

## ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide Guidance for Accredited Doctoral Training Centres

Version 7  
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## **Summary of key changes in version 7**

The following points have been updated for clarification. Please refer to the relevant sections for the full text.

### **RCUK Complaints Policy**

The guidance has been updated to reflect the Research Councils UK (RCUK) Complaints Policy which replaces the previous guidance on complaints and appeals.

### **ESRC Internships and Overseas Institutional Visits Schemes**

As both of these schemes have now closed, and all costs should have been paid, references to them have now been removed. Should you have any queries regarding these schemes please contact [tdbpolicy@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:tdbpolicy@esrc.ac.uk).

## **Section 1: Introduction and overview of studentship administration**

### **Purpose of the Postgraduate Funding Guide**

This guide is intended to support Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) Directors, supervisors, nominated contacts and students in the administration of studentships and Doctoral Training Grants in respect of financial payments, monitoring and evaluation, and rules, regulations and procedures. This version of the guide relates to accredited DTCs and studentships starting under the new postgraduate training framework from October 2011. For guidance on rules surrounding studentships funded prior to the introduction of DTCs please refer to the 'Guidance for non-DTC Studentships' version of the guide.

This guide is valid from June 2015 and supersedes all previous versions.

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 (2009) (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-policy/dtc-network/ptguidelines.aspx>) set out the Council's expectations in relation to the training content expected to be in place or in development within accredited DTCs indicating the core requirements across training in research methods and transferable skills.

Studentships can only be held in Research Organisations (ROs) that have been given ESRC accreditation as a DTC as described in the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2009) and the RO's subsequent application for accreditation. DTC status has been awarded to both single institutions and to consortia arrangements as per the application for accreditation. Consortia DTCs have a lead institution that administers the grant on behalf of the DTC but it is important to note that these guidelines apply to all ROs within consortia DTCs.

### **The role of the ESRC**

The ESRC is an independent, government-funded body set up by Royal Charter.

The mission of the ESRC is:

- To promote and support, by any means, high-quality basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training in the social sciences.
- To advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists who meet the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and quality of life.
- To provide advice on, and disseminate knowledge and promote public understanding of, the social sciences.

### **Doctoral Training Grants (DTGs)**

The studentships allocated to DTCs 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 or an alternative member of the RO nominated by the principal applicant. If

the DTC wishes to change the name of the award holder they must submit a grant maintenance request through Je-S to do so.

### **Submitting Student Details Functionality in Je-S (SDF)**

The Student Details Functionality (SDF) in Je-S is the mechanism through which DTCs inform ESRC of all students funded through the DTG. The SDF is an electronic database that DTC administrators will need to maintain with their students' details. The ESRC reserves the right to withdraw funding if student details are not maintained.

Student details must be submitted through the SDF within one month after the student has started their ESRC funding. Details of the project and, if relevant, any project partner (for any collaborative studentship awards set up by a DTC) should be submitted through the SDF along with the student details. Detailed information on how to submit student details can be found on the ESRC's website (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-guidance/index.aspx>). Je-S Helptext is also available on each screen in Je-S.

Please note it is essential that all student details are input and linked to the DTC's training grant and maintained throughout the studentship.

### **Payment of studentships allocated to DTCs**

The value of the DTG is calculated based on the number of students allocated to a DTC, a notional 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 subject to the RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/reviews/grc/RCUKPolicyandGuidelinesonGovernanceofGoodResearchPracticeFebruary2013.pdf>).

Awards are given to pathways within DTCs which the ESRC has accredited for the quality and relevance of their training provision. Awards are therefore made on the assumption that the DTC has adequate facilities for the research or training proposed in accordance with the requirements of the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2009) ([www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-policy/dtc-network/ptguidelines.aspx](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-policy/dtc-network/ptguidelines.aspx)), and that the policies, procedures and facilities specified in the DTC's submission to the ESRC for the purposes of accreditation will be applied in relation to each award holder. It is the responsibility of accredited DTCs to nominate students for awards who can meet the academic and residential guidelines outlined in Annex I.

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. DTCs 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 DTCs. 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 DTC's own complaints and appeals procedure at the earliest opportunity.

The ESRC relies on the DTC's 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 such as an Overseas Institutional Visit. 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**

Studentships can only be held in ROs that have been awarded ESRC accreditation as a DTC. The list of accredited DTCs can be found on our website (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/index.aspx>).

### **Types of Studentships**

DTCs 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 specified the structure of funding it would support across its range of pathways.

As part of its postgraduate training framework, the ESRC has increased its flexibility in the delivery of research training and does not prescribe that research training must be frontloaded. It can now be spread across the PhD programme. Where DTCs have favoured the introduction of a four- (or possibly a five-) year programme, it is expected that they have robust progression procedures in place to formally assess individual students within the first two years of the programme.

The ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2009 (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-policy/dtc-network/ptguidelines.aspx>) place an importance on core training in research methods to enable all social scientists to understand and use essential qualitative and quantitative techniques. Annex I of the Guidelines sets out the 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, DTCs can make minor amendments to their pathways 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 can be submitted by DTCs as part of the annual report process.

It is the DTC's 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 DTC should determine the actual length of a studentship 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.

### **Residential eligibility**

There are two main types of studentship:

- Full awards: these cover the cost of approved tuition fees and provide a maintenance grant (or 'stipend')
- Fees-only awards: these cover the cost of approved tuition fees, but no maintenance grant is provided.

In order to be eligible for one of these awards, a student must meet certain conditions relating to residence. Please note that the status of the award (eg full or fees-only) is determined at the start of the award and cannot be changed once an award is made. For example a student cannot upgrade from a fees-only to a full award once their award has been made. Please refer to Annex 1 for the full rules governing residential eligibility.

Important note: It is essential that students funded via the DTC receive the type of award they are entitled to. DTCs must not allocate a fees-only studentship to an applicant who is eligible for a full award.

### **Opening up international eligibility**

The Research Councils have agreed a number of underlying principles in relation to the recruitment of non-UK domiciled candidates to Research Council funded studentships. In light of this, ESRC has agreed to relax the rules around international eligibility in strategic areas, allowing fees and stipends to be paid for students from outside the UK. DTCs will be able to recruit overseas and EU students for full awards in Economics or Advanced Quantitative Methods without adhering to the current residential eligibility rules laid out in

Annex I. DTCs will be required to waive the higher international fee rate for these students, meaning that fees can only be paid at the same rate as home students.

DTCs can decide whether to apply these relaxed eligibility rules. The decision must apply across all pathways and (where relevant) all institutions within the DTC. It must also apply to applicants from anywhere in the world.

