

Changes to UKRI Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant webinar: responses to questions

Thank you to everyone who joined our March webinar on the changes we are making to the training grant conditions for the 2025-26 academic year. If you missed it, [the video is available to watch on the UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\) YouTube channel](#).

We had well over 100 questions so if we didn't manage to answer your question live, you should be able to find it below.

Remember, if you need further information, we've set out what we're changing and why in the [Policy Statement: review of the UKRI standard terms and conditions of training grant](#), available on our website. The statement includes a checklist of some of the key things that are changing. In answering some of the questions we've referred to specific conditions by number (for example "TGC 1") and you can find all the new conditions in the [Annotated changes to the Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant](#), published alongside the policy statement.

Over the next year, significant changes are being made to the support available to UKRI funded students through our training grant funds and their management. [Sign up to our newsletter to learn about the latest developments and receive an invitation to the next webinar \[GovDelivery\]](#)

We will be publishing revised training grant guidance and the UKRI DSA Framework in April, and the next webinar will be in May 2025.

Last updated: 18 March 2025.

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Co-funding

Question: If a company is paying 50% of a UKRI studentship, from September 2026, will they have to agree to fund 50% of parental leave and paid sick leave when they sign a collaboration agreement with the RO?

Answer: Broadly yes, but only for new studentships starting from 1 October 2026. The condition is in TGC 8.4.1 and states: "When arranging co-funding of individual or a number of studentships, you should seek to put in place arrangements so that costs of additional absences are met equitably between different funders. New co-funding agreements for Students starting from 1 October 2026 must have regard to meeting commitments to diverse student needs, including absence costs and extensions." If you do not comply with the requirement for new co-funding agreements, then you will be required to bear the additional cost directly.

Question: Phrasing of the type “if the co-funder is unwilling to cover the additional costs, they may be covered by the training grant” has caused us problems in the past. Is there a danger that this simply invites co-funders to say “sorry, we can’t cover those costs”?

Answer: If as an RO you do not have a current agreement, then the co-funder can refuse to cover those costs. This is why it is essential that colleagues in ROs ensure they discuss additional support that might be required for students at the outset.

Unlike all the other changes to the conditions, this change only comes into force on 1 October 2026. This additional time to implement this rule is to give you time to put in place suitable arrangements with co-funders.

Question: What are the implications on partner institutions which are offering co-supervision but not co-funding?

Answer: Arrangements for co-supervision should normally be managed at the grant level. As arrangements are made, it is worth project leads and others planning on the basis that where a studentship is disrupted because of medical, family or additional leave, the studentship may take longer to complete that might have been hoped.

Question: EPSRC formally called non and partly UKRI CDT funded students 'incorporated'. Now it has been changed to aligned - does this apply more widely to all UKRI students that are not fully part of CDT student cohort? So any student receiving even just 1-49% UKRI funding would be simply referred as a UKRI CDT student?

Answer : No, this only affects 2023 EPSRC Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs). The approach was communicated to those grants in their grant agreements (also called grant offer letters). If you have any doubt as to what conditions apply to a grant, please check the grant agreement. For background, TGC 1 sets out that specific grant conditions apply (in addition or instead of the standard terms and conditions of training grant) where these are set out in the grant agreement.

Please also note that the question does not characterise EPSRC’s specific conditions correctly. EPSRC has not changed incorporated to aligned, or vice versa. However for its 2023 CDTs, EPSRC:

- maintained the definition of an aligned student, to capture people attending occasional CDT activities but without being a full member of a CDT cohort or receiving any funding from the CDT grant (such as a student funded by a UKRI doctoral landscape award)
- removed the definition of an incorporated student, instead defining all members of a CDT cohort as EPSRC CDT students (regardless of the source of their studentship costs)
- added a condition to trial allowing studentships to be 1% to 49% EPSRC funded.

As those specific grant agreements set out, these were for “for 2023 EPSRC CDTs only”. If we make the change for other grants we will communicate this.

Question: ESRC recently changed the definition of aligned students to incorporated students, does this apply to more widely to other UKRI funded students too?

Answer: ESRC does not use the terms “aligned” or “incorporated students”; we believe this question refers to the 2023 EPSRC CDTs. See our response to the question above.

Communications

Question: Is it anticipated that the grant holder/RO will update the funded students with these changes?

Answer: Yes, you should ensure that your students are aware of the support that is available to them. In a number of places we have specific requirements, for example TGC 8.0.1: “You should ensure that Students and members of staff are aware of what leave is available to Students and when leave could result in an extension to the Studentship, for example in a well publicised policy on leave and extensions”.

While we anticipate that the update to the TGCs is largely positive, you may also want to consider your obligations under consumer law, as set out in the [Competition and Market’s Authority’s consumer law advice for providers](#). The guidance advised you to treat students in a way that is clear, transparent and fair and sets out some specific provisions about communication.

Some ROs have told us that they would benefit from UKRI doing more to inform students and supervisors of what support we provide. We are therefore planning to support ROs with our own communications activity in the 2025-26 academic year. This communications activity will not be specific to your institution and therefore will direct students to talk to their RO. It will not be a substitute for your own communications activity.

Question: In the interests of transparency, would this be a presentation that we can share with incoming students, so that they are fully appraised of the system they’re entering?

