

EPSRC Guidance on the Impact of COVID-19 on EPSRC students

To reduce 1:1 queries, please find guidance below regarding the support for EPSRC funded students relating to the impact of COVID-19.

EPSRC is taking a pragmatic approach to supporting students during this time and below we cover what we expect will be the most common impacts on students.

Events/activities

- In some cases, an activity (such as a conference or training course) due to be attended before the training grant end date will be postponed until after the grant end date. Providing the student can/wants to attend the new date please request a grant extension in the usual way. We will apply a no-cost extension to the grant to allow them to attend. To confirm (recognising it is most likely to be outside the student's funded period as well), as an exception we will allow the cost of attending this activity to be drawn from the grant even though it is beyond the student's funded period.
- In some cases, the individual student's funded period will be breached by a postponement, but not the training grant end date. In these cases, EPSRC will not apply a grant extension as this is unnecessary. However, we will allow the cost of attending this activity to be drawn from the grant even though it is beyond the student's funded period. We will not cover any other costs outside the funding period as per our usual T&Cs.

Self-isolation

- Where a student is ill, you should follow the standard T&Cs. Please follow guidance from Government regarding medical certificates.
- Where students are not ill, but self-isolating, you should not suspend their studentship.
 - In many cases students will be able to work from home even if the activities undertaken change. For short periods of self-isolation, even if they can't work, many students will have sufficient time left that they can make this up over the remainder of their doctorate. In these cases, extensions to funded periods should not be applied.
 - Where self-isolating undermines a student's ability to finish their doctorate within the funded period, an extension should be considered. In keeping with UKRI T&Cs, we would expect these to be costed extensions, funded in the first instance from any underspend on the grant. Where there is no underspend, EPSRC will reconcile this at the FES stage. Examples (not exhaustive) of when an extension may need to be applied include:
 - A significant period of self-isolation (we do not define significant as this is likely to be proportional to the time left in the funded period)
 - Postponement of critical activities where alternatives aren't available. An example would be experiments due to take place at a national/international facility which will delay the research for a significant amount of time.

To clarify, you should also apply this guidance to UKRI training grants issued by EPSRC (Doctoral Training Centre; Industrial Case Studentships; NPIF studentships; Doctoral Training Partnerships).

Hopefully this gives you sufficient information to advise your colleagues and students, Fellows funded on DTP awards and Supervisors. However, please continue to contact the students@epsrc.ukri.org mailbox as needed.