Please note that training grant funds cannot be used to cover the difference between home and overseas fee rates.

### **Institutional role in checking of residential eligibility**

ESRC places full reliance on residential eligibility approval checks undertaken by the RO. 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 DTC in the first instance and not contact the ESRC directly. If the circumstances around establishing eligibility are complex, the DTC should refer the case to their postgraduate admissions office (or equivalent) for further advice. In exceptional circumstances the DTC may refer the case to the ESRC for advice or a ruling. 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. Advice is obtainable from [tdbpolicy@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:tdbpolicy@esrc.ac.uk).

When submitting student details to the SDF, DTCs 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, circumstances and type of award (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 DTCs have obtained 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. For studentships awarded through a DTC, the ESRC has not awarded separate accreditation for part-time provision. Unless otherwise stated, all DTCs are eligible to host part-time studentships on all pathways.

It is possible for students to apply to their DTC 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.

DTCs 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. The DTC should not make or continue a studentship 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 DTC 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 from an accredited DTC 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 DTC 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. In the majority of cases, students will have undertaken an undergraduate course at a recognised UK higher education institution. 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 DTC to verify that students possess the relevant qualifications.

### **Equivalence**

Degree qualifications gained from outside the UK, or a combination of qualifications and/or experience that is equivalent to a relevant UK degree, may be accepted. In both cases, it will be necessary to ascertain whether these qualifications can be equated to an honours degree, and at what level. We advise that DTCs use the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) database to ensure that qualifications are of the appropriate level. Students should be aware that while a DTC may accept a non-UK qualification for entry to the degree course, the DTC will be required to assess whether the qualification is of sufficient standard for an ESRC award. 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.

### **Enhancement**

A less-than-sufficient first degree may be enhanced to meet the requirements by the acquisition of at least one satisfactorily completed academic year of full-time study or its part-time equivalent (ie 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.

### **Eligibility for +3 studentships**

The framework allows DTCs 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. DTCs must have procedures in place to verify and assess an applicant's prior research training before awarding them a +3 studentship.

### **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 (ie to be eligible for a studentship from October 2013, the work experience will be calculated from 1 October 2010). 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 Great Britain. Each of these bodies is primarily responsible for providing postgraduate studentships for its own range of subject areas. DTCs 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.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk)
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) [www.bbsrc.ac.uk](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk)
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) [www.esrc.ac.uk](http://www.esrc.ac.uk)
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) [www.epsrc.ac.uk](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk)
- Medical Research Council (MRC) [www.mrc.ac.uk](http://www.mrc.ac.uk)
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) [www.nerc.ac.uk](http://www.nerc.ac.uk)
- Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) [www.stfc.ac.uk](http://www.stfc.ac.uk)

The main disciplines and subjects covered by ESRC studentships are listed below. Some subjects may or may not be the responsibility of the ESRC.

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

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 the DTC selects one of the disciplines listed above as the primary discipline.

### **Seeking advice on remit queries**

DTCs 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 (if the student is undertaking a project on the boundaries of social science and other disciplinary areas). ESRC will monitor project summaries and reserves the right to reduce funding if a DTC allocates awards for projects that do not meet these criteria.

If in any doubt, potential applicants/DTCs must submit a brief synopsis of the thesis topic and the proposed method(s) to: [remit@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:remit@esrc.ac.uk).

### **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.

All studentship funding that has been allocated to DTCs and studentships can only be held on accredited pathways within a DTC. Please refer to our website for the accredited Doctoral Training Centres and list of pathways (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/index.aspx>).

DTCs will decide which students they wish to allocate ESRC funding to. The DTC will have strict internal processes for selecting students and students should follow the procedures outlined by their prospective DTC.

If an applicant has a query or complaint about the way in which their application has been processed it must be addressed through the DTC'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. DTCs 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 DTCs to seek out ways to co-fund some of their studentships.

Once the DTC has identified the students to receive ESRC funding, the students' details should be input on the SDF. These details must be submitted within one month of the student starting. Details of the project and, if relevant, any project partners (any collaborative studentship awards set up by a DTC that involve non-Research Council co-funding) should be submitted along with the student details. It is the responsibility of the DTC to ensure all records relating to students are maintained on the SDF throughout the lifetime of the award.

The DTC will complete the SDF on behalf of the student; please see the ESRC website for guidance on how to input details on the SDF (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-guidance/index.aspx>).

## **Section 3: Financial conditions and allowances**

### **Financial details**

Each DTC has received a provisional six-year allocation of studentships which represents the minimum number of students that must be funded through the grant. DTCs will be issued with a single DTG grant 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 to the DTC has been calculated as if it was a full award although the DTC can also allocate part-time and fees-only studentships as appropriate. The ESRC stipulates that students must be given the full value of an award they are entitled to; ie if a student is eligible for a full award, the DTC cannot fund them on a fees-only basis.

The ESRC expects DTCs 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 (2009) (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-policy/dtc-network/ptguidelines.aspx>), the DTC 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, all fees must be funded from a single Council. DTCs may also offer increased stipend levels (outside of the ESRC steers explained below) above the minimum level to help recruit/retain students in areas of shortage. The DTC can move funds between the different headings on the grant.

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 per cent of the total cost of the studentship (except for fees-only students) should be drawn from the ESRC DTG, but the remaining funding could be drawn from other sources. For example, DTCs 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 DTC must indicate, via the SDF, which is the lead council; this should be based on the primary disciplinary orientation of the proposal.

Unless stated otherwise in this document, the ESRC has adopted the RCUK Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/grantstcs.aspx>).

### **Notional cost**

The value of a DTG for DTCs 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 2015/16 has been calculated as follows:

• Standard maintenance	£14,057
• Fees	£4,052
• RTSG	£750
• Overseas fieldwork	£450
<b>Total</b>	<b>£19,309</b>

The amount paid for fees includes £200 Roberts funding for the purpose of transferable skills training.

The total amount of funding provided by the ESRC to each DTC for the research training support grant (RTSG) and overseas fieldwork (OSFW) is calculated using a fixed amount per student per year but students do not automatically receive this as a personal allowance. For students whose funding started on or after 1 October 2012, funding provided for both RTSG and OSFW should be pooled.

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. DTCs should not consider RTSG a personal allocation for each individual ESRC funded student, but rather to consider 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 DTC's responsibility to ensure that funds are used responsibly and DTCs should ensure a process is in place for managing RTSG and OSFW that it is responsive to the needs of its students. The ESRC encourages students to discuss their needs with their DTC early in their funding.

