



ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide

Version 11 - May 2023

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Section I: Introduction and overview of studentship administration

Summary of key changes

Version 11 (May 2023)

- Duplicated text, “meeting residency requirements” has been removed from eligibility criteria (Page 9)
- Added link to UKRI guidance on other types of leave (Page 26)
- Added guidance to Associated studentship annex (Page 44)

No costs will be added until the ESRC receives confirmation that the student(s) has been recruited. The amount added to the grant will reflect the notional cost in place at the time of nomination and the duration of the studentship requested in the original application.

Purpose of the Postgraduate Funding Guide

This guide is intended to support Directors, supervisors, nominated contacts and students in the administration of studentships and Doctoral Training Grants (DTGs) in respect of financial payments, monitoring and evaluation, and rules, regulations and procedures.

This guide is valid from October 2021 and supersedes all previous versions.

Conditions of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Training Grants apply to all ESRC Training Grants (TGs) issued after 1 February 2014. See [Terms and conditions for training funding – UKRI](#) for the most recent Terms and Conditions and associated guidance documents.

This Guide is intended to complement the UKRI guidance therefore, where guidance is duplicated in the UKRI terms and conditions documents, we have removed it from this document and referenced the relevant UKRI Training Grant Conditions number for your information.

A terminology document can also be found in the guidance on using the training grant terms and conditions document, ([Meeting UKRI terms and conditions for funding – UKRI](#)).

As part of fulfilling its mission, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) provides studentships for the support of full-time or part-time postgraduate study. The Council takes seriously its role to support high-quality training opportunities for postgraduate students. As such, the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2015) ([ESRC postgraduate training and development guidelines](#)) set out the Council's expectations in relation to the training content expected to be in place or in development within accredited Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs), Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) and Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) indicating the core requirements across training in research methods and transferable skills. Previous versions of the postgraduate training guidelines were in place for DTCs. A previous version of the guidelines (2009) relates to previous periods of accreditation.

Studentships can only be held in Research Organisations (ROs) that have been given ESRC accreditation as described in the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2015) and the RO's subsequent application for accreditation. Status has been awarded to both single institutions and to consortium arrangements as per the application for accreditation. Consortia have a lead institution that administers the grant on behalf of the consortium but it is important to note that these guidelines apply to all ROs within the consortium. Accreditation is time limited and will be specified in the award letter.

The role of the ESRC

ESRC is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which brings together the UK's seven research councils, Innovate UK and Research England to maximise the contribution of each council and create the best environment for research and innovation to flourish. The vision is to ensure the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation.

UK Research and Innovation is a non-departmental public body funded by a grant-in-aid from the UK government.

Our role is to:

- promote and support, by any means, high-quality research and related postgraduate training on social and economic issues
- develop and support the national data infrastructure that underpins high-quality research
- advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists who meet the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the UK, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and the quality of life
- communicate clearly and promote public understanding of social science.

Doctoral Training Grants (DTGs)

The studentships allocated to ROs are administered through Doctoral Training Grants (DTGs). A DTG is a grant providing funds for the training of research students leading to the award of a recognised qualification, usually a PhD.

The DTG award holder will normally be the principal applicant on the application for accreditation, the CDT Director or an alternative member of the RO nominated by the lead RO. Any request to change the name of the award holder must be submitted as a grant maintenance request through Je-S and should seek prior approval from ESRC.

Submitting Student Details Functionality in Je-S (SDF)

The Student Details Functionality (SDF) in Je-S is the mechanism through which ROs inform ESRC of all students funded through the DTG. For more information on the SDF, please see section 7.2 in the UKRI Training Grant guidance document.

Student details must be submitted through the SDF **within one month** after the student has started their ESRC funding. Detailed information on how to submit student details can be found here [ESRC postgraduate funding guide – UKRI](#). Je-S Helptext is also available on each screen in Je-S. The ESRC reserves the right to withdraw funding if student details are not maintained.

Please note it is essential that all student details are input and linked to the relevant training grant and maintained throughout the studentship. Details will populate outcomes systems such as Researchfish and the Gateway to Research so it is important that details are updated regularly.

Payment of studentships allocated to DTGs

The value of the DTG is calculated based on the number of students allocated to a DTC, DTP or CDT, and calculated based on the notional cost of a studentship. Calculation on a notional cost basis is determined by the cost of a studentship and an estimate of the average length of the studentships, adjusted for applicable enhancements. Payments will be profiled over the duration of the grant and will be made on a quarterly basis in line with the profile. More detailed information on the DTG can be found in section 3.

Section 2: Key conditions and types of awards

Key conditions for ESRC Studentships

Those receiving ESRC studentships and those responsible for supervising and organising their postgraduate studies are expected to abide by the ESRC terms and conditions as set out in this document.

The ESRC accepts no liability for the manner in which the work in connection with the studentship is undertaken. The student and the RO in which the studentship is held are responsible in all respects for the work and its consequences. Please note that both grants and studentships are subject to the UKRI Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-050321-PolicyGuidelinesGovernanceOfGoodResearchConduct.pdf>

Awards are given to pathways within DTCs and DTPs, and to specific CDTs which the ESRC has accredited for the quality and relevance of their training provision. Awards are therefore made on the assumption that the ROs provides adequate facilities for the research or training proposed in accordance with the requirements of the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2015) ([ESRC postgraduate training and development guidelines](#)), and that the policies, procedures and facilities specified in the submission to the ESRC for the purposes of accreditation will be applied in relation to each award holder. It is the responsibility of accredited RO to nominate students for awards who can meet the academic and residential eligibility requirements.

Studentships can be funded by drawing funds from the training grants provided by all Research Councils one of whom must be designated the lead Council. Where the ESRC is the lead Council, these rules must be abided by.

The ESRC is concerned with maintaining a high standard of training and supervision, and for this the Council relies on the co-operation of administrators, heads of departments and others who support students. The ESRC takes seriously its role to support high-quality training opportunities for postgraduate students and believes in the consistent application of policies and practices to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate unlawful discrimination. All recipients of ESRC funding are expected to comply with all equal opportunities legislation in force and where an organisation is shown to be in breach of these, ESRC is prepared to invoke sanctions.

All applications for ESRC studentship funding are administered through the DTPs and CDTs. If an applicant has a complaint or concern about the way in which their application has been processed it is essential that they raise this through the specific ROs own complaints and appeals procedure at the earliest opportunity.

The ESRC relies on the RO administrative authorities to ensure that they make full use of all other sources of financial assistance open to students, and that the authorities' own expenditure on postgraduate awards in the social sciences is not reduced on account of the ESRC studentships awarded to their students.

All study undertaken as part of the ESRC award must be carried out within the UK, except as part of overseas fieldwork which is an integral part of the study, conferences, or training.

Students may not, for example, write up their thesis whilst resident outside the UK during the period of their ESRC award. In such a case fees and/or maintenance grant will not be payable in respect of the student award. Students must be resident close to the RO at which they are registered and we would expect there to be direct contact between the student and supervisor. This applies to full-time and part-time students.

Where Studentships may be held

New studentships can only be held in ROs that have been awarded ESRC accreditation as a DTP or CDT. The list of accredited DTPs can be found here:

[Doctoral Training Partnership \(DTP\) contacts](#) and CDTs are available here: [Centres for Doctoral Training](#)

Types of Studentships

DTPs and CDTs can determine the type of studentship to fund. This may be a standard studentship or a collaborative studentship funded with another Research Council or non-academic partner.

ESRC does not fund studentships for standalone Master's degrees, Diploma studies, international study, summer schools or conferences/seminar attendance (unless as part of an award).

Structure of awards

When applying for accreditation, each DTC and DTP specified the structure of funding it would support across its range of pathways. All ROs will have specified the structure within the application.

As part of its postgraduate training framework, the ESRC no longer prescribes that research training must be frontloaded. It can now be spread across the PhD programme. It is expected that robust progression procedures are in the place to formally assess individual students within the first two years of any four-year programme.

The ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2015 ([ESRC postgraduate training and development guidelines](#)), place an importance on core training in research methods to enable all social scientists to understand and use essential qualitative and quantitative techniques. The Guidelines set out the minimum core skills and proficiency in the application of research methods that all students in the social sciences are expected to acquire during their studies. Accredited pathways have been given the flexibility to develop the structure and provision of their programmes to fit their own situation and strengths.

As ESRC recognises that pathways may evolve and develop over time, minor amendments to their pathways can be made without referral to the ESRC, for example changes to names of pathways or courses, changes to the way in which credits are allocated or changes to the optional modules available on a particular pathway. Any requests for approval of substantial changes should be submitted as part of the annual report process.

It is the ROs responsibility to determine which training package is appropriate, based on the particular requirements of specific disciplines or cross-disciplinary research areas, to satisfy the individual needs of students.

Typical course structures include:

- +3 programme: funding for a three-year PhD (assumes that a student has already met the majority of the core training requirements or that the PhD focus is largely on more advanced training)
- 1+3 programme: an integrated Master's programme precedes the three-year PhD which will deliver the majority of the core training requirements
- 2+2 programme: a longer Master's programme followed by a shorter PhD programme
- +4 programme: up to four years' funding for a PhD which assumes that core and advanced training requirements can be met during the course of the programme
- 2+3 programme: an extended Master's for specialist training followed by a standard three-year PhD programme.

The actual length of a studentship should be determined based on the individual student's requirements; however, this allocation must be in line with their accreditation. For example, if a student is following a four-year programme then, subject to length of funding criteria, they should be allocated four years of funding.

Eligibility

From academic year 2021/22, international students are now eligible to apply to UKRI for a full award. No new fees only awards will be allocated from the 2021/22 academic year. All new UKRI studentships must be opened up to both home and international students. UKRI will normally limit the proportion of international students appointed each year through individual doctoral training programmes to 30 percent of the total. The cap does not apply to associated studentships.

To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria and the associated residency requirements:

- Be a UK National, or
- Have settled status or,
- Have pre-settled status or,
- Have indefinite leave to remain or enter

If a candidate does not meet the criteria above, they would be classed as an International student.

