Coronavirus: Impact on UKRI-supported research

UK Research and Innovation is aware the ongoing situation regarding coronavirus has significantly impacted the research and innovation community and the nature of these impacts may evolve and increase over the coming weeks and months.

Our priority is the safety and well-being of people, both in the support we provide our own staff and in ensuring our investment support allows HEIs and businesses to prioritise the well-being of their teams.

UKRI is working to understand the nature of any impacts on our funded projects to ensure the appropriate support or advice is in place via our Councils and grants teams. This work is ongoing.

UKRI is taking a very pragmatic approach. For instance, where travel is impacted, if researchers or students cannot travel due to government/official advice, or it poses a risk to the individual (due to an underlying medical condition etc.), this can be charged to the grant in line with any other cost. If that cost cannot be absorbed by any overall underspend on the grant then UKRI will cover that small addition.

In the same circumstances, no cost extension requests to grants would be allowed.

Impact of COVID-19 - UKRI Training Grants Specific Guidance

UKRI 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.

Self-isolation

- Where a student is ill, you should follow the standard T&Cs. For the purposes of the Ts and Cs, UKRI will accept any variation in Government’s guidance 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, UKRI 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. Examples could include experiments due to take place at a national/international facility which will delay the research for a significant amount of time; access to critical archives being unavailable for a significant period.

**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, UKRI 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.

We realise that the situation is fast moving and that this guidance may need to be updated as the situation develops.