

Changes to UKRI Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant webinar: responses to questions

Thank you to everyone who joined our webinars on the changes we are making to the training grant conditions for the 2025-26 academic year. If you missed them, both webinars are available on our YouTube channel:

- [Video of the March 2025 webinar focussing on the training grant conditions](#)
- [Video of the May 2025 webinar focussing on the training grant guidance and UKRI Disabled Students' Allowance Framework](#)

Over the two webinars we had over 140 questions so if we didn't manage to answer your question live, you should be able to find it below. Questions are grouped according to their subject matter and those from the May webinar have been labelled as "(new)".

Remember, if you need further information, we've set out what we're changing and why in the [Policy Statement: review of the UKRI standard terms and conditions of training grant](#), available on our website. The statement includes a checklist of some of the key things that are changing. In answering some of the questions we've referred to specific conditions by number (for example "TGC 1") and you can find all the new conditions in the [Annotated changes to the Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant](#), published alongside the policy statement.

Over the next year, significant changes are being made to the support available to UKRI funded students through our training grant funds and their management. [Sign up to our newsletter to learn about the latest developments.](#)

Last updated: June 2025.

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Co-funding

Question: If a company is paying 50% of a UKRI studentship, from September 2026, will they have to agree to fund 50% of parental leave and paid sick leave when they sign a collaboration agreement with the RO?

Answer: Broadly yes, but only for new studentships starting from 1 October 2026. The condition is in TGC 8.4.1 and states: "When arranging co-funding of individual or a number of studentships, you should seek to put in place arrangements so that costs of additional absences are met equitably between different funders. New co-funding agreements for Students starting from 1 October 2026 must have regard to meeting commitments to diverse student needs, including absence costs and extensions." If you do not comply with the requirement for new co-funding agreements, then you will be required to bear the additional cost directly.

Question: Phrasing of the type "if the co-funder is unwilling to cover the additional costs, they may be covered by the training grant" has caused us problems in the past. Is there a danger that this simply invites co-funders to say "sorry, we can't cover those costs"?

Answer: If as an RO you do not have an appropriate agreement, then the co-funder can refuse to cover those costs. This is why it is essential that colleagues in ROs ensure they discuss additional support that might be required for students at the outset.

Unlike all the other changes to the conditions, this change only comes into force on 1 October 2026. This additional time to implement this rule is to give you time to put in place suitable arrangements with co-funders.

Question (updated): What are the implications on partner institutions which are offering co-supervision but not co-funding?

Answer: Arrangements for co-supervision should normally be managed at the appropriate level. As arrangements are made, it is worth project leads and others planning on the basis that where a studentship is disrupted because of medical, family or additional leave, the studentship may take longer to complete than might have been hoped.

Question: EPSRC formally called non and partly UKRI CDT funded students 'incorporated'. Now it has been changed to aligned - does this apply more widely to all UKRI students that are not fully part of CDT student cohort? So any student receiving even just 1-49% UKRI funding would be simply referred as a UKRI CDT student?

Answer: No, this only affects 2023 EPSRC Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs). The approach was communicated to those grants in their grant agreements (also called grant offer letters). If you have any doubt as to what conditions apply to a grant, please check the grant agreement. For background, TGC 1 sets out that specific grant conditions apply (in addition or instead of the standard terms and conditions of training grant) where these are set out in the grant agreement.

Please also note that the question does not characterise EPSRC's specific conditions correctly. EPSRC has not changed incorporated to aligned, or vice versa. However for its 2023 CDTs, EPSRC:

- maintained the definition of an aligned student, to capture people attending occasional CDT activities but without being a full member of a CDT cohort or receiving any funding from the CDT grant (such as a student funded by a UKRI doctoral landscape award)
- removed the definition of an incorporated student, instead defining all members of a CDT cohort as EPSRC CDT students (regardless of the source of their studentship costs)
- added a condition to trial allowing studentships to be 1% to 49% EPSRC funded.

As those specific grant agreements set out, these were "for 2023 EPSRC CDTs only". If we make the change for other grants we will communicate this.

Question: ESRC recently changed the definition of aligned students to incorporated students, does this apply to more widely to other UKRI funded students too?

Answer: ESRC does not use the terms "aligned" or "incorporated students"; we believe this question refers to the 2023 EPSRC CDTs. See our response to the question above.

Question (new): Does UKRI expect that training grant terms and conditions will be extended to students match-funded to a UKRI award?

Answer: If the student is registered on Je-S or the student portal as a UKRI student then the new rules cover them.

We do not have a harmonised position on match funded students, but matched studentships training grant conditions if the awarding council has imposed a special condition on the investment's award letter stating this.

Question (new): New conditions (of any sort) require modifications to partnership agreements for doctoral training partnerships. We must get those agreements negotiated and signed before the new cohort begin. When will we get award letters that allow us to progress that? They were promised (I believe) round about the end of January.

Answer: We appreciate that changes to the grant conditions may have consequences elsewhere. This is why, for this substantial set of changes, we published them in January ahead of implementation in October.

TGC 1 states that "UKRI reserves the right to amend and vary these Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant and any Specific Terms and Conditions of Training Grant or applicable policies at any time. The latest version of the Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant apply to all Training Grants with immediate effect and supersede any previous Standard Terms and Conditions under which a Training Grant was awarded unless otherwise stated. However, any Specific Terms and Conditions of Training Grant will still apply." It is not necessary for us to issue new award letters for existing training grants for the new conditions to apply.

We would encourage all parties involved in collaboration/co-funding agreements to consider how these agreements can be set up to accommodate common changes during a studentship, or circumstances a student might face, without the need for renegotiation. For example, the stipend and fee rates change each academic year.

Question (new): Will the change to being funded from 2 training grants be back dated? I can currently think of two students in my faculty 50:50 funded between an EPSRC grant and STFC grant, would we need to amend this going forward?

Answer: From 1 October, TGC 4.5.1 will state that the UKRI contribution to Studentship costs must be drawn from a single Training Grant at any one time. Interdisciplinary projects for students are still encouraged but should be aligning to the funding opportunity, rather than the council remit.

New studentships from the 2025-26 academic year will need to comply with the revised grant condition. For existing studentships, our preference is that you also comply with the revised condition from 1 October – by moving each student to the appropriate grant. If this is not possible, where there are existing arrangements, these are still allowed where the awarding council(s) state as such in the award letter or any specific conditions.

Question (new): Can you clarify this statement from the webinar: "Costs need to be claimed against the grant on which the student is supported, that is from which 50% or more of their costs were provided. and the exception for EPSRC CDTs where they can be funded at less than 50%."

Answer: EPSRC's 2023 Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) allowed, as a pilot, students to be funded less than the normal 50% prescribed by the standard training grant conditions. This was explained to those CDTs in their grant award letters. If any of the 2024 CDTs have students drawing less than 50% of their funding from the UKRI grant, then the costs concerned would still be drawn from that grant.

Communications

Question: Is it anticipated that the grant holder/RO will update the funded students with these changes?

Answer: Yes, as has always been the case, you should ensure that your students are aware of the support that is available to them. In a number of places we have specific requirements, for example TGC 8.0.1: "You should ensure that Students and members of staff are aware of what leave is available to Students and when leave could result in an extension to the Studentship, for example in a well publicised policy on leave and extensions".

While we anticipate that the update to the TGCs is largely positive, you may also want to consider your obligations under consumer law, as set out in the [Competition and Market's Authority's consumer law advice for providers](#). The guidance advised you to treat students in a

way that is clear, transparent and fair and sets out some specific provisions about communication.

Some ROs have told us that they would benefit from UKRI doing more to inform students and supervisors of what support we provide. We are therefore planning to support ROs with our own communications activity in the 2025-26 academic year. This communications activity will not be specific to your institution and therefore will direct students to talk to their RO. It will not be a substitute for your own communications activity.

Question: In the interests of transparency, would this be a presentation that we can share with incoming students, so that they are fully appraised of the system they're entering?

Answer: We recommend you develop your own communications materials for students, setting out what the changes mean for them in the context of your own policies and institution.

We are developing communications materials for students, but these will be comparatively high-level and direct students to their provider for further information.

Question (new): Will UKRI communicate these changes to UKRI funded students to avoid inconsistent messaging?