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

### **Enhancements**

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

- London weighting: an additional £2,000 per student is included for DTCs that involve ROs in London.
- Enhanced stipends in Economics and Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM): where the ESRC has specified the number of Economics and AQM students a DTC should recruit, the DTG will be supplemented by £3,000 per annum per student. Outside of this, where a DTC has recruitment problems, the flexibility of the DTG allows it to offer enhanced stipends. ESRC will monitor which research areas attract higher stipends using the data collected as part of the annual monitoring report.
- Enhanced RTSG for AQM Students: where the ESRC has specified the number of AQM students a DTC will recruit, the RTSG will be supplemented by £250 per annum per student.

### **Managing funds in a Doctoral Training Grant**

The ESRC expects DTCs 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 the costs of successful applications to the ESRC's own Internship Scheme, for Disabled Student's Allowance, and for associated studentships.

Where there are insufficient funds in the DTG to meet the costs of maternity leave, the Research Council will consider reimbursing any additional costs providing the DTC can demonstrate that it lacks the flexibility to meet the costs of maternity support and that it has no other contingency funding of concurrent training grants on which it could draw. Funds will be added to the end of the grant.

### **Basic levels**

The following are the minimum requirements for each award type.

A full-time studentship award consists of four parts:

- Payment of approved fees (as set and agreed by the Research Councils)
- Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)
- Maintenance grant (or stipend) for the student
- Contribution towards overseas fieldwork costs.

A part-time studentship consists of:

- payment of approved pro-rata part-time fees
- a pro-rata maintenance grant (stipend)
- a pro-rata RTSG

A fees only studentship consists of:

- payment of approved fees (as set and agreed by the Research Councils)
- RTSG
- Contribution towards overseas fieldwork costs.

### **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.

DTCs 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 DTCs.

When a student withdraws or suspends their studies the DTC must update the SDF 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**

DTCs are responsible for the payment of tuition fees from ESRC funding. Tuition fee payments cover tuition, registration, and validation/examination fees up to an annual maximum. This is the fee set by the Research Councils. Any difference between the Research Council fee payment level and what a RO charges should not be met by the student.

### **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 DTC 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 by the DTC, provided the ESRC terms and conditions are observed.

### **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 eg printing, stationery, telephone calls
- purchase of small items of equipment eg cameras, tape recorders, films, cassettes
- gifts for local informants
- books and other reading material not available through libraries

Since October 2012, DTCs are expected to pool RTSG funding for flexible use flexibly across ESRC-funded DTC 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. The DTC must have clear and transparent mechanisms in place to allocate this funding.

RTSG funds must not be top-sliced by the DTC or used to fund core provision. In exceptional circumstances, DTCs may consider requests from award holders 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 DTC following completion of the award.

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

### **Income Tax**

Payment under an ESRC studentship is not regarded as income for tax purposes. Students should note that earnings received during the final year from sources such as teaching and demonstrating should be aggregated with income from post-award employment when assessing income tax liability for the tax year in which the award ends.

### **National Insurance**

The ESRC will not make any payment for a student's National Insurance (NI) contributions. It is for the student to decide if they wish to pay contributions as a non-employed person. They should be referred to their local Department for Work and Pensions to determine the effect of non-payment of contributions on any further claims for benefit including longer-term pension entitlement. Students may become liable for NI contributions in connection with any paid teaching or demonstrating they undertake.

### **Enhanced stipends**

The ESRC has identified two disciplines/fields that experience specific challenges in attracting and retaining high-quality students. These are Economics and Advanced Quantitative Methods.

#### **Economics**

Where a DTC has received a specific allocation for studentships in Economics, a supplement of £3000 per annum per student will be included.

#### **Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM)**

The Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM) enhanced stipend of £3,000 is intended to encourage students to undertake training in advanced quantitative methods and to apply this in their PhD research and beyond. This is expected to be at a level over and above the basic generic and subject-specific methods requirements. The enhanced AQM stipend is only available during the doctoral (+3) programme and therefore will not be paid during any Master's training.

The ESRC has included an extra £3,000 maintenance grant for each studentship the ESRC has steered to AQM on the relevant training grants. It has also included RTSG for those awards at £1,000 per annum and the DTC must be mindful of the specific training needs associated with AQM when considering requests for RTSG from AQM students.

At the DTC's discretion any student undertaking research in Economics and AQM at a high level can be awarded an enhanced stipend, although this enhancement must be found from within the training grant funds.

DTCs will be asked to report on the progress of any student offered the AQM stipend within their DTC annual report. ESRC will undertake an annual check of a sample of DTC studentships allocated the enhanced stipend to ensure that they meet the requirement of using advanced quantitative methods.

### **Associated Studentships**

No enhancement can be claimed for Economics or AQM unless the cost has been included on the original research grant. Where an enhanced stipend for AQM is costed in to the grant the DTC must ensure that the studentship has been subject to the same procedures that the DTC has established for its own studentships to determine that the application meets the criteria of advanced quantitative methods.

For further information on associated studentships please see Annex 4.

### **Scheme-based enhanced stipends**

DTCs 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 DTC and the organisation 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 DTC 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 subject to a minimum time commitment of 50 per cent. 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; ie if following a +3 pathway at 50 per cent 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 by the DTC 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 eligible to claim overseas fieldwork expenses unless the student has been approved for a change of status for a fixed period by the RO.

### **Disabled Student's Allowance**

Part-time students may apply for Disabled Student's Allowance on the same basis as full-time students.

### **Fees-only awards**

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)**

Any disabled student who, because of disability, is obliged to incur additional expenditure in connection with their studies, may be eligible for an allowance. Any requests for DSA must be made and agreed in advance of the student committing any expenditure for which ESRC funding is sought. No awards can be made for retrospective purchase of any equipment, facilities or personal assistance in connection with a student's disability. DSA is usually paid during the funded period of the award but, in exceptional circumstances, the ESRC will consider requests for the continuation of DSA funding until the thesis has been submitted.

DSA can be claimed from the RO in respect of non-medical helpers, daily expenses and equipment. 'Non-medical helpers' covers support workers, specialist tutors, library assistance, note takers, etc. The daily expenses allowance includes items such as travel costs, internet connections, insurance, etc, (please note that photocopying and consumable costs should normally be claimed through RTSG). Meanwhile 'equipment' covers items such as PCs, laptops, printers, software, desks, chairs, etc as long as these are not for use at the student's institution/campus. The RO is expected to meet the costs of specialist equipment required for the student to attend the institution/campus.

The amount of each allowance is not fixed: the actual amount of entitlement must be determined according to the individual needs of the student. Institutions must consider value for money at all times when identifying the additional support required without failing to meet the student's needs resulting from their disability.