Answer: We recommend you develop your own communications materials for students, setting out what the changes mean for them in the context of your own policies and institution.

We are developing communications materials for students, but these will be comparatively high-level and direct students to their provider for further information.

Costs and benefits

Question: What plans does UKRI have for post-implementation review of the changes? I'm thinking in particular of picking up unintended and unanticipated consequences of the changes AND Policy Statement paragraph 1.14 states expenditure will only increase by 1.2% as a result of these changes. What evidence will you gather in the future to sense check this?

Answer: The replacement for the Joint-electronic Submission system (Je-S) will collect data on student extensions and the cause of these, which will help us assess the impact of leave requirements on an on-going basis. We are also considering how we better use data on Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA). This work may be supplemented commissions for additional evidence, as required.

We should have early indications of the impact of the proposals by late 2026, by which time the students who are in their final year when the changes are introduced will be due to either complete their studentship or receive an extension. The full impact won't be known until a full cohort has completed their degrees, by 2029 or 2030. In the meantime we will continue to engage with the community and are open to feedback sent to talent@ukri.org

Question: Up to now, costs of leave have been lower than typical underspend. However, are you confident that this will remain the case with the increased leave entitlement?

Answer: Yes, when looked at across the whole of UKRI's portfolio. Some grants – particularly smaller grants – will have less flexibility and will require us to work with you on the appropriate course of action, as set out in the training grant conditions which may include topping up a grant or moving the student to an alternative grant.

Question: Granting 28 weeks for all 300 of our UKRI funded students on our grant is going to be very costly to UKRI.

Answer: National statistics on sick leave for workers indicate that 1 in 25 people take a period of sick leave lasting more than four weeks each year. In total, across all UKRI studentships, we expect around 260 students to benefit a year from medical leave. We will monitor reasons for extensions to assess whether this is correct.

Grant holders should also bear in mind that they are required to ensure a safe environment for all individuals associated with any research activity funded by the Training Grant, both on and off-site, and for meeting all regulatory and legislative health and safety requirements (TGC 3.3).

Extensions

Question: TGC 6.1.1 and Policy statement 3.79: “in considering the length of an extension, you may consider the impact of the timing and duration of the absence.” Will there be any additional guidance about how to apply this? It is open to interpretation (i.e. is not a 1:1 extension for leave) and may lead to inconsistencies across the UKRI network. It also seems to contrast with the specific leave terms defined in "Special Leave" etc.

Answer: Yes, an extension could be longer than the time taken as leave *if* the time taken as leave was at a particularly critical part of the research project. For example, the leave meant a student missed their opportunity to use an essential research facility. We will provide further guidance when we publish the revised Training Grant Guidance in April, but in line with the wider changes our expectation is that ROs will have a policy that enables them to support students in a way that is fair.

Question: Could you please talk again about the potential for working together at the end of a grant to address a shortfall if the volume/duration of student extensions lead to one.

Answer: TGC 8.4.4 states: “Where you can demonstrate that you cannot meet the costs of leave from within the training grant or other contingencies, You must inform Us. Where we are content that you cannot meet the costs, we will either (a) agree an arrangement to transfer the student to an alternative concurrent training grant or (b) agree to meet the costs on a formal request through the completion of the Final Expenditure Statement for the Training Grant.”

For larger grants, we do expect them to be managed with a view to some students needing leave as this is not an atypical experience. Generally we expect welfare of students to be prioritised over other incidental opportunities. Provided a larger grant can demonstrate that it took reasonable steps to include contingencies, we will work with them to find ways to cover the cost. We recognise smaller grants may not have the ability to build in meaningful levels of contingency funding.

Question: If a week is taken as medical or additional leave, we have to extend the studentship by a week - is that funding only? Would you calculate that extra week as a 52 of the stipend or a quarter of a monthly payment?

Answer: Just to be clear, if a week is taken as eligible medical or additional leave, you are allowed (and encouraged) to extend the studentship by that week. If they take a month of leave, you *must* extend by that month. Note that medical leave for a routine illness (for example a common cold) is not eligible for an extension, as projects should be planned on the basis that most students will take some time off.

Whether you extend for a period between one week and one month, and how to calculate the stipend for that period, are up to you, but the student should be paid at their usual rate for that period of time. We recommend that you have a consistent policy on this. Provided your system is not inconsistent with the conditions or guidance we are content.

Question: Just a question on unfunded extensions, if a student has not had a period of sickness, has used their leave entitlement as they should, and as they have approached their submission date they have requested an extension, and that extension is granted, should we be funding that extension if it is outside of their funded period?

Answer: No. Extensions to the funded period / studentship are governed either by TGC 6.1 (on leave) or any specific conditions given to you by your awarding council (for example, in relation to a placement or language training). We do not provide for funded extension requests in other circumstances.

Also note the Policy Statement states that we will work with the sector in the first half of 2025 to consider whether we can scope and provide sufficient guidance for using additional funded time as a reasonable adjustment, but this work is yet to conclude.

Question: There seems to be a contradiction in the words around the extensions - in 6.1 it says Studentships must be extended under particular conditions, but later on (in various places) the wording moves from must to may e.g. 8.1.1 or 8.2.A.2

Answer: As set out in TGC 6.1.2 there are circumstances where you would not extend the studentship even though the leave type is eligible, notably an extension must not be provided for a period after the Student has submitted their thesis or equivalent.