Answer: Yes we will be communicating with students. It was recognised in feedback that students don't always have the right information and that ROs would value our support in communicating better.

But there is a limit to what we can do and what you need to do will likely depend on the kind of institution you are, how you're organised and how many students you have. For example:

- We can't know how a student in your organisation applies for or records leave.
- You might have extra regulations on how leave is used that we can't reflect.
- We don't know what your internal complaints processes are before escalating to the ombudsman.
- We can't know the decisions and arrangements you have made for how students of multi-organisation consortia programmes will be considered for, and access, support.

Costs and benefits

Question: What plans does UKRI have for post-implementation review of the changes? I'm thinking in particular of picking up unintended and unanticipated consequences of the changes AND Policy Statement paragraph 1.14 states expenditure will only increase by 1.2% as a result of these changes. What evidence will you gather in the future to sense check this?

Answer: The replacement for the Joint-electronic Submission system (Je-S) will collect data on student extensions and the cause of these, which will help us assess the impact of leave requirements on an on-going basis. We are also considering how we better use data on

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA). This work may be supplemented with commissions for additional evidence, as required.

We should have early indications of the impact of the proposals by late 2026, by which time the students who are in their final year when the changes are introduced will be due to either complete their studentship or receive an extension. The full impact won't be known until a full cohort has completed their degrees, by 2029 or 2030. In the meantime we will continue to engage with the community and are open to feedback sent to talent@ukri.org

Question: Up to now, costs of leave have been lower than typical underspend. However, are you confident that this will remain the case with the increased leave entitlement?

Answer: Yes, when looked at across the whole of UKRI's portfolio. Some grants – particularly smaller grants – will have less flexibility and will require us to work with you on the appropriate course of action, as set out in the training grant conditions (TGC 8.4.4) which may include topping up a grant or moving the student to an alternative grant.

Question: Granting 28 weeks for all 300 of our UKRI funded students on our grant is going to be very costly to UKRI.

Answer: National statistics on sick leave for workers indicate that 1 in 25 people take a period of sick leave lasting more than four weeks each year. In total, across all UKRI studentships, we expect around 260 students to benefit a year from the enhanced medical leave. We will monitor reasons for extensions to assess whether this is correct.

Grant holders should also bear in mind that they are required to ensure a safe environment for all individuals associated with any research activity funded by the Training Grant, both on and off-site, and for meeting all regulatory and legislative health and safety requirements (TGC 3.3).

Question (new): How will UKRI support institutions to embed inclusive practices beyond simply meeting the new funding requirements?

Answer: As we acknowledge in the policy statement, as we're talking about rules, that leads to a rules-based conversation.

However, the aim is to support a better research culture. Hence the updated grant conditions should be seen as part of the change, not the whole change.

Extensions

Question (updated): TGC 6.1.1 and Policy statement 3.79: “in considering the length of an extension, you may consider the impact of the timing and duration of the absence.” Will there be any additional guidance about how to apply this? It is open to interpretation (i.e. is not a 1:1 extension for leave) and may lead to inconsistencies across the UKRI network. It also seems to contrast with the specific leave terms defined in "Special Leave" etc.

Answer: Yes, an extension could be longer than the time taken as leave if the time taken as leave was at a particularly critical part of the research project. For example, the leave meant a student missed their opportunity to use an essential research facility. In line with the wider changes our expectation is that ROs will have a policy that enables them to support students in a way that is fair.

Question (new): TGC 8.2.A.2. Special leave – please can you confirm if the limits detailed are per annum, per incident or per studentship?

The limits are as set out in the grant conditions.

Question: Could you please talk again about the potential for working together at the end of a grant to address a shortfall if the volume/duration of student extensions lead to one.

Answer: TGC 8.4.4 states: “Where you can demonstrate that you cannot meet the costs of leave from within the training grant or other contingencies, You must inform Us. Where we are content that you cannot meet the costs, we will either (a) agree an arrangement to transfer the student to an alternative concurrent training grant or (b) agree to meet the costs on a formal request through the completion of the Final Expenditure Statement for the Training Grant.”

For larger grants, we do expect them to be managed with a view to some students needing leave as this is not an atypical experience. Generally we expect welfare of students to be prioritised over other incidental opportunities. Provided a larger grant can demonstrate that it took reasonable steps to include contingencies, we will work with them to find ways to cover the cost. We recognise smaller grants may not have the ability to build in meaningful levels of contingency funding.

Question: If a week is taken as medical or additional leave, we have to extend the studentship by a week - is that funding only? Would you calculate that extra week as a 52 of the stipend or a quarter of a monthly payment?

Answer: Just to be clear, if a week is taken as eligible medical or additional leave, you are allowed (and encouraged) to extend the studentship by that week. If they take a month of leave, you *must* extend by that month. Note that medical leave for a routine illness (for example a common cold) is not eligible for an extension, as projects should be planned on the basis that most students will take some time off.

Whether you extend for a period between one week and one month, and how to calculate the stipend for that period, are up to you, but the student should be paid at their usual rate for that period of time. We recommend that you have a consistent policy on this. Provided your system is not inconsistent with the conditions or guidance we are content.

Question: Just a question on unfunded extensions, if a student has not had a period of sickness, has used their leave entitlement as they should, and as they have approached their submission date they have requested an extension, and that extension is granted, should we be funding that extension if it is outside of their funded period?

Answer: No. Extensions to the funded period / studentship are governed either by TGC 6.1 (on leave) or any specific conditions given to you by your awarding council (for example, in relation to a placement or language training). We do not provide for funded extension requests in other circumstances.

Also note the Policy Statement states that we will work with the sector in the first half of 2025 to consider whether we can scope and provide sufficient guidance for using additional funded time as a reasonable adjustment, but this work is yet to conclude.

Question: There seems to be a contradiction in the words around the extensions - in 6.1 it says Studentships must be extended under particular conditions, but later on (in various places) the wording moves from must to may e.g. 8.1.1 or 8.2.A.2

Answer: As set out in TGC 6.1.2 there are circumstances where you would not extend the studentship even though the leave type is eligible, notably an extension must not be provided for a period after the Student has submitted their thesis or equivalent.

Question (new): what will be the process to follow for grants awarded in 2021 to request for an extension on grounds of a new disability condition?

Answer: If you need to request either a costed or uncosted extension, you should raise a grant change request in the normal way.

Note an extension is only allowed in line with the conditions as set out in Training Grant Condition 6. Where a disabled person takes medical or other types of leave this may result in an extension.

Funding assurance

Question: How will you ensure a consistent interpretation and implementation of these new T&Cs across all research councils?

Answer: The revised training grant conditions have been agreed by all councils. We also have a project called Collective Talent Funding which is further harmonising our support, where appropriate.

Grants

Question: Do these changes apply to studentships related to research grants secured by an individual academic which included provision for a studentship. So not a training grant, but a research grant with a studentship.

Answer: These provisions apply to all grants to which the training grant conditions apply. We are currently reviewing the funding policies for studentships that are not on training grants.

Question (new): Can we charge two different EPSRC DTP/DLA grants if they are consecutive or should we ask for no-cost extension?

Answer: You will need to contact the awarding council (in this case EPSRC) to discuss options. There are a number of factors to be taken into account, for example, an extension can shift grant reconciliation into another financial year, which can have a financial impact (in isolation or combination with other grants) even if it is a no-cost extension.

Question (new): How do you see cohort funds being managed across a DTP? Do we keep them in silos/blocks?

Answer: Unless the awarding council has provided advice or special conditions for how these funds should be managed, it is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to decide how to manage them so that they deliver the objectives of the training programme and of these funds specifically. You should bear in mind any detail in the original grant application about how these funds would be used and managed.

International students

Question (new): How will these changes impact international students?

Answer: The training grant conditions don't distinguish between home and international students, other than on fee status. There are also limits on the number of international students that can be recruited to a training grant.

Students' visa conditions may impose limitations on how some international students can access some support (e.g. periods of leave), but we can't offer you advice on that. You should instead speak to your support services or a registered immigration advisor.

Question (new): How does Disabled Students' Allowances work for International Students? Are they eligible as we have had some students have issues with this.

Answer: All UKRI students are eligible for UKRI Disabled Students' Allowances, irrespective of whether they are a home student or an international student.