Both home and international students must be resident in the UK for the majority of their studies and any time spent overseas should be for the purposes of fieldwork/long-term attachment.

You must refer to the UKRI Terms and Conditions for Training Grants for full details - see [Meeting terms and conditions for funding](#)

With the exception of European students with pre-settled and settled status, all pre-existing rules around the status of a student e.g. status of refugees, those with indefinite leave to remain or enter, remain unchanged. Research Organisations should determine the status of a student by reviewing the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) regulations 2007 in the usual way, noting that UKRI determine eligibility based on the first day of the studentship, rather than the first day of the academic year. Only where you determine someone has international status do you need to consider the new UKRI policy on international student support.

These changes come into effect from 01 August 2021. Residential eligibility criteria would not change for students who commenced their studies or were awarded their studentship before that date. Details of the residential eligibility criteria prior to August 2021 can be found in Annex 5.

Institutional role in checking eligibility

ESRC places full reliance on eligibility approval checks undertaken by the RO. See TGC 5.2.4 for more information. It is vital that ROs undertake the correct checks as decisions made on this are fundamental to the validity of ESRC funding. In the event that any funded student was subsequently found to be ineligible, under Treasury rules this would require cancellation of the grant and recovery of sums paid, for which ESRC would hold the RO liable. The ESRC will periodically undertake a sample check.

Potential applicants must discuss their eligibility with the RO in the first instance and not contact the ESRC directly. If the circumstances around establishing eligibility are complex, the postgraduate admissions office (or equivalent) should be contacted for further advice. In exceptional circumstances referral to the ESRC for advice or a ruling can be made. Where there is doubt about an individual's eligibility, the RO will be held responsible for an incorrect decision if the ESRC was not consulted. ROs can obtain advice from tdbpolicy@esrc.ukri.org

When submitting student details to the SDF, ROs are confirming that they have checked the eligibility of the student. ESRC reserves the right to stop payments to nominated students whom it considers to be ineligible and the final decision on a student's eligibility rests with ESRC.

The finances and length of time ESRC studentships may cover

ESRC studentships can cover tuition fees, maintenance grant and other expenses, depending on the student's situation and circumstances (see section 3 for further information).

The ESRC will not normally support any full-time student for more than four years, or the part-time equivalent based on the student's actual time commitment, except where ESRC have approved accreditation for a 2+3 award structure. Students who transfer between full- and part-time during their award will have their awards adjusted on a pro-rata basis.

Part-time and full-time Studentships

The ESRC continues to be supportive of part-time students. Unless otherwise stated, all ROs are eligible to host part-time studentships on all pathways.

It is possible for students to apply for a fixed period of full-time study where the demands of the work are such that the student would benefit from working full-time.

All ROs must ensure that part-time students compete on an equal footing with full-time students.

Information for students who are in receipt of other funding

If a student already holds an award from, or is otherwise financially supported by, another organisation and the ESRC considers that award, or other form of support, to be sufficient to cover maintenance and/or tuition fees, the student will not be eligible for an award from the ESRC.

Students who receive scholarships or grants from sources where the income is clearly inadequate or not in excess of an ESRC award may apply for an ESRC studentship.

New studentships cannot be used to extend existing studentships. A studentship should not be made or continued if applicants have already had three years of full-time or, if funded by the ESRC, five years of part-time postgraduate training in an RO or have been engaged on work which, in the opinion of the ESRC, is equivalent to such training.

For the purpose of assessing length of funding, the RO should not take into account previous part-time study not funded by the Research Councils (unless the conditions in the paragraph above apply) or up to one year's privately financed study. This applies to students who have undertaken postgraduate study at their own expense or with support from funds other than UK central government funds.

Students who have already received government funding for Master's-level or PhD-level training may apply for further funding but the total length of funding available plus previous government funding will not normally exceed four years for full-time study (or the part-time equivalent).

Students who receive other governmental studentship support are not eligible for an ESRC award.

Information for students who are currently undertaking postgraduate training

The ESRC does not expect its funding to be used for students who have already completed a substantial proportion of a PhD; for example, funds should not be used to support a student entering year three of a three-year programme.

Studentships should not normally be awarded to students who have already had a period of full-time postgraduate training at the same or higher level, or employment that is the equivalent of such training, unless support for them would clearly represent a good investment of public funds. The RO is responsible for deciding whether further support for an individual would represent good investment of public funds, taking into account the individual circumstances and other applicants for the limited number of ESRC awards.

Academic qualifications needed to apply for a studentship

For all studentships, students must have qualifications of the standard of a good honours degree at first- or upper second-class level, from a UK academic higher education institution, or, through a combination of qualifications and/or experience, be able to demonstrate equivalence. In the majority of cases, students will have undertaken an undergraduate course at a recognised UK higher education institution or equivalent international qualification.

Prior qualifications may be enhanced to meet these requirements by the acquisition of at least one satisfactorily completed academic year of full-time study or its part-time equivalent (i.e., two years) towards a UK higher degree,

If applying for an award without an undergraduate degree, the candidate may be accepted for doctoral study if they have achieved a Master's degree.

The ESRC reserves the right to deal as it sees fit with applications of an unusual character.

The ESRC reserves the right to refuse the application of any previous ESRC studentship holder whose studies, while supported by that studentship, were not completed satisfactorily. It is the responsibility of the RO to verify that students possess the relevant qualifications.

Equivalence

Degree qualifications gained from outside the UK, can be accepted where these qualifications can be equated to an honours degree, and at what level. We advise that ROs use the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) database to ensure that qualifications are of the appropriate level. Where a student with non-British qualifications is applying for a doctoral award (+3-only awards), institutions will need evidence that the student has acquired the necessary research training at postgraduate level.

Eligibility for +3 studentships

The framework allows each RO to determine which of their accredited funding structures is most appropriate for individual students based on their skills and prior research training. ESRC expects that applicants embarking on a +3 programme would have achieved a level of research training that would allow them to proceed directly to PhD; this is usually through the attainment of a previous Master's qualification in the social sciences. Each RO must have procedures in place to verify and assess an applicant's prior research training before awarding them a +3 studentship. The ESRC will undertake regular monitoring and assurance checks on eligibility.

Professional qualifications

Membership of professional bodies or learned societies usually requires students to have achieved, through formal training or work experience, a level of expertise which can be equated to that achieved by an honours degree student. The ESRC will accept such a professional qualification providing the candidate has also undertaken three years' subsequent full-time relevant professional work experience. The work experience would be calculated from 1 October (i.e., to be eligible for a studentship from October 2021, the work experience will be calculated from 1 October 2018). Applicants should also note the additional requirements of doctoral-only awards (see above).

What subjects ESRC studentships cover

There are seven Research Councils that provide support for postgraduate studies in the UK. Each of these bodies is primarily responsible for providing postgraduate studentships for its own range of subject areas. ROs in receipt of DTGs from more than one council can use the funds from more than one grant to support interdisciplinary studentships. For any ESRC award, the discipline must be primarily social science in nature. The seven award-making bodies are:

- Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) www.ahrc.ukri.org/
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) www.bbsrc.ukri.org/
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) www.esrc.ukri.org
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) www.epsrc.ukri.org/
- Medical Research Council (MRC) www.mrc.ukri.org/
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) www.nerc.ukri.org/
- Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) www.stfc.ukri.org/

The main disciplines and subject areas covered by the ESRC for studentships are within these broad headings:

- Area and Development Studies
- Economics
- Demography
- Economic and Social History
- Education
- Human Geography
- Linguistics
- Management and Business Studies
- Environmental Planning
- Political Science and International Studies
- Psychology
- Science and Technology Studies
- Social Anthropology
- Social Policy
- Social Work
- Socio-Legal Studies
- Sociology
- Statistics, Methods and Computing

CDTs have specialist areas determined by the call. They are focused on emerging interdisciplinary priority areas where studentships are at least 50% within the Social Science disciplines.

Some of these discipline areas fall between the ESRC and other award-making bodies' funding responsibilities depending on the exact nature of the proposed research. This will be particularly, but not exclusively, relevant to those seeking doctoral awards.

When inputting a student's details on to the SDF it is essential that one of the disciplines listed above is selected as the primary discipline.

Seeking advice on remit queries

ROs must ensure that ESRC funding is only allocated to students undertaking a PhD in the social sciences or where the field of study is predominantly social science. ESRC will monitor project summaries and reserves the right to remove or reduce funding if a studentship is allocated for projects that do not meet these criteria.

If in any doubt, potential applicants/ROs must submit a remit query form that includes a brief synopsis of the thesis topic and the proposed method(s) to ESRC. Further information can be found at: [Check if you're eligible for funding – ESRC](#)

Student submission procedures

Applicants with a qualification from any subject or discipline may apply, so long as they meet the ESRC's requirements for academic and residential eligibility. If undertaking a +3 award the student must have prior research methods training in the social sciences (see above)

Please refer to our website for further information on where studentships can be held ([Eligibility for studentship funding](#))

DTPs and CDTs will decide which students they wish to allocate ESRC funding to. Each RO will have strict internal processes for selecting students and students should follow the procedures outlined by their prospective RO.

If an applicant has a query or complaint about the way in which their application has been processed it must be addressed through the RO's own grievance procedure in the first instance.

Students should direct their applications to ROs that hold Research Council funding relevant to their disciplinary area. ROs can use the funds available through the DTG to co-fund studentships with other Research Councils. In these instances, the primary funder should be the Research Council most relevant to the discipline. ESRC encourages ROs to actively seek out ways to co-fund some of their studentships.

Once the RO has identified the students to receive ESRC funding, the students' details should be input on the SDF (see above - Submitting Student Details Functionality in Je-S (SDF))

Section 3: Financial conditions and allowances

Financial details

Each DTC, DTP or CDT has received an allocation of studentships which represents the minimum number of students that must be funded through the grant. Single DTG grants are issued and funding for new cohorts will usually be added on an annual basis.

