

NERC STUDENTSHIP HANDBOOK

2008/2009

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The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Answers section has been removed from the handbook, but can be found on the website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/studentinfo/faqs/>

STUDENTSHIPS – 2008/2009

Edition 2008-1.0 Jan 2008

This handbook sets out the terms and conditions of the different types of studentships, which are administered by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). NERC will be glad to give any further information by letter, telephone or e-mail.

Studentships are awarded to university departments, research institutes or other approved institutions, which are referred throughout this document as Research Organisation.

All enquiries concerning NERC Studentships should be addressed to:

Training Awards Team
Natural Environment Research Council
Polaris House
North Star Avenue
Swindon SN2 1EU
Fax: 01793 411560

For up-to-date telephone and email contacts please refer to the NERC website at:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/contacts.asp>

Please Note: Studentships are not awarded directly by NERC to individual students. If you are seeking a studentship place with an award you should address enquiries about the specific availability of places or the content of research training to the Research Organisation in which you would like to do your research training.

Disclaimer

NERC reserves the right to change these regulations at any time without prior notification. The regulations governing all NERC studentships at any time are those in the most recent version of this handbook, available on the NERC website at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/studentships/>

Major changes to note from last year:

NERC is changing the way it funds studentships in preparation for the move of all studentship administration to the RCUK Shared Services Centre in 2009. All PhD funding will now be provided to departments in the form of Doctoral Training Grants (DTGs). A new **Section E** has been added to the handbook to explain how the NERC DTGs will operate and this should be read in conjunction with the Cross-Research Council DTG Terms and Conditions which are in **Section I**. NERC will continue to make direct stipend payments to those students starting in 2005, 2006 and 2007 and payment details for directly funded students is primarily in **Section D**. During this transition period, there will be some differences in procedure for directly-funded compared to DTG-funded studentships and a number of other sections have been revised to explain these different procedures.

NERC will require data on DTG-funded students to be submitted within a month of the student starting their studies, via the **Je-S Student Researcher Data Portal (SRDP)**. Further information on how to submit student details will be made available on the NERC web site. Future DTG payments may be stopped if appropriate details are not submitted to NERC.

NERC would expect all students funded through a DTG to receive a similar level of support for illness/maternity etc. as those funded directly by NERC (see section D). Due to the nature of some NERC DTGs which have funding for a single studentship, NERC may exceptionally agree to an extension of the end date and supplementation of the DTG for the purposes of maternity/sick leave. Where departments are in receipt of larger and successive DTGs, the standard DTG Terms and Conditions apply (see Section I).

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Section A – INTRODUCTION – TYPES OF AWARDS AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Purpose

1. The aim of the Natural Environment Research Council's (NERC) postgraduate training awards schemes is to provide the trained scientific manpower required to sustain environmental research and development in the science base and industry. NERC's postgraduate awards provide opportunities for early career researchers to continue their training beyond a first degree in all scientific areas set out in the NERC mission (<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/about/work/mission.asp>)
2. The research topic must be concerned with the scientific aspects of the natural environment, and must fall within the NERC remit. NERC wishes to encourage broad-based training including reference to economic and social factors in appropriate cases. It also, particularly wishes to encourage links with public or private sector partners where partners will play a part in the training of the student (see CASE studentships below). Topics with objectives, which are predominantly economic, social, medical or agricultural, should be referred to the appropriate research council, or a Government Department/Agency for support. The research topic must be well defined with 'researchable' questions or hypotheses and include appropriate methodology and a feasible plan of action that offers genuine scope for doctoral research and innovative science.