Question: TGC 4.3: international students are now potentially going to be asked to cover the home/international fee difference: this has the potential to generate further inequalities for international students. Main question is about timing: applicants are already involved in student recruitment and would not have started with any expectation of paying this fee. Can this TGC be delayed until 25/26?

Answer: This is a clarification rather than a change in policy, which has been in place since 2021; we appreciate that there has been confusion before and apologise for this.

While you can charge international students (or associated project partners) the difference between the home fee and the international fee we are not in any sense requiring you to do so. A number of ROs continue to waive the fee difference.

Before you charge fees to a student you should consider your obligations under consumer law and seek legal advice. You should also bear in mind that UKRI and OfS require you to comply with consumer law. The consumer law obligations apply from before the student has applied for the studentship. See: [Competition and Market's Authority's consumer law advice for providers](#).

Question: Can the VISA & immigration health surcharge be charged to the Training Grants for International students?

Answer: No, this is not an allowable expense for UKRI studentships.

Question: The T&Cs say we must conduct health and safety risk assessments for student who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or given birth in last 6 months. How does that sit with the visa requirement that international students can only take 62 days mat leave? That is, if a student returns 62 days after giving birth, and the risk assessment clearly show they should not have returned to study as it puts their or their baby's health at risk, what are our options? Sickness absence?

Answer: In these circumstances we recommend you seek legal advice and / or advice from your immigration support service. Note UKRI is not authorised to give regulated immigration advice.

Question: Will UKRI lobby UKVI to ensure equitable treatment for students that it funds?

Answer: As a public body UKRI does not lobby the government. We recommend you highlight any concerns to your university mission group.

Question: UKRI recently started accepting international students are there any possibility that policy guidelines will be developed to guide RO?

Answer: UKRI is unable to provide regulated immigration advice.

Question: On the international student front, there is an issue with the emphasis placed by UKRI on internships. I know that this doesn't relate to the changes specifically but it is similar to the issue of leave- international students are being treated inequitably. AND Not a question but a note that we've got a PhD with a placement in place now that we hope will help International students to do a placement with their PhD and won't effect their visa so 1 step to helping making it easier for them!

Answer: Thank you for the question but placements were not part of this review. For further information please email talent@ukri.org

Question: Given the current financial climate institutions are facing, will you be looking at reducing the International cap of students in the future

Answer: We currently have no plans to change the cap on international students.

Question: Have there been EDI recommendations in the case of overseas students? These usually face considerable additional costs, not only to embark on a PhD (visa & health costs) but also, after they start their study, for instance in terms of bringing their family members to the UK. Any advice on this?

Answer: The Equality Act and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland apply to international students as well as home students. We therefore recommend you consider your obligations to international students with care. We have no advice on bringing family members to the UK, but students should direct any questions to an appropriate immigration advisor.

Leave

Question: Leave - reference to provider - is this PI of Training Grant or RO? AND "Provider" is a helpful definition: it is in the Policy Statement page 2 but not the annotated Ts & Cs Annex A: could this be added?

Answer: The provider is the organisation providing the training to a student funded through a UKRI grant. This could be the RO but it may also be other providers that are partners (more formally referred to as "third parties" in the training grant conditions) on the grant. We use this language because in the training grant conditions, "RO" specifically refers to the lead organisation for the grant.

In the training grant conditions themselves, we only refer to provider in TGC 8.0.4 on recording of leave. This reflects that ROs, providers and other third parties will want to be mindful of their obligations to recording personal information under data protection regulations.

On the whole we have avoided referring to Principal Investigators or Project Leads on the grant, as we tend to assume the legal liability rests with the organisation rather than the individual. We also reflect that ROs may choose to have a single RO-level policy, rather than multiple policies at grant level.

Question: When do the new leave provisions become effective? Is there an option to adopt them earlier for cases of a current students with chronic medical conditions?

Answer: The earliest the conditions can become active is the start of your 2025-26 academic year. They must be in place by 1 October 2025. Alternatively, you can provide additional support at your RO's or the provider's expense.

Question: When you say a week of leave - does this have to be consecutive? We often see shorter periods more frequently over the year just under the week block but can add up rapidly.

Answer: No, a week of leave does not have to be consecutive. Indeed, we encourage you to consider leave provision for students with chronic conditions which flare up from time to time, and ensure that they receive appropriate extensions.

Question: Does the 30-40 days annual leave include public holidays?

Answer: Yes. The condition on annual leave remains unchanged.

Question (updated): TGC 2.15: can you provide any clarification/additional information about what type of facilities and resources are intended here, particularly about "student welfare"? (NB this will likely be provided at a provider level, not RO.)

Answer: We will introduce text to the guidance (viewable in the [annotated revisions of UKRI training grant guidance 2025](#)) that states sets this out. The guidance will state that students should still receive some support while on a prolonged period of leave. For example, they should have access to key facilities as required, such as student services, disability services, email, the ability to return materials to libraries (and if appropriate arrange to borrow) and, where applicable, access to campus. A student must not study while on leave, and it is unlikely to be necessary that they retain access to technical facilities. Availability of fees and stipends is governed elsewhere in the TGCs. You are reminded of Your obligations under equality law if the students' leave is related to a protected characteristic.

Question: Since many of the existing leave policies operate on a "rolling year" basis, where permitted max leave periods have been extended (very welcome), how do we apply the "rolling year" entitlement from 1 Oct 25 for students who have had paid leave on the basis of the previous entitlements? Do we simply extend the amount of days/weeks available after discounting what has been taken?

Answer: Yes.

Question (updated): Can you provide any further guidance on how we should treat the new sickness absence allowance for students who have already taken medical leave in the previous 12-month period? E.g. if they've had 13 weeks in 2024-25, do they get another 15 weeks (if still within the 12 month period?)

Answer: Yes, they get a further 18 weeks. See also the [annotated revisions of UKRI training grant guidance 2025](#).

Question (updated): The 28 weeks' leave within the 12 months' period - how are the 12 months calculated? Solar, from the beginning of the academic year, or the studentship? AND Does the 12-month rolling period (for the 28 weeks paid leave) start on (i) the 1st day of medical leave or (ii) the 1st day of the PhD academic year (28 weeks per academic year, reset every academic year)? Thanks

Answer: It is a rolling 12 month period, meaning it starts on the day when they last took leave. For example, if a student was absent on sick leave from 1 January 2026 to 28 June 2026 and then returned to study, they would be unable to take further medical leave until 1 January 2027. See also the [annotated revisions of UKRI training grant guidance 2025](#).

Question (updated): Are the new definitions of leave types the only types of leave that we can approve, or can we approve a period of leave for e.g. personal reasons that wouldn't fit under one of the stated additional leave reasons.

Answer: Funding can only be drawn from the grant for leave types that are either (a) within the standard terms and conditions of training grant or (b) where your institution has applied for, and been granted, the authority to charge us for "regulation leave". See Annex D of the [annotated revisions of UKRI training grant guidance 2025](#).

Question (new): On leave, we can supplement the UKRI leave policy with our own provision for paid leave - if an institution has an established published leave policy that offers longer period of paid leave than UKRI would typically cover, we can follow that institutional policy and use UKRI funds to support the paid leave for the longer term? did I get that right? Or does institutional funding kick in after the UKRI allowed leave period ends?

Answer: there are two ways of providing more paid leave for students. First is that you fund this from your own resources, this could be while the studentship is suspended or at the end of the UKRI studentship.

It is now also possible to apply to UKRI to ask if we will fund more leave as part of "regulation leave" – see Annex D of the [annotated revisions of UKRI training grant guidance 2025](#).

Regulation leave is designed to enable us to have a conversation with ROs about whether we should provide further support where they have or develop an established leave policy, it is not to be used on an ad-hoc basis for individual students.

Question: TGC 8.1.5 re Parental leave (no stipend). This doesn't seem to be consistent with the medical leave where you have said we can extend for a week or more but must extend for a month or more. Also, is it pro-rata? Or one calendar month for all regardless of student's FTE?"

Answer: The principle behind paternity or partner's leave is "use it or lose it". This position is unchanged from the current training grant conditions.

And yes – this form of leave is pro-rata.

