

STUDENTSHIP COSTED EXTENSIONS – GUIDANCE FOR FACULTIES, SUPERVISORS AND PGRs

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Across the sector, during this crisis, HEIs have been urged to support PGRs to prioritise their personal, physical, and mental well-being over their academic working. In April, the Office for Students (OfS) published guidance¹ for providers setting out the expected quality and standards during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. This stated that HEIs should discuss and agree with individual PGRs how they will progress their research during this period, and the arrangements and adjustments that will be required if this is not possible. BU has followed this guidance in supporting its own PGRs. It is clear that the challenges faced by PGRs are varied and through the Doctoral College, Faculties, Departments and Supervisor, BU has worked with each PGR individually as this is the best way to support the PGRs as a cohort.
- 1.2 In April, it was announced that UKRI-funded PGRs, whose studies have been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, will be provided with additional support². This applies to UKRI-funded doctoral students in their final year who may receive an extension to their research with additional grants, known as a costed extension, of up to six months. This will provide them with peace of mind that they will be able to complete their studies. Whilst the number of UKRI-funded PGRs at BU and many other HEIs, is very limited, the precedent of offering costed extensions is being adopted across the sector for most studentships and the best practice set out by the UKRI has been used to inform the principles and process set out here.
- 1.3 In line with this sector-wide best practice, at BU costed extensions will be available to those PGRs in receipt of a Studentship as outlined in the following guidance notes.

2. PRINCIPLES & PROCESS

- 2.1 The principles for the supporting costed extensions should be as follows:
- Those in receipt of a BU studentship may be eligible for a funded extension
 - Requests will be considered on a case by case basis
 - Requests should be related to challenges faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic from March 2020 onwards, and will need to be accompanied by supporting evidence and/or a statement which explains the issues
 - Requests will only be considered from those PGRs who have not already submitted their thesis
 - Requests will only be considered within 6 months of last stipend payment. As such, these will be considered in three groups.
 - *Group 1* – PGRs currently in their final year of stipend (funding end date before 30 September 2020)
 - *Group 2* – PGRs whose stipend end date falls between 1 October 2020 and 31 July 2021
 - *Group 3* – PGRs whose stipend end date falls after 1 August 2021.
 - Costed extensions will be for a maximum of 3 months in the first instance and requests should only be for the duration during which the research was impacted.
 - Exceptionally, should a further period of costed extension be necessary, PGRs are able to submit a second application to be assessed via the same process.
- 2.2 Whilst ideally BU might wish to support all requests for costed extensions, realistically each case needs to be considered on its own merits. There may be a variety of factors contributing to delayed progress and it is important to establish that Covid-19 is the primary driver for seeking a costed extension.
- 2.3 As such, Faculties should ensure that individual applications provide clear information of the impact on research progress due to the restrictions resulting from Covid-19 by one or more of the following:
- Lack of access to laboratory or field work
 - Caring responsibilities
 - Professional responsibilities (e.g. NHS key workers)

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/f351a739-6cd6-4310-8f98-a6aa603f17f4/quality-and-standards-guidance-during-coronavirus.pdf>

² <https://www.ukri.org/news/government-announces-support-for-phd-students-as-a-result-of-coronavirus-disruption/>

- Personal direct illness linked to Covid-19 or indirect personal impact, including, for example, stress / mental wellbeing.

Any applications not demonstrating the above should not be forwarded to RPMC for consideration.

2.4 The process for applying for a studentship costed extension and for decision making is set out below:

- **Individual PGRs** will be required to complete the Costed Extension Application Form³ (Appendix 1 and available to download [here](#)) and provide information to support an application for a funded extension in line with the conditions above.
- A full statement of support will be required from the **Supervisory Team including** why mitigating actions could not prevent delay to research progress
- The PGR should send the completed form, with comments from the Supervisory Team to the Postgraduate Research Administrator, who will check for completeness before sending to the DDRPP.
- The **DDRPP** will review the application & attached information and a) provide confirmation that the impact of Covid-19 is the primary driver for the application, and b) comment on whether or not the Faculty supports it.
- The **Doctoral College Academic Manager** will review the application, check the data provided and ensure that all the information is complete.
- Applications received by 9am Tuesday of each week to be circulated to RPMC MIG by 12noon on Wednesday of each week
- **RPMC MIG** will review requests for funded extensions and determine which requests to approve and which to reject.

2.5 These principles, process and indicative questions should be reviewed in four months' time to ensure that any further impacts to PGR research are taken into account.

3. FURTHER INFORMATION

3.1 Whilst the majority of the BU Studentships are matched funded, the cost of any extensions will be primarily fully funded by BU. Where matched funders have indicated that they will be willing to contribute to any extension, the necessary amendment to contract will be dealt with by Legal Services and Research Development & Support.

3.2 The Doctoral College Academic Managers are providing operational oversight of this scheme, so if you have any queries or concerns in regard to the principles and/or process, please contact Dr Fiona Knight or Dr Julia Taylor in the first instance.

3.3 For administrative queries, and to submit your costed extension application, please contact your Faculty Postgraduate Research Project Administrator::

- Faculty of Health & Social Sciences: fhsresearch@bournemouth.ac.uk
- Faculty of Management: fmresearch@bournemouth.ac.uk
- Faculty of Media & Communication: fmcresearch@bournemouth.ac.uk
- Faculty of Science & Technology: scitechresearch@bournemouth.ac.uk

3.4 For other questions relating to the resumption of research activities at BU, please refer to the Resuming research activities at Bournemouth University during the COVID-19 pandemic: A guide for Researchers available [here](#).

³ <https://intranet.sp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/StudentshipStipendExtensionsApplicationForm.docx>



COVID-19 Pandemic: Costed Extension Application

Notes:

1. Postgraduate Researcher Details

Student number	Click here to enter text.		
Full name	Click here to enter text.		
Faculty	<input type="checkbox"/> FHSS	<input type="checkbox"/> FM	<input type="checkbox"/> FMC
Enrolment Details	Enrolment Start date Click here to enter a date.	Stipend End Date Click here to enter a date.	Enrolment End Date Click here to enter a date.

2. Costed Extension Application

Key impact on research progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of access to laboratory or field work	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Caring responsibilities	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional responsibilities (e.g. NHS key workers)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal illness linked to Covid-19	
Date of impact	Start Date Click here to enter a date.	End Date Click here to enter a date.
Length of costed extension requested	Click here to enter text. (months)	
Narrative supporting request (maximum 250 words)	Click here to enter text.	
Additional Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Covid 19 Form <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list) Click here to enter text.	

3. Supervisory Team Supporting Statement

Please confirm why mitigating actions could not prevent delay to research progress

Please add any narrative supporting the application	Click here to enter text.	
Supervisor Signature	Click here to enter text.	Date Click here to enter a date.

4. DDRPP / PGR Lead Faculty Oversight & Support

Please confirm that the impact of Covid-19 is the primary driver for the application and comment on whether or not

<i>the application has Faculty support</i>		
Comments	Click here to enter text.	
DDRPP Signature	Click here to enter a date.	Date Click here to enter a date.
5. Doctoral College Comments		
<i>Please review the application, check the data provided and ensure that all the information</i>		
Comments	Click here to enter text.	
DC AM Signature	Click here to enter a date.	Date Click here to enter a date.
6. RMPC Decision		
Outcome	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Not approved
RPMC Comments	Click here to enter text.	