Types of Award and Application Procedures

3. Research (PhD) Studentships -These awards are normally made for a minimum period of three years, and enable postgraduate students to receive training in research methods and to undertake a programme of research in a specific scientific area under the guidance of one or more named supervisor. It is expected that the awards will lead to the submission of a thesis and the award of a PhD. There are four main types of NERC PhD Studentships, which are allocated through different mechanisms:
 - Algorithm/Quota Studentships – the majority of NERC PhD studentships (250 pa) are allocated to Research Organisations using an algorithm, more details of which can be found at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/schemes/algorithm.asp>.
 - Open CASE Studentships - The Open CASE scheme is aimed at promoting collaborations between HEI's and public and private sector partners. Any UK-based industrial organisation, business and commerce or institution within the public sector, that has research interests in NERC's remit, is eligible to co-operate with HEIs or NERC Research Centres in an Open CASE studentship. The scheme differs from standard CASE in that the impetus and initial requirement for the research should originate from the CASE partner. Also, CASE partner eligibility is restricted to UK based organisations (whereas an overseas organisation can be a CASE Partner for standard CASE). Open CASE studentships are awarded in a separate yearly competition and details are posted on the website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/schemes/case.asp>. Proposals should be submitted via the Je-S system as detailed on the website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/howtoapply.asp>.
 - Directed Studentships – PhD Studentships may also be awarded in defined research areas as part of some NERC directed programmes and cross-Research Council programmes. There may be single or multiple calls under a programme for suitable studentship projects. Calls will be announced on the NERC website. Proposals should be submitted via the Je-S system as detailed on the website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/howtoapply.asp>.
 - Project Studentships – A Research Grant may also include funding for one or more project students (previously called tied studentship). The student's research project will be closely associated with the work carried out in the grant, but in all other respects the department must make the same level of provision for training and supervision that would be expected for any other NERC research student. The award includes the maintenance grant and university/college fees paid at 100% FEC. All other costs should also be requested on the grant proposal and will be funded at 80% FEC. An application for a project studentship should be submitted with the research grant application (see the NERC Research Grant Handbook for closing dates). It is expected that the studentship award will start around the same time as the grant. Investigators at eligible Northern Ireland institutions may seek project studentships as part of a research grant proposal and such studentships will be awarded and funded by NERC rather than the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI).
4. CASE Studentships: To encourage research students to gain additional experience outside academia, any research studentship may be funded as Co-operative Awards in Science and Engineering (CASE studentships). CASE awards involve the joint supervision of the student by a member of staff of an academic institution and a scientist from industry, business, commerce or a public sector research institute.

Any industrial organisation or institution within the public sector that has research interests in NERC's remit is eligible to co-operate with Research Organisations in the standard CASE scheme. This includes private industry, the research organisations of the nationalised industries, public bodies such as regional water companies, county planning offices and government research institutes, and similar overseas bodies. Any studentship awarded through the algorithm may be taken up as a CASE award. A project or directed studentship may also be held as a CASE award.

5. Joint ESRC/NERC studentships – Around twenty new interdisciplinary research studentships are jointly-funded each year by the NERC and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The studentships are awarded in a separate competition and successful students are subject to the terms and conditions of ESRC studentships, which may vary slightly from those in this handbook. Full details can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/schemes/jointesrc.asp>.
6. Masters Studentships are awarded to postgraduate students taking courses recognised by NERC that lead to an MSc or Research Masters (MRes) qualification. These awards are generally for a maximum duration of one year. The awards provide graduates with opportunities to proceed directly into employment or to doctoral study. Masters studentships are not an automatic prerequisite for doctoral study. NERC currently reviews its support for masters courses every five years, when there is a call for proposals. Successful courses receive support for a number of studentships via a flexible Masters Training Grant (MTG).

Section B - STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (All Types of Award)

Introduction

7. The Research Organisation department is responsible for **selecting** an eligible student for any NERC studentship award. However, the Higher Education Institution (HEI) at which the student will be registered has sole responsibility for assessing and confirming student eligibility to hold a NERC award against the criteria detailed in this Section.
8. **Heads of Departments, prospective supervisors and potential students needing advice on eligibility should contact the Registrars Office in the first instance.** Where there is doubt about an individual's eligibility for a NERC studentship the Registrar should contact the NERC Training Awards Team. Whilst general advice can be given over the telephone, a formal decision will not be given without full written details of the candidate's academic qualifications and residency situation on the student eligibility form, available at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/studentships/>, along with a copy of their *Curriculum Vitae*.
9. The university are confirming that they have checked the eligibility of the student, when submitting the students details via Je-S. NERC reserves the right to exclude nominated students whom it considers to be ineligible and the final decision on a student's eligibility rests with NERC. **Where students are funded from Training Grants, NERC will monitor adherence to the eligibility requirements and may stop payments if the students receiving NERC funding are not eligible under these requirements.**

