

Research Students Impact Statements guidance

Guidance for students

Students are invited to submit a Research Impact Statement with their thesis if their research has been substantially impacted by pandemic, war/conflict, or natural disaster.

The purpose of the statement is for students to describe any restrictions or difficulties experienced in undertaking their research as a result of a pandemic, war/conflict, or natural disaster, and to provide details of any alternative arrangements made to complete the work for their thesis. Such changes may include altering the scope of the research, limiting the range of any experiments or fieldwork, changes to the methods used, or not consulting certain material because of restrictions on access to physical collections and archives.

Details of students' personal circumstances should not be included. Students whose progress is being or has been impacted by personal circumstances related to a pandemic, war/conflict, or natural disaster, can apply to intermit or for an extension of their submission deadline. Students whose personal circumstances are impacting on their ability to continue their studies on an ongoing basis should discuss with their supervisor what changes can be made to their research project. Students should not therefore include details of their personal circumstances in their Research Impact Statement.

A Research Impact Statement form is available on the Cambridge Students website ([Doctoral, MSc and MLitt](#) or [MPhil by Thesis](#)). Students who wish to submit a Research Impact Statement should complete the form and pass it to their supervisor for signature (electronic signatures are accepted). Completed forms should be uploaded alongside the thesis submitted for examination and will be forwarded to the Examiners by the Degree Committee.

The Research Impact Statement should include:

- a brief summary of the work that the candidate planned to complete and details of how a pandemic, war/conflict, or natural disaster impacted on this work;
- details of any adjustments made;
- if appropriate, students may also summarise how any planned work they were unable to complete might have changed their research.

Students can submit Research Impact Statements even if they have been given an extension to their submission deadline because of disruption to their research caused by pandemic, war/conflict, or natural disaster, as it is accepted that an extension might not fully mitigate for disruption experienced.

Similarly, submission of a Research Impact Statement does not preclude students from requesting an examination review if in addition personal circumstances affect their performance in their oral examination. Students who do not provide a Research Impact Statement will still have an opportunity to inform Examiners of any impact of pandemic, war/conflict, or natural disaster, at their oral examination.

Examiners will be asked to take account of Research Impact Statements when examining theses. The statement may help inform questions for the oral examination, and in the examination the candidates may be invited to elaborate on the impact on their research and the adjustments they needed to make.

The University's [standards for research degrees](#) in terms of academic rigour remain unchanged, and as usual examiners will use the examination process to consider whether these standards are met, and if not what additional work is required (in the form of corrections or more substantive revision to the thesis) in accordance with standard procedures. If corrections or revision are required, the Research Impact Statement may also provide a useful reference for examiners to consider the feasibility of any proposed additional work.

Guidance for supervisors

To take account of any substantial impact of pandemic, war/conflict, or natural disaster when undertaking their research, students can if they wish submit a Research Impact Statement with their thesis for examination. Guidance for students can be found above. Supervisors will be asked to sign the Research Impact Statements. Research Impact Statements will be provided to Examiners by the Degree Committee along with the thesis.

When assessing the thesis and considering their recommended outcome and any further work required, examiners will be asked to take the information provided in the Research Impact Statement into account, considering whether the situation is ongoing and if research activity may continue to be restricted or limited. Depending on the circumstances it may be necessary for the Internal Examiner to seek guidance on the feasibility of further research activity. In these circumstances the Internal Examiner will consult the Supervisor and/or the Department Director of Postgraduate Education/ Programme Director.

If requested, guidance should be provided based on the feasibility of further study depending on the circumstances of the research area. For example, further lab work or fieldwork for data collection purposes might not be possible if there are ongoing restrictions in accessing laboratories or fieldwork sites. The candidate's personal circumstances should not be taken into account, as there are other mechanisms to mitigate for these.