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**COVID-19 Related Studentship Extension Request Form**

**Students with 6 months or less to current funding end date**

This form should be used by all eligible ESRC-funded students seeking an extension to their Studentship due to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. Eligible students are:

* Those whose mitigation plans were affected by the second lockdown from January 2021. For example, additionalunexpected caring responsibilities (e.g. during the January to April 2021 closures) or unforeseen changes to the expected timeline for accessing secondary data/collecting primary data.

AND

* Those who are in the final 6 months of their funded period and can demonstrate that attempts to catch up during the funded period have not been successful.
* Students who have already received an extension either in autumn 2020 (SGSSS phase 1 process) or spring 2021 (HEI phase 2 process) **are** eligible to apply if they meet both the above conditions and can demonstrate that further mitigation has become necessary.

This process cannot be used for:

* Health conditions, which should be dealt with through the standard [sick leave policy](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-150321-TrainingGrantsTermsConditions-Mar2021.pdf) (see section 8). New or exacerbated health conditions linked to the pandemic may be further supported by the UKRI COVID-19 [sick leave policy,](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-240321-GuidanceforStudentsandTrainingGrants.pdf) contact your HEI admin lead for more information on applying for sick leave. As per standard policy, such cases should be flagged at the time they are occurring and not in retrospect.
* Situations where no previous mitigation plan has been put in place.

As per [UKRI guidance](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-240321-PolicyStatementFinal.pdf) :

* *The priority remains for students to adapt and adjust research projects to mitigate the delays caused by COVID-19, where possible, to complete their research to a doctoral standard within their original funding period.*
* *The focus of supporting extensions is to provide the additional time an individual student requires to complete their revised doctoral research project.*
* *All UKRI-funded students are treated fairly, using an inclusive process that recognises the impact of the pandemic on individual personal circumstances of students.*

For most students we anticipate that previous mitigation plans will have been sufficient**; only exceptional cases that could not have been foreseen will be considered.** Requests will be considered by members of the SGSSS Directorate and your [institution’s Deans Group representative.](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/about-us/governance/)  We have developed this extension process in consultation with all our partner institutions and it replaces any existing process your institution has in place (i.e. you are not expected to prepare two applications; however, you may be required to complete some internal paperwork).

We will aim to respond to extension requests within eight weeks of receipt but there may be delays due to the dual institutional review process (SGSSS and your own university). During this period, you may be asked for supplementary information or clarification to support your request.

This form and guidance is based on the UKRI policy for PhD extensions from [March 2021](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-240321-GuidanceforStudentsandTrainingGrants.pdf) and may be subject to revisions in line with any further updates.

1. **Studentship Details**

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| Student Name: |
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| Student Email Address: |
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| Pathway: |
| Please select |

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| Home Institution: |
| Please select |

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| PhD Start Date: |
| Click or tap to enter a date. |

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| Status: |
| Please select |

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| Is your studentship: |
| Collaborative  Steer Award - AQM  Steer Award - Dataset  Steer Award - Interdisciplinary  Open Competition |

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| Student’s Supervisor Name (please include title, e.g. Professor): |
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| Student’s Supervisor Email Address: |
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1. **Extension Request Details**

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| What is your current funding end date? |
| Click or tap to enter a date. |

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| Length of current extension being requested (expected range 1-3 months): |
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| What is your proposed funding end date? |
| Click or tap to enter a date. |

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| If you have had any periods of funded sick leave or suspension/interruptions (including for internship) since January 2021, please outline the dates below |
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| If you have previously received a funded COVID-related extension either from SGSSS or your university, please provide details of the length and date this was granted. This includes the one month extensions granted by SGSSS at the start of the pandemic. |
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1. **Reason for Extension Request**

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| Please select the reason for your extension request from the below four categories: |
| Please select |

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| Please tick to confirm you have attached the required supporting documents: |
| Explanation of the circumstances upon which the extension requested is based (this must include a detailed completion plan incorporating the requested extension period, an explanation of the further mitigation that has been required and why earlier mitigation plans were unsuccessful.)  Supervisor supporting statement |

1. **Collaborative Studentships** (only applicable to Collaborative Studentship holders)

To be completed by the main contact in the collaborating organisation. An accompanying email answering the below questions from the collaborating organisation’s main contact will also be accepted.

**Please answer the below two questions:**

* 1. Does your organisation make a financial contribution to the studentship? Yes/No
  2. If YES, are you able to continue making the contribution for the extended period? Yes/No

By signing the below, I confirm that this submission has been discussed and agreed with the student and supervisory team.

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| Signed by Collaborative Partner: (electronic/typed signature or email accepted) |
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1. **Declaration**

This submission has been discussed and agreed with all relevant parties.

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| I confirm that I am currently an active Doctoral student, not suspended or on an interruption of studies |

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| I confirm that I have 6 months or less remaining in my current funded period |

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| Signed by Student: (Electronic/typed signature accepted) |
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| Signed by Supervisor: (Electronic/typed signature accepted) |
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| Signed by Collaborative Partner: (Where appropriate, electronic/typed signature accepted) |
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| In submitting this form, I consent for the information contained within and any supporting documentation to be shared with the relevant members of the SGSSS Directorate, ESRC and the HEI Admin Lead and Deans’ group member from my home institution: |
| Yes  No |

This form should be completed in full and then returned via email with supporting documents to [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk) , copied to the [HEI Admin Lead](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/about-us/governance/) at your home institution.

