



UKRI Terms and Conditions for COVID-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extension Funding

1. Background and objective

- 1.1. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is issuing a COVID-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extension Funding allocation to eligible UK Research Organisations (ROs) to support additional costed extensions to UKRI-funded doctoral studentships (beyond those already supported by the initial UKRI policy announced on 9 April 2020) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2. We expect ROs to use Phase 2 funding to ensure that UKRI-funded doctoral students, who have not submitted their doctoral thesis and have not already received a UKRI-funded extension under the initial UKRI policy, receive supported extensions on a needs-priority basis. More information on the policy is noted in the *UKRI COVID-19 Phase 2 doctoral extension funding policy statement*.
- 1.3. The award of Phase 2 funding is contingent on the RO submitting a Governance Plan to UKRI and accepting the Terms and Conditions listed in this document. Our expectations for the Governance Plan are outlined in the *Guidance on completing the UKRI COVID-19 Phase 2 Training Grant Governance Plan*.

2. General Terms and Conditions

- 2.1. These Terms and Conditions and the use of the Phase 2 studentship extension funding apply to doctoral students funded by the following Councils within UKRI:
 1. Arts and Humanities Research Council
 2. Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
 3. Economic and Social Research Council
 4. Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
 5. Medical Research Council
 6. Natural Environment Research Council
 7. Science and Technology Facilities Council
- 2.2. Further reference to UKRI here refers only to Councils listed in Paragraph 2.1.
- 2.3. The UKRI training grant from which UKRI students are normally funded from are referred to as the 'home' training grant throughout these Terms and Conditions.
- 2.4. The UKRI COVID-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extension Funding will be given directly to ROs through a block training grant award, to be active for 1 year between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, to provide flexibility to ROs regarding decision-making cycles, at the RO's discretion.
- 2.5. The UKRI COVID-19 Phase 2 training grant award holder will be an individual identified/nominated by the RO, who will have overall responsibility for the management and reporting of the award.
- 2.6. These Terms and Conditions are in addition to the UKRI standard [Training Grant Terms and Conditions](#) that apply to the home training grant.

3. Conditions on the use of UKRI Phase 2 Studentship Extension funding:

- 3.1. The decision on how to allocate Phase 2 funding rests with ROs in receipt of the award. The primary objective is noted in Section 1.2 and UKRI will require ROs to submit a Governance Plan, as per Section 1.3.
- 3.2. To be considered eligible to access these funds students must be at least 50% funded by UKRI.
- 3.3. Phase 2 funding can be used to support extensions for UKRI-funded doctoral students who have not submitted their doctoral thesis and have not already received a UKRI-funded extension for COVID-19 under the initial policy. Students whose funding end date was between 1 March 2020 and 31 March 2021 at the

announcement of the initial policy (9 April 2020) are not eligible. Funds also cannot be requested from this allocation to support case-by-case studentship extensions that have already been agreed under the initial UKRI policy.

- 3.4. Extensions will not be available for students with a funding start date of 1 March 2020 onwards, as the expectation is that doctoral students near the beginning of their training will be actively managing and planning their research proposal in accordance with the current circumstances.
- 3.5. All students and their supervisors should explore, if they have not already, what can be done to adapt their doctorate to ensure they can complete it within their funded period. This could mean adapting the research question, approach, or methodology, providing that this still enables the student to conduct a doctoral level research project. For some students this could result in their research project being different from that originally proposed.
- 3.6. Funded extensions should be allocated on a **needs-priority basis**, for those who have been unable to mitigate delays of COVID-19 or adjust their projects. Based on the UKRI Review findings, students in this priority group include students who at the time of the Review were in their penultimate year of funding and who have now recently gone into their final year of study (funding end date before or on 30 Sept 2021), or those students in other stages of their doctoral studies where project adaptation and mitigation may not be possible, for example disabled students, those with long-term illness, who are neurodivergent, or who have caring responsibilities.
- 3.7. ROs must ensure that all UKRI-funded students are treated fairly and have equal access and consideration in the decision-making process, by using an inclusive process that recognises the impact of the pandemic on individual personal circumstances of students.
- 3.8. This funding is not intended to cover 'time lost' due to COVID-19, but rather to address circumstances where, even with adjustments and mitigation, the student will be unable to complete their doctoral research within the funding period.
- 3.9. The majority of extension requests should be for **up to** 3 months of UKRI support. Where exceptional circumstances apply the RO could award longer extensions if funds are available.
- 3.10. ROs with Medical Research Council Clinical Research Training Fellowship (CRTF) award holders, who have recently gone into their final year of study (funding end date between 1 April 2021 and 30 Sept 2021), will be able to access clinical top-up funding, if these students are identified as a priority in the RO's decision-making process. UKRI will advise relevant ROs of the clinical top-up funds available to their organisation directly and the associated process for requesting these funds, where required.
- 3.11. As a minimum, it is expected that the home training grant holder should confirm if students are eligible to apply to the central RO process (e.g. they have not already received a UKRI-funded extension under the initial UKRI policy) and once a prioritised list of students has been determined for funded extensions, to confirm if the home training grant has any **existing** underspend. Underspend should be used in the first instance to support any funded extension, before drawing on the UKRI COVID-19 Phase 2 funding. Availability of existing home training grant underspend should not influence or contribute to the decision-making process. We do not wish to negatively impact on the experience of existing students, therefore, home training grant holders should not seek to generate additional or new underspend that may impact the current student offering.