For the purpose of calculating the value of the DTG, each studentship allocated has been calculated as if it was a full award. The ESRC stipulates that students must be given the full value of an award they are entitled to; for example, if a student is eligible for a full award, the student cannot be funded on a fees-only basis.

The ESRC expects ROs to meet the full costs of supporting their students from within the cash limit of their training grant. As outlined in the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2015) ([ESRC postgraduate training and development guidelines](#)), the RO can allocate funds flexibly and may, for example, part-fund students with other Research Councils or with partners in the public, private or civil-society sectors. For fees-only students (where applicable), all fees must be funded from a single Council. ROs may also offer increased stipend levels above the minimum level to help recruit/retain students in areas of shortage.

Apart from the annual allocation, only in unforeseen or exceptional circumstances will the ESRC agree to add additional funds to a training grant and such a request will only be approved if there are no other contingency funds or training grants to draw on.

A final expenditure statement will be issued at the end of the grant and ESRC will seek reimbursements of any unspent funds.

At least 50% of the total cost of the studentship (except for fees-only students where applicable) should be drawn from the ESRC DTG, but the remaining funding could be drawn from other sources. For example, ROs could provide 50:50 funding from two different Research Council DTGs (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, MRC, NERC or STFC) in order to support an interdisciplinary area. In such cases the RO must indicate, via the SDF, which is the lead council; this should be based on the primary disciplinary orientation of the proposal. Alternatively, the DTPs and CDTs may utilise institutional resources to co-fund awards.

Please note, that where a DTP or CDT is planning to match the funds provided by ESRC from another source, this must reflect 50% of the full notional cost (including the Student and Cohort Development funding).

Unless stated otherwise in this document, the ESRC has adopted the UKRI Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants ([Meeting terms and conditions for funding – UKRI](#))

Costs for additional caring responsibilities, including childcare, beyond that required to meet the usual requirements of the studentship and which are directly related to the project, may be claimed against the training grant where this is required in order for the student to participate. DTPs and CDTs may consider exceptional requests, for example where additional childcare is needed to enable a student to participate in an internship, but costs associated with the student's normal working patterns may not be sought.

Notional cost

The value of a DTG has been calculated using a notional cost and an estimate of the average length of a studentship (three-and-a-half years), based on a 50:50 split of 1+3 and +3 awards, adjusted for applicable enhancements. Payments will be profiled over the duration of the grant and will be made on a quarterly basis in line with the profile.

The notional cost for 2022/23 has been calculated as follows:

Standard maintenance	£17,668
Fees	£4,596
RTSG	£750
Overseas fieldwork	£450
Total	£23,464

CDTs and DTPs also include funding for student and cohort development of £4000 per student, paid as a single payment per cohort on the DTG.

The Student and Cohort Development allowance is intended to include initiatives to enhance:

- collaboration
- interdisciplinary working
- cohort development (such as conferences and networking events)
- Overseas International Visits (OIVs)
- internships funded through the Policy internships scheme.

The funding for interdisciplinary working is intended to enable students trained in a particular discipline to engage with and understand different disciplinary approaches.

Please note DTPs and CDTs are expected to undertake the activities described in their application for accreditation.

The total amount of funding provided by the ESRC for the research training support grant (RTSG) and overseas fieldwork (OSFW) is calculated using a fixed amount per student per year but is not a personal allowance for the student.

Although the total RTSG amount on a grant is calculated on the basis of an amount per doctoral student per year, there is no limit to the amount of funding any one student can receive from the total RTSG pot allocated to the RO for a grant. RTSG should not be considered as a personal allocation for each individual ESRC funded student, but rather considered as the total RTSG payment on a grant as a pot from which it allocates funds on the basis of student needs and priorities.

It is the ROs responsibility to ensure that funds are used responsibly, and processes should be in place to ensure that management of RTSG and OSFW funds is responsive to the needs of its students. The ESRC encourages students to discuss their needs early in their funding.

Indexation will be applied as appropriate on the date of issue.

Enhancements

In addition to notional costs, DTGs may include additional enhancements for the following:

- London weighting: an additional £2,000 per student is included for DTGs that involve ROs in London.

Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) grants included enhancements for stipends and RTSG in relation to steered awards in Economics and Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM).

Since 2017, within the flexibility of training grants, DTPs and CDTs can provide enhanced stipends but no additional funding will be provided by ESRC for this.

Managing funds in a Doctoral Training Grant

The ESRC expects ROs to meet the full cost of supporting their students from within the cash limit of their DTG. Only in unforeseen or exceptional circumstances will the ESRC agree to adding additional funds to a DTG and such a request will only be met if there are no other contingency funds or training grants to draw on.

The ESRC will provide additional funding for Disabled Student's Allowance, and for associated studentships. (See below for more detail)

Basic levels

The following are the minimum requirements for each award type.

	Type of studentship award		
	Full-time award	Part-time award	Fees-only award (up to August 2021)
Approved fees (as set and agreed by the Research Councils)	Yes	Yes: pro-rata	Yes
Maintenance Grant (or stipend) for the student	Yes	Yes: pro-rata	No
Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contribution towards overseas fieldwork costs	Yes	Yes (subject to conditions below)	Yes

Basic maintenance grant

The maintenance grant is intended to cover all normal living expenses. A higher rate is paid to students registered at a RO in London. Part-time students receive a pro-rata maintenance grant.

Students who have received a fees-only award are not eligible for maintenance payments.

ROs will need to make arrangements directly with students for payment of the maintenance grant and additional allowances. Frequency of payments to students may vary between ROs.

When a student withdraws or suspends their studies the SDF must be updated with the revised end date or termination date together with the reason for the withdrawal or suspension. Any advance payment made to a student who has withdrawn or suspended must be repaid by the student to the RO.

Tuition fee payments, see also UKRI T&Cs, TGC 4.7

ROs are responsible for the payment of tuition fees from ESRC funding. Where this fee is higher than the annual rate set by the research councils, you may draw this from the Training Grant subject to any specific conditions and the fee must be equal to the level of fee used for home non-UKRI funded students on similar programmes. ESRC will only provide funding up to the home fee level set by the research councils.

Any difference between the Research Council home fee payment level and what a RO charges for home fees should not be met by the student. ROs have flexibility to find international tuition fees from other sources. These sources can include contributions from the institution, co-funding partners or from the students directly.

Approved fees

Approved fees for full-time students do not include:

- payment for residence in college; this is paid out of the student's maintenance grant
- any examination which is taken for the second time
- any deposit which is ultimately repayable to the student (for example, caution money)
- charges for typing and binding a thesis or dissertation
- payment for any expense incurred either before the award starts, or after it is formally ended.

The ESRC is not responsible for the fees of students who interrupt their studies before their ESRC award expires. If these fees have been paid in advance, the RO must ensure they are reclaimed and return them to the training grant.

Students who wish to move from a part-time status to full-time or vice versa will have their fees adjusted accordingly, provided the ESRC terms and conditions are observed.

Students may become liable for the payment of fees after the termination date of their ESRC funding

Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)

All students are eligible for a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG). This allowance is intended to be used to pay for expenses which the student/supervisor/department deem to be in direct support of a student's research.

Examples include:

- UK fieldwork expenses
- UK, EU and overseas conferences and summer schools
- language training courses usually undertaken in the UK prior to an overseas fieldwork trip
- reimbursement of interpreters, guides, assistants
- survey costs for example, printing, stationery, telephone calls
- purchase of small items of equipment for example, cameras, recorders, films,
- gifts for local informants
- books and other reading material not available through libraries

RTSG funding must be pooled for flexible use across ESRC-funded students. This might also include the purchase of small items of equipment which students can borrow. RTSG funds can also be combined with the funds provided for overseas fieldwork. There must be clear and transparent mechanisms in place to allocate this funding.

RTSG funds must not be top-sliced or used to fund core provision.

In exceptional circumstances, ROs may consider requests from students to purchase laptops or other computer equipment using this allowance. Any such request must be clearly and adequately justified based on the nature of the research being undertaken and must be essential for the successful completion of the PhD. In these instances, any equipment purchased in excess of £200 should remain in the custody of the RO following completion of the award.

Both the RO and the student have the responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with the procedures for making a claim.

Income Tax and National Insurance

See UKRI Training Grant Guidance, TGC 4 page 9

Scheme-based enhanced stipends

ROs can also decide whether to fund an enhanced stipend for students undertaking a collaborative studentship (such as CASE). Previously ESRC-funded CASE students received an enhanced stipend from the ESRC of £2,000 above the standard stipend.

Collaborative students might also receive an allowance each year from the non-academic partner in addition to their maintenance grant. This will be subject to local agreement on conditions between the RO and the partner but is likely to be dependent on satisfactory progress and the production of specified written work. The non-academic partner will also pay an allowance each year to the RO as a contribution to their costs.

Other terms and conditions of collaborative awards are the same as for standard full-time research awards.

Part-time studentship awards

Studentships can be held on a part-time basis, with the time commitment ranging between 50% – 100%. The minimum time commitment is 50%. The length of a part-time studentship should be based on a pro-rata calculation relating to the student's actual time commitment and the structure of funding they have been allocated; i.e., if following a +3 pathway at 50%-time commitment the part-time student can receive a six-year award. Any permanent or temporary periods should be calculated on a pro-rata basis based on actual time commitment and any costs remaining from the notional value of the studentship can be utilised to fund other students or training activities. No part-time student should receive more funding than an equivalent full-time student.

Overseas fieldwork expenses

Part-time students are not normally eligible to claim overseas fieldwork expenses unless the student has been approved for a change of status for a fixed period by the RO.

Fees-only awards (prior to August 2021)

Fees-only student fees are paid on the same basis as a full- or part-time studentship.

Fees-only students can claim RTSG on the same basis as a full- or part-time studentship but are not eligible for a maintenance grant. Where a studentship is awarded on a fees-only basis, it must be funded entirely from the ESRC training grant and cannot be co-funded by another partner.

Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA) - also see UKRI Training Grant terms and conditions TGC 4.11

Any disabled student who, because of disability, is obliged to incur additional expenditure in connection with their studies, may be eligible for an allowance.

The Research Councils have adopted a harmonised approach to DSA; additional guidance and a claim form is available on the UKRI website ([Get a studentship to fund your doctorate – UKRI](#))

If the ESRC is not satisfied that value for money has been applied or that sufficient justification has been provided for high costs, we reserve the right to reduce the reimbursement costs.

Overseas fieldwork

Who is eligible?

Full-time students undertaking the doctoral element of their award are eligible to apply to their RO for overseas fieldwork expenses. Master's students are not eligible to claim this allowance.

Part-time students can become eligible for an overseas fieldwork grant if they transfer for a fixed period to full-time status for the duration of the fieldwork. Exceptional cases can be considered and should be submitted to ESRC for approval.

Full-time ESRC studentship award holders undertaking the doctoral element of their award are able to make one claim for overseas fieldwork expenses in the life of the award.

Students' proposed overseas fieldwork should have been outlined in the project summary section of the SDF. However, if the decision to claim overseas fieldwork is made later on, the SDF should be updated to show this.

Students must obtain approval from their Finance Office prior to undertaking any fieldwork; retrospective claims for overseas fieldwork expenses cannot be considered.

If the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office advises against visiting the country concerned, the Finance Office must not authorise payment of any contribution towards the fieldwork costs.

Any subsequent changes to fieldwork plans set out in the original application, such as length of stay or location, must be agreed by the student's supervisor beforehand.

Students will need to speak to their RO with regard to how they claim this allowance.

What the allowance covers

A student's overseas fieldwork visit will normally last for up to 12 months. If a student can demonstrate a strong case for a visit longer than 12 months, fieldwork of up to a maximum of 18 months may be granted. Students who remain in the field for periods longer than have

been formally agreed with their supervisor and the RO's Finance Office will not be able to make retrospective claims for expenses or for extensions to the period of award/thesis submission date.

Overseas fieldwork must be an integral part of the PhD and take place during the life of the award. Studentships will not be extended to reflect periods in the field.

If approval is given for overseas fieldwork lasting more than nine months, it may be appropriate to advise that either one return visit to the UK by the student, or one visit to the field by the supervisor, should take place. This visit should occur halfway through the period of fieldwork research and must be financed within the allowance given. No further funding may be given.

If the student returns to the UK to consult their supervisor, it is recommended the visit last for a maximum of 10 days. No extension to the fieldwork period can be given to compensate for time spent on a return visit to the UK by the student.

The overseas allowance does not cover reimbursement for any loss of the supervisor's teaching time.

The overseas allowance does not cover the expenses of any family member accompanying the student.

The overseas allowance will not be increased to cover expenses incurred by the student whilst abroad.

Calculating the value of overseas fieldwork expenses

The notional cost includes an amount per student; however, it is unlikely that all students will undertake overseas fieldwork. The actual allocation of funds towards fieldwork is at the RO's discretion, based on the funding available within the DTG, and ESRC will not normally supplement the grant for additional fieldwork costs.

Once the allowance has been calculated, it is the student's responsibility to manage the funds allocated.

If for any reason the fieldwork is abandoned or is unsuccessful and the student returns to the UK early, the fieldwork allowance less any reasonable expenditure already incurred, should be recovered.

It is the student's responsibility to apply directly to their supervisor for any period of overseas fieldwork.

Payments

The DTG will be paid quarterly, in advance. Payments will include maintenance grant payments for students, tuition fees, OSFW, RTSG, and, where applicable for DTC studentships, stipend enhancements.

ROs will be responsible for awards. They will be required to inform new students of the payment arrangements.

Grants are cash-limited from the outset and ESRC will not accept any request for additional funding, except within the provisions of the terms and conditions with respect to Disabled Student's Allowance and associated studentships.

Grant announcement and schedule of payments

An announcement letter and payment schedule (which is available for download via Je-S) will usually be available at least two months prior to the scheduled first payment of the grant. The RO must confirm acceptance and this notification will be taken as acceptance of the grant on the terms and conditions stated and will activate profiled payments.

Funds will usually be added to the grant annually to reflect the new cohort.

Right to terminate

The ESRC reserves the right:

- to revise or amend at any time the conditions of the grant
- to suspend or terminate a grant at any time.

In reserving these rights the ESRC will, where possible, seek to ensure that in the event of changes or termination, reasonable notice is given to the RO and grant holder. The minimum notice will be six months.

In appropriate cases, the ESRC will consider paying such final instalments as may be necessary to cover outstanding and unavoidable commitments.

Final Expenditure Statement, see also UKRI TGC 9, 10.2

At the end of the Training Grant, the Research Organisation must complete and return a Final Expenditure Statement (FES) detailing expenditure incurred over the full period of the Training Grant. The FES must be received within three months of the end date of the Training Grant. If the FES is not received within three months of the end date of the grant, ESRC will recover 20% of expenditure incurred on the grant. All payments will be recovered if the FES is not received within six months of the end date of the grant.

It is essential that the student details input via the SDF are accurate as that information will be drawn on as part of the FES process.

Once an expenditure statement has been received and the expenditure incurred has been reconciled against payments made, it will be considered as final. A breakdown of any costs arising should accompany the FES showing any expenditure under the following headings: Stipend, Fees, RTSG, DSA and Other. Where costs are submitted under the 'Other' heading, ESRC reserves the right to request additional information.

If there are exceptional reasons that will prevent submission of the expenditure statement within the period allowed, a written request may be made via the grant maintenance facility in Je-S, for the submission period to be extended. The written request must be made before the due date passes.

ESRC reserves the right to require the RO to complete and submit a statement of expenditure at any time during the course of the DTG, or to provide supplementary information in support of an interim or Final Expenditure Statement. The ESRC may also

request access to all student records on an institutional UKRI Funding Assurance Programme (FAP) Visit.

Requests from DTCs/DTPs/CDTs for supplementary expenditure statements must be made within sixty days of the final payment. Any requests after this date will be declined.

Contacting the ESRC about award payments/amendments

The UKRI Grants team supports the administration of grants on behalf of the research councils. ROs needing to enquire about a training grant should contact UKRI Grants at GrantsPostAward@funding.ukri.org

Section 4: Managing the studentship

Managing an award

ESRC accepts that there will be circumstances within the period of an award where it may be appropriate for the award to be extended, converted to part- or full-time status (as applicable), suspended or terminated. The funds should be managed through the DTG so that any variations to the award (except for DSA) should be funded via the grant in the first instance.

Extensions

Studentships can be extended for **any of the reasons given below**. Please note that for all extensions granted, it is the responsibility of the RO to amend student funding end dates on the SDF accordingly.

The total period of extensions on any award will not normally exceed 12 months. Extensions resulting from maternity leave and/or sickness leave will not count towards the 12-month maximum period. Please see Annex 1 for more information.

Difficult language training

Up to one extra year's extra support may be considered if a student needs to acquire or develop a working ability with a difficult language in order to carry out fieldwork (including UK fieldwork) or other parts of their research; this is over and above the funded length of the studentship. Students following a pre-described Masters course are not eligible to apply during this training.

Any anticipated difficult language training should be mentioned in the student's project summary within the student record on the SDF. Extensions beyond six months should only be allowed if the student needs to spend an extended period of time overseas in order to obtain these language skills. If the student has already undertaken a pre-described Masters course, it is expected that some progress with language acquisition will have been made and therefore it is not expected that extensions beyond six months should be made.

Extensions for difficult language training do not automatically attract overseas fieldwork costs. Overseas fieldwork costs should only be considered alongside an extension where it is not possible to learn the language outside of the fieldwork site.

Please see Annex 2 for guidance on the 'groupings' of languages.

Students will need to apply to their supervisor regarding any request for difficult language training. The ESRC should be informed on the SDF of any extension granted within a month of the change being formally agreed. It is the responsibility of the RO to amend studentship end dates on the SDF accordingly.

Students allocated a 2+3 award that incorporates language training cannot apply for a further extension.

ESRC Overseas Institutional Visits (OIVs)

The purpose of the OIV scheme is to support and encourage the international engagement of ESRC funded students. The scheme funds an extension to the studentship of up to three months, plus travel and subsistence costs.

Funds should be used to provide financial support and time for students to:

- undertake additional specialist research training not available in the UK
- develop language skills
- establish research links that will be beneficial to their current or future career
- disseminate early research career findings
- attend and participate in seminars where directly relevant to their research.

ROs have considerable flexibility in administering the funding allocated for the scheme and can also use their own funds to supplement the ESRC funding. ROs must establish their own processes to support the scheme subject to the following criteria:

- Applications must be student-led
- Visits must be related to the completion of the student's PhD and should not commence within the first three months of the studentship period. Visits taking place in the final year of the studentship must be completed at least three months before the end date of the award and prior to the extension period being implemented.
- Applications must be from 'research' award holders in the +3 component of their studentship. Students in the initial 'training' year of a 1+3 award are not eligible.
- The purpose of the visits funded must not be for overseas fieldwork as this is supported through other mechanisms.
- Visits can last for up to a maximum of 13 weeks, though it is expected that ROs will respond flexibly to the needs of the student
- Visits must involve visiting a Higher Education institution, or an organisation with a substantive research office outside of the UK
- Visits must not be undertaken if the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office advises against visiting the country concerned
- The RO must design a fair and transparent process for assessing applications and allocating awards.

Maternity leave - also see UKRI T&Cs

If a student becomes pregnant such that the expected date of childbirth will occur during the period of their award.

See **UKRI TGC 8.1** for further details on entitlement

Due to the structured nature of most taught research training programmes, students who take maternity leave during any research training programme are expected to re-join their course at the stage at which they left it, i.e. in order to ensure that all elements of the training are successfully completed in advance of their doctoral study. This may require taking a full 52 weeks of maternity leave, but this would depend on the structure of the course and the frequency in which training is provided.

