

York Graduate Research School April 2020 newsletter

Dear Postgraduate Researchers,

This is an anxious time for everyone, but we know that you are in a particularly vulnerable position. Many of you will be facing new challenges to your health, your wellbeing, your families and friends, your finances and the progress of your research and your degree.

We have all been forced to behave differently, think differently and challenge our understanding of how we can operate. Our routines have been disrupted and our way of life distorted. I want to echo all that our [Vice-Chancellor](#) has said about the need to talk to each other, listen to each other and show care and compassion for each other at this difficult time.

Professional services and academic staff have been working hard behind the scenes to make changes which will help over the coming months. I chair the PGR Academic Contingency Group which meets every day to review advice, prioritise actions and work out solutions. We keep in regular contact with colleagues at other universities and with funding agencies to make sure our decisions align with theirs. Sometimes simple fixes seem attractive but we also have to think through their long-term consequences and this takes a little time.

My key messages for all postgraduate researchers at York are:

- **look after yourselves and your loved ones**
- **do what you can - however little it is - to keep going with your research**
- **keep in touch with your supervisor and department on a regular basis - even if it is only to tell them that things are not going well**
- **seek support from us if you are struggling**
- **rest assured that we will respond to individual cases at the appropriate time and with compassion.**

This newsletter is a round-up of some main changes which we have implemented for postgraduate researchers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Don't forget you can get all information on the University coronavirus pages:

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information for postgraduate researchers](#)

Prof Tom Stoneham, Dean of YGRS

Applying for Leaves of Absence and Extensions

If you have been affected by COVID-19 and need to take a Leave of Absence or an Extension, we have made some changes to how you do this in order to make it quicker and simpler. For most of the ways you might have been affected by the pandemic, there is no need to provide evidence, but we do still want you to tell us how bad the impact is so that we can give you Leave or an Extension which is appropriate to your individual circumstances.

- [PGR Special Cases: contingency measures](#)

When you are within three months of your submission deadline, you can apply for a COVID-19 related extension through this simple form. Requests for up to three months will be confirmed within five working days:

- [COVID-19 contingency: PGR extension request form](#)

Annual Reviews of Progress: contingency measures

The review of progress procedure is different during the outbreak of COVID-19. Some candidates will have an online review of progress, while others will be progressed automatically. Decisions will be considered on a rolling basis, three months out from the institutional deadline.

- [Review of Progress procedure](#)

Online vivas guidance and support



All vivas will take place online until at least 31 October 2020. We've produced [student guidance for online vivas](#) and the support that's available to you so you can use this to decide whether to go ahead or delay. The Research Excellence Training (RET) Team is holding online workshops to help you prepare.

- [Student guidance for online vivas](#)
- [Preparing for your viva – new online sessions](#)

Online professional development training

The RET Team is moving all training for Summer Term online. Resources and slides will be housed in a new RET VLE area and made accessible to participants in advance, coupled with online sessions at scheduled times.

- [RETT Professional Development and Training for PGRs](#)

Coronavirus: looking after your mental health and wellbeing



We recognise that this is a very challenging time for everyone, and want to reassure you that – wherever you may currently be – the University is still here to support you. We've put together information on:

- how to access general University support from a distance
- ways to stay informed and connected in order to maintain good mental health
- how to log on to a new support service, the Big White Wall

[Coronavirus: looking after your mental health and wellbeing](#)

Have you checked out the changes to the Library loans and recalls?

Following the move to remote access, the Library has introduced changes to loans and recalls. You don't have to return any items before their original due date and you can no longer make requests for items already out on loan. The Library is trying to make as many resources available in digital formats as possible. For more information, including how to contact the Library, see the Library closure information:

- [Library closure: changes you need to know about](#)

Recent opportunities on the blog:

- [Cumberland Lodge Scholarship COVID-19 update](#)
- [Cumberland Lodge Research Associate opportunity](#)
- [Free online Career Management course for early career researchers](#)
- [Enter the Scientistt poster competition](#)

All these news items and more can be found on the [Research Student Community blog](#)

www.york.ac.uk/YGRS

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