

Research Students Impact Statements

Guidance for supervisors

To take account of the impact of COVID-19 when undertaking their research, students can if they wish submit a Research Impact Statement with their softbound thesis. Guidance for students can be found below. Supervisors will be asked to sign the Research Impact Statements. Research Impact Statements will be provided to Examiners along with the softbound thesis.

When assessing the thesis and considering their recommended outcome and any further work required, examiners will be asked to take the information provided in the Research Impact Statement into account, recognising that the COVID-19 situation is ongoing and research activity may continue to be restricted or limited for some time. Depending on the circumstances it may be necessary for the Internal Examiner to seek guidance on the feasibility of further research activity. In these circumstances the Internal Examiner will consult the Supervisor and/or the Department Director of Postgraduate Education/ Programme Director.

If requested, guidance should be provided based on the feasibility of further study depending on the circumstances of the research area. For example, further lab work or fieldwork for data collection purposes might not be possible due to ongoing restrictions in accessing laboratories or fieldwork sites, or further participant interviews might not be possible due to a specific country or area being in lockdown. The candidate's personal circumstances should not be taken into account, as there are other mechanisms to mitigate for these.

Guidance for students

In recognition that COVID-19 may have impacted on their research, students are invited to submit a Research Impact Statement with their softbound thesis.

The purpose of the statement is for students to describe any restrictions or difficulties experienced in undertaking their research as a result of COVID-19 and to provide details of any alternative arrangements made to complete the work for their thesis. Such changes may include altering the scope of the research, limiting the range of any experiments or fieldwork, changes to the methods used, or not consulting certain material because of restrictions on access to physical collections and archives. Details of students' personal circumstances should not be included (see further below). Examiners will be asked to take account of Research Impact Statements when examining theses. The statement may help inform questions for the viva voce examination and in the viva candidates may be invited to elaborate on the impact of COVID-19 on their research and the adjustments they needed to make.

The University's [standards for research degrees](#) in terms of academic rigour remain unchanged, and as usual examiners will use the examination process to consider whether these standards are met, and if not what additional work is required (in the form of corrections or more substantive revision to the thesis) in accordance with standard procedures. If corrections or revision are required, the Research Impact Statement may also provide a useful reference for examiners to consider the feasibility of any proposed additional work.

A Research Impact Statement form is available on the [Cambridge Students](#) website. Students who wish to submit an Impact Statement should complete the form and pass it to their supervisor for

signature (electronic signatures are accepted). Completed forms should be uploaded alongside the softbound thesis and will be forwarded to Examiners by Degree Committees.

The Research Impact Statement should include:

- a brief summary of the work that the candidate planned to complete and details of how COVID-19 impacted on this work;
- details of any adjustments made;
- if appropriate, students may also summarise how any planned work they were unable to complete might have changed their research.

Students whose progress is being or has been impacted by personal circumstances related to COVID-19, such as personal illness or caring responsibilities during periods of lockdown, can apply to intermit or for an extension of their submission deadline. Students whose personal circumstances are impacting on their ability to continue their studies on an ongoing basis should discuss with their supervisor what changes can be made to their research project. Students should not therefore include details of their personal circumstances in their Research Impact Statement.

Students can submit Research Impact Statements even if they have been given an extension to their submission deadline because of disruption to their research caused by COVID-19, as it is accepted that an extension might not fully mitigate for disruption experienced.

Similarly, submission of a Research Impact Statement does not preclude students from requesting an examination review if in addition personal circumstances affect their performance in their viva voce examination. Students who do not provide a Research Impact Statement will still have an opportunity to inform Examiners of any impact of COVID-19 on their research at the viva voce examination.