It is the student's responsibility to apply directly to their nominated contact and supervisor. This application must be supported by a copy of their MAT BI form. The ESRC should be

informed on the SDF of any extension granted within a month of the change being formally agreed. It is the responsibility of the RO to amend students' end dates on the SDF accordingly.

Paternity and adoption leave or unpaid parental leave – see also UKRI T&Cs

See UKRI TGC 8.1 for further information on entitlements

It is the student's responsibility to apply directly to their supervisor. The ESRC will need to be advised of any changes through the SDF.

Other leave – see **UKRI TGC 8.3.1** for further details

Transfers - also see UKRI T&Cs

A transfer will only be considered to an accredited pathway, at the time of the transfer, which is appropriate for the research project. DTC students wishing to transfer must do so to an accredited pathway at a DTP. If a student wishes to transfer to a RO and/or pathway which is not accredited by the ESRC, or to a subject outside the ESRC's remit, then they will have to withdraw from their ESRC award. Permission to transfer a studentship to a different DTP must be obtained in advance from the ESRC. A transfer to another RO within the same DTP does not need ESRC approval, but the transfer must still be within an accredited pathway.

In order to apply for a transfer, the following documentation must be submitted to ESRC for prior approval:

- A request from the student confirming the grounds on which the transfer is being requested and the pathway, DTP and RO to which they intend to transfer
- A statement from the original DTC/DTP/CDT director relinquishing the studentship and confirming that alternative supervision is not available from across the DTC/DTP/CDT
- A statement from the new DTP/CDT director confirming their acceptance of the studentship.

ESRC expects that the arrangements for such a transfer would include the relevant funds and any necessary monitoring of academic progress, which could be facilitated through a contract/memorandum between institutions. Any allowances already agreed for a student should also be part of the transfer of funds agreement. The SDF should be updated following a student transfer. The ESRC reserves the right to withdraw funding if student details are not maintained. Any agreed transfers should be reported in the annual report.

Transfer between part-time and full-time registration

A student may apply to transfer from a full-time to part-time studentship award or vice versa. Each case must be considered by the RO on its own merits. The ESRC recommends that, where possible, changes of mode of study should take effect from the beginning of a quarter (i.e. 1 October, 1 January, 1 April, or 1 July) as this makes the calculation, payment, and reconciliation of students' funding more straightforward.

ROs may approve a single change in the mode of study from part-time to full-time or vice-versa without prior approval from ESRC.

The rules governing permanent transfers are:

- a case cannot be considered if it is made in the last six months of the award or will apply only to the last six months of the award except in very exceptional circumstances, i.e. illness or students returning from maternity leave or for part-time employment (any such exceptions must have prior approval from ESRC)
- in exceptional circumstances, requests to transfer to part-time in the last six months for the purpose of taking up part-time employment can be considered subject to the student's supervisor and the DTP/CDT director's confirmation that such a transfer would not hinder the student's ability to complete. Any such request is subject to ESRC approval
- holders of collaborative awards will require the agreement of the collaborating partner before any request can be considered
- a transfer will not normally be allowed for acute health problems where suspension of the award is the appropriate course of action. However, where a health problem might prevent a student from permanently studying on a full-time basis, a case for a transfer to part-time can be considered
- a transfer from part-time to full-time cannot involve employment that would prevent the student from working on the PhD on a full-time basis
- a transfer from full-time to part-time will be considered where a change in domestic circumstances means that a dependent requires more of the award holder's time, or where the award holder has taken up part-time employment
- a fixed period transfer from full-time to part-time will be considered where a student wishes to undertake a fixed-term period of part-time employment relevant to their PhD. This should be limited to one request per student and the revised submission date should be calculated on a pro-rata basis.
- fixed-period transfers are unable to be considered within a pre-described Master's programme reserved for the research training element of the studentship
- a transfer can only be approved if the pathway has the necessary ESRC accreditation.

Whilst we expect that permanent transfers would only occur once during the life of an award, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances, such as changes to domestic arrangements, where a student needs to revert back to their original status. Such instances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

ROs must not, without consultation with ESRC, agree more than one change of mode of study during any one studentship or a change of mode of study in the final six months of a Studentship.

ROs should provide a short statement to include the request from the student, confirmation from the supervisor and RO agreeing to the change of mode and details on how the completion of the doctorate will be impacted. If the transfer is due to the student undertaking a period of part-time work, confirmation of the time commitment for that period of work (which should be a maximum of 50%) should be included in the request.

ROs should calculate the remaining length of the studentship on the basis of funding already received and the student's time commitment (minimum 50% for part-time students). This assumes the student satisfies the usual length of funding criteria set out in the Postgraduate Funding Guide. If the student does not meet the usual length of funding criteria then they may not be eligible to apply for a transfer.

If the case for an award to be transferred from part-time to full-time status is approved, the maintenance grant, fees and other allowances as appropriate would be offered on a full-time equivalent, depending on the period remaining on the award. Other terms and conditions will be the same as for full-time students, particularly those relating to part-time working. If a student transfers from full-time to part-time registration, they will be eligible for the normal allowances paid to part-time students.

Where a transfer takes place within the last six months of the award and is due to taking up employment, the revised thesis submission date should be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Change of status for part-time students for fixed periods

Few part-time students wish or are able to convert to full-time, but there are often benefits to be gained by the student undertaking a fixed period of full-time study such as carrying out fieldwork or detailed data analysis work, where there is a very large dataset. There might be other cases where a change of status would be appropriate: each request must be treated by the RO on its own merits and on the strength of the case put forward.

In the case of a change of status to conduct fieldwork, the RO should see evidence that extensive fieldwork is being proposed.

As such, part-time students will be permitted to apply for fixed periods of full-time study of between three months and one year. This must be taken as a single block, rather than at intervals. A student may make more than one such request, although students cannot be awarded more than one year in total over the whole period of the award.

In any request to their RO for a fixed-period transfer of status, the student must detail:

- what work will be done
- the benefits to them and their thesis
- an explanation of why the work cannot be done part-time
- the period of the transfer
- other relevant details for example, training required, supervisory arrangements etc
- a clear statement confirming that they have been released from their job for the period and that they will be working full-time on their PhD.

It is extremely important to note that the ESRC will not pay a maintenance grant if a student is undertaking paid work in excess of that already permitted for full-time students. For any block of full-time study therefore, the student must take unpaid leave from their place of work.

For any approved change of status period a student will have the same terms and conditions as a full-time student and, in particular, they will need to stay within the restrictions which apply to 'other work' for the period. A maintenance grant and full-time fees would be paid to the student on a pro-rata basis.

The length of the studentship should also be re-calculated to account for any change in status.

A transfer is unable to be considered within a pre-described Masters programme reserved for the research training element of the studentship.

A part-time student's request for a change of status for a fixed period needs to be submitted to their supervisor for a decision.

Where a student has changed from full-time to part-time status, the student's submission due date should be set to 24 months after the end of the studentship unless the transfer occurs at a very late stage in the funding period. ESRC will consider those circumstances on a case-by-case basis. ROs will need to input this information into the SDF. Where an overpayment occurs as a result of a change of the mode of study, the funds should be reclaimed and returned to the training grant.

The SDF should be updated following a student transfer. The ESRC reserves the right to withdraw funding if student details are not maintained. Any agreed transfers should be reported in the annual report.

Regular monitoring of academic performance

It is the responsibility of the RO to ensure that students' progress and to withdraw funds where necessary. In their applications for funding, ROs had to demonstrate effective processes in place to monitor and formally assess students' progress.

Supervisors are not required to report student progress to the ESRC. ROs are expected, however, to follow departmental Codes of Practice and internal quality-control mechanisms. All seven Research Councils subscribe to the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Programmes and therefore require ROs in receipt of Research Council funding to adhere to the QAA Code. The ESRC would normally expect supervisory arrangements to be put in place at the outset of a studentship to facilitate the transition from Master's training to the PhD itself. There should be frequent contact between student and supervisor to review progress during the Master's as well as through the period of doctoral research. Where a supervisor has concerns about a student's progress it is important that these are addressed in a timely manner.

Students in receipt of funding for Master's training (of any length) should not be permitted to continue to receive funding for the PhD if the Master's degree is not awarded. Likewise, if at any point during the Master's or PhD studies the student is not considered of the required standard to complete the PhD, funding should be withdrawn.

ROs have a responsibility to withdraw funding in such circumstances and to reclaim any overpaid maintenance grant or allowances. It is not a requirement to confirm satisfactory progress to the ESRC on a regular basis but should report on student terminations within the SDF and annual report.

Deferral of student start date

An ESRC studentship will normally start on 1 October. A later starting date may be possible in exceptional circumstances, for example in the case of illness, or if a student needs to give notice to a current employer.

As allocations are made for a minimum number of studentships to be funded annually, no studentships should be held open to allow a student to defer until the following academic year. If in those circumstances the funding for the award should come from the following year's allocation.

Studentships allocated on a 1+3 or 2+2 basis are expected to be held on a consecutive basis. Any breaks between the Master's and the PhD must be treated as suspensions, not deferrals. Suspensions between the Master's and PhD can be considered, subject to the criteria below, and must be counted in the total period of suspension.

Termination

ROs must only consider termination of a studentship as a last resort and, when a student is identified as experiencing difficulty, every effort must be made by the supervisor and institutional authority to work with the student to enable successful completion of their studies. The termination date and reason should be submitted to ESRC via the SDF.

ESRC funding is provided to support students undertaking a PhD; therefore, if a student completes their studies and submits a doctoral thesis before the end of the studentship, the student's funding should be terminated. It is reasonable, subject to agreement of the supervisor in consultation with the student, for the student to give up to four weeks' notice to complete domestic arrangements and take up to two weeks' leave.

Exceptionally, agreement to a short period of continued funding is allowable if the student has an agreed programme of work related to the publication of their research which they propose to pursue up until the next quarter payment.