Question (new): TGC 8.2.4. Please can you clarify whether medical appointments for individuals with a disability (which may be treated outside of medical leave) should be funded, or just additional time or neither?

Answer: where a student requires leave for medical appointments, this should be taken as medical leave and the studentship extended accordingly. The requirement reflects that some conditions will require appointments while others will require time away with no appointments, and seeks to treat those students in those groups equitably to one another.

Question: We have a number of PGRs who have caring responsibilities. Would any leave associated with care fall under family leave?

Answer: No, assuming you mean for adults or children with disabilities, it falls under carer's leave. See Additional Leave TGC 8.2.A.4.

Question: TGC 8.0.3 - New TGC states "You may supplement any of our provisions for leave with funds from other source"s. - Please clarify, should this supplement from other sources be still within 50% rule?

Answer: In this case, it is likely that the funding would take the form of additional stipend payments for the extension, that is, after the end of the UKRI studentship, and TGC 4.5 would no longer apply.

Question (new): Can we supplement leave with other funds *during* the studentship?

Answer: Yes, you could suspend the studentship, and instead pay the stipend and fee from other sources. This is similar to cases where the studentship is suspended for a period while a student is on placement and instead receives a salary from the host.

Question: So basically you are saying that we can grant 28 weeks leave in any 1 year rolling period without any evidence for sickness, parental and any other leave a student requests fully paid.

Answer: No. We are not requiring you to collect a medical certificate, but you should have a policy on leave which sets out the evidence that you do collect. The student's leave also has to be genuine, meaning that they cannot be studying during that period. Hence you cannot use leave for general extensions.

Question (new): How should we handle medical interruptions and extensions for chronic conditions with many short episodes? And How will doctoral students with disabilities that are fluctuating be accommodated?

Answer: The question might be how do you, as an RO, want to manage medical interruptions for chronic conditions?

We use the example in the policy statement of the Open University, where students with chronic conditions are able to take leave in small chunks, and when those chunks sum to a month they register it with the university. So long as they do so in the university's specified timeframe, they get an extension.

That seems a reasonable way to manage this – but there might be others. So long as they comply with the conditions as we've set them down you have a lot of flexibility to decide, as an organisation, how you want to support your students with these types of condition.

Question (new): if a student has sick leave starting in this year which goes into next year when the new rules take effect, are they entitled to sick pay under the new rules from 1 October? AND If a student has had a period of sickness absence in the preceding 12 month rolling period, how should new T&C be applied?

Answer: If a student is on sick leave already, then they can continue on their sick leave.

For example, if they've already had 13 weeks in the last 12 months under the old rules, the new limit is 28 weeks so: 28 minus 13 is 15 – they could stay off on medical leave for a further 15 weeks.

The guidance published in April says that we don't expect a student to return from a suspension to medical leave.

Question (new): If a student has 12 month approved paid leave, can they also have up to 12 months unpaid leave for personal reasons?

Answer: That's theoretically possible. For example, a student who had taken 28 weeks' medical leave one year, then at a later point a further 24 weeks medical leave, might then also have their studentship suspended for 12 months. This is unlikely to happen frequently.

You will also need to consider whether it is advisable for the student continue, as they do ultimately need to produce novel research to get their doctorate.

Question (new): How is paid neonatal care leave managed when it overlaps with maternity, paternity or parental leave?

Answer: This is in addition to maternity / paternity leave – so it doesn't overlap, it effectively extends. You could add it to the beginning, or at the end.

Question (new): Where the Institution has a better leave policy than that in the new UKRI Terms and Conditions, which is to take precedence?

Answer: You can enhance our offer with your own support – but you either have to pay for it (for example through further stipend payments at the end of the UKRI studentship) or apply for regulation leave as set out in the training grant guidance where upon UKRI will consider whether it should support the request.

Question: If an extension is allowed for family, medical and additional leave is the student also entitled to be paid during this period of extension.

Answer: Yes, it's an extension to the UKRI studentship.

Question: Can you also tell us about the rules around Jury Service?

Answer: Leave is allowed if a student is on jury service. A condition to this effect was first introduced in 2019 (see [TGC 6.1.1 in the existing conditions](#)); we are now transferring this into

TGC8.2.A.7. The stipend should be paid and the studentship extended. The substance is unchanged from the existing conditions.

Question: Will continuing students funded through existing UKRI training grants be entitled to the same level of increased paid medical leave, for example, as those starting under new grants from October 2025 onwards?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is there any reason why medical leave is set as 28 weeks maximum, i.e. 6 months 2 weeks, when 26 weeks equates to 6 months?

Answer: We have benchmarked against conditions for workers. Statutory sick pay is available to workers for 28 weeks.

Question: The current Ts & Cs say the total period of extension of the funding must not normally exceed 12 months during the lifetime of an award. The new Ts & Cs say max 12 months specifically for paid sick leave. Does this imply that a combination of sick and Additional Leave of more than 12 months is allowable?

Answer: No, the extension is limited to 12 months of Medical and Additional Leave.

Question: Students can take lengthy unpaid personal leave beyond the entitlements laid out under Additional Leave. Does unfunded leave (i.e. suspension of the studentship, rather than extension of the studentship) count towards the above-mentioned period limit? In other words is the limit referring to total amount of leave or total period of additional funding?

Answer: The extension refers only to the paid studentship, not to unpaid periods during which the studentship is suspended. We have no conditions on the period for which the studentship can be suspended, but the RO may have its own regulations on this. If the suspension means the studentship would last beyond the end of the grant, you should contact us to discuss options.

Question: We have a (disabled) student who has had more than 12 months medical leave (approved by UKRI and University). We suspect that more may be requested later in the PhD - will we be able to request approval from UKRI, or is it now capped?

Answer: We will continue to honour any existing commitments. Please contact your awarding council to discuss future leave.

Question: Given the changes to leave provision, under what conditions might you want or need to suspend a Studentship?

Answer: You may still need to suspend a studentship. For example, for a student who is still unable to return to study after exhausting their 28 week allocation of Medical Leave.

Questions (new): Can current student request retrospective medical leave be considered under new extension flexibilities? I.e. 4 individual weeks have been recorded for mental health issues over past 2 years. Can they have this as a 1 month extension if approved by RO this is needed to reflect the time lost?

Leave and extensions have to be taken under the rules in place at the time.

That said, even under the TGCs in place before 1 October 2025, TGC 6.1.1 states “The period of a Student’s support must be extended in line with these Training Grant Terms and Conditions, to offset ... absences covered by a medical certificate.” Provided a medical certificate was obtained it would be consistent with the conditions to provide an extension.

Leave records

Question: Do we need to record forms / periods of leave which do not result in an extension of funding, for example a short period of medical leave?

Answer: Providers must maintain a record of Family Leave, Medical Leave and Additional Leave (see TGC 8.0.4). Although a short period of medical leave may not lead to an extension, particularly if it is for a common illness (such as a cold), because it could contribute to a students’ allocation of medical leave and to an extension, (particularly if a health condition develops into something worse) we would recommend that RO staff do not attempt to dissuade students from recording medical leave.

Question (new): Will UKRI’s new student portal record on the Funding Service allow us to record family, sick and other leave in the same way as the Je-S?

Answer: No, that’s not what the new student data portal is designed to do.

We don’t dictate how you monitor and manage leave, that’s up to you and will be influenced by a range of things that are outside of our control, like your partnerships, the systems you already have, number of students, and any other regulations on leave your institution has.

What the new system will do is, if you say that a student requires a funded extension, ask you to state if this is due to medical, family or additional leave.

Question (new): Will the recording requirements on absences impact on reporting or are they more for audit?

Answer: You have to record leave because we’ve placed limits on how it is used and how much leave we will fund.

It’s also good practice and can help flag potential issues. For example, if a student starts taking lots of medical leave you can consider whether there’s something that can be done to help that student.

Day to day, you’ll only be asked for this information if you record an extension on the new student portal at which point it’ll ask you for a reason, which will be the headline leave types (medical, family, additional).

We may also ask for evidence that you're complying with the conditions as part of assurance work.

Question (new): Phased return and leave - assumes that we monitor leave (almost impossible and a huge workload), and that a student has any leave left?

