******Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19)**

**DTP Contingency Plan**

Last updated 23 September 2021



This plan is guided by the [UK government’s advice to the education sector](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/covid-19-travel-guidance-for-the-education-sector), and [guidance from NERC/UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/news/coronavirus-impact-on-ukri-supported-research/).

**Please keep up to date with your University / institution’s guidance for PGR students, as the situation is rapidly changing. Further guidance will be published by the EnvEast / ARIES DTPs as it becomes available.**

**Principles**

* Students and staff involved in EnvEast / ARIES activities (funded or otherwise supported by the consortium) should be able to follow advice to minimise infection without fear that they will be financially penalised.
* Students funded by the EnvEast or ARIES DTPs should receive appropriate advice and support to complete their PhD projects within the restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

Please see the [EnvEast](http://www.enveast.ac.uk/documents/5777943/7097052/EnvEast+Handbook_2019.pdf/778bf70d-a90e-bdce-9d14-e2ece6175376) or [ARIES](https://www.aries-dtp.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ARIES-Handbook-2019_20.pdf) Handbooks for differences in support between DTP-funded and Associated PGRs. The DTP supports all PGRs with respect to cohort training, but we do not fund the research, stipends or travel of Associated PGRs (other than travel to cohort training). Associated PGRs should consult their Supervisors and funders for any provision being made to provide equivalent support.

**IMPORTANT: It is imperative that you keep records of all impacts of COVID-19 on your PhD research and training – any impact on access to facilities, fieldwork, placement, etc) must be evidenced using the** [**DTP Risk Register**](https://www.aries-dtp.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/DTP-Risk-Register.xlsx)**.**

If you have any queries or concerns about your DTP training and/or studentship please contact [aries.dtp@uea.ac.uk](mailto:aries.dtp@uea.ac.uk)

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| **Risks and Mitigation**  **a) Possible impacts on current research projects (DTP-funded PGRs only)** | | | | |
| **Risk** | **Consequence of risk** | | **Mitigation** | |
| Student is unable to undertake planned national or international travel for research (e.g. fieldwork, conferences, placements including CASE) due to government restrictions, including FCO guidance | • Student may lose opportunity to access resources essential to their project – project may not be completed as proposed  • Costs already incurred in travel bookings would not be recoverable through institutional insurance policy | | • Reschedule travel where possible; extension to funded period can be applied for if necessary (details of process forthcoming)  • Where rescheduling is not possible (e.g. due to time-sensitive trips), redesign research project  • No future international travel arrangements to be booked until 19 April 2020, when the position will be reviewed. If prices go up in the meantime, EnvEast / ARIES will cover the increased cost.  • Good communication with supervisor and institutional Postgraduate Research Directors / committees.  • CASE placement requirements waived where these cannot be rescheduled in to existing time frames, or replaced by alternative non-attending activities. | |
| Student is unwilling to undertake planned national or international travel for research (e.g. fieldwork, conferences, placements) due to concerns about COVID-19 | • Student may lose opportunity to access resources essential to their project – project may not be completed as proposed  • Costs already incurred in travel bookings may not be recoverable | | • Reschedule travel where possible; extension to funded period can be applied for if necessary; assurances given to students that reimbursement will be made, and that replacement trips will be funded  • Where rescheduling is not possible (e.g. due to time-sensitive trips), redesign research project  • Where quarantine costs or increased prices apply additional funds may be accessed from EnvEast / ARIES using the financial assistance form.  • Good communication with supervisor and institutional Postgraduate Research Directors / committees | |
| Student is unable to access resources (e.g. IT facilities, research labs) due to institutional closure | • Student may lose opportunity to access resources essential to their project – project may not be completed as proposed | | • Investigate use of online resources (remotely accessible) where possible  • Where online is not possible or appropriate, redesign research project  • Good communication with supervisor and institutional Postgraduate Research Directors / committees | |
| Student is diagnosed with COVID-19 | • Student unable to proceed with project while sick  • Student may lose opportunity to access resources essential to their project while self-isolating but well enough to work – project may not be completed as proposed | | • Ensure students are aware that extensions are available of up to 28 weeks to funded period and submission deadline for illness  • Investigate use of online resources (remotely accessible) where possible  • Where online is not possible or appropriate, redesign research project  • Good communication with supervisor and institutional Postgraduate Research Directors / committees | |
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| **b) Possible impacts on EnvEast / ARIES events (DTP-funded and Associated PGRs)** | | | | |
| **Risk** | | **Consequence of risk** | | **Mitigation** |
| Mandatory cohort events may be cancelled due to government advice or illness of training lead | | • Loss of support for students  • Additional cost incurred | | • Virtual conferencing methods used to provide essential training  • No further venue bookings to be made until government advice allows face-to-face teaching and socialising  • Non-recoverable costs absorbed |
| Training event is cancelled due to government advice or illness of training lead | | • Loss of support for students  • Additional cost incurred  • Impact on DTP and institutional research training compliance. | | • Timely communication to attendees  • Seek to reschedule event where possible  • Consider virtual event where appropriate  • Monitor training budget |
| **c) Possible impact on recruitment** | | | | |
| **Risk** | | **Consequence of risk** | | **Mitigation** |
| Candidates are unable to commence study in October due to health issues or campus closures, or inability to enter the country. | | • Students may defer start in January/February, thereby miss induction | | • All students invited to attend virtual induction events where available  • Face-to-face events planned for Spring when cohort is complete |
| **d) Possible impact on governance and DTP management** | | | | |
| **Risk** | | **Consequence of risk** | | **Mitigation** |
| DTP core team and Executive Team meetings are not possible in person | | • Difficult to discuss operational issues | | • Set up virtual meetings; all members attend remotely  • Consider access/ability to participate - whether for reasons of disability or inability to work if colleagues have caring responsibilities. |
| Strategy and Advisory Board meetings are cancelled | | • Difficult to discuss essential DTP issues | | • Set up virtual meetings  • Consider access/ability to participate - whether for reasons of disability or inability to work if colleagues have caring responsibilities. |
| DTP management unable to work due to own or dependants’ ill-health | | • Unable to make operational decisions including authorising expenditure | | • Agree cover for colleagues, with deputies; support from wider PGR Service at UEA |