Scottish Graduate School of Social Science – Doctoral Training Partnership

ESRC Funding and Payment Arrangements 2019/20

[Stipend, Fees, Research Training Support Grant, Overseas Fieldwork Support, Difficult Language Training Support, Overseas Institutional Visits & Student-led Internships]

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Stipend

ESRC funding for students’ tuition fees, maintenance stipend and research training support grant are sent from the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science - Doctoral Training Partnership (SGSSS-DTP) to the Scottish Universities which have ESRC-funded students. If you are in receipt of a Full Award (fees plus maintenance) you will receive stipend payments from the University at which you are registered.

The standard stipend for full-time students in 2019/20 is £15,009.

It is important that you notify your HEI Admin Lead contact at your University of any changes in your banking details so that payments are not delayed. Any overpayment of maintenance stipend must be returned to your University upon notification from them.

Fees

Fees for full awards and fees only awards are transferred directly to the University at which you are registered.

Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)

All students are eligible for RTSG. RTSG should not be considered as a personal allocation for each individual ESRC funded student as the RTSG funding is pooled for flexible use across ESRC-funded
students from which funds are allocated on the basis of students needs and priorities. However, in general, students are entitled to £750 per year over the course of their studentship.

Students applying for RTSG can spend more than £750 in a given year, so long as the overall spend does not exceed the normal RTSG allowance of £2250 over a 3-year (£3000 for a 1+3) studentship award. Otherwise, SGSSS approval is required. You are advised to keep a record of how much you have claimed from RTSG funding.

Applications should be made in advance for a contribution towards funding for an activity to be covered by RTSG. The application form should be completed on GradHub and will be approved by the HEI Admin Lead at your home institution on GradHub. SGSSS approval will only be sought where a student wishes to apply for more than the normal RTSG allowance. Applications which are over £200 must be supported by a full case from the student's supervisor and should be reflected in the Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

Expenses are claimed via your home institution and you should via the relevant GradHub form on this page. You will need to provide receipts for all items you are claiming. You can claim on RTSG until you submit your thesis.

The RTSG is intended to be used to pay for expenses which you, your supervisor or department deem to be in direct support of your research. Examples are:

- 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 e.g. printing, stationery, telephone calls
- Purchase of small items of equipment e.g. cameras, tape recorders, films, cassettes
- Gifts for local informants
- Books and other reading material not available through libraries

RTSG funds can also be combined with the funds provided for overseas fieldwork.

If you are unsure as to whether you may claim for a particular item, please contact your HEI Admin Lead at your home University.

If we are unable to fully fund an overseas fieldwork trip, you may use your RTSG to supplement the costs associated with overseas fieldwork. This is entirely at your discretion.

Please note that the SGSSS - DTP regards it as the responsibility of your institution to provide you with computing facilities. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider requests from award holders to purchase laptop or other computer equipment from this allowance. Any such request must be clearly and adequately justified based on the nature of the research being undertaken and as being essential for the successful completion of the PhD. In these instances, any equipment purchased in excess of £200 will remain the property of the SGSSS-DTP following completion of the award.
Claiming SGSSS events with RTSG funding

You should also use the RTSG funding stream to attend SGSSS events such as advanced training workshops and our Summer School. Any funds used towards SGSSS events will not count toward your £750 RTSG allocation.

For SGSSS events, it is acceptable to claim after the event. Claims more than 3 months old will not be reimbursed and all claims should be made in line with the SGSSS travel expenses policy.

Overseas Field Work Support (OFW)

SGSSS-DTP receives an annual amount from ESRC towards the costs of Overseas Fieldwork visits made by doctoral students. This applies to Pathway Studentships, Advanced Quantitative Methods Studentships and Collaborative Studentships.

Only full-time PhD students undertaking the +3 element of their award are eligible for this allowance. It cannot be applied for by Masters’ students (including those in the 1 of a 1+3 and the first stage of a 2+2 award). Part-time students can become eligible for an overseas fieldwork grant if they transfer for a fixed period to a full-time status for the duration of the fieldwork.

Full-time ESRC studentship award holders undertaking the +3 element of their award may be able to make one claim for Overseas Fieldwork Expenses in the life of the award (funding cannot be provided for students in their writing-up year).

The Overseas Fieldwork visit must have been outlined in the original proposal, or at the end of the first year of the 1+3 award.