Answer: the revised training grant guidance makes clear that, if you do not record annual leave, it is acceptable to make certain assumptions. See the training grant guidance for more information.

Medical Evidence

Question: If HEIs ask for medical evidence for all students except UKRI-funded, there is a disparity there. Especially for the increasing number of students who choose to self-diagnose neurodiversity.

Answer: There is no disparity. While we are not requiring you to collect a specific type of medical evidence, you should have your own requirements on what medical evidence you require to verify a student's claims.

In so far as the question might relate to disability, you should bear in mind that in the training grant conditions, disability has the same meaning as in the Equality Act 2010 (in England, Scotland and Wales) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (in Northern Ireland). These acts state that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A simple guide to the meaning of disability is available from the [Equalities Advisory and Support Service](#) while the [UK government has published more extensive guidance](#). It is worth noting that the definition is broad and can cover impairments caused by a very wide range of health conditions.

Because the definition tends to focus on the impairment, not the health condition from which the impairment arises, your policy should reflect contemporary guidance on assessing disability. This should include what proportionate measures you require to verify what a student says about their health condition or requirements, or where you require expert evidence or recommendations to make well informed decisions. A degree of procedural formality will generally be appropriate. Where a student has a severe or urgent condition, you may need to make reasonable adjustments without a diagnosis or medical or expert evidence. Your policy is also likely to need to reflect your organisation's view on assessing where an impairment puts a student at a substantial disadvantage, and how to consider whether an adjustment is reasonable.

There is advice on what this means for higher education providers in England, Wales and Scotland:

- EHRC's [Technical guidance on further and higher education](#) [EHRC, 2014]

- EHRC's [Advice note for the higher education sector from the legal case of University of Bristol vs Abrahart \[EHRC, 2024\]](#) contains updated advice on providing reasonable adjustments to disabled students.

Question (new) Are there any situations where UKRI will ask to see the evidence we have accepted? Or will you just look for confirmation that we have accepted something.

Yes, as part of our assurance work we may ask for proof that you have the requisite policy on reasonable adjustments and that you are applying this consistently. This may involve reviewing individual cases and the evidence obtained. You should be mindful of your obligations to students regarding data protection as set out in the TGCs.

Mode of study (part-time or full-time)

Question: For part-time offerings, do we have to offer all options between 100-50% FTE, or would having some set options be acceptable (e.g. 80%, 60%, 50%)?

Answer: We have made a number of changes to the conditions on mode of study, removing many of our restrictions. Note neither the existing or future conditions restrict mode of study to *either* 50% or 100%.

You now have more flexibility on how to operate your rules on mode of study without recourse to us. It may be appropriate to offer a set of options. While not a requirement, we would encourage you to think about how different options might support different students. For example, a student who is a parent might say they need to work two days a week in order to qualify for government support for childcare; you might decide that it is appropriate to offer 60% FTE for the studentship. The evidence we commissioned from the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Caucus \(EDICa\)](#) [had further examples of students who would have benefitted from more flexibility around mode of study.](#)

Phased returns

Question (updated): Can you clarify TGC 8.3.2.2 and the text around phased return being taken from hours of annual leave accrued during a period of leave?

Answer: The Policy Statement sets out that a phased return would "...be accounted for from a period of leave, for example medical, additional, family or annual leave, as appropriate." On 31 April 2025 we amended TGC 8.3.2.2 in the annotated conditions to reflect the correct position. We emailed grant holders to highlight the change. Note an extension would only be granted where this is consistent with the rules on extensions (that is, for additional, family or medical leave).

On annual leave, it may be useful to use this for a phased return in the event that, for example, a student has already used their full 28 weeks' medical leave allocation and then wishes to undertake a phased return. If the RO or provider's policy is that the student receives 30 days' annual leave a year, they might have accrued 16 days' annual leave in the time they were on

medical leave. As a period of phased return, the student agrees that over a 4 week period, they will take 4 days' annual leave in the first week, 3 days' leave in the second week, 2 days' leave in the third week, and 1 day of leave in the final week – a total of 10 days' leave. The remaining 6 days could be used for a second period of phased return.

Question (updated): Is there guidance or principles around a phased return?

Answer: Yes, we have published guidance on the principles of a phased return in the annotated training grant guidance. A final version of this will be published on 1 September.

Question (new): What is the basis of the requirement to offset phased return against leave rather than allowing additional extensions to cover the agreed time off during phased return?

Answer: There is a limit on funded extensions for studentships. Using leave to account for the hours or days where the student is not studying maintains that limit in a way that is consistent and fair across students with a variety of different needs.

Question (new): Where phased return is agreed, must it always be fixed for a 4-week period in the first instance, and may now only be renewed for a single 4-week extension?

Answer: No – while the phased return “should” be organised over four weeks, this is not a “must”. There is also no guidance on what happens within that four weeks – for example, it is acceptable to organise a phased return that lasts only two weeks.

Generally, it is best practice to arrange a return over four weeks as this should give the student and staff some certainty while also ensuring that there is a set review point. This means that even if the last week was a return to full time, for example, you are able to ensure the student is coping with the return to their normal study pattern. However, you have flex if you need it.

We would encourage you to discuss the student's needs with them and the rules are there to help you support them.

Reasonable adjustments

Question: Please, could you clarify: reasonable adjustments (new TGC 3.4.5) – does it include students with chronic conditions?

Answer: Yes, a student with one or more [chronic conditions](#) can qualify as disabled. In the training grant conditions, “disability” takes the same meaning as in the Equality Act 2010 (in England, Wales and Scotland) and in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (in Northern Ireland). A chronic condition can meet the definition of a disability where it means the person has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Question: Can I ask about the offer letter, is that the admissions offer or the funding offer (or both)?

Answer: From 1 October 2025, TGC 3.4.5 will require you to inform persons who may become UKRI funded students that if they are disabled they can request reasonable adjustments at the earliest opportunity, including (but not limited to) in any prospectus material and in communications offering a person a studentship (such as an offer letter to the student).

Question: Re offer letters and reasonable adjustments info, is this generic or is it supposed to be specific to the individual? Hopefully the former as we can't expect our Disability Services to assess lots of applicants surely?

Answer: Either generic or specific advice would meet our requirement.

Question: When will we learn more about potential additional support for those with long term health conditions or caring for those with long term health conditions/disabilities, where, for instance, medical leave may not offer the support they need as they can continue to work but not in the same way as others, but rather a reasonable adjustment is that they simply need longer to complete. This would be similar to, for instance, giving additional time for Undergrad and Masters students work for those with disabilities as a standard reasonable adjustment.

Answer: As set out in the policy statement we will publish an update on this in April.

Question: How can Needs Assessment be done before the study start in the case of overseas students?

Answer: The requirement is only that you inform students of the availability of reasonable adjustments. We are also amending our DSA Framework so that *if* the needs assessment is undertaken before the study starts, you can reclaim that cost. It is essential that needs assessments also be available after the start of the studentship for a range of reasons.

Also please note that [an international student may be able to travel to the UK before their course starts](#).

Question: If part-time study is the result of a reasonable adjustment , so could be any fraction (TGC 5.3), should the full (1.0 FTE) stipend be paid or only the fraction of PT study?

Answer: Stipends for part time study should be paid at the rate, for example, a student studying 0.5 FTE should receive 50% of the stipend.

Question: If it is recommended that a student with a disability has additional time say 3 months to complete a PhD would this be possible to extend the funding for this reason as this would not normally go through DSA and often an organisation would fund this but could this now be charged to a grant instead?

Answer: The RO would need to fund the additional time from sources other than the UKRI grant.

Question (updated): Have all of the changes outlined in the annotated T&Cs document been confirmed? At the DAS session last week, there was talk about IF the changes are agreed, then can/how will ROs implement these. This suggests that some of the changes might not be in the final T&Cs when we see those? The condition in particular was the ability to give a student with a disability longer time to complete based on their disability meaning they student at a slower rate.

Answer: The policy statement published in January set out that all of the changes to the TGCs have been confirmed, but that we are still considering whether it is possible for UKRI to provide a student with additional time to study if they study at a slower pace through the UKRI DSA Framework (see page 48 of the policy statement). In line with the commitment in the policy statement, we provided an update in April 2025. This stated that it is not currently possible for us to introduce this change.