Residence

10. The legal basis for defining residence eligibility for postgraduate training awards is set down in the *Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations 1997*¹. The guidance below is based on the *Regulations* and on guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)^{2,3}. Candidates for awards must have a relevant connection with the United Kingdom. A relevant connection may be established if, at the date of nomination:
 - The candidate has been ordinarily resident in the UK throughout the 3-year period preceding the date of application for an award, **and**
 - Has not been resident in the UK, during any part of that 3-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 (i.e. is not subject to any restriction on the period for which he/she may stay).
11. A relevant connection may be established for an EU student if the candidate has been ordinarily resident in the UK throughout the 3-year period preceding the date of application for an award (including for full-time education).
12. 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 settled.

Temporary absence

13. A UK citizen may have spent an extended period living outside the UK, either for study or employment.
14. 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 the absence.
15. 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, by reasons of training or employment, of the candidate, the candidate's spouse or parents, or
 - The temporary full time education abroad of the candidate or spouse.

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¹ *The education (Fees and Award) regulations 1997*. Statutory Instrument 1997 No. 1972.

² *Guidance on Fees. The Education (Fees & Awards) Regulations 1997*. Department for Education and Employment 1998. ISBN 0 85522 771 0.

³ *Higher Education Student Support in England and Wales in 2001/02: Chapter 3 – Assessing Eligibility*.

16. 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, and
 - Links have been maintained or re-established through visits, vacation work and subsequent re-settlement in the UK.
17. 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 similar rights to citizens of that country. If a candidate has opted for full citizenship of a country other than the UK, then it should be assumed that the candidate will be ineligible.

Indefinite Leave to Remain

18. 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.

Refugees, Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave

19. 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. Refugees do not have to meet the requirement of three years' residence.
20. Candidates who are 'asylum seekers' are required to demonstrate settled status to be eligible.
21. 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 Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary leave. The granting of Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave circumstances make it impossible for him/her to return home at that time. Thus, the holder will normally be allowed to stay in the UK for three years. After this the award will be actively reviewed. Also, he/she is entitled to work in the UK and claim unemployment benefit and, after a certain period of residence, may be able to apply for ILTR, and subsequently British Citizenship.
22. Candidates who have been granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary leave 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

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

Fees-only Awards

24. 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 and no maintenance award. For new students starting from October 2006, NERC will also pay the Research Training Support Grant, conference attendance and costs for fieldwork and consumables. 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.
25. Currently, the member states of the Economic Union are as follows:
- Austria
 - Belgium
 - Bulgaria

- Denmark ⁴
- Finland
- France ⁵
- Germany ⁶
- Greece
- The Irish Republic (Eire)
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- The Netherlands ⁷
- Portugal ⁸
- Romania
- Spain ⁹
- Sweden
- Cyprus
- The Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Hungary
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Malta
- Poland
- The Slovak Republic
- Slovenia

26. Gibraltar is part of the EU, and students from Gibraltar are to be treated as other EU nationals.
27. The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not part of the EU (see below). The UK Dependent Territories are also not part of the EU. The independent states of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and The Vatican are not part of the European Union.
28. 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

29. Articles 7 (2) and Article 12 of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1612/68 allow for candidates who have established a relevant connection with a member state of the EU to be eligible for a full award to include maintenance, as ‘migrant workers’, in that member state. A migrant worker can be defined as an EU citizen that 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 should 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 should normally be expected to be relevant to the candidate’s previous or future course of study, although employment of a ‘professional’ nature should be considered on its merits.