The purpose of the visit should be to carry out fieldwork that is essential to the successful completion of a student’s thesis and be an integral part of the PhD. Applications will only be considered where the supervisor’s case for support provides evidence that the Overseas Fieldwork Visit is essential to a student’s research.

The Overseas Fieldwork application is for a contribution towards the cost of an overseas fieldwork visit. As there are limited funds available, not all costs will necessarily be met. The allocation of funds is at the DTP’s discretion - typically for fieldwork up to 3 months. Students may use their Research Training Support Grant to supplement the costs associated with overseas fieldwork, entirely at the student’s own discretion. Standard allowable expenses are as follows:

- Airfares: The expectation is that students travel economy, try to use low-cost airlines where possible, and book well in advance. In order to avoid problems with monitoring airfare costs and the possibility of overpriced quotes, students should as a matter of course accompany their request with a print-out/screenshot of possible airfares for a given itinerary and dates from established websites (Opodo, Expedia, etc.). The expectation is that students travel to and from the field only once.
Internal travel: The expectation is that students use public transport. In cases of particularly remote settings where there are no practicable public transport options, a separate case will have to be made for alternative arrangements.

Related travel and health expenses: Visas, research permits, inoculations and insurance will be covered. Students should check with their own University first for insurance as University policies cover student travel.

Accommodation: The normal expectation for fieldwork periods between 6-12 months is that students move out of their UK address to cover overseas accommodation with their stipend (students with families who remain in the UK will not be penalised). Students to look for the most economic accommodation and evidence of this is demonstrated.

Subsistence: The expectation is that students cover these expenses with their stipend. Requests for partial support in cases where the cost of living is significantly higher than in the UK will be considered.

Research assistance: These expenses (e.g. translation and transcription) should be met more appropriately through other sources e.g. RTSG.

Communications and equipment: Students may need to buy a mobile phone sim card for the country they are visiting, but we can’t cover phone calls and internet access, etc.

If a student’s application for a contribution towards an Overseas Fieldwork Visit is successful, a student may not change the dates or details of the Overseas Fieldwork Visit without first informing the nominated contact at the relevant institution where the student is registered.

Students may include visits to more than one country on their one application. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that appropriate visas are obtained. Applicants should consult the Foreign & Commonwealth Office guidance relating to their intended destination. If the FCO advises against visiting the country concerned, payment of any contribution towards the fieldwork costs will not be authorised. All students must comply with their University’s policy on Health & Safety in fieldwork and undertake appropriate risk assessments. A Health & Safety risk assessment will be undertaken with your Supervisor prior to applying.

The duration of an Overseas Fieldwork Visit should not exceed twelve months.

It is strongly recommended that students take out insurance to cover their period of fieldwork and should check with their University’s insurance office in the first instance. If for any reason the Overseas Fieldwork Visit is cut short or cancelled, the nominated contact at the relevant institution where the student is registered must be informed immediately. The University may demand a refund less any reasonable expenditure already incurred.

Students must comply with their University’s auditing processes and provide receipts as required – your HEI Admin Lead will be able to provide advice on this. Receipts must be provided on return from the Overseas Fieldwork Visit – if the costs are found to be less than the contribution provided, a repayment will be required. Where costs are incurred in advance, receipts must be provided before all funding can be released. If there is any residual funding left in the grant after allocation, then award holders may be entitled to receive a further contribution to their costs.

Applications should be made in advance for a contribution towards funding for an Overseas Fieldwork Visit. We have tri-annual deadlines in the academic year – 18th October 2019, 24th January 2019, and
17th April 2020. The application form should be completed on GradHub and will be approved by the HEI Admin Lead at your home institution on GradHub before it is assessed by SGSSS. Applications must be supported by a full case from the student’s supervisor. Applications will be assessed by the DTP Directorate after which students will be informed of the result of their application via GradHub. The SGSSS-DTP would normally expect to communicate funding decisions within 3 weeks of application.

When assessing applications, the SGSSS Directorate offer the following guidance:

1) They will monitor the number of applications but prioritise those where OFW was highlighted in the original research proposal.
2) Students and their supervisors must take responsibility for submitting applications that are based on reasonable and accurate costings including appropriate justification of costs. There has been considerable variability in supporting statements provided by supervisors – those with more attention to detail are most helpful in assessing applications.
3) Any variations from original plans in the research proposal should be explained in the application.
4) Difficult Language Training should be undertaken within Scotland wherever possible rather than in the field. Exceptions need to be fully explained and costed.
5) ESRC guidelines relating to fieldwork typically not exceeding one visit for no more than 12 months be taken as appropriate norm – and communication with supervisors be maintained via Skype or similar media, obviating the need for a return visit to HEIs during fieldwork.
6) The expectation is that students will work with their supervisors when drawing up applications and that supervisors will check for completeness. It is helpful to us when applications come in well ahead of planned start dates.
7) The Directorate will endeavour to be as transparent as possible in explaining its decisions.