Question: My understanding is that we have always had to fund reasonable adjustments from core funding – which we have done – so it would be good to have guidance on how we might apply for (and be granted) support from the DSA.

Answer: While the research councils have operated a harmonised DSA Framework for a number of years, students are occasionally recruited on grants that are not subject to the training grant conditions. We note in the policy statement that we are considering this issue. If your grant has not had access to DSA please email talent@ukri.org

Question (new): Can you please clarify whether we should be writing to offer holders to make it clear that they can have an assessment at this stage (for DSA changes).

Answer: This may be a good idea, but our requirement applies from 1 October. You have been under a separate legal duty to provide reasonable adjustments to disabled students since at least 2010 (in England, Wales and Scotland), as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

UKRI Disabled Students' Allowance Framework

Question (new): Will it be possible to claim for DSA assessments completed before September 2025 for students starting in September 2025?

Answer: Yes.

Question: For DSA, if an applicant has a study needs assessment and then doesn't ultimately enrol on their programme, would this cost become ineligible on the grant?

Answer: The needs assessment will still be eligible for funding, but for equipment purchased before the studentship starts to be eligible you must seek for this to be returned and not be able to obtain a refund from the supplier.

Question (new): If a needs assessment is arranged and equipment is provided in advance of studentship but the student doesn't end up starting - equipment providers are unlikely to take back equipment. Can the RO claim back the costs?

Answer: If the equipment is recovered from the student and (as you set out) the supplier will not allow a return, then yes the cost can be recovered from UKRI. You will need to state that you have recovered the equipment and that it cannot be returned on the form.

Note equipment does not need to be recovered if the student has enrolled and subsequently leaves, as is set out in the UKRI Disabled Students' Allowances Framework.

Question: Disability question: can a DSA be extended to a student if they have an unfunded programme extension to complete/submit their thesis?

Answer: Yes, the DSA Framework has been amended to allow existing adjustments to continue for 18 months after the end of the studentship or until the student has submitted any corrections after their viva, whichever the sooner.

Question (new): Is the process and annual timeframe for universities to claim from UKRI for DSA equivalent support changing?

At this point (May 2025) we have not made any changes and currently require DSA forms to be submitted by 31 October. We are however considering whether the deadline should change in the future, to move workload on ROs from October. If we change our deadline this will be communicated to grant holders.

Question (new): Can current students request a new assessment based on the new DSA framework?

Answer: The DSA Framework has never limited students to a single needs assessment. This is important because students' needs can change during the course of their studentship.

That said, while the updated DSA Framework allows more costs to be drawn from UKRI (notably adapted furniture for use on site), the RO or provider should already have been providing such furniture at its own expense in the previous framework.

Question (new): Does the Needs Assessment need to be conducted by an external provider? Or can we do it in house? Is there a standardised assessment you expect to see?

Answer: The DSA Framework states that "the student will normally have to undergo an impartial assessment of need to identify the study-related support required." We generally assume impartial means external. If you were undertaking a needs assessment internally, you would need to be able to demonstrate that this was appropriately impartial and by someone suitably proficient at conducting needs assessments.

It is not UKRI's role to set a standardised needs assessment. It is the legal responsibility of the provider to ensure that they are assessing needs in a way that is compliant with equality law.

Question (new): For equipment at the PGRs home and campus, is it either or, i.e. are costs for equipment for both home AND campus eligible?

Answer: The assessment should be based on the student's needs – do they need to study both at home and on campus? If so, then both are eligible.

Question (new): Is furniture limited to desks, tables and chairs?

Answer: Desks, tables and chairs are the items of furniture that are most commonly required, but the word "furniture" takes its normal meaning so is not solely limited to these items. If there is an occasion where you cannot determine whether an item is an item of furniture, please contact us using the relevant details listed in the DSA Framework.

Question (new): References to Research Organisation in the DSA Framework are presumably incorrect (e.g. assessment of DSA) - this should actually be the 'provider'?

Answer: No, the references in the DSA Framework are correct.

We require that the research organisation (that is, the organisation named on the grant) be responsible for ensuring all partners deliver the training in line with our conditions, including those of the DSA Framework. The funding for DSA is provided through an additional funding stream on the grant, that the research organisation must then distribute to third parties as appropriate.

Notwithstanding our requirements, the provider at which the student is based has a number of relevant legal duties, including to provide reasonable adjustments, under data protection and likely under consumer law.

Question (new): Does the extension of DSA support to 18 months after the funding period apply to students whose funding period ended before April 2025? AND Can we reinstate DSA funded support for existing students whose funding period ended before April 2025 and have not yet submitted their theses?

Answer: No, it only applies to students whose funding period ends after 31 April 2025 when the new framework was published.

Question (new): We have a part time student needing DSA support renewed as their current DSA funded laptop is failing after 5 years and exceeded the warranty. May we fund a new machine/or updates/fixes?

Answer: As you note, there are conditions regarding warranties within the DSA Framework, but some students' period of study may exceed these. There are also conditions on when a laptop can be claimed and the value that may be claimed.

You have a duty to provide disability support throughout the studentship. Students' needs can change so needs assessments can be undertaken at any time to inform a change to the type of support provided, including the introduction or removal of some support. Even where a student's needs have not changed, some types of support may require maintenance or replacement, a change in service provider, contract renegotiation etc. so that the reasonable adjustment can continue to be provided. DSA claims are made annually in arrears, providing

research organisations with the flexibility needed to claim support costs that are eligible under the DSA Framework.

Question (new): The UKRI DSA Framework (April 2025) confirms: "UKRI does not offer support for extensions to the UKRI studentship through DSA." ... Please can you help us understand why UKRI has taken this decision and how we navigate this?

Answer: In the policy statement, we said that we would explore whether we should allow funding extensions on the grounds of disability and confirm our position on whether we could introduce extensions through DSA for the 2025-26 academic year. This is separate to extensions that result from medical leave or additional leave.

To help us better understand the potential of allowing additional time, we invited colleagues from the higher education community to a roundtable meeting earlier this year. We have received the report we commissioned on this discussion which we will publish in due course, alongside our response. The report makes a number of recommendations that deserve careful consideration.

What is clear is that such a change is likely to be complex and, currently, there is no simple way for UKRI to amend existing schemes to provide additional time. We are therefore not able to introduce the change for 2025-26, and we have amended TGC 6.1.1 and removed TGC 8.2.4 (previously marked as 'subject to confirmation') in the annotated TGCs.

In the meantime, supporting disabled students remains a priority and we are retaining all our other changes that support this group of students. This includes requiring you to alert students to the possibility of adjustments at an early stage, funding needs assessments earlier, removing our requirement for medical evidence, allowing up to a year of medical leave with stipend paid, and allowing additional leave where reasonable adjustments are not put in place.

These changes – in combination with the efforts of people working across the sector – will make significant progress in addressing concerns about the level of support provided to disabled students.

Responsibilities

Question: Where students are part of a consortium, which can comprise up to 8 institutions, is there an expectation for the policies across the 8 institution to harmonise so that all students are supported the same way? AND Some of these changes will require policy changes at the institutional level. For multi-institution partnerships, this is challenging given the different policy frames that are operational in different departments. Any support or guidance for this type of challenge?

Answer: It is not a requirement that institutions within a consortium harmonise. While we recognise the desirability for all students in a cohort to be treated under the same policies, this is not always possible for students registered at different organisations. What is important is that each student knows the policies that apply to them and why these may be different to other students in their cohort.

We appreciate that many institutions will need time to adapt to the new conditions, and that multi-institution partnerships often find that different partners have different rules, frameworks or requirements. In setting out our thinking in the Policy Statement we hope to assist the sector in considering what action it might need to take.

Question: Most universities use a studentship agreement based on the Russell Group for UKRI studentships receiving funding from an industry partner. Will UKRI work with such group or similar to help update this template. Of particular note is the obligations to allow special leave and extensions. Will industry be expected to support the costs of this?

Answer: Yes, we have recently been approached by the Russell Group and are happy to work with them (and others) on this. We also require that new partnership agreements for studentships starting after 1 October 2026 reflect the changes.

Question: Is there new guidance on place of tenure? Is there flexibility for the case of students who request a remote PhD if they have additional needs (young family, caring responsibilities, etc.)?