Funding assurance

Question: How will you ensure a consistent interpretation and implementation of these new T&Cs across all research councils?

Answer: The revised training grant conditions have been agreed by all councils. We also have a project called Collective Talent Funding which is further harmonising our support, where appropriate.

Grants

Question: Do these changes apply to studentships related to research grants secured by an individual academic which included provision for a studentship. So not a training grant, but a research grant with a studentship.

Answer: These provisions apply to all grants to which the training grant conditions apply. We are currently reviewing studentships that are not on training grants. If this applies to you and you do not hear from us by 1 May 2025, please email talent@ukri.org

International students

Question: TGC 4.3: international students are now potentially be going to be asked to cover the home/international fee difference: this has the potential to generate further inequalities for international students. Main question is about timing: applicants are already involved in student recruitment and would not have started with any expectation of paying this fee. Can this TGC be delayed until 25/26?

Answer: This is a clarification rather than a change in policy, which has been in place since 2021; we appreciate that there has been confusion before and apologise for this.

While you can charge international students (or associated project partners) the difference between the home fee and the international fee we are not in any sense requiring you to do so. A number of ROs continue to waive the fee difference.

Before you charge fees for a student you should consider your obligations under consumer law and seek legal advice. You should also bear in mind that UKRI and OfS require you to comply with consumer law. The consumer law obligations apply from before the student has applied for the studentship. See: [Competition and Market's Authority's consumer law advice for providers](#).

Question: Can the VISA & immigration health surcharge be charged to the Training Grants for International students?

Answer: No, this is not an allowable expense for UKRI studentships.

Question: T&Cs say we must conduct health and safety risk assessments for student who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or given birth in last 6 months. How does that sit with the visa requirement that international students can only take 62 days mat leave? That is, if a student returns 62 days after giving birth, and the risk assessment clearly show they should not have returned to study as it puts their or their baby's health at risk, what are our options? Sickness absence?

Answer: In these circumstances we recommend you seek legal advice and / or advice from your immigration support service. Note UKRI is not authorised to give regulated immigration advice.

Question: Will UKRI lobby UKVI to ensure equitable treatment for students that it funds?

Answer: As a public body UKRI does not lobby the government. We recommend you highlight any concerns to your university mission group.

Question: UKRI recently started accepting international students are there any possibility that policy guidelines will be developed to guide RO?

Answer: UKRI is unable to provide regulated immigration advice.

Question: On the international student front, there is an issue with the emphasis placed by UKRI on internships. I know that this doesn't relate to the changes specifically but it is similar to the issue of leave- international students are being treated inequitably. AND Not a question but a note that we've got a PhD with a placement in place now that we hope will help International students to do a placement with their PhD and won't effect their visa so 1 step to helping making it easier for them!

Answer: Thank you for the question but placements were not part of this review. For further information please email talent@ukri.org

Question: Given the current financial climate institutions are facing, will you be looking at reducing the International cap of students in the future

Answer: We currently have no plans to change the cap on international students.

Question: Have there been EDI recommendations in the case of overseas students? These usually face considerable additional costs, not only to embark on a PhD (visa & health costs) but also, after they start their study, for instance in terms of bringing their family members to the UK. Any advice on this?

Answer: The Equality Act and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland apply to international students as well as home students. We therefore recommend you consider your obligations to international students with care. We have no advice on bringing family members to the UK, but students should direct any questions to an appropriate immigration advisor.

Leave

Question: Leave - reference to provider - is this PI of Training Grant or RO? AND "Provider" is a helpful definition: it is in the Policy Statement page 2 but not the annotated Ts & Cs Annex A: could this be added?

Answer: The provider is the organisation providing the training to a student funded through a UKRI grant. This could be the RO but it may also be other providers that are partners (more formally referred to as "third parties" in the training grant conditions) on the grant. We use this language because in the training grant conditions, "RO" specifically refers to the lead organisation for the grant.

In the training grant conditions themselves, we only refer to provider in TGC 8.0.4 on recording of leave. This reflects that ROs, providers and other third parties will want to be mindful of their obligations to recording personal information under data protection regulations.

On the whole we have avoided referring to Principal Investigators or Project Leads on the grant, as we tend to assume the legal liability rests with the organisation rather than the individual. We also reflect that ROs may choose to have a single RO-level policy, rather than multiple policies at grant level.

Question: When do the new leave provisions become effective? Is there an option to adopt them earlier for cases of a current students with chronic medical conditions?

Answer: The earliest the conditions can become active is the start of your 2025-26 academic year. They must be in place by 1 October 2025. Alternatively, you can provide additional support at your RO's or the provider's expense.

Question: When you say a week of leave - does this have to be consecutive? We often see shorter periods more frequently over the year just under the week block but can add up rapidly.

Answer: No, a week of leave does not have to be consecutive. Indeed, we encourage you to consider leave provision for students with chronic conditions which flare up from time to time, and ensure that they receive appropriate extensions.

Question: Does the 30-40 days annual leave include public holidays?

Answer: Yes. The condition on annual leave remains unchanged.

Question: TGC 2.15: can you provide any clarification/additional information about what type of facilities and resources are intended here, particularly about "student welfare"? (NB this will likely be provided at a provider level, not RO.)

Answer: We will provide details in the guidance document.

