Cambridge University PGR* Student Covid-19 Assistance Scheme (PGR -CAS) Application form 2021

Application Guidance for Students

The University is aware that many students have been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular PG Research students who have not been able to receive a funded extension from a sponsor as they are self-funded. The University has agreed to provide support to students who find themselves in this situation and also in financial hardship. A fund has been made available from July 2021 that will be allocated through the University PG Hardship scheme, overseen by the University Hardship Committee.

This scheme will offer a grant of up to £3700 to Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students who are self-funded (either wholly or partially), whose completion of research has been delayed due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, and who have no other means to receive a funded extension to cover this overrun. The scheme will operate in the Long Vacation 21 and MT 21 at least (it may continue to LT 22 and ET 22 if there is sufficient funding).

This grant is intended to cover up to 3 months of maintenance for eligible students to enable them to complete their research and submit their thesis for their degree. Applicants will be means tested to ensure that funding is targeted to those most in need.

1. Eligibility criteria:

You will be eligible to apply for PGR CAS if:

- You are registered for a PGR course (e.g. PhD) at the University of Cambridge
- You are in your final year of study (i.e. 3rd or 4th year of PhD i.e. between terms 7-12 or part time equivalent)
- You are currently self-funded for all or part of your course or have become self-funded if sponsorship has ended (and cannot be extended). Note – you cannot apply for support with tuition fees, only maintenance (i.e. living costs)
- You have not already benefited from a Covid-19 related extension to your doctoral funding and are unable to secure extended funding from another source (e.g. sponsor)
- You are in financial need due to the impact of disruption from Covid-19 on the progress of your research
- You have not yet submitted your soft bound thesis
- You meet all other eligibility requirements for the University PG Hardship Scheme (see link above)

In addition, students must have considered adapting their project to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 disruption before making an application. If you haven’t already, talk to your supervisor about this. Adapting could involve:

- changing your research question
- changing your approach to data collection
- changing your analyses and the tools you use
- rescheduling aspects of your research

If you are unable to adapt your project sufficiently to complete your doctoral research as planned then you can apply for a means tested extension of up to three months under the PGR CAS scheme.

2. How to apply

You must currently complete two online forms to be considered for this scheme available at [Hardship Funding for Postgraduate Students | Cambridge students]:

a) University PG Hardship form – this asks about your financial circumstances and includes a supporting statement from your Tutor and Supervisor. This is an online form that automatically is sent to your Supervisor and Tutor.

b) University PGR -CAS form – this asks about your eligibility for the scheme, how you are currently funded and the reasons (academic and personal) for the need for a funded extension. This is a MS Form that is only sent to the Student Funding team for review.

See the website above for the termly deadlines by which you need to apply.

Please let your Tutor and Supervisor know that you are applying for a PGR - CAS so that they can reference this in their supporting statements to the University PG Hardship scheme.

*Notes on the PGR CAS form (a above) This is a Microsoft Forms document.
You will be asked to log in so that you can access the application portal – please ensure you use your CRSid@cam.ac.uk email address and Raven password to log in.

If you have forgotten your Raven password please visit: https://help.uis.cam.ac.uk/service/accounts-passwords

Please note that if you are already signed into an alternative Microsoft Office 365 account on your device (which did not require your Raven credentials in order to sign in), you will need to sign out of this account and clear your cache in order to access the portal.

You are strongly encouraged to check you can access the portal and the relevant online application form without any problems well before the deadline. If you have any technical problems with access please email: postgraduatefunding@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Please be aware that the MS Form online application form comprises several sections and it is not possible to partially complete the form, save it, and return to it later – it must be completed in one sitting. The questions asked on the application form are included for reference as an appendix to this guidance and you are strongly encouraged to draft your answers in advance before completing the form. You should be aware that you will need to include a statement of support from your supervisor as part of your application so you will need to have this (and any additional support statement you might wish to include) ready before submitting your application. If you experience any difficulties uploading a statement, you might need to try again a few times or change to a different browser. In the event that you are unable to upload a statement, please email it to: UKRICovid19extensions@admin.cam.ac.uk and it will be attached to your application.

