



**UK Research  
and Innovation**

## **Managing Your Award: Frequently Asked Questions**

(Including updates from January 2021 Q&A sessions around impact of COVID-19)

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## Getting Started

### How do I begin my project?

If a Future Leaders Fellowships (FLF) proposal is successful, an electronic offer letter will be sent to the Host Organisation's administrative office via the [Joint Electronic Submission-System](#) (Je-S). It is the responsibility of the Host Organisation to provide copies of the offer letter to the fellow and any other interested parties. Please note that the offer letter can take a few weeks to be received following the notification of outcome due to UKRI's post-panel administrative processes.

The offer letter will be accompanied by an electronic offer acceptance form via Je-S, which must be completed and accepted within 10 working days of receipt by the Host Organisation's administrative office. Should the offer be accepted, a start confirmation form and payment schedule will be sent out electronically via Je-S. The administrative office must submit the start confirmation document via Je-S within 42 days of the actual start date. Further information on starting procedures can be found in the [fEC Grants Terms and Conditions](#).

For Business Fellowships there are several checks that need to be undertaken before a formal grant offer letter can be issued by UKRI. These include:

- Financial checks, carried out by the Innovate UK Project Finance team.
- Additional due diligence checks carried out by The UKRI Funding Assurance team.

You will be asked to provide information on the host organisation finances and policies to enable us to complete these checks. As the fellow you may redirect us to other individuals and/or teams within the organisation to provide this information on your behalf. We are unable to issue a grant offer letter without the successful completion of these checks. Your fellowship will start when both the grant offer letter and the starting certificate have been submitted via Je-S. You can incur spend from the date you receive your grant offer letter. However, the first financial quarter of your fellowship will not activate until you have submitted your starting certificate.

## Start Date

### Can I delay my project Start Date?

- The start date can be delayed until the latest published mandatory start date for the round of the FLF to which you applied, but not beyond this date. Exceptions to this are for cases of parental leave or long-term sickness, which are allowable in line with fellows' terms of employment.
- A grant may be delayed by up to three months after the date given in the offer letter, so long as this does not exceed the mandatory start date, without the need to notify the FLF team. The end date for the grant will be revised automatically in these instances. If you wish to request an extension to the start date outside of these parameters, please contact the FLF Post-Award team: [FLFpostaward@ukri.org](mailto:FLFpostaward@ukri.org).
- For guidance on delaying start dates for business-hosted fellowships, please contact the office ([FLFpostaward@ukri.org](mailto:FLFpostaward@ukri.org)).

## Payments

### How will the grant money be paid?

- Payment profiles are created for each grant based on the expected pattern of expenditure over the lifetime of the grant. Please speak to your Host Organisation regarding accessing your funding.
- Business Fellows will be asked to submit a payment profile based on the expected pattern of expenditure over the lifetime of the grant. Payments will be made quarterly in arrears against the individual payment profile of each grant. Payments will only be made to the registered business bank account of the host organisation. No other bank details will be accepted.

## Monitoring and Reporting

### How will the grant be monitored?

- You will also be asked to report the outcomes of your fellowship via a system called Researchfish on an annual basis. The information you provide is vital for evaluating and demonstrating the value and impact of government funding in supporting research and innovation. There is more information about this on UKRI [Reporting your research outcomes](#) webpage.
- Please be aware that Researchfish is used for the reporting of both academic and business hosted fellowships. Therefore, you should answer all mandatory fields but where a question or section is not relevant (and not mandatory) you can leave this blank. There may also be mandatory questions where you do not have anything to report in the earlier stages of your fellowship.
- For Business Fellowships financial assurance reviews will be undertaken on grant expenditure each quarter by the Innovate UK Funding Assurance Team, on behalf of the FLF scheme. You will be asked to provide documentation and supporting evidence to demonstrate expenditure.

## Post-Award Amendments

### How do I know what to expect from UKRI?

- The UKRI [fEC Grants Terms and Conditions](#) are applicable to FLF grants. In addition to the UKRI T&Cs, award holders will note additional FLF terms and conditions within their offer letter. Host Organisations and fellows are responsible for ensuring that all T&Cs are adhered to.
- UKRI understand that circumstances may change throughout the duration of the fellowship and offer flexibility to the grant to be as accommodating as possible. Therefore, amendments to a grant can be requested in line with the T&Cs, via Je-S grant maintenance requests.

