

5 June 2020

Dear QMUL PhD Pandemic Organizing Group,

Thank you for setting out your concerns in your letter dated May 29<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The pandemic is clearly presenting a large array of challenges, including the impact it has had on your studies.

The approach at Queen Mary to extensions of funding for research studies follows that laid out by government and charity funders where they have agreed policies. The Queen Mary offer of additional funding for those funded students whose sponsor does not provide support will be allocated in the same way that UKRI are allocating their funding extensions, on a case by case basis for students whose funding is due to end between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. We recognise that a number of research students have been affected by the Covid-19 situation in some way. However, taking a one-size-fits-all approach would mean it is not possible to meet external sponsor requirements, or to ensure the fairest and most effective use of the additional Queen Mary funding.

We are finalising the application process for the additional Queen Mary funds. The process will include input from each School and Institute as well as the Queen Mary Equality and Diversity leads.

We will continue to review our policy on extensions to funding as applications come in. Students in need of unfunded extensions to their period of registration and thesis submission deadline can continue to apply for these in the usual way, once they are within their final twelve months of study. Applications due to the Covid-19 situation will be considered appropriately by the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB).

In relation to the use of funds for travel and research, the Doctoral College has confirmed that any funding already allocated through the Postgraduate Research Fund (PGRF) will remain in place. We will work with Schools and Institutes that hold their own funding for postgraduate research, to ensure the best use of these resources.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> we began to reopen our laboratories and other spaces, starting with areas of the Charterhouse Square and Mile End campuses. Please talk to your supervisor about the plans for your labs and other facilities; we want to ensure you are able to return safely if you need to do so to carry out your research. A great deal of risk assessment and guidance has been shared with Heads of Schools/Institutes and laboratory managers. At the same time, we recognise that many factors outside Queen Mary's control, such as conditions on public transport, will impact on research students' safety. Returning to campus is not an obligation, and everyone should continue to work from home where they can, and no research student will be put in an unsafe position.

We do understand these are difficult times. We aim to meet the diverse needs of our research students effectively and ask you to engage positively in the processes we are putting in place.

With kind regards

Colin Bailey (President and Principal)  
Andrew Livingston (Vice Principal Research and Innovation)  
Adrian Armstrong (Director, Doctoral College)

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