

Student Policy & Procedure

The UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) have provided Newcastle University with a Covid-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extension Funding allocation to provide additional costed extensions to UKRI Funding doctoral students affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The application process is described below, and should not be difficult or require extensive evidence, and will be equivalent to one side of paper.

Further UKRI T&C information can be found here: <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/tackling-the-impact-of-covid-19/guidance-for-applicants-and-awardholders-impacted-by-the-pandemic/>

Funding available

This funding will provide 1, 2 or 3 months funding per student. The funding will be allocated based on a needs-priority basis. It 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 funded period.

The funding and application process described here is expected to be the last UKRI Covid-19 extension funding.

Support will be paid in the same way and at the same value as your normal stipend. Fees will also be provided if required. Funding is not available for additional research costs.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this funding you must:

- Receive Doctoral training funding from at least 1 of the following Councils within the UKRI:
 - Arts and Humanities Research Council
 - Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
 - Economic and Social Research Council
 - Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
 - Medical Research Council
 - Natural Environment Research Council
 - Science and Technology Facilities Council
- Have not submitted your doctoral thesis
- Have started your UKRI funded project before 1 March 2020
- Have already adapted your research project where possible
- Have not received a Covid-19 related extension in Phase 1 from your Doctoral grant holder (DTP/CDT).

Students funded partly or wholly by the University as part of a matched funding commitment for UKRI funding will also be eligible to apply, with funding from the University, through the same process. Students who are aligned with a CDT/DTP, but not funded from it are not eligible.

If you are unclear whether you fall into these criteria, please seek help from the PGR support within your school or institute.

Exceptions:

- Students whose funding end date was between 1 March 2020 and 31 March 2021 and have already received a UKRI funded extension under the initial UKRI policy (Phase 1). (This will include students who have had an extension agreed to be funded through grant underspend.) Students who commenced study in the academic year 2020/21 are not eligible.
- For fees-only students, funds can be used to cover fees only.
- For clinical doctoral students, UKRI contribution to salary can be requested (in place of stipend) where required.

Application process

Round 1 deadline: 2nd March 2021

Round 2 deadline: 11th October 2021

Please complete the application webform at this address: <https://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=10320744>

You should provide a Supporting statement (see example in Appendix 2) and upload a statement from your supervisor or School Director of PGR (see example in Appendix 3), to the online webform. Information Required:

- Supporting statement: Please describe concisely the reasons why you have been unable to mitigate delays of Covid-19 or fully adjust your project. This statement does not need to be shared with your supervisor/Director of PGR if you wish to keep any information confidential.
- Supervisor/Director of PGR statement: Please discuss your intended funding extension request with your supervisor or Director of PGR and ask them to provide a short statement in support of your application. This should be uploaded to your application webform.
- Additional evidence is **not** required.

If you have concerns over the intended deadline date (due to mitigating circumstances such as caring responsibilities, illness etc.) please contact the doctoralcollege@newcastle.ac.uk as soon as possible.

Queries

All queries relating to the Covid-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extension Funding process should be directed to the Newcastle Doctoral College. Email: doctoralcollege@newcastle.ac.uk

Decision Making

We will make all decisions at a single time point after each application deadline, as shown in the timeline below. We will use one or more panels in parallel to ensure timely consideration of all applications. Each panel will consist of senior academics from each Faculty, an EDI representative, and a Senior Professional Services representative.

The panel will score applications based against the criteria (*see Appendix 1*) which will then be moderated. Applications will be judged on a needs-priority basis.

Outcomes

Application outcomes will be communicated directly to you by the Doctoral College, with a copy sent to your supervisor and Grant award holder (CDT/DTP Management).

Data Confidentiality

All data will be treated confidentially and used only for the purposes of this funding decision or for complaints relating to funding decisions. Evidence submitted will be deleted by or before the conclusion of

the scheme (April 2022). Funding decision outcomes will be reported to UKRI but submitted personal evidence will not.

Queries, feedback & Complaints

If you have any questions, feedback or wish to submit a complaint please contact us via the doctoralcollege@newcastle.ac.uk email.