Continued funding following submission of the thesis must not extend beyond the next date for payment of the quarterly maintenance grant.

If a student takes up paid full-time employment before the expiry date of their award, the award will terminate on the date of appointment.

If an award is prematurely terminated for any reason, the student must repay any monies including maintenance grant, fieldwork contribution, etc. overpaid to them. All debts that arise as a result of overpayments, for whatever reason, must be actively pursued by the RO. All reclaimed monies must be returned to the training grant.

Students may become liable for the payment of fees after the termination date of their ESRC funding.

A studentship may be terminated, or its conditions varied, at any time, at the absolute discretion of the ESRC.

Suspensions

Studentships are intended to be held on a continuous basis. Sometimes, however, a student may need to interrupt their studies, for example as a result of their own persistent health problems or those of dependants, or to take up the opportunity of a temporary, short-term post which can be justified as being highly relevant to their thesis or research training. It is responsibility of the RO to consider suspension requests and to update the SDF accordingly.

Please note that suspensions can only be considered during the funded period of the studentship. If a student interrupts their registration after their ESRC funding has finished a suspension to their studentship cannot be considered. In those instances the RO can consider an extension to the student's submission date.

The RO must enter the details of any approved suspensions in the SDF within one month of the suspension being approved.

Suspensions can be approved provided that:

- the period of suspension does not exceed one calendar year in any one instance
- total periods of suspension do not exceed one calendar year during the lifetime of the award
- the student's supervisor has given their permission for the student to suspend their studies. For collaborative awards, the collaborative partner must also indicate their approval of any requested suspension period
- the student's supervisor certifies that the suspension of studies will not delay the submission of the final thesis by more than the length of the suspension
- the request is made in advance: retrospective requests must not be accepted.

Suspension of studies requests must not be considered on the grounds of financial hardship.

Due to the nature of training received in the Master's year of a 1+3 award (and equivalent structures), a suspension taken during the master's year may need to be for a full year to allow the student to re-join their course at the stage at which they left it, i.e. in order to ensure that all elements of the training are successfully completed in advance of their doctoral study. This would depend on the structure of the course and the frequency in which training is provided.

For students with a 1+3 or 2+2 type award, suspensions can only be considered between the Master's and PhD if the request meets the criteria outlined above.

Periods of suspension are usually added to the expected thesis submission date and thus taken into account when the ESRC thesis submission rates are calculated.

If an award is suspended for any reason, the student must repay to the RO any monies including maintenance grant, fieldwork contribution, etc overpaid to them. All debts that arise as a result of overpayments, for whatever reason, must be actively pursued by the RO.

Where there is any doubt about a student's continuation of studies, a temporary 'hold' should be placed on maintenance grant payments until the relevant issues have been resolved.

**Illness, see also UKRI T&Cs and guidance document
See TGC 8.2 for full details**

1+3 students (and equivalent structures)

Students who are taken ill in their Master's year for more than a few weeks would normally be expected to request a suspension of their award. Due to the structured nature of the programme of training, students in their research training year (Master's) would be expected to rejoin their course at the same point that they left it.

Part-time students in this position should note the rules and regulations with regard to the payment of fees and notify their supervisor in the case of long-term illness.

Where an overpayment occurs as a result of a student being unable to resume their studies after a period of illness, monies should be reclaimed by the RO and returned to the training grant.

Change to project details, see also UKRI T&Cs, TGC 7.2.1

Students must be made aware that it is a condition of their award that significant changes to the title and/or focus of their research need to be approved in advance by their supervisor. Such approval should not be given unless a clear justification is provided.

Only in the most exceptional circumstances should a radical change of topic or direction (and consequently a complete change of title) be approved for the research where a student has a +3 studentship or has commenced the +3 phase of a 1+3 studentship.

It is the responsibility of the RO to ensure that any changes to a student's project are amended on the SDF within one month of the agreed change. Project details will be made available through Research Council databases such as the Gateway to Research.

Change to supervision

The Head of Department, School or Faculty will have appointed an appropriate member or members of staff to act as supervisor(s) or advisor(s) to the student and be responsible for their progress. The principal supervisor must be from within the student's pathway and from an RO within the DTC, DTP or CDT.

Any requested changes in supervision will need to be approved by the student's Head of Department, School or Faculty, who has the right to turn down a supervisor if they consider that he/she is not suitable/appropriate or has insufficient experience. ROs should consider any impact that a change of department or supervisor may have on the submission date before approving such a change.

Any new supervisors should be aware of their responsibilities towards their students as laid out in the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2015) ([ESRC postgraduate training and development guidelines](#)) and this document.

It is the responsibility of the RO to ensure that any changes to a student's supervision are amended on the SDF within one month of the agreed change.

Thesis submission date

Councils expect doctoral projects to be designed and supervised in such a way that students are able to submit their thesis within the funded period, as defined at the outset of the project.

ESRC will not inform students of any changes to their submission date resulting from suspensions or extensions, as this will be the responsibility of ROs. When the submission date is altered on the SDF, a reason for the change should be added which will be monitored as part of the submission rate survey.

All full-time students must submit no later than one year after their funding end date and part-time students must submit within two years of their funding end date.

All students should aim to submit by the end of their funded period. Students will find it much more difficult to finish their thesis whilst also undertaking full-time employment.

Where a student submits their thesis within the funded period of the award, the date of submission normally becomes the funding end date. All debts that arise as a result of overpayments, for whatever reason, must be actively pursued by the RO.

Where a student becomes pregnant or experiences problems relating to accident, illness, or exceptional personal circumstances during the course of their study, ROs can consider a case for extending their submission deadline up to a maximum of 12 months but the period of the extension should reflect the actual time lost. Any request for an extension to the submission date due to illness/pregnancy should not be considered unless the appropriate medical evidence has been provided. Extensions to the submission date cannot be granted for periods of employment (no matter how relevant they may be to the writing-up of a thesis or to career opportunities) after the award has finished.

Beyond changes resulting from suspensions and extensions, ROs can approve extensions to submission dates but only for unexpected and exceptional circumstances that have occurred since the ESRC funding has finished.

Extensions to the submission date must not be considered in retrospect.

How students apply for a submission date extension

Students must apply to their nominated contact at their RO two to three months before the submission deadline date. Any request must be supported in writing by the student and their supervisor and be fully supported by medical evidence if based on an illness. The RO is expected to update the SDF accordingly.

First destination data, see UKRI T&CS

TGC 7.2 Information requirements

Publication of results/thesis abstracts - also see UKRI T&Cs

Decisions on whether the results of a student's work are published are at the discretion of the student and supervisor.

Students are advised to refer to the ESRC Research Data Policy ([ESRC research data policy](#)) that is available on the ESRC website. ESRC-funded students are strongly encouraged to offer copies of any machine-readable data created or repurposed during the lifetime of the award for deposit in the UK Data Service. Further guidance on data deposit with the UK Data Service is available at www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/deposit-data.

ESRC-funded students who are likely to produce data of any kind as a result of their grant are recommended to read the UK Data Service data management guides (www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/manage-data).

The UK Data Service will be also pleased to offer any further advice, if required. Any enquiry should be addressed to: www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch or UK Data Service, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ.

Ethics - also see UKRI T&Cs, TGC 3.1

As an important source of public funding for postgraduate training in the social sciences, the ESRC has an obligation towards the general public and academic community to try to ensure that such training is conducted in a professional manner and will not give rise to distress or annoyance to individuals.

It is the responsibility of ROs to ensure that appropriate ethical mechanisms are in place. The ESRC has its own Framework for Research Ethics (www.esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/) which should be consulted. It is expected that proper consideration has been given to any ethical issues that the research project may raise.

Scholarships and research work

Students must inform their RO immediately if they receive or are applying for a grant or an award from another body to support their postgraduate work, especially in the form of payment of fees or a maintenance grant. A student must not hold two awards for the same purpose concurrently.

The ESRC would encourage research students to take up other scholarships whilst undertaking their ESRC studentship. In particular, the ESRC would encourage students to participate in schemes such as Erasmus/Socrates. In addition, there may be times when the offer of a particular piece of research work will greatly add to the quality of a student's PhD study being undertaken, although such work would not be considered appropriate within the Master's training year. However, it is important to note that there may be implications for financial entitlement made under the ESRC studentship award in these circumstances.

If a student takes up a scholarship, research work or additional research training during the course of an ESRC full-time studentship, then the following rules must be applied:

- a suspension of the studentship will apply, if the study, research or training undertaken during the period is relevant but not integral or essential to the ESRC studies
- an honorary studentship should be counted against the three-year limit if assistance given by the scholarship or research work is used for the same purposes for which the ESRC studentship was awarded: as a result, the thesis submission date will not be amended
- the Erasmus/Socrates scheme is normally counted as an honorary studentship.

If a scholarship award is paid for by a foreign government on a non-reciprocal basis, the ESRC will supplement the award to the level of an ESRC studentship in accordance with the rules on residency and length of funding. This supplement is not though available in the case of contract research work.

Students wishing to undertake any scholarship or research work, whether suspended or honorary, are required to put their case in writing to their supervisor. This must detail the relevance of the work proposed to the student's PhD study and also the type of supervision and any training that will be received whilst on the scheme.

Employment - also see UKRI T&Cs

ESRC studentship award holders are encouraged to undertake a certain amount of paid teaching or other research work during their studentship provided that they spend a minimum of 1,800 hours each academic year on their doctoral research and research training.

Their programme of postgraduate training must be compatible with such work and their supervisor must approve.

Please note that the figure of 1,800 is based on recommendations about the difference between full and part time. It equates to a 37.5-hour week for 48 weeks. Please note that ESRC allows for eight weeks' holiday per year and when this is taken into account, the figure of 1,800 hours is reduced to 1,650.

Further to this, demonstrating, teaching, or other types of employment should not be a compulsory element of research training, and ROs should seek to provide a range of development opportunities for their students.

