



## The Faculty of Population Health Sciences Covid-19 PhD Carers Fund: Supporting PhD Students with Caring Responsibilities During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Document type	Procedure
Scope	PhD students within the Faculty of Population Health Sciences (FPHS)
Applicability date	11 February 2021
Review date	March 2021
Approve date	04 February 2021
Approver	Prof Graham Hart (FPHS Dean)
Purpose	Offers information and guidance for PhD students on how to apply for financial assistance within FPHS to cover caring expenses while working from home and while lockdown measures are in place during the Covid-19 pandemic.
Version number	1.0
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Date	04 February 2021

## 1. Background

The lockdown measures that have been necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic are having a disproportionately negative impact on the life-work dynamics of UCL PhD students with caring responsibilities. There are a wide range of caring activities which need to be undertaken during this time which may be causing significant difficulties in managing working from home.

UCL has created a **Covid-19 Career Support Scheme** which aims to mitigate adverse impact caused by the pandemic that results in lost work productivity that may cause longer term career harm without additional support from UCL. Staff with caring responsibilities and who are being affected by national lockdown measures are strongly advised to apply for this scheme. Please visit the [Covid-19 Career Support Scheme pages](#) for further information and to apply.

The Faculty aims to provide some financial assistance to PhD students as they are not covered by the above scheme. The financial assistance is to help these postgraduate research students to achieve a better balance between caring and doing their PhD work while lockdown measures are in place. The Faculty has allocated **£3,000** for this purpose. Note that the fund is not a general hardship fund.

## 2. Eligibility

- 2.1. In order to be eligible for the FPHS Covid-19 PhD Carers Fund you need to be a PhD student within FPHS who has caring responsibilities.
- 2.2. PhD students who are also UCL staff members should apply via the UCL Covid-19 Career Support Scheme noted above.
- 2.3. Expense must occur during the financial year 2020/21 (1 August 2020 – 31 July 2021).

## 3. Procedure

- 3.1. Inform your supervisor that you are applying for this financial assistance.
- 3.2. Complete the online application form **by 26 February 2021**. The online form can be found in this link: <http://bit.ly/FPHSCaringPhD>
- 3.3. A small Faculty-level panel will consider the applications as quickly as possible and will allocate the funding according to need.
- 3.4. Successful applicants will be notified via email and an account code to which authorised expenditure should be charged will be indicated.
- 3.5. After the expenditure has been incurred, applicants should submit an expense claim form via [iExpenses](#), including receipts. **Expenses should be submitted** immediately after the expenditure had occurred and **no later than 30 March 2021**. Claimants should use the 'Exceptional Items' category on iExpenses.
- 3.6. Following submission of the expense claim, a [feedback form](#) should also be completed.

## 4. Conditions

- 4.1. For the purposes of this fund, 'Caring' can mean childcare, care of elderly or any other family member or dependants requiring help.
- 4.2. Claims up to £300 will be considered per person. In exceptional circumstances more funding may be allocated depending on funds available.
- 4.3. A [feedback form](#) following the submission of the expense claim needs to be completed.

4.4. Some examples of how the funds could be used are:

- Providing financial assistance to students with small children at home to buy teaching material (books, puzzles), or fund printing that can help the learning from home while parents work.
- If it can be done safely, having a person\* that can help to guide small children or children with special needs through their learning while the applicant undertakes work associated with their PhD.
- Funding to support care for an elderly person under the care of the applicant.
- Supporting childcare while attending an online conference taking place at times of the day where the child would normally be at school or when a child is usually under the care of the carer.
- Supporting childcare if the parents were already paying fees for nurseries that have been closed.

The funding cannot be used to fund items listed under the [Limitations section of the Covid-19 Career Support Scheme Guidance](#).

- 4.5. There must be an auditable record such as receipts for the cost of the childcare or caring. These must be submitted in order for the claim to be processed. Applicants are advised to submit their claims with receipts as soon as possible once the expenditure has been incurred and not later than **30 March 2021**.
- 4.6. The allocation of funds will be decided by a small Faculty panel chaired by the FPHS Vice-Dean (EDI). Priority will be given to applicants without alternative access to funds.
- 4.7. In the event that the funding is no longer needed or used, applicants should notify the Faculty Office ASAP ([fphs.pa@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fphs.pa@ucl.ac.uk)) so that the funds can be redistributed.
- 4.8. The Fund and its conditions will be reviewed after the 31 March 2021.

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\* We recommend you use a registered childcare provider. However, we are aware that grandparents / family members / members of support networks are helpful sources of informal support particularly in these times. Please note that it is your responsibility to be aware of the law, and UCL accepts no liability for your choice of childcare support. Whilst receipts are preferable, the scheme has been designed to cover a range of situations, including those where receipts are not available. We will therefore accept handwritten receipts, or where they are not available, a declaration of use signed by yourself that confirms that the money has been used as per the original request.