We refer to general support for students such as access to library, email account, welfare support, etc. The change is in response to concerns that some students lose access to these facilities while on leave which may make it harder for them to return.

Question: Since many of the existing leave policies operate on a "rolling year" basis, where permitted max leave periods have been extended (very welcome), how do we apply the "rolling year" entitlement from 1 Oct 25 for students who have had paid leave on the basis of the previous entitlements? Do we simply extend the amount of days/weeks available after discounting what has been taken?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Can you provide any further guidance on how we should treat the new sickness absence allowance for students who have already taken medical leave in the previous 12-month period? E.g. if they've had 13 weeks in 2024-25, do they get another 15 weeks (if still within the 12 month period?)

Answer: Yes, they get a further 18 weeks. We will provide some further guidance on leave in the Training Grant Guidance in April.

Question: The 28 weeks' leave within the 12 months' period - how are the 12 months calculated? Solar, from the beginning of the academic year, or the studentship? AND Does the 12-month rolling period (for the 28 weeks paid leave) start on (i) the 1st day of medical leave or (ii) the 1st day of the PhD academic year (28 weeks per academic year, reset every academic year)? Thanks

Answer: It is a rolling 12 month period, meaning it starts on the day when they last took leave. For example, if a student was absent on sick leave from 1 January 2026 to 28 June 2026 and then returned to study, they would be unable to take further medical leave until 1 January 2027.

We will provide further guidance on this as part of the update to the Training Grant Guidance in April.

Question: Are the new definitions of leave types the only types of leave that we can approve, or can we approve a period of leave for e.g. personal reasons that wouldn't fit under one of the stated additional leave reasons.

Answer: Funding can only be drawn from the grant for leave types that are either (a) within the standard terms and conditions of training grant or (b) where your institution has applied for, and been granted, the authority to charge us for "regulation leave". We are due to set out the process for applying for regulation leave in April.

Question: TGC 8.1.5 re Parental leave (no stipend). This doesn't seem to be consistent with the medical leave where you have said we can extend for a week or more but must extend for a month or more. Also, is it pro-rata? Or one calendar month for all regardless of student's FTE?"

Answer: The principle behind paternity or partner's leave is "use it or lose it". This position is unchanged from the current training grant conditions.

And yes – this form of leave is pro-rata.

Question: We have a number of PGRs who have caring responsibilities. Would any leave associated with care fall under family leave?

Answer: No, assuming you mean for adults or children with disabilities, it falls under carer's leave. See Additional Leave TGC 8.2.A.4.

Question: TGC 8.0.3 - New TGC You may supplement any of our provisions for leave with funds from other sources. - Please clarify, should this supplement from other sources be still within 50% rule?

Answer: In this case, it is likely that the funding would take the form of additional stipend payments for the extension, that is, after the end of the UKRI studentship, and TGC 4.5 would no longer apply.

Question: So basically you are saying that we can grant 28 weeks leave in any 1 year rolling period without any evidence for sickness, parental and any other leave a student requests fully paid.

Answer: No. We are not requiring you to collect a medical certificate, but you should have a policy on leave which sets out the evidence that you do collect. The student's leave also has to be genuine, meaning that they cannot be studying during that period. Hence you cannot use leave for general extensions.

Question: If extension is allowed for family, medical and additional leave is the student also entitled to be paid during this period of extension.

Answer: Yes, it's an extension to the UKRI studentship.

Question: Can you also tell us about the rules around Jury Service?

Answer: Leave is allowed if a student is on jury service. A condition to this effect was first introduced in 2019 (see [TGC 6.1.1 in the existing conditions](#)); we are now transferring this into TGC8.2.A.7. The stipend should be paid and the studentship extended. The substance is unchanged from the existing conditions.

Question: Will continuing students funded through existing UKRI training grants be entitled to the same level of increased paid medical leave, for example, as those starting under new grants from October 2025 onwards?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is there any reason why medical leave is set as 28 weeks maximum, i.e. 6 months 2 weeks, when 26 weeks equates to 6 months?

Answer: We have benchmarked against conditions for workers. Statutory sick pay is available to workers for 28 weeks.

Question: The current Ts & Cs say the total period of extension of the funding must not normally exceed 12 months during the lifetime of an award. The new Ts & Cs say max 12 months specifically for paid sick leave. Does this imply that a combination of sick and Additional Leave of more than 12 months is allowable?

Answer: No, the extension is limited to 12 months of Medical and Additional Leave.

Question: Students can take lengthy unpaid personal leave beyond the entitlements laid out under Additional Leave. Does unfunded leave (i.e. suspension of the studentship, rather than extension of the studentship) count towards the above-mentioned period limit? In other words is the limit referring to total amount of leave or total period of additional funding?

Answer: The extension refers only to the paid studentship, not to unpaid periods during which the studentship is suspended. We have no conditions on the period for which the studentship can be suspended, but the RO may have its own regulations on this. If the suspension means

the studentship would last beyond the end of the grant, you should contact us to discuss options.

Question: Back to the leave policy. We have a (disabled) student who has had more than 12 months medical leave (approved by UKRI and University). We suspect that more may be requested later in the PhD - will we be able to request approval from UKRI, or is it now capped?

Answer: We will continue to honour any existing commitments. Please contact your awarding council to discuss future leave.