### **How students should apply**

The Research Councils have adopted a harmonised approach to DSA; additional guidance and a claim form is available on the RCUK website (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/researchcareers/Pages/dsa.aspx>).

Requests for DSA must first be discussed with the Disability Officer at the student's institution.

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 DTC 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.

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 and Commonwealth 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 DTC 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 to the DTC 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 DTC'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 DTC should recover the fieldwork allowance less any reasonable expenditure already incurred.

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 still include maintenance grant payments for students, tuition fees, OSFW, RTSG, and, where applicable, stipend enhancements.

DTCs will be responsible for awards. They will be required to inform new students of the payment arrangements within their DTC.

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.

### **Final Expenditure Statement**

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.

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 DTC 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 RCUK Funding Assurance Programme (FAP) Visit.

**Contacting the ESRC about award payments/amendments**

The Research Councils have established a Shared Business Centre (SBS), known as UK SBS Ltd, to support the administration of grants. Should a DTC need to enquire about a training grant, they should contact the SBS at [esrcfamresearchteam@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:esrcfamresearchteam@esrc.ac.uk).

## **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 DTC should manage the funds available through the DTG such that any variations to the award (except for DSA) should be funded via the grant in the first instance.

### **Extensions**

The ESRC will not provide more than five years' funding to any full-time student (or part-time equivalent based on the student's actual time commitment) under any circumstances. Any initial funding requests of less than five years for full time, or the part-time equivalent, can be extended for any of the reasons given below. Please note that for all extensions granted, it is the responsibility of the DTC to amend student funding end dates on the SDF accordingly.

The total period of extensions on any award will not normally exceed 12 months.

Please see Annex 2 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 3 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 by the DTC. It is the responsibility of the DTC 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.

### **Training in film-making**

Where film or video recordings are an integral part of the evidence submitted and used in defence of a thesis, an extension of up to six months may be granted by the DTC to enable training in film-making. The ESRC expects that students interested in film as research data will have already undertaken training prior to the start of their PhD studies, for example, through a Master's degree course in Visual Anthropology. Where an extension is also being requested for a difficult language, the overall length of extension cannot exceed 12 months.

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

Students allocated a 2+3 award that incorporates training in film-making cannot apply for a further extension.

### **ESRC Overseas Institutional Visits (OIVs)**

ESRC stopped administering the Overseas Institutional Visits scheme (OIVs) on 31 January 2014. The administration of the OIV scheme has now been devolved to the DTC network.

DTCs have been provided with an allocated amount of funding to pursue student-led international activities. 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 academic career
- disseminate early research career findings
- attend and participate in seminars where directly relevant to their research.

DTCs have considerable flexibility in administering the funding allocated for the scheme and can also use their own funds to supplement the ESRC funding. DTCs 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.
- Applicants 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 DTCs 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 and Commonwealth Office advises against visiting the country concerned
- The DTC must design a fair and transparent process for assessing applications and allocating awards.

For OIVs awarded under the ESRC-administered scheme, ESRC will have informed the DTC of any successful applications and the DTC should update the SDF with the revised end dates accordingly. ESRC will add funds to the training grant accordingly.

### **Maternity leave**

If a student becomes pregnant such that the expected date of confinement will occur during the period of their award, the ESRC will allow up to six months' paid maternity leave without the level of their award being reduced. Financial support for any time beyond six months should be sought from the institution's Access Fund in the first instance. Should the circumstances of an award be changed following a period of maternity leave, students should notify their supervisor and nominated contact immediately and efforts will be made to take account of these circumstances in flexible ways. The total period of financial support available to students will not be extended beyond the usual 36 months plus the period of up to six months' maternity leave.

Students may also apply for up to a further six months' unpaid suspension of their award because of the pregnancy, providing a total period of paid and unpaid maternity leave of up to twelve months; this is counted towards the total 12-month suspension period allowed in an award. Please note that such paid and unpaid periods of leave must be taken consecutively. If a student chooses not to take the full twelve months at the time of their pregnancy they will not be able to take the remaining period at a later date.

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 in the subsequent year at the stage at which they left it. This is to ensure that all elements of the training are successfully completed in advance of their doctoral study. This would normally require the six months' paid maternity leave to be automatically followed by a six-month period of unpaid leave.

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 by the DTC. It is the responsibility of the DTC to amend students' end dates on the SDF accordingly.

Where there are insufficient funds in the training grant to meet the costs of maternity leave, the Research Council will consider reimbursing any additional costs providing the DTC can demonstrate that it lacks the flexibility to meet the costs of maternity support and that it has no other contingency funding from concurrent training grants on which it could draw.

Where departments are in receipt of larger and successive DTGs, funding should be found from within the DTGs. Where approved, these extra costs should be claimed on the Final Expenditure Statement.

### **Paternity leave and adoption leave or shared parental leave**

A total of 10 days' paternity leave may be taken at any time during a partner's pregnancy or within three months following the birth. This period is regarded as additional leave of absence from studies and the award will not be extended. If the student needs to take any further time, this must be taken as a suspension to the award.

Partners may be entitled to up to 50 weeks of Shared Parental Leave; this may include paid and unpaid leave, depending on the individual circumstances, any paid leave should be at full stipend. There is no qualifying period for maternity, paternity, or shared parental leave.

Adoption leave has the same terms and conditions as maternity leave (please see above). 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.

### **Transfers**

A transfer will only be considered to an accredited pathway that is appropriate for the research project. If a student wishes to transfer to an 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 must be obtained **in advance** from the ESRC.

The DTG will not be amended to take account of the transfer of a student from one DTC to another or from one department to another within the DTC. Transfers may be arranged where they are essential to the student's training (eg when a supervisor is moving and there is no alternative supervision available from within the DTC), and there should be agreement regarding the transfer between the DTCs concerned.

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 and DTC to which they intend to transfer
- A statement from the original DTC relinquishing the studentship and confirming that alternative supervision is not available from across the DTC
- A statement from the new DTC 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. 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 DTC annual report.

### **Permanent 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 DTC on its own merits. The ESRC recommends

that, where possible, changes of mode of study should take effect from the beginning of a quarter (ie 1 October, 1 January, 1 April, or 1 July) as this makes the calculation, payment and reconciliation of students' funding more straightforward.

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 ie illness or students returning from maternity leave (any such exceptions must have prior approval from ESRC)
- 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 dependant requires more of the award holder's time, or where the award holder has taken up part-time employment
- 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 DTC/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.