Answer: TGC 5.2.4 states that "Both home and International Students must be resident in the UK for the majority of their studies and any time spent overseas should be for the purposes of fieldwork/long-term attachment." The current training grant guidance also states that the student must live within a reasonable travel time of their RO or collaborative organisation to ensure that they are able to maintain regular contact with their department and supervisor. This remains unchanged.

Question (new): What's the responsibility is really "Research Organisation" rather than Higher Education Provider, as many grants are consortiums.

Answer: In the grant conditions, there's a specific definition of Research Organisation which is "The organisation to which the Training Grant is awarded and which takes responsibility for the management of the research training programme and the accountability of funds provided."

Even for a consortium, there will only be one Research Organisation – the organisation awarded the grant by UKRI. They distribute funding and are the one required in the grant conditions to ensure the compliance of the others.

However, unless you have some arrangement in place, the legal onus for complying with equality law, consumer law etc., is likely to lie with the institution where the student is based or registered.

In short: every provider needs to ensure they are compliant with the law and other regulations; the RO needs to ensure its partners are compliant with the grant conditions.

Question (new): What if a student challenges a condition? For example, we have applied UKRI's condition but the student has interpreted what a 12 month rolling period is differently to UKRI's expectation on how this is calculated? What advice should we give the student?

Answer: We seek to foster an open and positive culture of listening to feedback and sharing learning that encourages students, and others, to have confidence that they will be treated fairly.

If a student believes they have identified an area where you are not complying with our conditions, they are likely to want to raise this with you in the first instance, and you will want to ensure you are compliant with our condition and any other obligations on you. If you or they wish to contact us then you or they may do so. If we share the concerns we may seek to address these with you directly or consider the issue as part of wider assurance work.

It is also a requirement that you have a policy to support the efficient and satisfactory identification and resolution of complaints from students (TGC 2.12).

Question (new): TGC 3.4.4 requires that if an RO/provider considers there to be a conflict or tension between a reasonable adjustment it is providing and a UKRI practice, it should be reported to UKRI. Can you give an example of when a tension might arise between the RO and the UKRI?

Answer: We cannot provide an example as where we had identified possible issues we have resolved them through the revisions to the training grant conditions.

The intent of the condition is to ensure that, if a tension does arise in the future there is clarity over where responsibility lies to resolve them.

Stipend

Question: On co-funding, can we take the October 2025 uprate from the grant if partners cannot provide this due to contracts already been agreed/funds received?

Answer: No.

Question (new): Where industry match funding falls short due to stipend uplifts, can we charge this to the grant underspend? AND Can you confirm that we can pay the October fees and stipend increase from the grant if external co-funders cannot cover this?

Answer: You need to look carefully at the co-funding agreement that you have. We expect you to cover any co-funding commitments you may have made. How those factored in price increases depends on the agreement itself and whether, for example, it was arranged as a percentage or fixed cash contribution. If the percentage contribution reduces, please be sure to update the studentship record to reflect that.

Question: Can I confirm you can draw the cost of the stipend uplift from UKRI grants for incorporated students? It won't matter that this is less than 50% funding?

Answer: No, this is not possible.

Question: Where a student receives an enhanced stipend, for example from industry, would the expectation be that sick leave is paid at the enhanced rate? And if so, would the company be expected to provide the additional funding or would it be taken from the grant?

Answer: Yes, the expectation is that any paid leave is paid at the student's normal, in this case enhanced, rate. You will need to follow the conditions and guidance on co-funding at the time – see TGC 8.4.1

Question: Policy statement 6.15: please can we have clarification on "...allow the provider, with the RO's permission, to start a student on the stipend that will apply for the rest of the academic year".

Answer: The academic year for stipends will now start on 1 October. Say the stipend was due to rise on that date from £19,000 to £20,000. A student is due to start on 12 September. The rule means that a student can be paid £20,000 pro rata from 12 September; there's no need to annualise the stipend for 18 days.

Question: Does this mean ROs should pay stipend earlier than usual OR give additional stipend e.g. bring forward October payment to September but make that payment last OR award additional money for September?"

Answer: No, you do not need to bring forward payment runs. In fact, the condition states that the increase must apply "no later than the first stipend payment *after* 1 October" to give you the flexibility to pay the updated rate from a date in October if this is your normal practice. See TGC 2.10. You would however need to ensure that that payment run reflects the updated stipend rate – you could not leave that to a future payment run.

Question (updated): You have not addressed the increase in the stipend and how that impacts on finances in training grants. Can you discuss how you have considered the impact of that on training grants budgets and financial flexibility to deliver these T&Cs?

Answer: Awarding councils have contacted Project Leads (previously known as Pls) about the changes.

Question: Stipend overpayment to students can occur from time to time - does UKRI give guidance on reclaiming overpayments made in error.

Answer: No, but generally an overpayment could not be met from the grant. In the event that the overpayment is because a student has left, TGC 2.8 states that you are expected to take reasonable steps to recover monies paid to students in advance who leave or whose studentship is terminated, any unrecovered funds must be met by you and cannot be charged to the training grant. This remains unchanged.

Student portal

Question (new): When will the new system that replaces JE-S be launched? AND When will we see the "Student Portal" on The Funding Service?

Answer (updated from the answer provided in the webinar): We are working for the system to be fully operational for September 2025. Our priority is that all new student records are created on the same system. Therefore, please do not create any new studentship records for 2025 in Je-S. This priority may mean a delay in migrating the records of existing students.

Further communications are being developed currently. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the studentship data project studentshipdatapoint@ukri.org.

Question (updated): When will the Je-S studentship function be retired and replaced? Will HEI admins be offered training on the new system?

Answer: Further details will be communicated to project leads and others who work on training grants in due course. [Sign up to our newsletter to be sure of getting update.](#)

Question (updated): About the new system replacing Je-S, for studentships - could UKRI ensure that the new system will be configured to allow ROs to record all types of leave, DSA/reasonable adjustments etc? AND are there any plans to capture this leave of absence in Je-S in line with the latest changes through a drop-down box?

Answer: No. The new student portal is being designed to provide data to us for our administration of grants; as with Je-S, the new system is not designed to support your day to day management. In part this reflects that ROs have a wide variety of requirements that we could not adequately reflect.

Submission dates

Question: Will there be any uniformity in submissions within the funding period for all the councils?

Answer: We do not currently have a harmonised position on expected submission dates. We are aware of the issue and considering whether we can provide further harmonisation at a future date.

Question: Some UKRI studentships are funded for 3.5 years. However, most ROs expect submission within 4 years. ROs cannot be expected to impose different expectations on students according to the source of their funding. Would you agree that the RO's rules on the period available for a PhD should trump those imposed by individual funders? AND The T&Cs describe the duration of the studentships. Is the thesis due at the end of the studentship or can the thesis be submitted later? (If there is a discrepancy between these dates, having students work on their thesis when they are not paid a stipend is not good for their wellbeing.)

Answer: The [Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training](#) states that ROs through supervisors should support students to complete their doctoral training (including wider training and submission of their doctoral thesis or equivalent) within their funded period by ensuring individual doctoral projects are designed to be achievable within that timeframe. It also states that ROs should ensure students receive paid leave throughout the doctorate, with additional leave as required, in accordance with training grant terms and conditions. It goes on to say that this may involve paid extensions to the funded period.

While we do not presently have harmonised expectations on submission dates, we note that in England the OfS monitors completion rates as parts of condition B3, and we expect ROs regulated by OfS to comply with its requirements.

We also expect all ROs across the UK to comply with consumer law, including the requirement that communicate with students and potential students in a way that is clear, fair and transparent.

Question (new): Is submitting within the funded period a MUST? Most ROs have an unpaid writing-up period - what do we record in (what was) JeS as it asks for funding end date and a submission date as if they can be different. Only ESRC appear to be strict about submitting within the funded period.

Answer: Since 2018 UKRI's Training Grant Guidance has stated that "Councils expect doctoral projects to be designed and supervised in such a way that Students are able to submit their thesis within the funded period, as defined at the outset of the project." This is also underlined in the Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training.

ESRC has issued further guidance for its investments that started in 2024.

