

Governance Plan Template – UKRI COVID-19 Phase 2 Doctoral Extensions

Organisation name	University of Southampton
Allocation (£)	
Principal investigator	<i>Responsible owner of the COVID-19 Phase 2 Training Grant</i> Professor Christopher John Howls

Section 1: Overall framework and governance

Please confirm agreement to the framework and governance

Yes

If you will be implementing a different process, please specify here:

Section 2: Assurance on equality of assessment

In this section, we are asking you to state the mechanism by which your organisation will ensure that decision-makers are able to make fair comparisons.

In parallel with, and mirroring the benefits of, Phase 1 of the UKRI COVID PGR funding extension scheme, the University of Southampton (UoS) set up an application process for funded extensions for non-UKRI students. UoS will integrate Phase 2 of the UKRI scheme into a revised and enhanced University-wide version of our own process. The guidance we currently use is available on request.

Communication:

- The scheme will be announced to all students and publicised using all internal communications channels.
- Similar comprehensive guidance will be issued to all students, regardless of UKRI funder. This guidance will be revised to include specific UKRI statements from UKRI's own guidance and to include an appeal and complaints mechanism.
- The communications aimed at both PGRs and supervisors will be careful to not create expectations that are unfulfillable under UKRI Phase II, listing updated eligible and ineligible reasons for an extension.
- The comms will remind students and supervisors of the QAA criteria for the award of a doctoral level thesis.
- An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed will be published on the applications site.
- We are making parallel regulatory changes to allow the inclusion of a COVID impact statement in the final thesis, with commensurate guidance to examiners.
- **Application Process:**
- A series of application rounds will be run, in January, March, June, September and December 2021. Students may apply at any time only once, unless circumstances change. Demand may be managed by clear communication of the prioritisation criteria and the need first to explore all other possible alternatives.
- Applications to the UoS scheme has been via a University-wide Microsoft Forms template via an internal password protected Sharepoint Site.
- The site will address each of the eligibility bullet points listed in the UKRI Governance guidance.
- Applications will be anonymised before consideration by the relevant panel (see below). The viewing permissions of the application will be restricted only to the decision-making panel.
- Students will be asked to upload a case for support (maximum 750 words) indicating:
 - Why the extension is needed, and how it was exclusively caused by COVID-19.
 - That mitigation and variation in projects that have been tried, with reasons why this has failed to enable the submission of the thesis within the unextended funding periods.
 - why no alternative viable mitigation or variation in project is possible to enable the submission of the thesis within funded period.
- The student may nominate a member of their supervisory team, or another member of staff (academic or otherwise) to provide a supporting statement (maximum 750 words).
- Supporting documentation may also be uploaded:
 - A COVID Impact Log detailing the mitigation that has been carried out, together with its success will be required.
 - Additional evidence may be submitted to the Decision Panel. We will only ask for NHS supporting evidence where it has been possible to obtain it.
- For confidential evidence, students will be provided with a SafeSend internal upload link, to which only the Chair of the Special Considerations Panel will have access who will use their experience to undertake an assessment and make a recommendation to the Decision Panel.

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- Faculty Graduate School Offices will be available to help to upload documents and/or if required, to arrange for an amanuensis to facilitate an application.

Decision Making Process:

- To cope with the 615 applications that may be received, a two-level process will be used: A University panel will define and oversee the process. Decision panels will consider the merits of each application and make recommendations to the University panel.
- The multidisciplinary University-level Panel will consist of:
 - Director of the Doctoral College (and UKRI Phase 2 PI); The Chairs of the Decision Panels (see below); Chair of the University Special Considerations Forum, ED&I representative.
- The University-level Panel will:
 - Agree the common criteria, priorities and scheme guidance across all research councils.
 - Confirm, tension and prioritise the recommendations made by the Decision panels across the University (taking in to account genuine disciplinary needs where relevant).
 - Seek funding for extensions initially from PIs of the relevant CDTs/DTPs.
 - Control and oversee the use of UKRI Phase II funds.
 - Ask the Faculty panel to undertake additional investigation as required.
 - Inform the University community of any changes to the status of the scheme and report to UKRI.
- Five Multidisciplinary Decision Panels will each consist of:
 - Faculty Director of Graduate School (Chair); Chair of a PGR Special Considerations Panel (interdisciplinary expert normally considering extension requests irrespective of COVID); The PIs of the relevant CDT/DTPs; an academic ED&I representative.
- The panels will be serviced administratively respectively by the Doctoral College Manager and by a senior member of Faculty Graduate School Office (FGSO) teams.
- Panels will be briefed on unconscious bias before undertaking their roles and declare any conflicts of interest. Where conflicts arise members from another Decision panel will be co-opted.
- The UoS Enabling Services team will provide advice on cases including those made by: disabled students, or students with long term illnesses, or those who are neurodivergent.
- All meetings will take place using a secure internal Microsoft Teams Site.
- Decision Panels will classify applications according to:
 - **A:** Those in most need of an extension to submit a doctoral level thesis within the funding period and who can demonstrate that the extension will lead to this outcome.
 - **B:** Those who may have a need of an extension, but the case is not as strong as A.
 - **C:** A need for an extension has not been established
 - **D:** Further information is required before a decision may be made.
- The University Panel will consider recommendations (in classes A and B) tensioning across the UKRI remit and prioritising according to a scoring system based on common criteria including:
 - Those with a need arising from disability, long term sickness, neurodivergence or ED&I; the time left until end of funding, those with need to access physical infrastructure, fieldwork, or physical research resources, other specific or exceptional reasons.
- A ranking list will be drawn, funding sources identified, and outcomes communicated to applicants.
- Where co-funding is required, the communication of the outcome on the UKRI proportion of the funding will be immediate along with the need to consult the co-funder, If/when the latter is obtained (target of one month), the final extension length will be confirmed.

Appeals and Complaints

- Appeals to the Decision panel will be allowed within 10 working days of notification, on the grounds of new substantive information not previously known at the time of the application.
- Complaints pertaining to the failure of the process may be made within 10 working days of notification of application outcomes to the University level panel.

Section 3: Agreement and authorisation

Please confirm agreement to the Funding Process	Yes
Please confirm agreement to the Reporting Process	Yes
Responsible owner name and signature	Professor C.J.Howls
Responsible owner position within the organisation	Director of Doctoral College
Date	7/12/20

Please complete and submit your Governance Plan to Covid19Allocation@ukri.org by **Monday 7 December** .