**Please see the below scenarios for guidance when completing a COVID-19 Related Extension Request**

When considering extension requests, UKRI guidance states:

* *The priority remains for students to adapt and adjust research projects to mitigate the delays caused by COVID-19, where possible, to complete their research to a doctoral standard within their original funding period.*
* *The focus of supporting extensions is to provide the additional time an individual student requires to complete their revised doctoral research project.*

The student’s supporting statement should be a short description (up to one page) of the case for the extension, including how the student and revised research programme were affected by ongoing restrictions from January 2021. This must include: **a detailed completion plan incorporating the requested extension period, an explanation of the further mitigation that has been required and why earlier mitigation plans were unsuccessful**. We expect that logs of issues have been kept and we are looking for this reflection in your submission, along with clear mitigation strategies and a plan for moving forward.

The supervisor statement should provide further evidence to back up the student statement, specifically commenting on: the rationale for the extension; reflections on previous and proposed mitigation; the appropriateness of the revised timetable; and, on the current level of progress with the PhD.

To provide further guidance, we have put together the following examples of scenarios and subsequent extension awards. We expect most extensions to be in the range of 1-3 months.

**Caring Responsibilities**

1. David is a full time PhD student with two children, aged two and four. He has 6 months of his funded period remaining, has completed his fieldwork and data analysis and is writing up his thesis. He was on track to finish on time having been given an SGSSS extension of three months in September 2020 for the first phases of lockdown. However, he had to takeover full child-care from January until March as his partner works full-time as a medic and their nursery was closed from the beginning of January to the end of May.

David and his supervisor have assessed the remaining work to be accomplished – he has three full findings chapters to write as well as the introduction and conclusion to his thesis – it is estimated that he will need eight months in total.

This case would warrant an extension of 2 months.

1. Angela, a single parent and full-time student, is in her final year with two teenage children who were home-schooling from January to April 2020. She was writing her final chapters but instead of being able to work 8 hours every workday (her normal routine) she had to reduce her hours to ensure that her children were undertaking their own work. She kept a log and found she was able to work productively for only 6 hours per day. Following discussion with her supervisor, Angela estimates that one additional month will allow her to finalise her thesis.

This case would warrant an extension of one month.

**Exceptional Fieldwork**

1. Ayisha is undertaking a study which involves secondary analysis of a linked data set accessible through a data Safe Haven. She needed such access for a period of 9 months. In March 2020 she was due to begin accessing the data but this had to be put on hold because of the closure of the Safe Haven site. In summer 2020 she was told that she would have access again in October (she had spent the intervening period finalising her literature and methods chapters and in devising a revised analysis plan that would cut down the length of time needed to spend in the Safe Haven). Her access was halted again in January and although she has agreed with her supervisor that she should further reduce the planned analysis, she is still to complete the final piece her analysis (one further month required) and has only two months of funding left. She managed to write one findings chapter based on the Oct-Dec data access and her remaining writing tasks include a further findings chapter (two months), and an introduction and conclusion (two months).

This case would warrant a three month extension (in total Ayisha will have received 4 months including her one month automatic extension).

1. Nasar is doing a study that involved fieldwork in Poland, which he was due to complete in October 2020. As this was unable to take place, he reworked his study and managed to put the fieldwork online, using local contacts who were able to facilitate setting up virtual focus groups and interviews. The mitigation plan had a visit to Poland in spring 2021, which would combine presenting at a relevant conference and conducting some extra interviews with hard-to-reach groups he was unable to work with virtually. His funding end date is September 2021. Luckily, the conference moved online, however, in order to secure the final interviews, he partnered with a peer based in Pozan who was able to conduct the interviews on his behalf and send the recordings for Nasar to transcribe and analyse from the UK. This additional mitigation took extra time to set-up (including securing an ethics approval amendment) and the analysis also requires more time than if he’d been conducting the interviews himself in the field.

This case would warrant a two month extension.

**Sick Leave**

1. James is a final year student who is writing his findings chapters. Since the middle of January, James has had three periods of ill-health. At the end of January, he broke his wrist and was unable to progress his work for 6 weeks. In mid-March, James contracted COVID-19 and was ill for three weeks. Since then, he has been unable to focus on work due to a recurring depression thought to have been brought on by his virus experience and its repercussions. He began a phased return in June and aims to be back at full productivity by July.

James kept in touch with his supervisors at all times and has medical evidence for each separate illness.

He claimed 6 weeks sick leave using the normal sick leave procedures for his non COVID-19 illness and was granted three months further sick leave in April 2021 related to COVID-19 and the ongoing repercussions from mid-March to mid-June.

**Guidance for Collaborative Students**

All students with a collaborative award are expected to discuss extension requests and their implications with their collaborative partners. This is important because collaborative proposals have been co-produced by supervisors and the collaborative partner and the timing of outputs may be important for the work of the non-academic organisation and because the collaborative partner may be able to suggest alternative mitigation plans.

It is also important that the collaborative partner is able to continue supporting the student during the extension period if required and if the partner makes a financial contribution to the studentship, they are able to continue that contribution during the extension period. The ESRC are unable to cover shortfalls to funding from collaborative partners.