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⁴ **Greenland** and the **Faroe Islands** are not part of the EU

⁵ 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) e.g. **French Polynesia**, are not part of the EU.

⁶ **Heligoland**, although a tax free port, is part of the EU.

⁷ The **Netherlands Antilles** are not part of the EU.

⁸ **Madeira** and **The Azores** are part of the EU under special terms. **Macao** is not part of the EU.

⁹ The **Balearic Islands**, the **Canary Islands**, **Ceuta** and **Melilla** are all part of the EU.

- The employment should not be considered to be ancillary i.e. taken up with a view towards engaging in subsequent studies (job and study are a package), 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 a Research Organisation department where a future award is to be held.
30. With regard to the children of migrant workers (Article 12), 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 the parent's employment, or departed with the parent at the cessation of that employment, will not be eligible to claim migrant worker status.

Candidates from European Economic Area (EEA) Member States

31. 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.

Northern Ireland

32. The Research Councils have the responsibility for making postgraduate awards to Northern Ireland domiciled students who wish to undertake postgraduate study at a higher education institution in Great Britain. Similarly, the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) is responsible for making awards to GB-domiciled students who wish to undertake postgraduate study at a university in Northern Ireland.
33. Candidates from Great Britain and Northern Ireland who wish to undertake postgraduate study at a Northern Ireland university should apply to DENI, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down, Northern Ireland, BT19 2PR for details of application procedures and closing dates.
34. However, Investigators at eligible Northern Ireland institutions may seek project studentships as part of a research grant proposal and such studentships will be awarded and funded by NERC rather than the DENI.

Channel Islands & Isle of Man

35. Students who are ordinarily resident in the Channel Islands are now eligible for a full award.
Students who are ordinarily resident in the Isle of Man should apply to their Education Authority viz:
a)The Isle of Man, Department of Education, Murray House, Mount Havelock, Douglas, IM1 2SG.
36. **NOTE:** A candidate from the Isle of Man will not have established eligibility for a NERC award through any period of residence in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland during which he or she has been in full-time education.

Academic Qualifications

37. Candidates must hold an honours degree in an appropriate branch of science or technology. For research studentships (PhD/MPhil) this should be a **first or upper second class honours degree**. For an advanced course studentship (MSc) or research masters (MRes) it should be a **first or second class honours degree**. NERC also accepts qualifications, or a combination of qualifications and experience, which demonstrate equivalent ability and attainment. A less than sufficient first degree may be enhanced to meet the requirements by the acquisition of:
- a) a Masters degree to enhance the first degree by one step, e.g. from 2(ii) to 2 (i) and/or
 - b) Substantial relevant postgraduate work experience, i.e. a minimum of two and a half years full time equivalent to enhance a degree by one step, five years equivalent to enhance by two steps. The postgraduate work experience must relate to the discipline of the first degree, a subsequent Masters degree or the intended area of postgraduate study.
38. NERC does not need to see copies of qualification certificates. **It is the responsibility of the registering institution to verify that candidates possess the relevant qualifications. They are also responsible for ensuring that qualifications obtained outside the UK are of an equivalent level to those quoted above.**

Previous Study

39. 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 Research Organisation are responsible for deciding whether further support for an individual would represent good investment of public funds, taking into account the individual circumstances and the other applicants for the limited NERC support.

Section C - TERMS AND CONDITIONS (All Types of Award)