3. Application checklist

**Prepare your application** (applications open termly – see Hardship Funding for Postgraduate Students | Cambridge students

- Check you are eligible (see above)
- Check you can access the online applications portals to apply (2)
- Review the questions you will be asked in the PGR CAS online form (see appendix 1)
- Draft your answers offline for the PGR CAS form (you cannot partially complete your online application and return to finalise and submit it, it must be done in one session)
- Share your draft answers for the PGR CAS form with your supervisor and ask them to comment in their statement of support to your PG Hardship scheme application

**Submit your applications** *(by the termly deadline)* Hardship Funding for Postgraduate Students | Cambridge students

- Complete and submit the online application forms (2)
- Answer all the questions

**Outcome notification**

You will be told the outcome of your application by email according to the termly timetable see Hardship Funding for Postgraduate Students | Cambridge students

4. **Use of data:** The information you provide in your application will be held securely and only shared with individuals where it is strictly necessary to process and consider your application, this comprises:

- your Supervisor, Tutor and funding sponsor (if applicable)
- your Department/Faculty (or equivalent) as necessary
- the Committee who will be overseeing the final funding allocation decisions and members of the University’s Student Funding Team who are supporting it

General information on how the University uses your personal data is published on the University’s website at: https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/student-data
### Appendix 1 PGR CAS Form - questions asked on the online MS Form (for reference only)

1. Your First/Given name

2. Your Surname/Family name

3. Your email address

4. Your CRSid

5. Your Department/Faculty (or equivalent)

### 6. Eligibility confirmation and Amount requested
- Please confirm you meet all of the eligibility criteria above (Yes/No)
- Please state the % of your funding that is currently Self-funded e.g. from income/savings/loans/family contributions (%)
- Please name the Sponsor if you have received sponsorship during your PGR course (e.g. Research Council)
- If this sponsorship has ended, please provide the end date (e.g. dd/mm/yyyy)
- If you were sponsored, did you seek a funded extension? (e.g. Yes/No/NA if no sponsor)
- Have you already received a funded extension from a sponsor for your course of study? (Yes/No)
- How much funding are you applying for? (£3700 max)
- Is the amount applied for sufficient to meet financial shortfall for the overrun to your studies? (i.e. Yes/No – less than amount needed)
- If you answered No to the question above, please state your total anticipated financial shortfall (i.e. £xxx)

### 7. Please place a cross next to all the factors that have contributed to your need for a funded extension. These will not be shared with your supervisor.
- Additional caring responsibilities
- Additional impact arising from a disability, chronic illness, mental ill-health or neurodivergence
- Affected health and well-being (e.g. following a COVID-19 infection, or because you are part of a particularly vulnerable group)
- Interruption of data collection and/or fieldwork
- Lack of access to research resources and facilities (e.g. lab or library closure, supervisor unavailability)
### Negative impacts on your working environment due to changes in your living/study arrangements

- Redeployment to work on COVID-19 related research
- Self-isolation has undermined your ability to progress your doctoral research
- Other (please describe)

### 8. Your Funding extension request statement

Please explain the steps you have taken to adjust your research project in order to mitigate against the impact of COVID-19.

*Please try to limit your response to 200 words*

### 9. Your Funding extension request statement

Please explain why the adjustments you have made have not been sufficient to enable you to complete your doctoral research within the period for which you had original made provision for funding. If you have been unable to implement any mitigation, please state this and briefly explain why.

*Please try to limit your response to 200 words*

### 10. Your Funding extension request statement

Please describe the factors that have impacted on your ability to make adjustments to your research project and complete your doctoral research within the originally planned period. These factors might include (but are not limited to) the ones listed in Question 7 above.

*Please try to limit your statement to no more than 400 words.*