will need to balance this requirement with other pressures on the UKRI allocation. The funding cannot be used to support general COVID-19 protection needs within the organisation.