DTCs should calculate the remaining length of the studentship on the basis of funding already received and the student's time commitment (minimum 50 per cent 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 by the DTC, 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 student has changed from part-time to full-time status, the student's submission due date should be set to 24 months after the end of the studentship. DTCs 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 DTC annual report.

### **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 DTC 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 eg 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 part-time to full-time status, the student's submission due date should be set to 24 months after the end of the studentship. DTCs 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 DTC annual report.

### **Regular monitoring of academic performance**

It is the responsibility of the DTC to ensure that students' progress and to withdraw funds where necessary. In their applications for accreditation, DTCs 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. DTCs 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.

DTCs have a responsibility to withdraw funding in such circumstances and to reclaim any overpaid maintenance grant or allowances. DTCs do not have to confirm satisfactory progress to the ESRC on a regular basis but should report on student terminations within the SDF and DTC 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 each DTC has been allocated a minimum number of studentships to be funded annually, no studentships should be held open to allow a student to defer for 12 months. If a student wishes to defer for 12 months, 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**

DTCs 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.

DTCs can, exceptionally, agree to a short period of continued funding 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 full-time 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 to the DTC 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 DTC. All reclaimed monies must be returned to the training grant.

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 DTC to consider suspension requests and to update the SDF accordingly.

Please note that suspension 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 cannot be considered. In those instances, the DTC must submit a submission date extension request to ESRC for approval.

The DTC 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 CASE 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), suspensions should be for 12 months to allow the student to re-join the course at the same point at which they left it.

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 DTC 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 DTC.

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**

If a student is prevented from working by illness for a continuous period of more than two weeks they must inform their supervisor immediately and send in a medical certificate (regardless as to whether or not the student is suspending studies).

They should also inform their supervisor if they suffer frequent short absences for medical or other reasons that are likely to lead to a considerable delay in their programme of study. This is particularly important if they are a research student, as periods of leave notified in this way can be taken into account when calculating their thesis submission date.

If a student has a condition that can lead to prolonged periods of sick leave then a suspension should be considered. If it is a case of short but regular absences, ESRC would encourage the institution to consider transferring the studentship to part-time or to ensure that, through the monitoring and review processes already in place, the student's PhD programme is adapted to ensure it remains achievable within the funded period.

Doctoral students - Award payments can continue during absences covered by medical certificates for up to 13 weeks, within any 12-month period. However, the total paid period

of an award, including payment during sickness, must not exceed the original offer length of funding.

If the illness lasts, or is expected to last, for more than 13 weeks, the student and RO should make arrangements to suspend the studentship following the guidance above.

Abeyances on account of illness must not normally be approved for periods in excess of 12 months. In cases where a student is confidently expected to resume study within the current academic term, a degree of discretion can be exercised.

1+3 students (and equivalent structures) - please note that the 13 weeks' paid sick leave rule would not normally apply to students in their research training year (Master's). 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.

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**

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 DTC. 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 DTC to ensure that any changes to a student's project are amended on the SDF within one month of the agreed change.

### **Change to supervision**

The Head of Department, School or Faculty will have appointed an appropriate member or members of DTC 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.

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. DTCs 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 (2009)

(<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-policy/dtc-network/ptguidelines.aspx>) and this document.

It is the responsibility of the DTC 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**

ESRC will not inform students of any changes to their submission date resulting from suspensions or extensions, as this will be the responsibility of DTCs. When the DTC alters a submission date on the SDF, they will have to add a reason for the change which will be monitored as part of the submission rate survey.

DTCs cannot approve extensions to submission dates that are not associated with changes to the funding end date. All requests for submission date extensions not associated with changes to the funding end date must be referred to ESRC.

All full-time students funded through the DTC 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 writing their thesis whilst also undertaking full-time employment.

Where a student submits their thesis within the 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 DTC.

Extensions to the submission date cannot be considered in retrospect. Where a student becomes pregnant or experiences problems relating to accident, illness, or exceptional personal circumstances during the course of their study, the ESRC will consider a case for extending their submission deadline. Any request for an extension to the submission date due to illness/pregnancy cannot be considered unless the appropriate medical evidence has been provided to the ESRC. 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.

### **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; the nominated contact will then contact the ESRC for approval. 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. If approved, ESRC will instruct the RO to update the SDF accordingly.

### **First destination data**

ESRC also requires ROs to provide data on the first employment destinations of all ESRC-funded students. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects destination data on behalf of all the Research Councils and ROs should ensure that they complete the Research Council funding fields accurately. Please note that all DTCs will also be required to provide some first destination data for their students as part of the DTC annual report.

## **Publication of results/thesis abstracts**

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

If a decision is made to publish any part of a student's work, as an ESRC-funded postgraduate student, this must include an acknowledgement of ESRC financial support. Following discussions between the Research Information Network, Research Councils, other funders and journal publishers, a standard format has been agreed for acknowledging funders in journal articles. This is to enable improved tracking of the publications generated by funded research projects.

For articles published in journals, or deposited in institutional or subject-based repositories, acknowledgement of funding should take the form of a sentence as in the following example, with the funding agency written out in full, followed by the grant number in square brackets:

This work was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council [grant number xxxx].

Multiple grant numbers should be separated by comma and space. Where the research was supported by more than one agency, the different agencies should be separated by a semi-colon, with 'and' before the final funder. For example:

This work was supported by the Wellcome Trust [grant numbers xxxx, yyyy]; the Natural Environment Research Council [grant number zzzz]; and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council [grant number aaaa].

Students are advised to refer to the ESRC Research Data Policy (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/data-policy.aspx>) 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 <http://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/deposit-data.aspx>.

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 (<http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/manage-data.aspx>).

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

## **Ethics**

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 therefore attaches considerable importance to the maintenance of high ethical standards in the training it supports as well as in the development, conduct and reporting of the research undertaken.

It is the responsibility of DTCs to ensure that appropriate ethical mechanisms are in place. The ESRC has its own Framework for Research Ethics (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/researchethics>) which should be consulted by DTCs. DTCs should ensure that proper consideration has been given to any ethical issues that the research project may raise.

Should any ethical considerations arise in the design or conduct of any proposed postgraduate study, the student and their supervisor(s) should address these explicitly. Full consideration should be given to such ethical implications drawing on any ethical standards which are appropriate to their discipline. In particular, students should ensure that:

- they are aware of any published material on research ethics relevant to their discipline or field of study, such as guidelines published by learned societies
- potential ethical issues are identified and built in to the design of the research at an early stage
- they are open and honest about the aims, methods and intended use of results from their postgraduate studies
- confidentiality of data on individuals is maintained within the limits of the law.