General Conditions

40. Applications are accepted, and awards made, on the understanding that institutions, supervisors and students accept the terms and conditions set out in this Handbook and any amendments or additions that may be announced subsequently.
41. The Research Organisation where awards are held must provide students with all the services, facilities and materials necessary for their training, including an appropriate level of access to computing facilities. NERC does not, therefore, fund requests for purchase of equipment or the use of non-NERC services or facilities to support research training. Nor should students be expected to purchase personal computers to enable them to carry out their research training.
42. The Research Organisation where awards are held is responsible for day-to-day management of safety in the student's work area. The student's supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the work is subjected to risk assessment and that any required risk management is implemented and monitored. The student is responsible for following safety guidance and instruction issued by the Institution.
43. It is a condition of award that NERC accepts no liability for the manner in which the work connected with the award is undertaken. The recipient of an award is responsible in all respects for the work and its consequences.
44. NERC attaches great importance to the good supervision of students. **Any changes in supervision must be notified to NERC.** For directly funded students, via an e-mail to trainingawardsteam@nerc.ac.uk and for DTG funded students via the Je-S SRDP (see below for details).
45. NERC adopted an ethics policy in June 2005. This sets out guiding principles which provide the ethical framework that we aspire to in all aspects of our work. We expect those who receive funding from us to respect the policy. The policy and additional information can be found on the website at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/publications/corporate/ethics.asp>
46. Alternative methods and techniques should be investigated before it is decided to use animals in experiments. All pertinent regulations for the use of animals must be observed. The Research Organisation is responsible for ensuring that the establishment, research workers and experiment possess the appropriate Home Office licences plus any further permits, or authorisation, that are needed to conform to local bye-laws or other appropriate legislation. Supervisors may be asked by NERC to confirm possession of appropriate experiment licences before a student's research commences.

Data and Statistics

47. NERC will require data on DTG funded students to be submitted within a month of the student starting their studies, via the Je-S Student Researcher Data Portal (SRDP). Further information on how to submit student details will be made available on the NERC web site. Future DTG payments will be stopped if appropriate details are not submitted to NERC. For directly funded students, similar data was received via the nomination form.
48. All directly funded PhD students are required to register their official email addresses for NERC correspondence including details of awarded fieldwork and Annual Student Reports. These should be registered at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/students/> before the Studentship Starting Certificate is returned to NERC. 2007 students will be responsible for maintaining their contact details via their Je-S student account. E-mail addresses For DTG funded students will be collected via the Je-S SRDP and should be kept up to date.
49. NERC requests data annually from Research Organisations on the dates of thesis submission (for doctoral students), masters course completion and the award of a degree for each NERC-funded student. NERC also requires institutions to provide data on the first employment destinations of all NERC-funded students. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) on behalf of all the research councils now collects destination data and HEIs should ensure that they complete the research council funding fields accurately.

Submission of Thesis

50. NERC expects a research student to submit a thesis no later than four years after the start of the studentship. The **submission of a thesis is seen as an essential part of a research student's training** and as a means of ensuring that research work undertaken is made available to other scientists. To this end, NERC collects details of the number of students who submit their theses within four years. Submission rates are a consideration in the subsequent allocation of studentship awards to Research Organisations. NERC collects submission data (on directly-funded students) from Universities electronically on an annual basis.

Submission data for MTG- and DTG-funded students will be collected via the Je-S SRDP.

Review and Renewal of Awards- Annual Student Report (ASR) Forms

51. All directly funded NERC PhD students and their supervisors are required to complete an Annual Student's Report (ASR) form. In the first and second year forms, the supervisor must confirm that the studentship should continue into the following year. The ASR form relates to the year of study the student has completed and not the year they are currently in. Completion of the ASR forms will be done on-line. Students will be notified by email when the form is available for completion. Failure to complete the form will result in a consequent delay in the payment of the following quarter's maintenance grant. Guidance on completion of the ASR is given on the form itself. For those students funded through DTGs, NERC will receive updates via the Je-S SRDP.

Income Tax

52. Payments made as part of a NERC studentship are not regarded as income for income tax purposes. Students should note, however, 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

53. NERC will not make any payment for students' National Insurance contributions. Students should consider whether they wish to pay contributions as non-employed persons. They should consult their local office of the Department for Work and Pensions (formerly the Department of Social Security) about their position to determine the effect of non-payment of contributions on any future claims for benefit. Students may become liable for contributions in connection with any paid teaching or demonstrating which they undertake.