- 3.12. Funding categories available
- 3.12.1. Funding will only cover the UKRI contribution level to the stipend (or equivalent) and fees of students. For EPSRC incorporated students, training grant holders should continue to liaise with EPSRC directly about agreed UKRI contribution levels (guidance on UKRI contributions have already been provided to EPSRC CDT directors as part of the final-year extensions guidance – any queries regarding this should be directed to students@epsrc.ukri.org).
 - 3.12.2. Funds cannot be used to cover non-UKRI contributions (for example where students are co-funded), including institutional sponsors or the public/private/voluntary sectors.
 - 3.12.3. For clinical doctoral students, UKRI contribution to salary can be requested (in place of stipend) where required. Clinical students who returned or increased clinical sessions during the delay should use underspend in their home training grant (due to NHS providing salary for this duration) in the first instance.
 - 3.12.4. For fees-only students, funds can be used to cover fees only.
 - 3.12.5. In line with the UKRI standard [Training Grant Terms and Conditions](#), UKRI fee costs will only cover a tuition fee. Separate college and bench fees for example may not be charged. A continuation fee for a student could be supported where this replaces a tuition fee. Continuation fees for students outside their funded period will not be supported.
 - 3.12.6. In exceptional circumstances, animal maintenance costs can be requested from the Phase 2 funding, if fully justified to the RO. Funding to support other research or project costs can be met from the students home training grant existing Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) funding and institutional or external sources. We expect the central RO process to liaise closely with the home training grant holder regarding any discussions about use of RTSG.

4. Financial conditions

- 4.1. The Phase 2 funding will be awarded in the 2021/22 financial year. As the Phase 2 training grant award is administered by NERC, payments dates will be the same as standard NERC training grants.
- 4.2. Payments from the Phase 2 funding to students who are identified as a priority for a funded extension in the RO's decision-making process should be made directly to the student and payment from home training grant suspended for the duration of the agreed extension.
- 4.3. Failure to supply details of expenditure may result in UKRI reclaiming the funds awarded.
- 4.4. UKRI reserves the right to vary the value of the Phase 2 funding during its lifetime in accordance with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Deflators published by HM Government or to consider any other Government decisions affecting the funding available to UKRI.
- 4.5. UKRI reserves the right to amend, and/or suspend future payments if funds have not been spent as reported in the Final Report.
- 4.6. UKRI reserves the right to terminate the Grant at any time, subject to reasonable notice and to any payment that UKRI agrees may be necessary to cover outstanding and unavoidable commitments.
- 4.7. Any under spending from the Phase 2 funding award as reported in the Final Report will be fully recovered and reconciled.
- 4.8. Organisations' overspending of the Phase 2 funding will not be met by UKRI.

5. Reporting and audit requirements for Phase 2 funding

- 5.1. Students in receipt of Phase 2 funding should have their funding end date updated on their home grant via the Student Details reporting function in Je-S.
- 5.2. If an extension is required to the home training grant due to a student receiving an extension through the Phase 2 funding, this should be requested through the standard mechanism via Je-S.
- 5.3. Organisations will be required to submit a Final Report at the end of the award on how funds have been spent and summary of the decision-making process that was implemented. The Final Report should include as a minimum, the full names of all students who have benefited from the funds, their home training grant council and reference number, and factors that contributed to the students needs for an extension (e.g. lack access to research resources and facilities; interruption of data collection and/or fieldwork; increased caring responsibilities; health and wellbeing affected; other – specify). The Final Report must be submitted via Je-S as an attachment with the Final Expenditure Statement. The normal requirements for expenditure must be entered into the Final Expenditure Statement available in Je-S.
- 5.4. Organisations may be asked to provide evidence of proportion funding distribution, including considerations taken to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion aspects were delivered.
- 5.5. UKRI reserves the right to call for periodic updates on the Phase 2 funding progress, visit the award holder, or request participation in evaluation studies. The Phase 2 funding award holding organisation must make all reasonable efforts, if so invited, to respond to requests for information or to attend events or activities organised by UKRI concerning the students supported by the Phase 2 policy, including requests or events after the grant end date.
- 5.6. Expenditure from the Phase 2 funding must be auditable and kept separate from expenditure paid from other sources of funding.
- 5.7. UKRI reserves the right to examine expenditure of the Phase 2 funding in the course of the award.
- 5.8. UKRI shall be entitled to inspect any financial or other records and procedures associated with the Phase 2 funding as are reasonably required to verify the regularity and propriety of the Phase 2 grant expenditure, or to appoint any other body or individual for the purpose of such inspection. This includes expenditure by Third Parties.
- 5.9. By accepting the Grant in Je-S you are agreeing that you accept the award and the Terms and Conditions as stated above. Please note, awards will only be paid once you have confirmed acceptance of the award and completed the Start Confirmation.