Dear [Name]

Freedom of Information request: Research Training Support Grant - ref UKRI – 2018/0056

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request submitted on the 14th June 2018 in which you requested the following:

Your Request:

I would like to make a freedom of information request with regards to the Research Training Support Grant or any equivalent form of funding known under a different name. For all RCUK funded stipends, (including DTP, CDT or any others) what is the level of the RTSG or equivalent? Please provide data for each year from 2010 onward. Since the level of RTSG (or equivalent) is different between different research councils, as well as different funding schemes, please split the data accordingly.

Our response:

I can confirm that UKRI does hold the information that you have requested. Our response is detailed below, split by council response:

**AHRC:**
I can confirm that AHRC has paid £200 per year per student (based on full-time study) each year since 2010. This is the case for all of our PhD funding schemes.
We publish these rates on our website here, at the bottom of this page: https://ahrc.ukri.org/skills/phdstudents/currentawardholders/.

**BBSRC:**
The Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) is a funding line in all our Training Grants, and have been set at the following indicative levels (the amount shown is per annum, so should be multiplied by 4 for the overall cost to the grant). Please note that BBSRC expects our training partners to manage their finances to a cash limit and so the Research Organisations have the flexibility to pool the RTSG to give students variable amounts to reflect the costs associated with different projects.

For studentships (all costed on a four year model) commencing in:

- October 2010 - £1k per annum
- October 2011 - £1k per annum
- October 2012 to present - £5k per annum
**EPSRC:**
EPSRC recognise that individual students have varying needs with respect to support costs (commonly known as RTSG) therefore our routes to doctoral training allow for flexibility. As such, there is no set level for RTSG for any EPSRC studentship funding route and individual research organisations have the flexibility to decide the RTSG level on a per student basis. When training grants are awarded, RTSG funding is not separately identified in the award letter. We do not hold information on how much RTSG or equivalent has been allocated to each individual student.

**ESRC:**
The basic RTSG rate for ESRC has remained the same since 2010.

- **RTSG:** £750.00 p.a.
- **Enhancements:** £250.00 p.a. for those students studying Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM) - no longer applicable for studentships starting from 2017.

In 2010, this was a personal allocation to the student.

From 2012, our Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) were encouraged to pool this funding and allocate funds based on student needs and priorities. This has been the case since, with our Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) and Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) managing the process of awarding RTSG funds.

**MRC:**
The Research Training and Support Grant amount was £1,000 in 2010 which increased to £5,000 in 2011 and has remained at the same level for each intake year since.

A studentship award is made up of fees and stipend, RTSG and travel. Information is available on studentships on our website at [https://mrc.ukri.org/research/funded-research/success-rates/#studentship](https://mrc.ukri.org/research/funded-research/success-rates/#studentship) and [https://mrc.ukri.org/skills-careers/studentships/how-we-fund-studentships/doctoral-training-partnerships-dtps/](https://mrc.ukri.org/skills-careers/studentships/how-we-fund-studentships/doctoral-training-partnerships-dtps/).

**NERC:**
Between 2010 and 2013 the amounts of RTSG paid depended on the type of studentship; responsive (algorithm) students received £2771 per annum which included fieldwork and exceptional consumables costs. Directed students received at least £1571 per annum, but this amount was variable due to fieldwork and exceptional consumables costs which could be applied for separately. Since 2013 we have paid an RTSG of £2750 per student per annum irrespective of the type of studentship. The only exceptions are the STARS and Oil and Gas CDT who each receive an uplifted RTSG of £5000 per student per annum. The £2750 figure includes costs such as consumables, field work costs and conference/travel and subsistence costs.

**STFC:**
The amount of Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) for all STFC students is £1000 per annum per student. This amount has not changed since before 2010.

**Innovate UK:**
Innovate UK do not provide this type of grant
I hope this answers your questions.

If you have any queries about this response please contact me, or if you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to request a review of our decision, please write to:

Complaints Officer  
UK Research and Innovation  
Polaris House  
North Star Avenue  
Swindon  
SN2 1FL  
Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Enquiry/Information Line: Between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745  
Further information about the Office of the Information Commissioner can be found at http://www.ico.gov.uk/

Yours sincerely,

[Blank]

Information Manager  
UK Research and Innovation, Information Governance Team  
Email: foi@ukri.org
I’ve received the following responses in answer to your queries regarding our FOI response:

**MRC query:**
This is an annual amount. The [MRC webpage](#) has further information which may be of use.

**EPSRC query:**
Due to the flexibility their training grants afford, EPSRC advise that the RTSG can differ by university and by individual student.

We cannot provide details of the funding request made via CDT applications. This is subject to peer review confidentiality. It is also the case that awards don’t necessarily reflect the funding requested. This is particularly true of the CDT 2013 call which involved negotiations with institutions before awards were released. EPSRC did not set a level for RTSG either for the CDT applications or during the negotiations.

As stated in our previous response, the award letters don’t specify an amount to be spent on RTSG and we are unable to say what the CDTs have spent on RTSG so far. However, we have found an intermediary document which summarised the expected costs across the first tranche of awarded CDTs. This document was produced for internal EPSRC use after the negotiations with institutions and before the grants were awarded. This indicates that the average ‘other student costs’ (which we would associate with RTSG) per student across this tranche of Centres was £15,059 (i.e. £3,765 pa) with the minimum in the range of £0 and a maximum of £10,015 pa.

It is clear from this document that this is based on the average number of students supported by EPSRC from the grant. The actual average may be higher or lower depending on the contributions from other partners, and on whether these costs were being used to support the 20-40% of the students funded by CDT partners. While the minimum indicated is zero, we would not expect this to mean some CDT students are receiving no RTSG, but that this funding is being provided from partners.

I hope this answers your questions.

Kind Regards,

[Signature]

Professional Support Unit

Sent: 11 July 2018 09:46
Many thanks for the information. A few points need clarifying.

The response by the MRC does not specify whether the award is per annum or for the duration of the PhD. Could this please be clarified.

The response from the EPSRC is unsatisfactory, since for example the CDT funding call of 2013 (https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/funding/calls/2013/epsrc-centres-for-doctoral-training-invitation-to-submit-a-full-proposal/) includes a financial statement which had to be submitted. Row 5 of this statement needs the estimated other cost per student per cohort. So at least for this type of grant there is an indication of estimated other costs per student per annum. If no other similar data is available I would like to know the minimum, maximum, average median and mode of all proposals which included an estimated other cost per student per annum and the same information on all those successful applications.

Could you please let me know whether this information can be dealt with under this FoI request or whether I need to make a separate request.

Many thanks,