Section D - PAYMENTS (Directly funded PhD Studentships only)

54. A standard studentship award consists of:
- A maintenance award (stipend)
 - Additional allowances where applicable
 - University and any Oxford/Cambridge College fees
 - Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)
 - Assistance with fieldwork travel and subsistence expenses
 - Contribution towards exceptional consumables costs
 - Conference attendance allowance and funding to attend short courses
 - Six months additional funding (4th year funding)
55. An EU Student that is not eligible for a full award will receive their fees from NERC. For EU “fees only” students starting from October 2006, NERC will now pay other project-related costs (RTSG, fieldwork, conference allowance and exceptional consumables), but can not pay a maintenance award. NERC will also consider funding for disabled students allowance (see section F). The “fourth year” funding associated with “fees only” studentships does include a maintenance award payment.
56. Directly-funded project students receive a maintenance award, fees and additional allowances, where applicable. All other project-related costs should be requested as part of the grant application. From 2008, all the costs for project students will be funded on the grant.
57. Maintenance awards are paid quarterly in advance on 1 October, 1 January, 1 April and 1 July, directly into the student’s bank account via the BACS system. Students starting their awards before 1 October will receive a *pro rata* payment for the period from the start date to the beginning of the next quarter. For these students the new rates of maintenance grant will not apply before 1 October. Payment will not be made until the acceptance form and bank details are received from the Student.
58. The Starting Certificate should be signed by the student and Supervisor, Head of Department or Administration Authority and returned to the Training Awards Team at NERC as soon as the student has started. Failure to return the starting certificate could lead to delays in payment of the first fees instalment and the students January maintenance. 2007 students will be responsible for maintaining their contact details via their Je-S student account.
59. NERC must be given early notice of any change in students' circumstances (e.g. change of Research Organisation, prolonged absence or early end to the studentship) likely to affect their award. NERC will retrieve any overpayments and, if necessary, will take whatever legal steps are necessary to recover the funds.
60. Tuition fees, the RTSG, the conference attendance allowance, approved fieldwork and exceptional consumables funds and any Oxbridge college fees are paid directly to the Research Organisation in two instalments on 15 December and 15 May each year. **These payments are calculated automatically, and invoices are not required.**
61. For Research Centre studentships, the maintenance award will be paid directly to the student as normal. The tuition fees and any Oxbridge college fees will be paid to the university. All other payments (RTSG, conference attendance allowance, travel & subsistence and exceptional consumables) will be paid directly to the Research Centre. It is the responsibility of both the Research Centre and the university to agree any necessary transfer of support funds between one another. It is also the responsibility of the Research Centre to ensure that the appropriate training is provided, although the university is the most likely provider of formal generic skills training.

Maintenance Award

62. The annual rates of maintenance award for doctoral students in the academic year 2007/2008 are:
- Students registered at an Research Organisation in London: £14,600
 - Students registered outside London: £12,600.
 - In 2008/2009 these will increase to £14,940 and £12,940 respectively.
 - The latest Research Council approved minimum rates can be found at:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/postgradtrain.htm>

63. Studentships awarded through some programmes may receive a higher stipend. This will be advertised separately
64. For PhD students, starting from the 2004 academic year onwards, there is some new funding available to support students for an average of three and a half years. The "fourth year" funding is being given to departments and research centres to allocate as required via a fair, transparent mechanism. Students are not automatically entitled to extra funding. Further details can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/studentinfo/extendphds.asp>.
65. To qualify for London Allowance students must be studying within the Metropolitan Police District or be based at Imperial College, Silwood Park or Brunel for a minimum continuous period of 12 months.
66. CASE students receive an additional allowance of £350 pa. In circumstances where the student is registered at a Research Organisation outside London and the CASE partner is located within London, London weighting will be paid to the student if they are working with the CASE partner for a continuous period of at least 12 months.
67. Research students (except fees-only) will receive an additional payment of £500 during their third year. This includes a contribution to the cost of typing and binding their PhD thesis. Any replacement students receive the award in the final year of NERC's obligation.
68. Payments for periods of less than 12 months will be reduced pro rata.