In coming to this decision, the Council considered the following:

- a stipend is a tax-free award for the purposes of undertaking a period of education and training. Income earned from employment duties is taxable in the normal way
- the Council would expect to see the contribution of research students to demonstration or teaching work formally recognised and recorded as employment by an RO, with appropriate contractual obligations and training. Remuneration costs for duties considered to be constitute employment must not be taken from the student's stipend covered by the DTG.
- research students should be given information about their entitlements and responsibilities in undertaking a postgraduate research programme at the outset of their studies.

Please note that a student cannot be paid for more than 37.5 hours a week from ESRC funds. Therefore any additional employment beyond their full-time studentship cannot be supported from ESRC grant funding.

Students may undertake a small amount of other paid work either in term time or during holidays. The ESRC does not encourage such work especially during the times when students are expected to be fully engaged in research training and thesis preparation.

Students should not be overcommitted during the period of their award. Full-time ESRC studentship award holders cannot hold either a full-time job, permanent part-time job or temporary role for an extended period of time, during the period of their award. Part-time ESRC studentship award holders cannot hold a full-time job.

If a student wishes to suspend their award for a period because of a temporary employment opportunity which is relevant to their area of research, the maximum period of suspension will be based on whether the employment is full- or part-time. As a result, the normal maximum suspension of 12 months will apply if the employment is full-time but may be calculated on a pro-rata basis if the employment is part-time. Please see the section on change in status for part-time students.

Holiday, see UKRI T&Cs
TGC 8.3 Annual Leave

Student grievance procedure

In the event of a student experiencing serious problems with supervision or any other academic matter that cannot be resolved at the department level, they should follow the RO's own grievance procedures in the first instance. It is important that any concerns are raised at the earliest opportunity and preferably during the funding period, although the ESRC does recognise that in some circumstances this might not be possible or appropriate. If the matter is still not resolved, it may be appropriate to take the case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The ESRC will not get involved in any case until the OIA review is published and would not expect to review cases more than three years after funding has ceased.

If a student wishes to appeal a decision made by the RO then they must address their appeal to the RO itself.

Complaints

The Research Councils adopted a harmonised complaints policy with effect from 1 April 2015, further information can be found at www.esrc.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints/

Section 5: Other expectations

Collaboration

The Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2015) ([ESRC postgraduate training and development guidelines](#)) emphasise the importance of collaboration with public, private, and civil-society sector organisations. The expectation is that 30% of the funding allocation (20% of each cohort for DTCs) will involve some form of collaboration with other public, private or civil-society organisations. This may increase for specific CDTs, which will be confirmed in the call specification.

The ESRC is not always prescriptive about the type of collaboration, but rather asks ROs to demonstrate that studentships are developed in collaboration with other organisations and involve substantive user engagement and knowledge exchange activity as part of the award. This could be achieved through collaborative studentships and other opportunities such as internships and placements.

The general principles of what activities count towards the collaborative target are:

- To contribute to the target collaborative activities these do not need to be co-funded, unless specified in the call specification, though there are clear benefits to securing co-funding
- Collaborations must be with a non-academic organisation in the public, private or civil-society sector
- Collaborations must include substantive knowledge exchange and not just one way engagement (for example, data collection)

Whilst co-funding is not a requirement of a collaborative award, unless specified in the call specification and grant offer letter, the ESRC would encourage institutions to seek co-funding whenever possible to support collaborative elements of studentships as this will help the DTG funding go further and be more sustainable.

Monitoring and reporting

The ESRC will be looking to its doctoral training network to deliver against the original aims and objectives both individually and as a network.

Annual reporting

All investments will be required to submit an Annual Report which will cover a number of areas such as the development of the investment, collaboration, co-funding, and delivery against priority areas. Members of network will also be required to provide further information on the students funded.

The annual report will form the basis of the annual meeting that will be held between the investment director and the ESRC Case officer.

Assurance checking

ESRC will undertake a programme of assurance checking aimed at ensuring the robustness of allocation processes with respect to the following areas:

- the allocation of +3 studentships

- studentships steered in the priority areas of advanced quantitative methods the use of ESRC datasets and interdisciplinary research which straddles other research council remits
- training needs analysis

From time-to-time DTPs and CDTs may be allocated additional awards to address specific thematic or research challenges. Where this is the case, ESRC may undertake additional assurance checks to ensure that awards remain aligned to the topic for which the studentships were allocated.

ESRC reserves the right to reduce or remove funding where continue to fall below the targets set for them by ESRC, have consistently low outcomes from assurance checking exercises and/or are not delivering the training they committed to in their proposal.

Annex I: Award amendments - responsibilities and reporting requirements

Once payments are issued, individual student details may be subject to change over the course of the funding period. ROs have been given authority to approve changes in certain circumstances subject to notifying the ESRC of these changes on the Je-S Student Details Functionality (SDF).

Requirements for reporting studentship amendments on the SDF are as follows:

Termination of studies

- Termination Date
- Termination Reason (choose appropriate response from drop-down menu)
- Further Information: include any further information that might be relevant

Suspension of studies

please note that the funding end date and PhD end date should be the same.

- Funding End Date
- Expected Submission Date
- Course End date (if applicable)
- PhD End date
- Reason for change: please explain

Extensions for the following reasons

- Funding End Date
- Expected Submission Date
- Course End Date (if applicable)
- PhD End Date
- Reason for Change: Adoption, Maternity, Status Change, Other

Maternity, paternity, adoptive or unpaid parental leave

- Funding End Date
- Expected Submission Date
- Course End Date (if applicable)
- PhD End Date
- Reason for Change: Adoption, Maternity, Other

Funding transfer (part time to full time)

- Funding End Date
- Expected Submission Date
- Course End Date (if applicable)
- PhD End Date
- Reason for Change: Status Change plus amendments to% of full time

Changes to project details

- Project Title

Changes to supervision

- Edit Supervisors

Transfer of award

- Add new Organisation
- Edit Supervisors

Amendments to the DTG can be requested through the Grant Maintenance Request functionality on Je-S. When selecting a request type from the drop-down menu, please select the most appropriate option. In the absence of a suitable option, please use the 'Grant Generic Change Request.'

The ESRC expects ROs to meet the full cost of supporting their students from within the cash limit of their DTG. Only in unforeseen or exceptional circumstances will the ESRC agree to add additional funds to a DTG and such a request will only be met if there are no other contingency funds or training grants to draw on.

A grant maintenance request must be raised by the DTP/CDT within three months of the students' start date to claim costs for the associated studentships. ESRC reserves the right not to reimburse costs, either in part or in full, where costs are not claimed within three months.

The ESRC requests that ROs submit their Grant Maintenance Requests between 1 October and 31 December of each year. You may need to submit multiple requests if you have amendments to students who are funded by different DTGs. All costs in the final year of the grant should be included in a Final Expenditure Statement rather than in a Grant Maintenance Request.

Disabled Student's Allowance

Amounts to be approved and paid by the RO directly to the student and requested back from the ESRC via an annual claim.

The following studentship amendments require prior approval from the ESRC:

Pathway/RO transfer

Both ROs need to be in full agreement of the transfer before information within the SDF is changed. Students, including those currently at a DTC, can only transfer to an accredited pathway in a DTP. If there is not a like-for-like course on offer, a transfer can only be completed if there is a suitable pathway and supervisors for the student to complete their studies. Transfers between ROs within the same DTP do not require prior approval from the ESRC, but the transfer must still be within an accredited pathway. For collaboration awards, the collaborating partner must also approve the transfer.

Status transfers in the final six months

ESRC will only consider transfers in the final six months of funding in exceptional circumstances. If approved, ESRC will inform the RO when to update the SDF.

Submission Extension requests over 12 months

A request for an exceptional submission extension over 12 months may be submitted to ESRC for approval. Please note that these requests should not be made retrospectively.

Annex 2: Difficult language training

As a rough guide to the way in which extensions for difficult language training should be interpreted, the following notes may prove useful.

The distinctions made below are not to be read as hard and fast rules, but rather as general guidelines. In practice, each case is considered on its merits. For example, a student who has a degree in Arabic is not likely to receive a nine-month extension for learning the language. At the same time, the 'Groups' listed are not treated as watertight categories, and, in certain circumstances, a student learning a Group B language may receive more than nine months.

Extensions for difficult language training do not automatically attract overseas fieldwork funding. ROs should only consider paying fieldwork costs where it can be demonstrated that the language can only be learnt in the field. Funding for difficult language extensions and overseas fieldwork must be drawn from the DTG; no additional funding will be provided.

Group A

Included in this group are unwritten languages or languages in the early stage of being analysed and for which no grammars, vocabularies, or other learning aids are available. These might include Amerindian, Papuan languages, etc. A case can be argued for 12 months.

Group B

Included in this group are:

- languages for which there are limited descriptive and learning resources available
- languages which present intrinsic difficulties for speakers of English because they are click, tonal, object-verb-subject, agglutinating, etc.
- languages that require knowledge of a non-alphabetic script, such as Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and South- and South-East-Asian languages.

A case can be argued for nine months.

Group C

Included in this group are difficult languages (as defined in Group B above) which have been well described in grammars, vocabularies etc, but for which no learning aids exist, and the language will have to be learnt mainly in the field from unskilled teachers. These might include various African, Melanesian, and Amerindian languages plus some in the Indian sub-continent. A case can be argued for six months.

Group D

Included in this group are languages similar to those in Group C but for which intensive learning materials exist such as courses, language laboratory, materials, tapes, etc. A case can be argued for three months (this includes all European languages).

Annex 3: Associated studentships

Associated studentships (previously called grant- or project-linked) studentships are designed to add value to the proposed research outlined in the grant application, whilst providing a clear opportunity for a distinct and independent course of enquiry for the student.

Associated studentships are only permitted on strategic calls such as Centres and Large Grants. The specific guidance for the call will confirm whether associated studentships can be supported or not.

Where permitted, associated studentships may be requested as long as:

- the grant applied for is for three years or more
- the Principal or Co-Investigators are approved to act as a primary supervisors for PhD students and are based within a DTP or CDT
- the student(s) are located in an ESRC accredited DTP or CDT and they are studying on an accredited pathway.