## Grant Transfer Requests

- If a Fellow wishes to transfer their Fellowship to a different Host Organisation, prior approval from the UKRI FLF Post Award team must be sought in advance of

submitting the formal transfer request via Je-S. The new Host Organisation must be eligible for UKRI funding and, as a minimum, meet the commitment to salary and post-award support made by the existing Host Organisation. The transfer will need to be agreed by both the existing and new Host Organisation.

- FLF grants can be transferred from businesses to any other type of organisation (businesses, universities, other research organisations), as long as the conditions listed above are met. UKRI appreciate that sensitivities in Intellectual Property may make it particularly difficult to transfer a grant between businesses.
- UKRI will request information in support of the move which will be reviewed by FLF panel members before a decision is taken. As such, sufficient time must be allowed for the transfer to be reviewed and processed. This will include reconciling the existing grant and creating a new one at the new Host Organisation. If the grant is active, please allow up to four months for this process to be completed from the date of the request being made.
- Due to differences in the level of match funding required by different types of host organisations, a grant transfer between two businesses or between university/research organisation and a business may introduce a discrepancy about the required match funding level. In this scenario UKRI will work with the fellow and new host to agree the best use of funds.

## No Cost Extensions

[Can I extend my project due to delays in getting activities associated with my fellowship underway?](#)

Yes. Subject to UKRI approval no cost extensions will be allowed for fellows whose work has been halted or delayed due to reasons such as parental leave, long-term health problems, COVID-19-related disruptions etc.

- Fellows will need to provide evidence of the need for an extension and are advised to keep a record of any disruption caused. If helpful, please use the Impact of COVID-19 survey to provide this information to us as delays are encountered. We may continue to ask for updates through our quarterly newsletter.
- No cost extensions will be added to the end of the first four-year period (pro-rate for part time fellows) of the fellowship, prior to the start of the +3 year extension period. It is beneficial to you to wait until the final year of your award to make the request for a no cost extension to allow you to ensure the duration requested accurately reflects the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and any other delays that may have been encountered.
- We are aware that some Host Organisations are asking that we confirm approval of the no cost extension now e.g. to enable recruitment process to begin that have been delayed. We are happy to accept these requests.
- To request an extension under the current funding system, grant holders submit a Je-S grant maintenance request and provide justification and reasoning for the no-cost extension requested. More information on extension requests can be found on the [UKRI \*How To Manage Your Award\* webpage](#).

- It is usual for fellowship grants to underspend; when a no cost extension is applied, the host organisation/fellow can use their remaining award funds in accordance with the grant terms and conditions up until the new end date. See below for details regarding the virement of funds.

#### Will costed extensions be offered?

- We are unable to offer costed extensions.

### **Halted Research & Development Plans/Changes to Project**

#### Can I make changes to my project?

Project plans can be changed, and it is not unusual for this to happen. Changes fall into two broad scenarios:

- Aims and objects remain the same, however there are changes to the timeline, methods, or how costs are applied. As long as any changes in costs are within virement rule these changes are permissible and do not require the approval of UKRI.
- Aims and objects need to be changed or altered. This can be for a variety of reasons, not just COVID-19. For example, there may be a development in your field/sector which either creates new options to you or disproves original theories or methods. In this case you must contact us with details of the change, which we will need to review before updating our record of your fellowship.

### **Budget/Virement (transfer of funds)**

#### Can I move funds to manage any changes I have needed to make, such as to buy equipment to work from home, using travel budget to pay for training courses or staff recruitment, etc.?

There is flexibility in managing your award funds. We allow the virement of funds as per the conditions of your award. Usually if you have costed for something in your original application then these costs can be used to cover most items. Please note that if you are creating new staff posts then you will need to come to us with a justification and for approval.

- For non-business-based fellows, virement rules at RGC 4.4 of the Grant Terms and Conditions of FEC Grants [UKRI-150321FullEconomicCostingGrantTermsConditions-Mar2021.pdf](#) allow for funds to be vired between Directly Incurred cost headings without the need for permission from UKRI.
- Directly allocated or DA funds cannot be vired in or out of this fund heading. Directly incurred or DI funds can be vired between the DI headings. But cannot be vired into DA or exceptions.
- A minority of award holders will have exceptions costs associated with costs outside the UK. These can be vired within both exception and DI headings. Equipment costs awarded to procure items over £10k cannot be vired out to any other heading. Nor can funds be vired into this heading. Equipment costs under £10k will be awarded under the DI heading and can be vired within the DI headings only. Award funds can be used to purchase home equipment.

