

# Coronavirus: Impact on AHDB-supported PhD studentships

Guidance for supervisors and students

AHDB is aware the ongoing situation regarding coronavirus has significantly impacted the research and innovation community and the nature of these impacts may evolve and increase over the coming weeks and months. Our priority is the safety and well-being of people, both our own staff and those supported by our research funding and studentships.

AHDB will seek to take a pragmatic approach that enables studentships to be completed in as timely a manner as possible without impacting on the health or well-being of the student or their supervisors.

In some circumstances, extension requests to studentships will be allowed. The specific approach to the most likely impacts are detailed below.

## Self-isolation

Where a student is ill, normal procedures should be applied. For short periods of illness (less than one month), we expect this to be managed by the academic supervisor. Where illness is prolonged, or impacts on the ability of deadlines to be met, the AHDB manager should be informed at the earliest opportunity.

Where students are not ill, but self-isolating, you should not suspend their studentship by default, but consider the impact on the ability to undertake the required work (e.g. if writing up, the impact will be minimal).

In many cases, students will be able to work from home even if the activities undertaken change. For short periods of self-isolation, even if they can't work, many students will have sufficient time left that they can make this up over the remainder of their doctorate. In these cases, extensions to funded periods should not be applied.

## Inability to access research facilities or other premises

We recognise that prolonged self-isolating, travel restrictions and limitations on access to research or other premises may undermine a student's ability to finish their doctorate within the funded period. In these cases, an extension may be considered. Where the student stipend represents the student's main source of income, AHDB would expect to pay additional costs to cover the stipend element only for the suspension period. In other cases, a no-cost extension will be applied.

## Procedure for approval of extensions

In the first instances, and at the earliest opportunity, please write to the AHDB manager responsible for the studentship, alerting them to any factors likely to result in a request for an extension. AHDB will determine the most appropriate course of action in consultation with the academic supervisor and, if appropriate, a contract variation will be issued.