

Frequently Asked Questions: Accelerated quality-related (QR) research funding announcement

Q. Is this new money?

A. This is a planned investment [for the financial year 2020-21] and is being brought forward from the academic year 2020-21. The £100m will be distributed to institutions eligible to receive funding from Research England, as a top-up to their current Quality-related Research (QR) funding allocation.

Q. Does it correlate with the institutions that are most at risk?

A. This intervention is aimed at addressing immediate pressures faced by all institutions and allows them time to make an informed response to the current situation as the full impacts become clear.

We and the OfS will continue to work further with universities on issues of institutional financial sustainability.

Q Will there be any conditions attached?

A. There are no new conditions attached to this funding (i.e. no new monitoring or reporting has been introduced). The funds will be allocated as an additional QR allocation with the same Terms and Conditions as current QR funding.

Q. Should the money be directed at COVID-19 related projects?

A. UKRI and others have specific schemes which are available for COVID-19 related projects and universities should consider applying to those schemes (see link for current UKRI call: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/funding-opportunities/ukri-open-call-for-research-and-innovation-ideas-to-address-covid-19/>). However, universities may also choose to use this money on COVID-19 related activity if they wish.

Q. Should the money be directed at particular research activities?

A. This unhypothecated funding is to be spent on activities eligible for QR funding. It is not targeted specifically at a discipline or any other activity explicitly.

Universities are autonomous institutions who are best placed to take local decisions and will do so based on strong evidence which will develop over time.

It is expected that universities use this funding to address their priority research concerns either immediately or in the foreseeable future to further support their research objectives.

Q. Is there any direction on how the money should be spent?

A. There is no explicit guidance on how these funds should be spent as the funding is unhypothecated. It is hoped that this accelerated funding will support universities to take fully informed decisions, but ultimately universities have responsibility for how this money is directed.

Q. Does bringing QR forward just push pressures down the line?

A. Universities have indicated that they face immediate challenges, and this response is intended to relieve some of these pressures, safeguarding research talent and capacity.

Q. How will future allocations be affected?

A. This represents a change in the profile of planned investment for FY20-21. No funds have been reallocated from other non-QR budgets. For example, the planned £25m uplift to HEIF to AY 2020-21 remains.

Q. What about universities in the rest of the UK?

A. Each of the Devolved Administrations is responsible for determining how to support universities in their Nation.

Q. Is this a precursor to a bail-out package for universities?

A. Research England has been asked to sit on the joint Ministerial Taskforce on research sustainability and will continue to assess the scale of the impact and help co-develop interventions and solutions over the coming months.

Research England will continue to engage, as it has done to date, with the sector, representative and mission groups, the Devolved Administrations, the Government, and the OfS to develop robust data needed in order to identify the most appropriate options for the sector.

Q. When will Research England allocate the additional funds?

A. This funding is being brought forward from AY 2020-21 and we intend to make payment in the May 2020 pay run. Eligible institutions will be contacted directly.