It is the ESRC's policy that potentially valuable results or products arising from ESRC-funded research and postgraduate training should, where practicable, be exploited for the benefit of the UK economy, the quality of life of the nation, the institution, the award holder and the UK social science community. This policy applies to all forms of results or products, regardless of the nature of the intellectual property rights involved.

Whilst the ESRC does not retain any rights for itself from the exploitation of the results or products of the work of the students it supports, it wishes to ensure that students and ROs are able to benefit from the exploitation of such results or products. In particular, award holders should not enter into any agreement, whether implicitly or explicitly, giving any other person or organisation the right to suppress results or products of work which has been funded by the ESRC. Supervisors and students involved in collaborative arrangements with external organisations, such as CASE studentships, need to be fully aware of their position; unwary students have sometimes been prevented from publishing their thesis. University Registrars or Industrial Liaison Officers should be able to offer advice to students.

If any postgraduate training is likely to produce results or products that might be commercially exploited, it is important to ensure that any potential benefits can be realised. DTCs should have an established procedure for dealing with Intellectual Property Rights. Further information on commercial exploitation can be found in the ESRC Research Funding Guide (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/RFG>) which is available from university Registrars or Finance Officers, or from the ESRC website.

It is a requirement of the student to ensure that the information they provide is accurate.

The ESRC may, from time to time, provide information on ESRC-funded students to third parties on a discretionary basis. This will be primarily for the purpose of providing students with information relating to research training, research funding or employment opportunities.

### **Scholarships and research work**

Students must inform their DTC 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**

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.

The ESRC is supportive of its students undertaking demonstration, teaching and other duties in their department, where these do not interfere with the progress of their research degrees. However, Research Council stipends are training awards and do not cover remuneration for duties which would reasonably be considered to constitute employment. Where Research Council students undertake demonstration or teaching, or other types of employment in an RO, they should be paid for this in addition to receiving the minimum ESRC stipend.

Further to this, demonstrating, teaching, or other types of employment should not be a compulsory element of research training, and DTCs 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
- research students should be given information about their entitlements and responsibilities in undertaking a postgraduate research programme at the outset of their studies.

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.

Full-time ESRC studentship award holders cannot hold either a full-time job, or a permanent part-time job, during the period of their award. Part-time ESRC studentship award holders cannot hold a full-time job.

If a part-time 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**

Full-time students are allowed up to eight weeks' holiday (including public holidays) each academic year as approved by their supervisor.

If a studentship covers a period of less than 12 months in any academic year, a student's holiday entitlement will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

### **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 DTC'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 DTC then they must address their appeal to the DTC itself.

### **Complaints**

The Research Councils adopted a harmonised complaints policy with effect from 1 April 2015, further information can be found here:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/Complaints.aspx>.

## Section 5: Other expectations of Doctoral Training Centres

### Collaboration

The Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines (2009) (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-policy/dtc-network/ptguidelines.aspx>) emphasise the importance of collaboration with public, private, and civil-society sector organisations. The ESRC therefore encourages DTCs to support collaborative awards using their Doctoral Training Grant (DTG). The expectation is that 20 per cent of each DTC's allocation will involve some form of collaboration with other public, private or civil-society organisations.

The ESRC is not prescriptive about the type of collaboration, but rather asks DTCs 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 20 per cent target collaborations do not need to be co-funded, 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 (eg data collection)

Whilst co-funding is not a requirement of a collaborative award, 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.

### Strategic steer

As outlined in the ESRC Delivery Plan (published December 2010), the ESRC is aiming to build capacity in the following disciplines: Economics, Management and Business Studies, Language-based Area Studies, and interdisciplinary research. As a result, some DTCs have been required to steer a minimum number of their allocation into one or more of these disciplines (DTCs were informed of this when they received confirmation of their accredited status). The number of students undertaking studentships in these areas will be collected as part of the DTC annual report.

The ESRC is also aiming to increase overall capacity in quantitative methods training across the network. A minimum benchmark of ten per cent has been set as the proportion of all studentships using advanced quantitative methods, spread across all disciplines. As a result, for certain DTCs we have explicitly steered studentships onto pathways with a strong quantitative methods focus. However, we would encourage all DTCs to recruit and train students in the use of advanced quantitative methods whenever possible. In particular we would like to encourage the exploitation of large quantitative datasets by doctoral students undertaking research in any DTC, such as those available through the Economic and Social Data Service.

Please note that the ESRC will provide funding for the enhanced Economics and AQM stipends for those DTCs which have received steers in either or both of these areas.

### National disciplinary benchmarks

The ESRC also remains committed to maintaining the overall health of the social science research base and has therefore established a set of minimum disciplinary benchmarks for the overall allocation of its studentships (see table below). There is no intention that each DTC should seek to replicate the distribution in its allocation processes and the emphasis should very much be on supporting the best students and marrying them up with the best training pathways. Nevertheless, the benchmarks do provide an important framework within which the DTCs will operate, and the ESRC will be monitoring the distribution of studentships through the DTC annual reporting process to maintain disciplinary balance across the network.

Discipline	ESRC disciplinary benchmarks (per cent)	Final quota numbers (per year)
Anthropology	5	30
Area Studies	6	36
Demography	2	12
Economic Social History	3	18
Economics	10	60
Education	7	48
Human Geography	8	48
Linguistics	2	12
Management and Business Studies	7	42
Planning	2	12
Politics and International Relations	5	30
Psychology	7	42
Science and Technology Studies	3	18
Social Policy	5	24
Social Work	3	18
Socio-Legal Studies	4	24
Sociology	8	48
Stats, Methods and Computing	3	18
Interdisciplinary	10	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>600</b>

### Monitoring and reporting

The ESRC will be looking to its network of DTCs to deliver against the original aims and objectives of the Postgraduate Training Framework (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/dtc-policy/dtc-network/index.aspx>) both individually and as a network. As a result all DTCs will be required to submit an Annual Report which will cover a number of areas such as the development of the DTC, collaboration, co-funding, and delivery against priority areas. The DTC will also be required to provide further information on the students funded. This is intended to be a light-touch report that will not ask for detailed information on the operation of the DTC.

The Training and Skills Committee is also aiming to visit each DTC over the course of the accreditation period in order to assess its progress against the ESRC's objectives.

## **Annex I: Residential guidelines**

### **Established UK residency**

The legal basis for defining residence eligibility for postgraduate training awards is set down in the *Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations 1997*<sup>1</sup>. Candidates for awards must have a relevant connection with the United Kingdom. A relevant connection may be established if:

- The candidate has been ordinarily resident in the UK for three years prior to the start of the studentship grant
- Has not been resident in the UK, during any part of that three-year period wholly or mainly for the purposes of full time education, **and**
- Has settled status in the UK within the meaning of the Immigration Act 1971 (ie is not subject to any restriction on the period for which he/she may stay).