Question: Given the changes to leave provision, under what conditions might you want or need to suspend a Studentship?

Answer: You may still need to suspend a studentship. For example, for a student who is still unable to return to study after exhausting their 28 week allocation of Medical Leave.

Question: Do we need to record forms / periods of leave which do not result in an extension of funding, for example a short period of medical leave?

Answer: Providers must maintain a record of Family Leave, Medical Leave and Additional Leave (see TGC 8.0.4). Although a short period of medical leave may not lead to an extension, particularly if it is for a common illness (such as a cold), because it could contribute to a students' allocation of medical leave and to an extension, (particularly if a health condition develops into something worse) we would recommend that RO staff do not attempt to dissuade students from recording medical leave.

Medical Evidence

Question: If HEIs ask for medical evidence for all students except UKRI-funded, there is a disparity there. Especially for the increasing number of students who choose to self-diagnose neurodiversity.

Answer: There is no disparity. While we are not requiring you to collect a specific type of medical evidence, you should have your own requirements on what medical evidence you require to verify a student's claims.

In so far as the question might relate to disability, you should bear in mind that in the training grant conditions, disability has the same meaning as in the Equality Act 2010 (in England, Scotland and Wales) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (in Northern Ireland). These acts state that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A simple guide to the meaning of disability is available from the [Equalities Advisory and Support Service](#) while the [UK government has published more extensive guidance](#). It is worth noting that the definition is broad and can cover impairments caused by a very wide range of health conditions.

Because the definition tends to focus on the impairment, not the health condition from which the impairment arises, your policy should reflect contemporary guidance on assessing

disability. This should include what proportionate measures you require to verify what a student says about their health condition or requirements, or where you require expert evidence or recommendations to make well informed decisions. A degree of procedural formality will generally be appropriate. Where a student has a severe or urgent condition, you may need to make reasonable adjustments without a diagnosis or medical or expert evidence. Your policy is also likely to need to reflect your organisation's view on assessing where an impairment puts a student at a substantial disadvantage, and how to consider whether an adjustment is reasonable.

There is advice on what this means for higher education providers in England, Wales and Scotland:

- EHRC's [Technical guidance on further and higher education \[EHRC, 2014\]](#)
- EHRC's [Advice note for the higher education sector from the legal case of University of Bristol vs Abrahart \[EHRC, 2024\]](#) contains updated advice on providing reasonable adjustments to disabled students.

Mode of study (part-time or full-time)

Question: For part-time offerings, do we have to offer all options between 100-50% FTE, or would having some set options be acceptable (e.g. 80%, 60%, 50%)?

Answer: We have made a number of changes to the conditions on mode of study, removing many of our restrictions. Note neither the existing or future conditions restrict mode of study to *either* 50% or 100%.

You now have more flexibility on how to operate your rules on mode of study without recourse to us. It may be appropriate to offer a set of options. While not a requirement, we would encourage you to think about how different options might support different students. For example, a student who is a parent might say they need to work two days a week in order to qualify for government support for childcare; you might decide that it is appropriate to offer 60% FTE for the studentship. The evidence we commissioned from the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Caucus \(EDICa\) had further examples of students who would have benefitted from more flexibility around mode of study.](#)

Phased returns

Question: Can you clarify TGC 8.3.2.2 and the text around phased return being taken from hours of annual leave accrued during a period of leave?

Answer: The Policy Statement sets out that a phased return would "...be accounted for from a period of leave, for example medical, additional, family or annual leave, as appropriate." On reflection, we note that this is not clear in the annotated TGC 8.3.2.2 as published, which states that "Phased Return will normally be taken from hours of Annual Leave". While the use of the word "normally" in TGC 8.3.2.2. gives scope for medical or family leave to be used for a phased return, we will amend the TGC to make this flexibility clearer and provide further explanation in

the Training Grant Guidance update in April. Note an extension would only be granted where this is consistent with the rules on extensions (that is, for additional, family or medical leave).

On annual leave, it may be useful to use this for a phased return in the event that, for example, a student has already used their full 28 weeks' medical leave allocation and then wishes to undertake a phased return. If the RO or provider's policy is that the student receives 30 days' annual leave a year, they might have accrued 16 days' annual leave in the time they were on medical leave. As a period of phased return, the student agrees that over a 4 week period, they will take 4 days' annual leave in the first week, 3 days' leave in the second week, 2 days' leave in the third week, and 1 day of leave in the final week – a total of 10 days' leave. The remaining 6 days could be used for a second period of phased return.

Question: Is there guidance or principles around a phased return?

Answer: We will provide further information in the Training Grant Guidance when published in April. Please do attend the May webinar if you have further questions about it.

Reasonable adjustments

Question: Please, could you clarify: reasonable adjustments (new TGC 3.4.5) - does it include students with chronic conditions?

Answer: Yes, a student with one or more [chronic conditions](#) can qualify as disabled. In the training grant conditions, "disability" takes the same meaning as in the Equality Act 2010 (in England, Wales and Scotland) and in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (in Northern Ireland). A chronic condition can meet the definition of a disability where it means the person has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Question: Can I ask about the offer letter, is that the admissions offer or the funding offer (or both)?

Answer: From 1 October 2025, TGC 3.4.5 will require you to inform persons who may become UKRI funded students that if they are disabled they can request reasonable adjustments at the earliest opportunity, including (but not limited to) in any prospectus material and in communications offering a person a studentship (such as an offer letter to the student).