Difficult Language Training (DLT)

The SGSSS-DTP will consider paying up to one year’s extra support if a student needs to acquire or develop a working ability with a difficult language in order to carry out fieldwork (including for the purposes of UK fieldwork) or other parts of their research; this is over and above the funded length of the studentship. Students should consult with their supervisor and HEI Admin Lead regarding any request for difficult language training. Students allocated a 2+3 award that incorporates language training cannot apply for a further extension.

ESRC students are eligible to apply for this allowance if they are:
- In the doctoral (+3) phase of their award, and
- The proposed language training was outlined in the original research application. Exceptions to this regulation will be considered on individual merit.

Students in the Masters element of their award are not eligible to apply for a Difficult Language Training extension.

The length of the extension is determined by the type and nature of the language to be learnt, combined with the student’s own background. Extensions beyond six months are only normally
allowed if the student needs to spend an extended period overseas in order to obtain these language skills. Please consult the ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide for details on how to calculate the length of your Difficult Language Training extension.

Language training may take place in the field and in the UK. If language training takes place while a student is on overseas fieldwork, an application for Overseas Fieldwork expenses will also need to be submitted. Whilst there are often clear advantages to in-country training, options for receiving language training within the UK should be fully considered in the first instance.

Students who have followed a pre-described Masters course are expected to have already made some degree of language progress and may therefore only apply for a maximum extension of six months.

Retrospective claims will not be accepted, including where an extension has been further lengthened once training has begun.

Students must comply with their University’s auditing processes and provide receipts as required – your HEI Admin Lead will be able to provide advice on this. Receipts for Difficult Language Training expenses must be provided – if the costs are found to be less than the contribution provided, a repayment will be required. Where costs are incurred in advance, receipts must be provided before all funding can be released.

How to apply

1) The student and their supervisor should complete the SGSSS-DTP Difficult Language Training Application Form on GradHub. This should contain sufficient detail to show that their home institution agrees with the need for difficult language training and should be reflected in the Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

2) The application should be made within 6 months of commencing the PhD programme.

3) We have tri-annual deadlines in the academic year – 18th October 2019, 24th January 2019, and 17th April 2020. The application form should be completed on GradHub and will be approved by the HEI Admin Lead at your home institution on GradHub before it is assessed by SGSSS. Applications must be supported by a full case from the student’s supervisor. Applications will be assessed by the DTP Directorate after which students will be informed of the result of their application via GradHub. The SGSSS-DTP would normally expect to communicate funding decisions within 3 weeks of application.

4) Applications will be assessed by the DTP Directorate after which students will be informed of the result of their application via their own HEI DTP Administrator. The SGSSS-DTP would normally expect to communicate funding decisions within 1 month of application.

Note: A Difficult Language Training funding extension will require institutional approval for an equivalent extension to the PhD registration period.

Overseas Institutional Visits (OIV)

The overarching purpose of the OIV scheme is to support and encourage the international engagement of ESRC funded students. SGSSS wishes to encourage students to spend a period of time
abroad to undertake activities and take advantage of opportunities that would not be available in their home institutions. The aim of the visit is three-fold: 1. To support timely completion, 2. To enhance employability post-PhD and 3. To reflect on impact potential of the project.

Use your TNA and the VITAE framework to underpin the rationale for your proposed trip. Please note: Syllabus development is not included in the purpose of the award. Seminar and conference attendance can be funded from the RTSG fund.

The SGSSS scheme funds an extension to the studentship (aka stipend extension) of up to four weeks, plus travel, subsistence costs and visas. The maximum grant that can be awarded from this scheme is £4,000, including the 4 week stipend extension (2019/2020 £1,250).

The award should be used to provide financial support and time for students to undertake two or more of activities. Examples of appropriate activities:

• draft a peer-reviewed publication
• undertake additional specialist research training not available in the UK
• establish research links that will be beneficial to their current or future academic career
• disseminate early research findings and interpretation with experts
• attend and participate in expert seminars where directly relevant to the student’s research.