**For purposes of residence requirements the UK includes the United Kingdom and Islands (ie the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).**

A relevant connection may be established for an **EU student** if the student has been ordinarily resident in the UK throughout the three-year period preceding the start of the course (including for full-time education).

British citizens are not subject to immigration control but only those other nationals who have been granted written permission to stay in the UK permanently are considered to have settled status.

It is important to note that residential eligibility is based on a physical presence in the UK. British citizenship in itself does not satisfy the residential eligibility requirement.

### **Temporary absence**

A UK citizen may have spent an extended period living outside the UK, either for study or employment. Most candidates in these circumstances will be able to show that they have maintained a relevant connection with their home country and therefore claim that the absence was temporary. 'Temporary' does not depend solely on the length of absence.

For the purposes of eligibility, a period of ordinary residence will not be treated as being interrupted by an absence which is caused by:

- the temporary absence abroad, for reasons of training or employment, of the candidate, the candidate's spouse or parents
- the temporary full-time education abroad of the candidate or spouse.

The applicant may be asked to provide copies of temporary contracts of employment and/or other documentary evidence to prove temporary absence.

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<sup>1</sup> *The education (Fees and Award) regulations 2007*. Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 779.

An expatriate, or the child of an expatriate, who may have been born in the UK or abroad, and appears to have returned to the UK for full-time education, is required to establish temporary absence. In order to be eligible, it must be shown that:

- the absence abroad was involuntary, and attempts were made to remedy the breach with the UK at the earliest opportunity
- there was no individual intention to sever links with the UK
- links have been maintained through visits and vacation work.

It should be noted that anyone who is resident in a country is normally subject to the residence and tax conditions of that country. A resident may or may not acquire other rights by virtue of living there, but birth or long-term residence does not automatically confer rights similar to those of the citizens of that country. If a candidate has opted for full citizenship of a country other than the UK, then the candidate will be ineligible.

### **Refugees and asylum seekers**

A candidate who has been granted full refugee status by the Home Office, or is the child or spouse of a refugee, has settled status and is eligible on residence grounds, provided that he/she has not ceased to be resident since being granted asylum or refugee status. Such candidates must provide documentary evidence of their status, usually in the form of a letter from the Immigration and Nationality Department of the Home Office.

Candidates who are 'asylum seekers' are required to demonstrate settled status to be eligible.

### **Indefinite leave to remain**

Candidates who have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILTR) by the Home Office have been given the right to reside in the UK, and thus have settled status. ILTR is usually given to those who have already spent a period in the UK, and are looking to take up British citizenship. A candidate who holds ILTR must, nevertheless, establish a relevant connection as set out in the Introduction above. Documentary evidence will be required.

### **Exceptional leave to remain or exceptional leave to enter**

Candidates who have not been recognised by the Home Office as meeting the terms of the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees may be granted Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) or Exceptional Leave to Enter (ELE). The granting of ELR recognises that the current situation in the candidate's country of origin makes it impossible for him/her to return home. Thus, the holder of ELR may be allowed to settle in the UK if their home situation does not improve. Also, he/she is entitled to work in the UK and claim unemployment benefit and, after a certain period in residence, may be able to apply for ILTR, and subsequently British citizenship.

Candidates who have been granted ELR/ELE do not have the same entitlements as refugees. They will however, be eligible on residence grounds if they have spent the previous three years in the UK, not wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education.

### **Visas, work permits, etc**

Candidates who are resident in the UK on a student visa, work permit or dependant visa, or who have restrictions on the time they may stay in the UK and cannot demonstrate a relevant connection or settled status, will not be eligible on residence grounds.

### **Tuition-fees-only studentships for EU nationals to study in Great Britain**

Candidates from EU countries other than the UK are generally eligible (subject to their eligibility on grounds of academic qualifications) for awards restricted to the payment of tuition fees only; no maintenance award will be payable. In order to be eligible for a fees-only award, a candidate must be ordinarily resident in a member state of the EU, in the same way as UK candidates must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

Currently, the member states of the European Union (EU) are as follows:

Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Bulgaria, Denmark<sup>2</sup>, Finland, France<sup>3</sup>, Germany<sup>4</sup>, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands<sup>5</sup>, Portugal<sup>6</sup>, Romania, Spain<sup>7</sup>, Sweden, Cyprus, The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, The Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

Gibraltar is part of the EU, and students from Gibraltar are to be treated as other EU nationals.

The UK Dependent Territories are not part of the EU. The independent states of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and The Vatican are also not part of the European Union.

The implementation of the Switzerland Agreement means that permanent residence in Switzerland is no longer a bar to EU nationals being classed as 'EU Students'. Swiss nationals do not qualify to be considered as EU students.

### **Migrant workers (EU nationals)**

Articles 7 (2) and 12 of Council Regulations (EEC) No. 1612/68 allow for candidates who have established a relevant connection with the EU to be eligible for a full award (including maintenance) as 'migrant workers'. A migrant worker can be defined as an EU citizen who is employed in a member state of the EU who should be treated as a national of that member state. Similarly, a child or spouse of a migrant worker is also eligible to be treated in the same way. However, the following conditions must be met:

- The employment should be full-time and of significant duration. Therefore, a candidate engaged in part-time or short-term casual employment, or who has been effectively unemployed, cannot be considered to hold migrant-worker status. Additionally, the employment would be expected to be relevant to the candidate's previous or future course of study, although employment of a 'professional' nature will be considered on its merits.

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<sup>2</sup> Greenland and the Faroe Islands are not part of the EU

<sup>3</sup> The French Overseas Departments (DOMs) of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana, and Reunion are part of Metropolitan France, and the treaties apply. However, French Overseas Territories (TOMs) eg French Polynesia, are not part of the EU.

<sup>4</sup> Heligoland, although a tax free port, is part of the EU.

<sup>5</sup> The Netherlands Antilles are not part of the EU.

<sup>6</sup> Madeira and The Azores are part of the EU under special terms. Macao is not part of the EU.

<sup>7</sup> The Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla are all part of the EU.

- The employment should not be ancillary, ie taken up with a view towards engaging in subsequent studies, or subject to the candidate being accepted for the training for which he/she is to be nominated. An example of this would be a candidate who has been employed as a Research Assistant in an RO department where a future award is to be held.
- With regard to the children of migrant workers, it must be shown that the candidate's residence is as a consequence of the parent's past or present employment. A child who has not been resident in the UK during their parent's employment, or who departed with their parent at the cessation of that employment, will not be eligible to claim migrant-worker status.