Question (updated): Policy document 3.3: "Recognising that providers are ultimately responsible for the welfare of their students, a further change will make it explicit that a provider may supplement any of our provisions for leave with funds from other sources. If this provision is used, it is likely that the provider will arrange to continue providing a stipend from its own funding sources after the end of the UKRI Studentship" This clashes with ESRC requirement that student submission date is the same as funding end date: can we request more guidance about how the RC will apply this?

Answer: On the whole, where the studentship is extended the expected submission date should move too. We provided further guidance on the steps to take when TGC 8.0.3 is used in April.

Question (new): For its 2023 grants, ESRC requires the submission date to align with funding end date. How does this align with TGC 8.0.3? And if we can supplement leave with RO funds, and this can be done after the studentship has ended, how does this sit with the requirement to submit within the funded period?

Answer: Only for students funded from ESRC DTP or CDT with a funding start date from October 2024, the funding end date and expected thesis submission date recorded on Je-S are the same. The ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide further states that where a student becomes pregnant or experiences problems relating to accident, illness, or exceptional personal circumstances during the course of their study, ROs can consider a case for extension or suspension to their studentship in line with the terms and conditions. A period of extension and or suspension would move the funding end date and, therefore, the expected submission due date.

The guide will be updated shortly to ensure there is clear guidance for when an RO wishes to fund a students' additional time from other sources.

Note, the ESRC Funding Guide only applies to grants from ESRC and does not apply to other councils' grants.

Question: RE: TGC 6.2.1 Students may submit their thesis prior to the end of their award. Where the Student continues to undertake - (was) work (now) study - that is directly linked to their thesis, it is permissible to continue their funding from the Training Grant until the end of the quarter in which the thesis is first submitted. Q - what are your definitions of "work" compared to "study". What activities would you consider falling under the study category? AND TGC 6.2.1 re early submission. What was the driver for changing word from work to study?

Answer: We have updated the language in the training grant conditions for consistency. While students might be considered to "work" (for example, secondary school pupils do "homework"), given the attention to employment law we felt replacing the word "work" with "study" better reflected that in the majority of cases students on training grants are not workers or employees.

Regarding TGC 6.2.1 it is still acceptable for funding to continue to the student for them to continue their studies after submitting their thesis and until their original funding end date.

UKRI does not provide guidance on the difference between a worker and a student. ROs will need to be mindful of any advice from HMRC on the application of employment law.

Other

Question (new) What is the timeline for implementation of any changes that depend on new systems?

Answer: The deadline is 1 October. We don't dictate systems, and interim measures might be needed and is acceptable, so long as students have access to the support.

Question (new): What further changes can we reasonably expect in the September edition of the TGCs? (Will they only be clarifications based on feedback received by 1 July, or are other, more significant, essentially new items a possibility?)

Answer: You now have a consistent set of changes. The only other changes we currently plan to make are where we refer to Je-S, which will be decommissioned shortly.

There is always a small chance another change needs to be made – we're not planning on it – and if it does we will be sure to highlight it.

Question (new): There have always been some rules that are somewhat hidden, and don't appear in grant conditions – e.g. eligibility, if a student has previously had a different UKRI studentship. Is this is still the case?

Answer: As a grant lead you will need to read both the training grant conditions and the training grant guidance. Note that, as stated in the policy statement, this review has considered the training grant conditions from the perspective of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and some other changes as part of Collective Talent Funding.

Question (new): 'Place of Tenure' appears only in guidance. The guidance states that the student MUST live within a reasonable travel time ...

Thank you for flagging this. We will consider whether the place of tenure should be incorporated into a future iteration of the Training Grant Conditions.

Question (new): Can a UKRI funded student be 50% funded by Diamond Light Source or does this fall under STFC funding?

Answer: Diamond Light Source is operationally independent of UKRI (including STFC). Students on UKRI funded training grants at Diamond Light Source would benefit from these changes, including where they are part-funded by a UKRI council such as STFC.

Question (new): Is there a pdf of EPSRC training grant funding guide?

Answer: EPSRC does not currently have a training grant funding guide but will have made specific conditions clear as part of the grant offer.

Question (new): Can we still reclaim costs if, up until now, we have had to fund these from our QR monies?

Answer: you can only claim costs from training grants where these are in line with the training grant conditions active at the time of the activity.

Quality related Research (QR) funding is unhypothecated, meaning, if your organisation receives this from Research England, it is largely free to use it how it sees fit. Some organisations may draw a direct line from the Research Degree Programme element of QR to support for individual students, but this is not a requirement.

Question: In relation to complaints, how do students complain about UKRI Ts & Cs e.g. if RO has to implement a condition which the student feels is unfair? UKRI website not clear on this.

Answer: Generally we do not accept complaints from students, as the onus is on an RO and provider to provide the training to the student and the student would address any complaints to the RO. If the RO felt that it could not provide fair treatment to students because of our requirements, then it should raise this with us. There are numerous channels through which this might happen, which could include through the UKRI complaints process. You can find more information about [UKRI's complaints policy on our website](#).

Question: Can you clarify what you mean by 'working from home'? Does this mean a student's home country or city or their residence where they are studying?

Answer: With reference to the purchase of specialist equipment for a disabled student to work from home, the UKRI DSA Framework refers to this as their place of residence.

Question: Would the cost of software systems to record leave be an eligible cost to charge to the grant?

Answer: Not directly. The fee covers UKRI's contribution to ROs running costs; English universities also receive QR funding from Research England, with Medr, the Scottish Funding Council and Department for the Economy Northern Ireland providing some equivalent support in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Question: Can (and from where) will project running costs be increased to cover potential increased length of candidature (in the event of extended leave)? Are there limits?

Answer: When the studentship is extended you should continue drawing a fee as well as the stipend from the grant.

Question: Apologies if I've missed this, but will the guidance be fleshed out on how the RTSG element can be spent? Clear examples of what's allowed/not allowed?

Answer: No. The Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) – an element of training grants used for research related expenses – was not part of this review.

Question: Will individual research councils plan to revise their subordinate documentation (e.g. funding guides) in response to the changes in the terms and conditions?

Answer: Where councils have specific terms and conditions (for example, in the grant award letter), these will continue to apply and superseded the Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant.

We are considering how to better harmonize councils' approaches, but this goes beyond the EDI review that was the focus of this policy statement.

Question: Would it be open to Research Councils to set requirements in their funding guides which are more onerous for ROs than the UKRI terms and conditions? For example, could a Research Council say that an RO 'must' grant extensions for leave lasting more than one week, even though UKRI's terms and conditions say that an extension 'may' be provided for leave lasting more than one week and 'must' be provided for leave lasting more than one month?

Answer: These changes have been overseen and agreed by talent leads in all of UKRI's councils.

Question: When will Research Councils be expected to update their own guidelines to reflect UKRI changes?

Answer: Individual councils will update their own guidance according to their usual schedules.

Question: I am very much in favour of the vast majority of the changes. However, many of these changes transfer yet more workload from Councils to DTPs/CDTs, and create additional workload in some areas. Does UKRI recognise this? (I assume there will be no financial support for this increased workload?)

Answer: Yes, we considered this in the policy statement. On balance we feel that the revised conditions better reflect where responsibilities should lie and, in aligning to existing requirements, hope to have minimised additional workload. In the medium term, the changes should provide ROs with more flexibility to support students with less recourse to us, which should help reduce bureaucracy.

We are very grateful to everyone who has and continues to contribute to this work and hope that after the initial implementation, the changes this will benefit staff as well as students.

Question: We are currently making offers to our future cohort starting in 2025. Is there any guidance on what to tell them about future changes to UKRI T&Cs which are not available yet but to which they will be subject?

Answer: [The future training grant conditions are already available on our website.](#)

Question: This is all super helpful. Will the video be available after this webinar?

Answer: Yes, the recordings are available on YouTube here:

- [Link to the recording of the March webinar \(YouTube\)](#)

- [Link to the recording of the May webinar \(YouTube\)](#)

Question (updated): Will you be holding more of these sessions throughout the year? I expect we will have more questions as we progress with the implementation

Answer: The May webinar was the last planned webinar. If you have further questions or would like us to come and speak to a group or meeting, please email talent@ukri.org

Question: Not a question, just a comment: these changes are very welcome. Well done.

Answer: Thank you.