- For business-based fellows virement rules will differ and all funding is awarded under a single heading in Je-S ('exceptions'), and further split into cost categories using the grant profiling template. The figures used to populate the grant profiling template are taken from your original application.

Requests for virement between cost categories that differ from the planned spend submitted in the original application must be submitted to UKRI for approval. All requests should be emailed to [FLFpostaward@ukri.org](mailto:FLFpostaward@ukri.org).

#### May I recruit a PhD student to my project?

- Costs associated with supporting PhD students cannot be included within FLF awards.

### COVID Frontline Related Responsibilities

#### What about time spent on COVID-19-related activities?

- UKRI has been supportive of fellows applying for funding to support COVID-19 related activities.
- These activities are considered an exception to the 6 hours allowed for non-FLF activities per week, as set out in the additional terms and conditions, as long as these do not impact on the aims and objectives of the fellowship.
- If the COVID-19 related activities are not related to your FLF and will take up more than 6 hours per week, awards may be paused, or a no cost extension requested to account for the time spent on the COVID-19 related activity.
- Salary should not be claimed as part of any COVID-19 project funding (see EXCEPTION below).
- EXCEPTION for fellows who were loaned / redeployed to the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic: NIHR/DHSC guidance has now been published confirming that HEIs and other non-NHS employers should recover salary costs from the trust they were deployed to for COVID-19 response activity duties. The guidance for this is found at: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/guidance-on-funding-the-cost-of-research-staff-redeployed-to-the-nhs-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/25208>

### Furlough

#### What is the UKRI advice on furloughing of staff during COVID-19?

- UKRI are unable to offer any advice on whether fellows or staff associated with a FLF can or should be furloughed. Your Host Organisation should refer to the UK Government guidance for further detail on the furlough scheme.
- Where the decision has been made to furlough either the fellow or staff costed on a FLF salary costs cannot be claimed from the FLF award. The FLF can either be paused or a no cost extension can be applied. As each project and team can differ please contact the FLF post award team to discuss the options in this situation.

## Host Obligations

What happens if my host claims it is no longer able to fulfil their agreed obligations for my FLF award?

- The Head of Department Letter of Support submitted with your application sets out the support committed to you by your Host Organisation, and UKRI expects this to be provided. When in discussion with your host, please refer them back to your Letter of Support and the expectation of UKRI that this support be provided.
- If there are issues in the support being received, for example if you are not being given the space you need to carry out your fellowship or other issues that cannot be resolved by discussions, let us know.
- These awards are portable. If you wish to transfer Host Organisation, you will need to put a request for this in through the UKRI FLF team. There is an assessment process to follow which can take up to four months (possibly longer for business-based fellows) so please contact us as early as possible if you are considering moving host so that we can discuss the process with you.

## Salary

Can salary increase due to pay rises or promotion be paid from an FLF award?

- Yes. Our guidance for applicants advises that costings for salaries for fellows and named staff should include incremental pay rises and promotions.
- If costings do not include pay rises or promotions, it may be possible for funds to meet salary increases to be vired, in accordance with virement rules, provided that this does not compromise the aims and objectives of the fellowship.

## Reduced Hours Fellowships

For Business Fellowships only what are the rules around reduced hours fellowships?

- For fellows on reduced hours fellowships (up to 40% time spent on non-FLF business activities), the time commitment can be flexible over the duration fellowship but should be documented to demonstrate the fellow and team are committing a sufficient amount of time to the fellowship. Salary cannot be claimed for any activities outside of FLF activities.
- If a fellow and host organisation wish to request a change to the percentage of hours worked by the fellow, this must be requested by emailing [FLFpostaward@ukri.org](mailto:FLFpostaward@ukri.org), explaining how the aims and objectives of the fellowship will be impacted. Grant funding from UKRI cannot be increased to accommodate this; however, funds may be vired from other cost categories.

## Time available to spend on non-FLF activities

Am I allowed to spend time on activities outside my FLF?