Fees

69. NERC will provide funding for approved university fees, including all necessary fees for approved higher degrees, diplomas or examinations and compulsory union fees, at a fixed rate in 2008/2009 of £3,300 (£3,240 in 2007/2008), provided that these are incurred during the period of the award. NERC will also fund Oxford/Cambridge college fees where these are payable. NERC and the other research councils set a fixed rate for fees every year. Research Organisations should not charge PhD students extra top-up fees.
70. NERC will not pay any other college or halls of residence fees.

Research Training Support Grant

71. NERC pays the Research Organisation a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) of £1,000 pa for each Doctoral student (excluding project students). This is a contribution towards costs incurred in training research students e.g. the provision of consumables, equipment, travel, etc and can only be spent on the student to whom the funds are allocated. The RTSG is not intended to relieve a Research Organisation of any part of its normal expenditure.

Fieldwork Expenses and Exceptional Consumables

72. Fieldwork is defined as activity undertaken away from a student's normal place of study in order to make observations or collect data or specimens for their research. In cases where a student is likely to undertake fieldwork prior to 1 October of their first year, an early start date should be requested. No retrospective payments will be made for any fieldwork carried out before the requested start date. NERC expects students to spend a reasonable amount of time at their Research Organisation, so will not approve funding for excessive fieldwork periods or fieldwork late in the third year of the PhD.
73. NERC will contribute towards the costs of fieldwork carried out in the UK or overseas, and to the costs of research students attending certain short courses. Fieldwork funds are paid to support the student only and cannot be transferred for use for any other purpose. Rates for travel and subsistence are set by cross-Council agreement, and are revised periodically. Limited funding is also available for the costs of consumables required for laboratory or other work, where these cannot be met from the Research Training Support Grant. Prior approval for all such costs must be requested at the time of the student nomination. **No subsequent requests for funding will be considered.** If for exceptional reasons, the fieldwork location needs to be changed, NERC will only fund up to the maximum costs already agreed.
74. Where it is fully justified in the application and essential to the student's training, NERC may support requests for a contribution to the cost of sending the student to sea on an unspecified research cruise. NERC is willing to support such requests up to a limit of £1,000.
75. All requests for approval of fieldwork and exceptional consumable costs must contain a scientific case for support, including a full justification of costs. Safety equipment, beyond basic safety provision, will be considered as an exceptional consumable, as long as it is justified with a complete risk assessment of the project. Students and supervisors will normally receive a summary of the funding available for the

studentship in October. Students and supervisors should not make any assumptions about the amount of funding they may have available until this formal notification has been received. NERC's decision is final and we will not consider any appeals, as full justification should be provided on the nomination form.

76. NERC will not normally fund the costs of fieldwork undertaken at the premises of the CASE partner, or accommodation and travel to and from the CASE partner's premises.
77. NERC would not normally pay subsistence expenses for a sustained period of fieldwork of 6 months or greater, on the basis that the student shouldn't need to retain their alternative accommodation and so can use their maintenance award for accommodation and living expenses.
78. NERC will not provide extra funding to support fieldwork assistants, as this is the responsibility of the Research Organisation.
79. It should be understood that in assisting students with their fieldwork expenses NERC does not accept any liability for illness, accident or loss during the tenure of the award. NERC cannot provide funding for insurance. **The provision of adequate medical or other insurance is the student's responsibility.**
80. Fieldwork and exceptional consumables are not provided for project students. These costs should be included as part of the associated grant application.

