

## UKRI COVID-19 Continuing Doctoral Extension Funding

### Application Guidance

- UKRI has permitted further flexibility on the use of UKRI training grants to enable continuing consideration of institutional COVID-19 doctoral studentship extension cases. Strathclyde has carefully balanced this approach to supporting further studentship extensions with ensuring that the quality of the student experience and support for future student recruitment are maintained.
- A key component of UKRI policy on COVID-19 impacts on postgraduate study relates to the priority for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and supervisors to work together to adjust projects and mitigate for the delays caused by COVID-19. While we anticipate that the majority of students earlier in their studies will be able to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, we recognise that in some cases this may not be possible.
- Associated with this, we understand that some students will face circumstances which may impact their ability to complete the doctoral research within their funded period; this group could include disabled students, those with a long-term illness, who are neurodivergent, or who have caring responsibilities. Based on this, the Continuing Doctoral Extension process is intended to facilitate extensions for UKRI-funded PGRs who are unable to mitigate delays or suitably adjust their projects due to such on-going circumstances or developments following previous UKRI COVID-19 extension phases.
- *In exceptional circumstances* extension applications could relate to students who had an earlier request turned down or who have already received an extension under the Phase 1 or Phase 2 processes.
- The Strathclyde-based **UKRI COVID-19 Continuing Doctoral Extension Funding** scheme will be managed by the Deputy Associate Principal (DAP) Research & Knowledge Exchange (R&KE) and the PGR Funding Team in RKES. To be eligible to apply, students must:
  - be registered at Strathclyde;
  - be funded through a Strathclyde centrally-managed UKRI training grant (EPSRC DTP, EPSRC ICASE; EPSRC NPIF; and EPSRC Mathematical Sciences);
  - be at least 50% funded by UKRI; and
  - not have submitted their doctoral thesis.
- The **UKRI COVID-19 Continuing Doctoral Extension Funding Application Form** should be completed in partnership between the student and supervisor and should be emailed to [doctoral-covid19-enquiries@strath.ac.uk](mailto:doctoral-covid19-enquiries@strath.ac.uk). See below for contact details should students wish to discuss any matters directly and in confidence.
- Applications will be accepted for consideration on a rolling basis. However, in line with UKRI recommendations, it is anticipated that requests should normally be considered 6 months prior to the end of the student's current funded period where possible, when the success of mitigations and level of additional need by the individual can be best assessed.
- Should a student wish to make a make an application for an extension where the supervisor does not support such a submission, students are asked to contact the [PGR Funding Team](#), who will provide guidance on the application process. Supervisors will then be contacted separately for an independent statement. Both the application and supervisor statement will be submitted to the reviewers for consideration and assessment.
- 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.

- Funding can be applied for to cover stipend and standard tuition fees at the agreed UKRI contribution levels, but cannot be used to cover the extension of co-funding costs from non-UKRI sources, including institutional sponsors or the public/private/voluntary sectors. For fees-only students, extension funds can be used to cover fees only.
- The funding can be used to cover fully-funded extensions of **up to 3 months**. Whilst recognising the constraints of the UKRI doctoral research training grant funding, Strathclyde can approve extensions of longer durations if deemed appropriate and justified. If co-funders are unable to contribute towards the cost of the extension, the UKRI contribution can be used to fully support a shorter extension. For example, if a student funded at 50% level by UKRI is deemed to require a 6 month extension period (and the funding partner is not able to contribute to the costs of the extension), an extension of up to 3 months could be granted to such a student at the standard full stipend level from the UKRI funds.
- For extension requests relating to studentships funded by UKRI training grants which are not managed centrally at Strathclyde (e.g. individual CDT awards and externally held DTP grants, such as the ESRC SGSSS and the AHRC SGSAH), the 'home' training grant programme should be approached.
- A group of cross-disciplinary **UKRI COVID-19 Continuing Doctoral Extension Funding Reviewers** will act as assessors to inform and deliver funding award decisions. The chair of the group will be the DAP (R&KE) and members will include the Vice-Deans/Associate-Deans (Research/PGR) from all Faculties, the Director of RKES, the Head of Disability & Wellbeing Services, and the University's Gender Equality Officer within the Department of Access, Equality and Inclusion.
- Applications with sensitive personal information will be assessed by key reviewers, with potential inclusion of the DAP (R&KE), the Director of RKES, the Head of Disability & Wellbeing Services and/or the University's Gender Equality Officer. These applications will not be shared with the wider group.
- All applications will be reviewed by a minimum of 2 reviewers.
- UKRI COVID-19 Continuing Doctoral Extension funding is limited and, based on the detail provided, submissions will be reviewed and considered for funding by reviewers taking account of the following criteria:
  - (i) the levels of mitigation and adjustments to projects already made, where this has been possible, or why mitigation has not been possible or has been insufficient;
  - (ii) that relating to cases where adaptation and mitigation may not be possible, for example as related to disabled students, those with long-term illness, who are neurodivergent, or who have caring responsibilities; and
  - (iii) the risk relating to the student being unable to complete their doctoral research within the funding period.
- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (E,D&I) monitoring form, developed for the institutional UKRI COVID-19 Phase 2 extension process, to enable the University to report statistical data to UKRI, will continue to be used. Only aggregated, anonymised numerical data will be shared with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). No identifiable E,D&I information will be shared with UKRI. Responses will help us with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion monitoring; however, please note that it is not compulsory to complete the form, and that you can choose to not disclose information on the form. Additionally, please be assured that whether or not you choose to complete this form, the reviewers will have no access to this information or to any data provided, and it will have no impact on your application. Completed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion forms should be returned directly as a separate document by email to [rkes-res@strath.ac.uk](mailto:rkes-res@strath.ac.uk).

- If students would like to discuss any matters in confidence, or do not wish to disclose personal information to their supervisor(s) or the wider group of reviewers, they can contact the PGR Funding Team at any time: [rkes-res@strath.ac.uk](mailto:rkes-res@strath.ac.uk).
- Students and supervisors can appeal an extension funding decision. Appeals must be submitted to the PGR Funding Team ([rkes-res@strath.ac.uk](mailto:rkes-res@strath.ac.uk)) on the application form and will be reviewed by senior academic colleagues not involved in the initial case review. Any appeal should be based on, for example, any perceived irregularities around how the case was considered *or* information that was not initially considered. The student or supervisor cannot appeal on the basis that they do not agree with the reviewers' decision. Appeals must be submitted within 2 weeks of the outcome of the initial application being communicated.