Question: Can DA analysis undertaken between now and 1/10/25 be charged to the TG? AND If we offer candidates to whom we send offer letters before the autumn the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments ahead of the commencement of their studentships in the autumn, will the costs of these be eligible to be claimed through the current or new DSA framework?

Answer: We will publish an update on DSA in April. Please do attend the May webinar if you have further questions about it.

Question: Re offer letters and reasonable adjustments info, is this generic or is it supposed to be specific to the individual? Hopefully the former as we can't expect our Disability Services to assess lots of applicants surely?

Answer: Either generic or specific advice would meet our requirement.

Question: For DSA, if an applicant has a study needs assessment and then doesn't ultimately enrol on their programme, would this cost become ineligible on the grant?

Answer: We will publish an update on DSA in April. But in general, the needs assessment would still be eligible for funding from the grant, but for equipment purchased before of the studentship starts to be eligible you must seek for this to be returned and not be able to obtain a refund from the supplier.

Question: When will we learn more about potential additional support for those with long term health conditions/ caring for those with long term health conditions/disabilities, where, for instance, medical leave may not offer the support they need as they can continue to work but not in the same way as others, but rather a reasonable adjustment is that they simply need longer to complete. This would be similar to, for instance, giving additional time for Undergrad and Masters students work for those with disabilities as a standard reasonable adjustment.

Answer: As set out in the policy statement we will publish an update on this in April.

Question: How can Needs Assessment be done before the study start in the case of overseas students?

Answer: The requirement is only that you inform students of the availability of reasonable adjustments. We are also amending our DSA Framework so that *if* the needs assessment is undertaken before the study starts, you can reclaim that cost. It is essential that needs assessments also be available after the start of the studentship for a range of reasons.

Also please note that [an international student may be able to travel to the UK before their course starts](#).

Question: If part-time study is the result of a reasonable adjustment , so could be any fraction (TGC 5.3), should the full (1.0 FTE) stipend be paid or only the fraction of PT study?

Answer: Stipends for part time study should be paid at the rate, for example, a student studying 0.5 FTE should receive 50% of the stipend.

Question: Disability question: can a DSA be extended to a student if they have an unfunded programme extension to complete/submit their thesis?

Answer: Yes, the policy statement confirms that we will amend the DSA Framework to allow existing adjustments to continue for 18 months after the end of the studentship or until the student has submitted any corrections after their viva, whichever the sooner.

Question: If it is recommended that a student with a disability has additional time say 3 months to complete a PhD would this be possible to extend the funding for this reason as this would not normally go through DSA and often an organisation would fund this but could this now be charged to a grant instead?

Answer: The RO would need to fund the additional time from sources other than the UKRI grant.

Question: Have all of the changes outlined in the annotated T&Cs document been confirmed? at the DAS session last week, there was talk about IF the changes are agreed, then can/how will ROs implement these. This suggests that some of the changes might not be in the final T&Cs when we see those? The condition in particular was the ability to give a student with a disability longer time to complete based on their disability meaning they student at a slower rate.

Answer: The policy statement sets out that all of the changes to the TGCs have been confirmed, but that we are still considering whether it is possible for UKRI to provide a student with additional time to study if they study at a slower pace through the UKRI DSA Framework (see page 48 of the policy statement). We are committed to providing an update on this work in April 2025.

Question: My understanding is that we have always had to fund reasonable adjustments from core funding – which we have done – so it would be good to have guidance on how we might apply for (and be granted) support from the DSA.

Answer: While the research councils have operated a harmonised DSA Framework for a number of years, students are occasionally recruited on grants that are not subject to the training grant conditions. We note in the policy statement that we are considering this issue. If your grant has not had access to DSA please email talent@ukri.org

Responsibilities

Question: Where students are part of a consortium, which can comprise up to 8 institutions, is there an expectation for the policies across the 8 institution to harmonise so that all students are supported the same way? AND Some of these changes will require policy changes at the institutional level. For multi-institution partnerships, this is challenging given the different policy frames that are operational in different departments. Any support or guidance for this type of challenge?

Answer: It is not a requirement that institutions within a consortium harmonise. While we recognise the desirability for all students in a cohort to be treated under the same policies, this is not always possible for students registered at different organisations. What is important is that each student knows the policies that apply to them and why these may be different to other students in their cohort.

We appreciate that many institutions will need time to adapt to the new conditions, and that multi-institution partnerships often find that different partners have different rules, frameworks

or requirements. In setting out our thinking in the Policy Statement we hope to assist the sector in considering what action it might need to take.

Question: Most universities use a studentship agreement based on the Russell Group for UKRI studentships receiving funding from an industry partner. Will UKRI work with such group or similar to help update this template. Of particular note is the obligations to allow special leave and extensions. Will industry be expected to support the costs of this?

Answer: Yes, we have recently been approached by the Russell Group and are happy to work with them (and others) on this. We also require that new partnership agreements for studentships starting after 1 October 2026 reflect the changes.

Question: Is there new guidance on place of tenure? Is there flexibility for the case of students who request a remote PhD if they have additional needs (young family, caring responsibilities, etc.)?