When considering whether to apply to the OIV scheme you should take the following into consideration:

• There are two deadlines per year.
• Only one application per student for the duration of their studentship.
• Applications must be student-led. The applications should also include a supervisor statement and a statement from the overseas host institution.

• Visits must be closely related to the completion of the student’s PhD and should not commence within the first three months of the studentship period. Visits taking place in the final year of the studentship must be completed at least three months before the end date of the award and prior to the extension period being implemented.

• Applications must be from ‘research’ award holders in the +3 component of their studentship. Students in the initial ‘training’ year of a 1+3 award are not eligible.

• The purpose of the visits funded must not be for overseas fieldwork as this is supported through other mechanisms.

• A longer trip of up to 3 months can be scheduled if a case can be made that a longer visit is absolutely necessary to writing up and will not interfere with timely completion. If considering a longer
visit (using other funds) you should ensure that supervision will continue throughout the length of the trip and provide details accordingly. You and your supervisor must satisfy us that you have a watertight supervision strategy. In all cases, the stipend extension available is for **one month only**.

- 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

- This is a competitive process. Evaluation of applications will take place against the criteria set for the scheme. Evaluation criteria will include: 1. Rationale for the visit against the remit of the scheme as detailed above, 2. Detailed work programme, 3. Feasibility of the work programme in a 4-week period, 4. the ability of the work programme to deliver value-added to the studentship, 5. Appropriate costings, 6. The quality of the supervisor’s supporting statement, including the rationale and anticipated outcomes for the visit and a statement about supervision, especially if the visit were to exceed 4 weeks (see point above). 7. The quality of the host supervisor’s statement, including details about the work programme (e.g. writing collaborations, networking, involvement in training, etc...) and practical support given. 8. Any risks to timely and successful completion.

Our decision will be final and will not be revisited.

We wish to ensure that the OIV fund is accessible to as wide a range of ESRC funded students as possible in line with our policy on Diversity and Equality. We would encourage all supervisors to draw all their ESRC funded students’ attention to the scheme. We will aim to make six awards per year.

**What we will not fund:**

- Registration fees at host institution

- Travel insurance (unless not provided by the applicant’s institution)

- Mobile phones or sim cards

- Clothing

**FAQs**

**Can I stay for longer than 4 weeks?**

Yes, but we will only cover a 4 week-stipend extension. If you want to stay longer than 4 weeks, you must ensure that the extended stay does not interfere with normal PhD activities and your ability to complete in good time. So make sure that during the 4 weeks of your stipend extension you schedule work and activities that will really give added value to your student experience and help with completion. It is obviously perfectly acceptable to schedule a holiday at the end of your trip but you would have to bear the costs associated with this and the time off would be part of your holiday entitlement.
Can I apply for funds from elsewhere?

Yes. You could apply elsewhere for additional funds if your total costs are likely to exceed the maximum amount awarded by SGSSS (approximately £2500 plus 4 week stipend extension).

Can I take my partner and children with me?

Yes, but you will have to find funds for them. However if you travel with your children on your own, do contact us to discuss childcare arrangements.

Can I attend a conference while I am visiting my host institution?

Yes but under the terms of the scheme you would need to apply to RTSG to fund attendance at a discipline-based event (registration, additional accommodation and additional local travel). However if the event is a gathering of experts to which your PhD topic directly relates (e.g. a workshop on your topic, a consensus conference) then you may use this as one of your OIV activities. Outline clearly in your application why your participation is necessary.

For further information contact your nominated HEI Admin Lead. (Full list available from the SGSSS Website). The ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide also provides information on the studentship funding and training funds at [https://esrc.ukri.org/files/skills-and-careers/studentships/postgraduate-funding-guide/](https://esrc.ukri.org/files/skills-and-careers/studentships/postgraduate-funding-guide/)

How to apply

The application form and supporting statements should be completed on GradHub and will be approved by the HEI Admin Lead at your home institution on GradHub before it is assessed by SGSSS. Applications must be supported by a full case from the student’s supervisor. Applications will be assessed by the DTP Directorate after which students will be informed of the result of their application via GradHub. The SGSSS-DTP would normally expect to communicate funding decisions within 3 weeks of application. Deadlines for 2019/2020 are 18th October 2019 and 17th April, 2020. The maximum grant that can be awarded from this scheme is £4,000, including the 4 week- stipend extension (2019/2020 £1,250).