### **Candidates from European Economic Area (EEA) member states**

The arrangements for migrant workers are also extended to candidates who are nationals of the EEA member states of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Where such candidates meet the migrant worker requirements they will be eligible for full awards. However, as these countries are not member states of the EU, candidates will be ineligible for fees-only awards.

### **Residents of Northern Ireland**

If the applicant is usually resident in Northern Ireland and can meet the eligibility requirements in the same way as described for residence in Great Britain, they can be considered for a studentship if they intend to study in an accredited Doctoral Training Centre and on an accredited pathway.

If the applicant is usually resident in Northern Ireland or Great Britain and wishes to study in Northern Ireland, the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland is responsible for awarding postgraduate studentships. The address is:

Department for Employment & Learning  
 Adelaide House  
 39/49 Adelaide Street  
 Belfast  
 BT2 8FD  
 Telephone: 028 9025 7777  
 Website: [www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)

### **Opening up international eligibility**

The Research Councils have agreed a number of underlying principles in relation to the recruitment of non-UK-domiciled candidates to Research-Council-funded studentships. In light of this, ESRC has agreed to relax the rules around international eligibility in strategic areas, allowing fees and stipends to be paid for students from outside the UK. DTCs will be able to recruit overseas and EU students for full awards in Economics or Advanced Quantitative Methods without adhering to the current residential eligibility rules. Institutions will be required to waive the higher international fee rate for these students (ie fees can only be paid at the same rate as home students).

Please note that it is optional for DTCs to relax the rules around international eligibility which have been relaxed in order to help DTCs recruit full-award students in typically difficult disciplines. Where a DTC chooses not to open up international eligibility (this must be a DTC-wide decision), we do not expect the international fee to be waived.

### **Institutional role in checking of residential eligibility**

ROs will be primarily responsible and accountable for applying checks and making decisions, although the ESRC will undertake a sample check on an annual basis.

ESRC places full reliance on residential eligibility approval checks undertaken by the RO. 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.

If the circumstances around establishing eligibility are complex, the case may be referred to the ESRC for advice or a ruling. 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. Advice is obtainable from [tdbpolicy@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:tdbpolicy@esrc.ac.uk).

When submitting student details to the SDF, ROs are confirming that they have checked the eligibility of the student. ESRC will undertake dipstick checks annually to ensure this is being implemented in line with the guidance. ESRC reserves the right to stop payments to nominated students whom it considers to be ineligible; the final decision on a student's eligibility rests with ESRC.

## **Annex 2: 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**

- 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, adoptive or shared 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 per cent of full time

### **Changes to project details**

- Project Title

### **Changes to supervision**

- Edit Supervisors

## **Transfer of award**

- Add new Organisation
- Edit Supervisors

\* Please note that whilst DTCs can amend the expected submission dates where the funding end dates have been amended following a variation to an award, all submission-date-only extensions must be approved by the ESRC.

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 DTCs 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.

The ESRC requests that DTCs 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 DTCs need to be in full agreement of the transfer before information within the SDF is changed. Students can only transfer to an accredited pathway within a DTC. 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 DTCs require prior approval from the ESRC.

### **Status transfers in the final year**

ESRC will only consider transfers in the final year of funding in exceptional circumstances eg illness or students returning from maternity leave. If approved, ESRC will inform the DTC when to update the SDF.

### **Extensions for student placements/internships**

In the case of the ESRC's own internship scheme, students should apply to ESRC in response to the relevant call but via the central institution authorities. ESRC will authorise extensions and inform DTCs when to update the SDF.

### **Overseas Institutional Visits**

Students should apply to ESRC at least three months prior to the date of the intended visit. ESRC will authorise extensions and inform DTCs when to update the SDF.

**Extensions to thesis submission date**

Prior approval from the ESRC will be required for extensions to submission deadline dates. Requests should be made, via the nominated contact, two to three months before the submission deadline date. ESRC will still continue to conduct the annual submission rates survey to monitor institutional submission rates. The sanctions policy will remain unchanged.

## Annex 3: 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. DTCs 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 4: 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 and Professorial Fellowships. The specific guidance for the call will confirm whether associated studentships can be supported or not. We no longer fund associated students on proposals submitted to our response mode Research Grants open call.

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 an accredited Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) (see exceptions below)
- the student(s) are located in an ESRC-accredited DTC (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/index.aspx>) and are studying on an accredited pathway (see exceptions below).

### **Rules and regulations**

Up to three studentships can be applied for on any single application. The studentships must be embedded within a Doctoral Training Centre (DTC), be subject to the same terms and conditions as a standard DTC studentship, and the funds managed within the DTC's training grant. Before submitting an application that includes an associated studentship the applicant must obtain a letter of support from the DTC Director.

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 ring-fenced within the grant and paid alongside standard ESRC studentships. 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.

Whilst associated studentships can outlast the grant they are linked to, the majority (ie 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. The notional cost calculation should

include appropriate enhancements for students undertaking PhDs in Economics or using Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM). Additional costs will not be provided if enhanced stipends are not included in the original grant application.

Where an enhanced AQM stipend is included, the applicant must ensure that the studentship has been subject to the same procedure as the DTC has established for their own studentships to determine that the application meets the criteria of advanced quantitative methods. ESRC will be undertaking annual dipstick checks to ensure that those in receipt of the enhanced stipend are utilising advanced quantitative methods.

Support to meet provisions to aid students with requirements under the Disability Acts 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 per cent cost of the normal provision. The cost associated with the studentship(s) must be costed as part of the overall value of the application in the Other Staff section of the application. 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
- additional cost for the Advance Quantitative Methods (AQM) enhanced stipend; this should be costed into the original grant application
- additional cost for the Economics enhanced stipend (only available for applicants based within an economics department where the primary discipline is economics); this should be costed into the original grant application.

Stipends may only be paid to students who are normally UK residents or to EU students meeting standard ESRC eligibility requirements. Exceptions to this ruling can be made for students studying either Economics or AQM as the international eligibility rules have been relaxed. More information about this is available in Annex I.

### **Exceptions**

Under normal circumstances students must be studying within an accredited Doctoral Training Centre (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/dtc/index.aspx>) 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 Doctoral Training Centre 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.

### **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 DTCs 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 their sex, transexuality, race, nationality, religion, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or age. DTCs 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 2.

## **Annex 5: 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.

These studentships are monitored and evaluated by the ESRC's Policy and Resources Directorate, which is advised by the ESRC Training and Skills Committee whose members represent the social science research interests of ROs, government, business, and the third sector.

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.