Answer: TGC 5.2.4 states that "Both home and International Students must be resident in the UK for the majority of their studies and any time spent overseas should be for the purposes of fieldwork/long-term attachment." The current training grant guidance also states that the student must live within a reasonable travel time of their RO or collaborative organisation to ensure that they are able to maintain regular contact with their department and supervisor. This remains unchanged.

Stipend

Question: On co-funding, can we take the October 2025 uprate from the grant if partners cannot provide this due to contracts already been agreed/funds received?

Answer: No.

Question: Can I confirm you can draw the cost of the stipend uplift from UKRI grants for incorporated students? It won't matter that this is less than 50% funding?

Answer: No, this is not possible.

Question: Where a student receives an enhanced stipend, for example from industry, would the expectation be that sick leave is paid at the enhanced rate? And if so, would the company be expected to provide the additional funding or would it be taken from the grant?

Answer: Yes, the expectation is that any paid leave is paid at the student's normal, in this case enhanced, rate. You will need to follow the conditions and guidance on co-funding at the time – see TGC 8.4.1

Question: Policy statement 6.15: please can we have clarification on “...allow the provider, with the RO’s permission, to start a student on the stipend that will apply for the rest of the academic year”.

Answer: The academic year for stipends will now start on 1 October. Say the stipend was due to rise on that date from £19,000 to £20,000. A student is due to start on 12 September. The rule means that a student can be paid £20,000 pro rata from 12 September; there’s no need to annualise the stipend for 18 days.

Question: Does this mean ROs should pay stipend earlier than usual OR give additional stipend e.g. bring forward October payment to September but make that payment last OR award additional money for September?"

Answer: No, you do not need to bring forward payment runs. In fact, the condition states that the increase must apply “no later than the first stipend payment *after* 1 October” to give you the flexibility to pay the updated rate from a date in October if this is your normal practice. See TGC 2.10. You would however need to ensure that that payment run reflects the updated stipend rate – you could not leave that to a future payment run.

Question: You have not addressed the increase in the stipend and how that impacts on finances in training grants. Can you discuss how you have considered the impact of that on training grants budgets and financial flexibility to deliver these T&Cs?

Answer: We will be contacting Project Leads (previously known as PIs) about the changes shortly.

Question: Stipend overpayment to students can occur from time to time - does UKRI give guidance on reclaiming overpayments made in error.

Answer: No, but generally an overpayment could not be met from the grant. In the event that the overpayment is because a student has left, TGC 2.8 states that you are expected to take reasonable steps to recover monies paid to students in advance who leave or whose studentship is terminated, any unrecovered funds must be met by you and cannot be charged to the training grant. This remains unchanged.

Submission dates

Question: Will there be any uniformity in submissions within the funding period for all the councils?

Answer: We do not currently have a harmonised position on expected submission dates. We are aware of the issue and considering whether we can provide further harmonisation at a future date.

Question: Some UKRI studentships are funded for 3.5 years. However, most ROs expect submission within 4 years. ROs cannot be expected to impose different expectations on students according to the source of their funding. Would you agree that the RO's rules on the period available for a PhD should trump those imposed by individual funders? AND The T&Cs describe the duration of the studentships. Is the thesis due at the end of the studentship or can the thesis be submitted later? (If there is a discrepancy between these dates, having students work on their thesis when they are not paid a stipend is not good for their wellbeing.)

Answer: The [Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training](#) states that ROs should support supervisors to support students to complete their doctoral training, including wider training and submission of their doctoral thesis or equivalent, within their funded period by ensuring individual doctoral projects are designed to be achievable within that timeframe. It also states that ROs should ensure students receive paid leave throughout the doctorate, with additional leave as required, in accordance with training grant terms and conditions. It goes on to say that this may involve paid extensions to the funded period.

While we do not presently have harmonised expectations on submission dates, we note that in England the OfS monitors completion rates as parts of condition B3, and we expect ROs regulated by OfS to comply with its requirements.

We also expect all ROs across the UK to comply with consumer law, including the requirement that communicate with students and potential students in a way that is clear, fair and transparent.

Question: When you said no unfunded writing up year are you saying that both fees and stipends have to be charged to the grant in any writing up year, or that there should be no writing up period full stop if the grant has stopped paying?

Answer: In line with the statements of expectations, students should be enabled to submit their thesis or equivalent within their funded period. While it is acceptable to have a grace period after the end of the studentship, you should not actively encourage students to delay writing up until after the end of the funded period.

You can only extend to studentship for the reasons set out in the training grant conditions or any specific conditions set out by the council (for example, for placements).

Question: Policy document 3.3: "Recognising that providers are ultimately responsible for the welfare of their students, a further change will make it explicit that a provider may supplement any of our provisions for leave with funds from other sources. If this provision is used, it is likely that the provider will arrange to continue providing a stipend from its own funding sources after the end of the UKRI Studentship" This clashes with ESRC requirement that student submission date is the same as funding end date: can we request more guidance about how the RC will apply this?

Answer: On the whole, where the studentship is extended the expected submission date should move too. We intend to provide further guidance on the steps to take when TGC 8.0.3 is used in April.

Question: RE: TGC 6.2.1 Students may submit their thesis prior to the end of their award. Where the Student continues to undertake - (was) work (now) study - that is directly linked to their thesis, it is permissible to continue their funding from the Training Grant until the end of the quarter in which the thesis is first submitted. Q - what are your definitions of "work" compared to "study". What activities would you consider falling under the study category? AND TGC 6.2.1 re early submission. What was the driver for changing word from work to study?

