

## Covid-19 – Week Four Check In Survey: Response from the Department of Biology and Biochemistry – PGR

Dear All

Thank you to those of you who responded to the *COVID-19 Check In Survey* run by the University in week 4 of this semester. I have now had a chance to look at the responses from PGR students in our department and wanted to give you a summary of the main issues raised, and the actions that have been taken.

- ***Funding and extensions.*** The provision of funded extensions to non-UKRI funded students was the main issue raised by PGR students who responded. Prior to release of the survey the Doctoral College had already been talking to the University about this and working to develop suitable solutions. Directors of Studies for PGR students had also discussed this extensively at the Faculty Doctoral Studies Committee (FDSC), and the FDSC highlighted the need for schemes to support non-UKRI students to University management. Students funded by the university (URSA students) have now had the opportunity to apply for funded extensions. An additional ***COVID19 Research Interruption*** scheme for students who do not benefit from other forms of support (including self-funded students) is also now available. Guidance for this scheme and application forms can be found [here](#), and I am happy to talk to anyone wishing to apply regarding DoS supporting statements.
- ***More in person social events for PGR students.*** A number of respondents expressed a desire for more in person social events to enable greater interaction between PGR students in the department. Although I fully understand the desire for this type of event, it is not feasible in the current circumstances to organise social events of this nature. PGBio continue to organise regular virtual alternatives, such as coffee mornings, but I will be talking with PGBio to explore additional events that we may be able to organise.
- ***Getting advice.*** Among those who responded to the survey, a notable number indicated that they had found it difficult to find answers to questions they have. I would like to emphasise that anyone who needs help can come to me directly and I will work with you to help answer the questions you have.

However, I would also like to note that those who responded to the survey often made positive comments about their experience in the Dept this semester. In particular, it was great to see numerous comments describing the efforts supervisors have made to support their students, maintain regular communications, and facilitate alternative ways of working.

Please also feel free to contact me at any time if you require help or support with any issues you may be facing. I will be happy to talk things over with you (in confidence) and will help in any way I can.

Best wishes

Brian Jones