Applicants must allow at least three months between the deadline and commencing the visit (e.g. if your application was received on 31 January, the earliest you would be able to commence your visit would be 1 May).

The SGSSS-DTP will aim to process and send applications to assessors within five working days of the deadline. The SGSSS-DTP will normally communicate funding decisions to nominated HEI Admin Leads within three weeks of the deadline.

How to complete the application form

Each OIV application will be considered on its own merits by a panel of academics. Please refer to the application form for details of what is required in each section.

Student-led Internships
The SGSSS-DTP invites ESRC-funded students in their second or third year (and with more than 6 months left of their funding) to apply for funding for a three-month PhD Internship with a non-academic partner organisation.

The objectives of the SGSSS Student-led Internship Scheme are:

- Initiate collaborations or enhance existing relationships between academic and business or industry partners leading to longer-term self-sustaining activities;
- Provide opportunities to enhance understanding in the public, private or third sector of what social science research can offer;
- Enhance employability through the development transferable skills for our researchers, whilst providing tangible value to a host organisation.

**Key qualifying criteria**

Projects must be of clear benefit to the host, helping to meet organisational objectives, and must be achievable within the allotted time frame. In addition:

- Students must be funded by the ESRC through SGSSS;
- Current students must be in their second or third year with more than six months left of their funded period, and registered at a Scottish institution.
- Applicants must be eligible to work in the UK.

**What types of opportunities will we support?**

- A SGSSS internship should be a challenging role with clearly defined task(s). This could be one large project, e.g. the production of a report; or a series of smaller tasks contributing to a larger outcome.
- We are looking for projects where interns can use their research skills in new contexts. Some interns will be using this as a way of determining whether or not they want to pursue a career in a particular sector and/or profession, so they will want to gain a sense of how the organisation works more broadly, as well as in their own area. We suggest that an element of shadowing at a strategic level could be a useful part of an internship.
- The sorts of projects that we are looking for are:
  - Work that offers a genuine ‘something extra’ that has a medium- to long-term benefit for the host organisation rather than simply a short term ‘extra pair of hands’;
  - A project which gives the PhD intern ownership/responsibility for some aspects of their work, and potentially the opportunity to present it or explain it to others;
  - The chance to work with a range of people, providing the opportunity to network and build relationships with people at multiple levels in your organisation and beyond.

**Funding and expenses**

ESRC students will continue to receive their full stipend during the internship and will receive a three month funded extension to their studentship. Additional expenses of up to £2,400 can also be claimed to support travel or relocation costs in order to undertake the internship. For further information about the types of expenses you can claim please see our [Internship FAQs](#).
Expected partner contribution

We expect a percentage cash contribution of between 10%-50% from the host partner organisation, which is based on sector and (for businesses) turnover. The full cost of a 3-month SGSSS internship is £5,500 (please note this does not represent the funding award made to the student, but what it costs SGSSS to run and administer the scheme).

- If the partner is a Private Sector organisation (e.g. registered as a company, partnership, or corporation, including Social Enterprises\(^1\)) then we expect a contribution of between 10% and 50% (based on company turnover) of the cost of an internship.
- If the partner is a Public Sector organisation\(^2\) then we expect a contribution of 33% of the cost of an internship.
- If the partner is a Third Sector organisation (e.g. charities, CIOs, trusts and foundations) then we expect a 10% contribution towards the cost of an internship.

The table below should be used as a guide while negotiating the internship with your potential host, so that they know what their minimum expected contribution will be for 3 months of your time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Turnover</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Total cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>&gt; £50M</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>£2,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; £50M</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>£1,815</td>
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<td>&lt; £10M</td>
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<td>&lt; £630K</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>£550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>£1,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Sector</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>£550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to apply

This is a rolling programme, so you can apply any time as long as you fit the eligibility criteria at the date of the start of the internship. Applicants must allow at least three months between submitting the form and the start of the internship (e.g. if your application was received on 31 January, the earliest you would be able to commence your internship would be 1 May).

Fill out the application form (download here) and submit through GradHub.

The SGSSS-DTP will aim to process applications and communicate decisions within three weeks of submission.

SGSSS-DTP
November 2019

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\(^1\) A Social Enterprise must be getting the majority of its revenue from trading rather than grants/donations to be considered Private Sector, otherwise it is third sector.

\(^2\) For more information on what constitutes a public body and to find a list of public bodies as provided by Scottish Government in 2016 please use the following link: [https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-public-bodies-directory/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-public-bodies-directory/)