Answer: We have updated the language in the training grant conditions for consistency. While students might be considered to "work" (for example, secondary school pupils do "homework"), given the attention to employment law we felt replacing the word "work" with "study" better reflected that in the majority of cases students on training grants are not workers or employees.

Regarding TGC 6.2.1 it is still acceptable for funding to continue to the student for them to continue their studies after submitting their thesis and until their original funding end date.

UKRI does not provide guidance on the difference between a worker and a student. ROs will need to be mindful of any advice from HMRC on the application of employment law.

Other

Question: In relation to complaints, how do students complain about UKRI Ts & Cs e.g. if RO has to implement a condition which the student feels is unfair? UKRI website not clear on this.

Answer: Generally we do not accept complaints from students, as the onus is on an RO and provider to provide the training to the student and the student would address any complaints to the RO. If the RO felt that it could not provide fair treatment to students because of our requirements, then it should raise this with us. There are numerous channels through which this might happen, which could include through the UKRI complaints process. You can find more information about [UKRI's complaints policy on our website](#).

Question: Can you clarify what you mean by 'working from home'? Does this mean a student's home country or city or their residence where they are studying?

Answer: With reference to the purchase of specialist equipment for a disabled student to work from home, the UKRI DSA Framework refers to this as their place of residence.

Question: Would the cost of software systems to record leave be an eligible cost to charge to the grant?

Answer: Not directly. The fee covers UKRI's contribution to ROs running costs; English universities also receive QR funding from Research England, with Medr, the Scottish Funding Council and Department for the Economy Northern Ireland providing some equivalent support in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Question: Can (and from where) will project running costs be increased to cover potential increased length of candidature (in the event of extended leave)? Are there limits?

Answer: When the studentship is extended you should continue drawing a fee as well as the stipend from the grant.

Question: Apologies if I've missed this, but will the guidance be fleshed out on how the RTSG element can be spent? Clear examples of what's allowed/not allowed?

Answer: No. The Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) – an element of training grants used for research related expenses – was not part of this review.

Question: Will individual research councils plan to revise their subordinate documentation (e.g. funding guides) in response to the changes in the terms and conditions?

Answer: Where councils have specific terms and conditions (for example, in the grant award letter), these will continue to apply and superseded the Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant.

We are considering how to better harmonize council's approaches, but this goes beyond the EDI review that was the focus of this policy statement.

Question: Would it be open to Research Councils to set requirements in their funding guides which are more onerous for ROs than the UKRI terms and conditions? For example, could a Research Council say that an RO 'must' grant extensions for leave lasting more than one week, even though UKRI's terms and conditions say that an extension 'may' be provided for leave lasting more than one week and 'must' be provided for leave lasting more than one month?

Answer: These changes have been overseen and agreed by talent leads in all of UKRI's councils.

Question: When will Research Councils be expected to update their own guidelines to reflect UKRI changes?

Answer: Individual councils will update their own guidance according to their usual schedules.

Question: When will Je-S studentship function be retired and replaced? Will HEI admins be offered training on the new system?

Answer: All research councils are now transitioning from the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system to the UKRI Funding Service. Ahead of the final decommission of Je-S, we will be changing how studentship data is submitted to us. Our intention is that the new system will be in place ahead of 1 October 2025. Further details will be communicated to project leads and others who work on training grants in due course. [Sign up to our newsletter to be sure of getting update.](#)

Question: About new system replacing Je-S, for studentships - could UKRI ensure that the new system will be configured to allow ROs to record all types of leaves, DSA/reasonable adjustments etc? AND are there any plans to capture this leave of absence in Je-S in line with the latest changes through a drop-down box?

Answer: No. Je-S and its replacement are designed to provide data to us for our administration of grants; as with Je-S, the new system is not designed to support your day to day management. In part this reflects that ROs have a wide variety of requirements that we could not adequately reflect.

Question: I am very much in favour of the vast majority of the changes. However, many of these changes transfer yet more workload from Councils to DTPs/CDTs, and create additional workload in some areas. Does UKRI recognise this? (I assume there will be no financial support for this increased workload?)

Answer: Yes, we considered this in the policy statement. On balance we feel that the revised conditions better reflect where responsibilities should lie and, in aligning to existing requirements, hope to have minimised additional workload. In the medium term, the changes should provide ROs with more flexibility to support students with less recourse to us, which should help reduce bureaucracy.

We are very grateful to everyone who has and continues to contribute to this work and hope that after the initial implementation, the changes this will benefit staff as well as students.

Question: We are currently making offers to our future cohort starting in 2025. Is there any guidance on what to tell them about future changes to UKRI T&Cs which are not available yet but to which they will be subject?

Answer: [The future training grant conditions are already available on our website.](#)

Question: This is all super helpful. Will the video be available after this webinar?

Answer: [Yes, the recording is available on YouTube here.](#)

Question: Will you be holding more of these sessions throughout the year? I expect we will have more questions as we progress with the implementation

Answer: We are holding the next webinar in May 2025. [Sign up to our newsletter to be sure of getting an invitation.](#)

Question: Not a question, just a comment: these changes are very welcome. Well done.

Answer: Thank you.