- As set out in the additional FLF terms and conditions, in years one and two of the fellowship non business-based fellows have a maximum of six hours (pro-rata for part time fellowships) for commitments that are not part of their fellowship but which support a fellow's broader professional or career development, or a maximum of two clinical sessions. In years three and four, the time available for non-fellowship commitments that support the fellow's wider career and professional development increases to 25% of a fellow's time (pro-rata for part time fellowships). This flexible time can be used as the fellow deems fit, but additional activities must not compromise a fellow's focus, or achievement of the aims of their Fellowship, must be of benefit to the fellow's professional or career development, and must be at the fellow's discretion. Additional salary cannot be claimed as a result of involvement with additional research activities associated with this flexible time at this point.

### **+3 Extension Period**

How will the +3 extension period be assessed and decided?

- The plus 3 process is currently in development and we will confirm the details when these are finalised, towards the end of May 2021. Assessment will comprise a written submission and face-to-face discussion with a panel; Fellows will have full details and guidance well in advance of any renewal submission. The start of the plus 3 will pick up from the end date of the award, taking into account any no cost extensions.

### **Childcare/Personal Responsibilities**

What happens if closure of a nursery/school means my working conditions become more difficult?

In the first instance speak to HR within your host organisation. Find out what policies they have in place to support you if childcare becomes your priority. In terms of grant funding we can either:

- Pause your funding
- Apply a no cost extension
- Adjust your FTE

### **Maternity/Paternity/Adoption leave**

- If a fellow or named researcher is included on the grant as Directly Incurred (DI) staff and they spend 100% of their contracted time on the grant, then the costs of their parental leave can be paid from the grant.
- UKRI will compensate any additional net costs that cannot be met within the cash limit of paid parental leave at the end of the grant. The net cost is the amount paid to the individual less the amount the Research Organisation can recover from HMRC.

### **Overseas Recruitment**

I have staff that had to return to their home country due to the Pandemic. Can they continue to work on the project from abroad?

- We cannot approve the recruitment of staff to work remotely outside the UK, where overseas staff have not been included within the original proposal. If currently recruiting, you can also delay the start of staff until they are able to move to the UK.



- For staff listed in your application as working outside the UK where additional costs involved with overseas recruitment and employment have been included in your award offer and have been considered part of the FLF assessment process the above statement does not apply and you are able to continue to manage your staff costs as planned.
- For any other changes to staff costs from the original award offer please refer to the Budget/Virement (transfer of funds) section of this FAQ.
- For general recruitment please be aware that the Global Talent Visa is a possibility for both the fellow and any roles mentioned in the original fellowship application. Please see the UKRI [Get funding and visas to do research in the UK](#) for more information.

## Submitting Grant Maintenance Requests Via Je-S

### How do I formalise changes to my project?

Grant maintenance requests are a Je-S functionality which allows award holders to submit requests to change an existing grant. These requests are subject to UKRI approval. For example, change requests can be submitted for:

- Extensions
- Staff extensions
- Exceptional extensions - non staff
- Grant suspension/resumption
- Start date extension request
- Grant transfer request
- Grant termination

You can also make a 'grant generic change request' for any other type of change not covered by the specific options.

For more guidance on post-award amendments please refer to the [UKRI WEBSITE](#).

For more guidance on submitting requests and a full list of grant maintenance requests, please see the [Je-S Grant Maintenance Requests](#) page.

## Acknowledging UKRI Support

### I have written a paper and want to formally acknowledge my FLF, how do I do this?

*Grant supported work should formally be described as "This work was supported by a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship [grant number xxxx]."*

## Newsletter

Please also look out for quarterly newsletters as we will continue to use this to share the latest information and updates.

## **Contacts**

Should you have any problems with Je-S, please contact the [Je-S Helpdesk](#). The helpdesk is staffed Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Fridays 8.30am to 4.30pm (excluding bank holidays and other holidays).

- Email: [JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org)
- Tel: 01793 444164

Should you have any UKRI FLF policy queries regarding the management of your award, please contact the FLF Post-Award team.

- Email: [FLFpostaward@ukri.org](mailto:FLFpostaward@ukri.org)

Further information for award holders and Host Organisations can be found on the [UKRI WEBSITE](#)

## **Keep Us Informed!**

Please do complete our Impact of COVID-19 survey to keep us informed [UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships - COVID-19 Impact survey \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](#)