Rules and regulations

Up to three studentships can be applied for on any single application. The studentships must be embedded within a Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) or Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT), be subject to the same terms and conditions as a standard studentship, and the funds managed within the training grant. Before submitting an application that includes an associated studentship the applicant must obtain a letter of support from the relevant DTP Director, confirming that the DTP will support the students for the duration of the project.

The studentship must not be a displacement of the normal research support required on the grant. Linked studentships are designed to add value to the proposed research outlined in the application, whilst providing a clear opportunity for a distinct and independent course of enquiry for the student. Through being embedded within a high-quality research team, they should offer the student an opportunity to develop their substantive research skills, alongside broader professional development. The main research grant project should still be viable without the studentship and should have distinct objectives that are not reliant upon the studentship.

If successful, the funds for the studentship will be removed from the main research grant and paid alongside standard ESRC studentships (once the student has been recruited and the funds have been requested by the DTP via a grant maintenance request). Such students will also be expected to submit their PhD within 12 months from their funding end date and will be included in the ESRC PhD Submission Rate Survey. Non-submission will therefore affect the RO's postgraduate submission rate.

Funding for associated studentships is awarded based on peer reviewed applications. No changes can be made to the studentship projects or the number of studentships funded, without prior approval from ESRC.

Whilst associated studentships can outlast the grant they are linked to, the majority (i.e. more than half) of the studentship must take place during the life of the grant.

Associated studentships are subject to the standard rules for ESRC studentships and should be therefore calculated on the same notional-cost basis. This includes RTSG, Overseas Fieldwork and Student and Cohort development costs.

Support can be available to meet provisions to aid students with requirements under the Equality Act 2010. Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) may be claimed separately.

Studentships are not costed under full Economic Cost (fEC) arrangements, but if awarded, the grant will meet the full 100% cost of the normal provision. The cost associated with the student(s) must be costed as part of the overall value of the application in the Project Student section of the application. The Je-S system automatically calculates the cost of a student based on current rates for fees and stipends and the proposed duration of the studentship. **Applicants should overtype these amounts** to include the other elements of the notional cost, namely the research training support grant (RTSG), overseas fieldwork and Student and Cohort Development Funds. No additional costs, for example travel and subsistence, conference attendance or items of equipment should be costed into the grant. Where they are, these costs will be removed from the final award.

For each studentship the application will need to indicate:

- the name of the student, if known at the point of application
- the length of the studentship in years
- the proposed start and end date of the studentship

UKRI have opened up eligibility for studentships to international students from the 2021/22 academic year and associated studentships are open to both home and international students, subject to the eligibility criteria in the UKRI Terms and Conditions of Training Grants. All students will receive a full award, to include a stipend and fees at the home level.

Exceptions

Under normal circumstances students must be studying within an accredited DTP or CDT ([Doctoral Training Partnerships](#) and [Centres for Doctoral Training](#)) and on an accredited pathway. Where a grant is being funded as part of a cross-council initiative, students may study within non-ESRC-accredited institutions and departments. Please refer to the call specification for any such initiative to determine whether studentships can be applied for.

Case for support (project student request attachment)

The case for such a studentship will need to be set out as an additional attachment to the grant application. Where costs for a studentship have been entered when completing the application via the Joint Electronic Submission System (Je-S), applicants will be required to submit a 'project student request' attachment. One attachment of a maximum of two sides of A4 must be included for each studentship requested.

This attachment must include:

- the accredited pathway in which the student will be based
- the Principal and/or the Co-Investigators who will supervise the studentship
- a summary statement of the PhD topic to be undertaken and a justification for the length of the programme of study

- a clear statement of how this is independent from, but will add value to, the principal research objectives set out in the application.

Where institutions are planning to co-fund the associated studentships this must be confirmed in the grant proposals and the relevant documentation should be included for all students. For example, if funding equivalent to three full students is being requested, but the RO intends to co-fund an equivalent amount, six project student requests should be included in the proposal.

Submission of student details

The ESRC is concerned with maintaining a high standard of training and supervision, and for this the Council relies on the cooperation of administrators, heads of departments and others who support students. The ESRC takes seriously its role to support high-quality training opportunities for postgraduate students and believes in the consistent application of policies and practices to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The ESRC expects ROs to be fair and transparent in the recruitment of students; students must be selected and treated on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of background or any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act (2010). ROs are expected to comply with all equal opportunities legislation in force and where an organisation is shown to be in breach of these, ESRC is prepared to invoke sanctions.

Student details must be submitted within one month of starting through the Student Details Functionality in Je-S (SDF). Details of the project should be submitted through the SDF along with the student details. It is the responsibility of the RO to ensure all records relating to students are maintained on the SDF throughout the lifetime of the award. For grant amendment requirements please see Annex I.

In line with the research grant terms and conditions, a grant maintenance request must be raised by the DTP/CDT **within three months of the students' start date** to claim costs for the associated studentships. No costs will be added until the ESRC receives confirmation that the student(s) has been recruited. ESRC reserves the right not to reimburse costs, either in part or in full, where costs are not claimed within three months.

The request should include the name of the student, the research grant reference that they are associated with, the funding start and end dates and the full cost being requested. ESRC will confirm the details and add the funding to the DTP grant. The amount added to the grant will reflect the notional cost in place at the time of nomination and the duration of the studentship requested in the original application.

Annex 4: Notes for employers or part-time students

Part-time applicants for an ESRC studentship who are in employment should ensure that their employers read these notes.

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is an independent government-funded body set up to promote social science research. One way it does this is through its support for studentships, usually for study towards a doctorate.

ESRC studentships are highly regarded in the academic community and the competition for them is intense.

Only those departments in ROs which have been formally accredited by the ESRC for the strengths of their research training may receive studentships. This research training must be formal with an emphasis on general and transferable skills.

Students may apply on a full- or part-time basis. The studentship for a successful full-time applicant may include the full award of fees, maintenance and a contribution to other expenses such as fieldwork or study visits. Part-time students receive fees and a pro-rata maintenance grant. In order to provide more flexibility for students, particularly at times in the studentship when the workload is most demanding (for example during fieldwork) or if there are very large datasets to be compiled, processed or analysed, the ESRC is prepared to consider requests for a fixed period of full-time working of between three months and a year. In this period part-time students will receive most of the allowances received by a full-time student. Clearly, any such full-time working will affect students' ability to work on their 'normal' job, and the student would thus need the approval of their employer. The ESRC would urge employers to consider very favourably any such request in the interests of the student, of the research and, we hope, of the employing organisation itself.

The ESRC wishes to ensure that its support for part-time students should not replace or duplicate funding from other sources.

Annex 5: Residential Eligibility criteria (this guidance is provided for information and relates to studentships awarded prior to August 2021)

Residential eligibility

To be eligible for a **full award** (stipend and fees), you must:

- be ordinarily resident in the UK, meaning there are no restrictions on how long you can stay, **and**
- have been 'ordinarily resident' in the UK for at least three years prior to the start of the studentship grant. This means you must have been normally residing in the UK (apart from temporary or occasional absences), **and**
- not have been residing in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of full-time education. (This does not apply to UK nationals and EU nationals who were ordinarily resident in the EU immediately before the period of full-time education).

Further information on the eligibility criteria for **full awards** can be found on the UKCISA website: www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Fees-and-Money/Government-Student-Support

To be eligible for a **fees only award**, you must:

- be ordinarily resident in an EU member state, in the same way as UK students must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

Opening up international eligibility (prior to August 2021)

Prior to August 2021, ESRC made the strategic decision to relax the rules around international eligibility in key areas, allowing fees and stipends to be paid for students from outside the UK.

Students could be recruited from overseas and EU students could receive full awards in:

- Economics
- Advanced Quantitative Methods

Students could be recruited under these areas without the ROs adhering to the residential eligibility rules up to a maximum of 35% of their allocation in those areas. The higher international fee rate was expected to be waived for these students, meaning that fees could only be paid at the same rate as home students.

ROs could decide whether to apply these relaxed eligibility rules. The decision had to apply across all pathways and (where relevant) all institutions within the Consortia. It must have also applied to applicants from anywhere in the world.

Training grant funds could not be used to cover the difference between home and overseas fee rates.

Annex 6: Guidance for studentships impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic

The following information has been collated to provide guidance for our training grant holders when dealing with students who have been impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The full guidance can be found on the UKRI website: [Guidance for applicants, students and award-holders impacted by the pandemic – UKRI](#)

Extensions

We are committed to ensuring all doctoral students are supported in completing their research projects to a doctoral level and are funded to do so.

All students should be treated fairly, using flexible, generous and inclusive processes that are sympathetic to the disruption caused to academic programmes and recognise the impact of the pandemic on individual personal circumstances of students.

We expect training grant holders to follow these principles when reviewing whether students should receive the extension. However, training grant holders should not place an onerous burden of proof on students to provide evidence to justify their extension. Training grant holders should engage those research organisations with whom their students are registered and seek to harmonise expectations and processes as much as possible/practical.

The eligibility of students should be determined by the training grant holder, and students are not required to apply to UKRI for an extension. In discussion with students and supervisors, the training grant holder should determine which students should receive an extension and for how long. The training grant holder should provide students with contact details of alternative professional staff in case students do not wish to disclose sensitive personal issues to training grant holders and/or supervisors.

Please note that UKRI's standard Training Grant Terms and Conditions continue to apply, except in the circumstances outlined in the UKRI guidance.

Sick Leave

For cases relating to COVID-19, sick leave can be claimed for up to 28 weeks in line with Government Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

Shielding

For those students that are shielding and are unable to work from home, they should receive sick pay for the period detailed in their shielding letter. Students can claim for more than one period of shielding.

Full guidance for doctoral students supported by UKRI research council programmes can be found here: <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/tackling-the-impact-of-covid-19/guidance-for-applicants-and-awardholders-impacted-by-the-pandemic/>