Complaints will be considered under the University's Student Complaints and Resolution procedure. A response will be received within 30 days of the complaint being received.

Payment

Payments from this scheme for successful applicants will start in April 2021 and will be paid in the same way as your stipend. Your final funding end date will be extended by the appropriate amount, in line with the funded extension awarded to you.

Thesis Extensions

Awards from this scheme will not result in an automatic extension of your thesis submission deadline, except where your revised final funding end date would fall after your current thesis submission deadline. In such cases, your thesis submission deadline will be adjusted to match your revised final funding end date.

You can apply for an extension to your thesis submission deadline independently via ePortfolio. Awards from this scheme could be used as evidence in support of an extension request, however, any evidence submitted as part of your application to this scheme would not be automatically available to colleagues considering extension requests, due to the Data Confidentiality statement outlined above.

Deadlines & milestone dates

- February 2021: Launch of Newcastle's UKRI Phase 2 Extension Funding 'Round 1' with clear eligibility criteria and application process, for UKRI doctoral students.
- 2nd March 2021: Round 1 application closing date
- March 2021: An appointed panel will review all applications and make decisions
- End of March 2021: Round 1 outcomes will be communicated to students, along with their supervisor(s) and Doctoral grant award holder, and other relevant RO colleagues.
- 28th April 2021: Extension payments will be applied
- 1st September 2021: Round 2 launched
- 11th October 2021: Round 2 deadline date
- November 2021: An appointed panel will review all applications and make decisions
- End of November 2021: Round 2 outcomes will be communicated to students, along with their supervisor(s) and Doctoral grant award holder, and other relevant RO colleagues.
- End of December 2021: Extension payments will be applied

Appendix 1: Criteria for Consideration by the Newcastle UKRI extensions Phase 2 panel

Impact extent	Severity of impact	Example reasons (these are for guidance only and not exhaustive)
A	No extension <i>no significant impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student able to progress project without significant hindrance; • Student had completed data gathering and was writing-up at the time of lockdown; • No significant well-being impacts (physical and mental health, caring responsibilities, etc) due to Covid-19. • Student has funding from another source/sponsor.
B	<i>limited impact*</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In early stage of research • Accommodating new plans due to thesis changes as a direct result of Covid-19; • General / minor well-being impacts (physical and, neurodivergent, and/or mental health) due to Covid-19; • Reduced access to support from supervisory team. • Difficulties establishing working from home (e.g. access to laptop/IT/quiet working environment);
C	<i>significant impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In later but not final stage of research • Accommodating new plans due to thesis changes as a direct result of Covid-19; • Relatively significant wellbeing impacts (e.g. physical, neurodivergent, or mental health, and/or bereavement); • General caring responsibilities (e.g. children or vulnerable groups);
D	<i>major impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In final funding period (funding end date before or on 30 Sept 2021) and unable to complete research/data gathering as planned as a result of Covid-19, and alternative plan not possible, or involves significant delay; • Very significant well-being impacts (e.g. physical, or neurodivergent, mental health, and/or bereavement); • Significant and/or full-time caring responsibilities (e.g. children or vulnerable groups);

Appendix 2 - Example Student Statement

This is an example student statement showing the type and depth of information that we would like to see as the main part of the application:

My PhD is largely laboratory bench based, performing experiments which require attention spread throughout the day. While, I have adapted or replaced many of the experiments that I was to perform in the third year with desk-based exercises and analysis, I had planned to move some of my experiments into early 2021; as I am a single parent, this period has now also been heavily disrupted due to a second lockdown. I would request therefore three months additional money to enable me to replan and readjust the final part of my experimental work. In addition, this will also be providing me with more time for writing my thesis which is extremely challenging with the schools closed.

Appendix 3 - Example Supervisor or School Director of PGR Statement

My student has worked hard from the initial onset of the pandemic to modify and alter their project, but even having modified many of their experimental plans, has still struggled to continue their research while fulfilling their responsibilities as a single parent. The few remaining experiments that they would like to perform would complete their early laboratory research, as well as providing additional time for writing.