

## **Exceptional regulations for summer 19/20: UKRI funded Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students**

The University recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the research activities of many of its Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) and that as a result they may not be able to complete by their final submission date. UKRI-funded PGRs are eligible to apply for a funded extension (fee plus stipend) to compensate for impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their research activity and progress, for a period up to six months.

These Exceptional Regulations apply to those UKRI funded doctoral postgraduate researchers (PGRs) with a final submission date between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 wishing to apply for an additional period of registered study or extension to Thesis Pending ('extensions') for up to six months. These regulations should be read in conjunction with all existing regulations, including the Exceptional Guidance for Extenuating Circumstances Panels attached to the Policy on Circumstances Affecting Students' Ability to Study and Complete Assessments, as well as the Exceptional Regulations on Extenuating Circumstances. We will keep these regulations under review and may extend the period further.

MR1. PGRs should continue to work towards completion of their degree by their current submission date where possible.

MR2. Plans and attempts should be made to both continue appropriate research activity and minimise the impact of COVID-19 on the doctoral progress. These plans and attempts should be recorded through the supervision process. These should include activities that are necessary for continued progress to meeting Doctoral Outcomes, such as reorganisation of research plans in the light of this unforeseen problem, restructuring the timing of outputs/deliverables (project conceptualisation and design), developing and designing new ideas, literature research (acquisition of new knowledge and understanding), data analysis and interpretation (creation and interpretation of new knowledge), writing the thesis, or publications, or undertaking online training.

MR3. If, despite appropriate risk management and mitigation, the PGR judges that they will not be able to complete submission of the thesis by the submission date, they may apply for an extension of their final submission date.

MR4. Requests for extensions will be considered during the period 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, from UKRI-funded PGRs with final submission dates between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 only.

MR5. All applications should be submitted with the information listed below, to Student Services or equivalent for consideration on behalf of Quality and Standards Committee (QSC). The aim will be to notify you of the outcome of your application within 2 weeks.

MR6. Requests for extensions will only be considered for circumstances that have occurred between March 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 and the PGR's current final submission date, and only for circumstances that can be attributed to effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

MR7. The request may be to allow either an additional period of registered study and/or an extension to Thesis Pending, depending on the need and the case made.

MR8. Additional periods of registered study and extensions are exclusively for the completion of doctoral work, including thesis finalisation.

MR9. The thesis should be submitted as soon as it is ready for examination.

MR10. Applications should include:

The University COVID impact statement containing;

- a statement of whether the application is for an additional period of registered study and extension to Thesis Pending or for both
- information as requested to justify the extension type and length
- what has been achieved to date in the period of COVID-19 impact, and
- confirmation that the impact statement has been completed in discussion with the supervisors or an appropriate member of PGR support staff (such as the School Postgraduate Student Advisor (SPSA), School PGR Director, Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)/Centre for Doctoral Training(CDT) Director, DTP/CDT Manager, DTP/CDT Welfare Officer or other member of the Welfare team/ Researcher Academy Faculty Lead)

a simple plan including:

- the work completed before any COVID-19 impact
- work remaining to be done in the requested time to enable the PGR to meet the Doctoral Outcomes
- a timeline with milestones for completion of the thesis in the time remaining plus the requested extension
- revised date for thesis submission

MR11. The following criteria will be used in the decision on whether to approve an additional period of study or an extension due to COVID-19:

*Circumstances as detailed in the PhD and MPhil Regulations:*

- New occurrences of illness (mental or physical), hospitalisation or accident: for instance, periods of medical leave of absence other than those already considered and accommodated under the usual Extenuating Circumstances (EC) process
- maternity/paternity leave other than those already accommodated under existing policies and processes
- death of a close relative
- illness of a close relative where the PGR is the carer
- illness or death of a partner
- requirement for a student to undertake military service other than those already accommodated under existing policies and processes

*Additional COVID-19 related circumstances*

- An impact on your supervisory team that has affected your supervision or progress of either research or writing, such as illness
- Redeployment to work on COVID-19 related research or other action but only where the redeployment time has not already been accommodated under other policies
- Postponement of critical activities (including fieldwork or placements) where alternatives are not available, and impact cannot be mitigated
- Caring responsibilities
- Specific impact resulting from remote working as a result of a disability or being at higher risk of coronavirus;
- Lack of access to mental health support if needed
- Financial impacts, either personal or on the research activity
- Impacts related to any protected characteristics

- Other considerations that can be specifically attributed to COVID-19 and evidenced in the case

MR12. The following are examples of circumstances or occurrences that would not normally warrant an additional period of study or an extension under these Regulations:

- Taking up employment
- Voluntary service overseas
- Taking a placement that is part of/within a funded programme (e.g. PIPS) and is unrelated to the research activity
- Volunteering activity or paid secondment for the national COVID-19 effort, for which a voluntary interruption of studies was taken
- The University closure in and of itself, without any evidence of mitigation attempts or detail of impact
- Where the impact described does not affect the ability to demonstrate the achievement of the Doctoral Outcomes