UK Fieldwork

81. Travel will be reimbursed in full provided students follow a direct route, and take advantage of cheap fare facilities, including the use of students' rail cards.
82. Necessary and reasonable travel by private transport or in a Research Organisation vehicle will be reimbursed at the fixed rate of 27p per mile. Because NERC expects departments to provide vehicles, claims for their hire are not normally accepted, but in exceptional circumstances, a contribution may be made for up to 50% of the cost of hiring a car or small boat. Any request for such funding must specify the contribution available from the department or other source. NERC does not fund the purchase, maintenance, repairs or insurance of vehicles.
83. Reasonable subsistence expenses will be reimbursed on the basis of actual out-of-pocket expenditure up to a limit of £35 per 24 hours. NERC would not normally pay subsistence expenses for a sustained period of fieldwork of 6 months or greater, on the basis that the student shouldn't need to retain their alternative accommodation and so can use their maintenance award for accommodation and living expenses.
84. Payment of approved fieldwork will be made in six equal instalments over the three years of the studentship. The payment is made directly to the Research Organisation and students should seek reimbursement within the department.

Overseas Fieldwork

85. Overseas travel and subsistence will normally be funded at the overseas fieldwork rates table, which can be found on the NERC website at, <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/studentships/>. An additional contribution may be approved for certain specific areas, such as the Arctic. NERC would not normally pay subsistence expenses for a sustained period of fieldwork of 6 months or greater, on the basis that the student shouldn't need to retain their alternative accommodation and so can use their maintenance award for accommodation and living expenses. NERC will also consider requests for the following:

a Hire of Vehicles

Because NERC expects departments to provide vehicles, claims for their hire are not normally accepted, but in exceptional circumstances, a contribution may be made for up to 50% of the cost of hiring a car or small boat. Any request for such funding must specify the contribution available from the department or other source.

b Other Costs

NERC does not fund the purchase or transport of equipment or materials. A 50% contribution may be made, at NERC's discretion, towards reasonable costs incurred in transporting field samples.

86. Payment of approved fieldwork will be made in six equal instalments over the three years of the studentship. The payment is made directly to the Research Organisation and students should seek reimbursement within the department.

Exceptional Consumables

87. The normal costs of training should be met from the RTSG. However, limited funding (up to £3000 over three years) is available for exceptional costs incurred as part of the studentship, for example to provide access to specialist laboratory facilities. Funding is not available for buying equipment, with the exception that safety equipment, beyond basic safety provision, will be considered as an exceptional consumable, as long as it is justified with a complete risk assessment of the project. A full costing and a case for support must be submitted with the studentship nomination, and requests will not be considered after this time. The use of the RTSG should be fully justified on the nomination form where exceptional consumables are being requested. Where it is not fully justified NERC will not consider any additional funding.
88. NERC expects CASE partners to contribute towards the costs of consumables required for the project. NERC will consider applications for funds to match the CASE partner's contribution.
89. Payment of exceptional consumables will be made directly to the Research Organisation and students should seek reimbursement within the department.

Conferences, Workshops and Short Courses

90. NERC pays the host department £150 per annum per student as a contribution towards conference, workshop and short course attendance. This is included in the payments made directly to the Research Organisation, and the Research Organisation will have discretion as to how this money is divided between such meeting and courses. However, NERC expects that within the period of the award each student should have the opportunity to attend at least one conference at which they can present the findings of their research. The annual allowance may be carried between award years and NERC students. NERC will not require Research Organisations to return unused funds at the end of the studentship.
91. The RTSG and short course allowance which you are provided with can be used to fund attendance at a short course. A small number of courses are also funded directly by NERC. The current list can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/studentinfo/scsupport.asp>. You should apply directly to the course organiser if you are interested in attending any of those courses.
92. Funds for attending conferences are not paid as part of a project studentship, since these should be requested as part of the grant application. However, project students can apply to attend relevant courses that are directly funded by NERC – see previous paragraph.

Illness

93. If a student is likely to be absent through illness for more than two weeks, the supervisor must advise NERC immediately and arrange for medical certificates to be sent to NERC. NERC must be informed when the student returns following an absence. Frequent short absences for medical or other reasons must also be reported where they are likely to affect course studies or lead to considerable delay in the programme of research. NERC will only pay sick leave for continuous periods of a minimum duration of 2 weeks. However NERC **may** consider a no-cost extension for ongoing medical problems, which do not result in a continuous period of absence.
94. Payments of the award will continue for absences covered by medical certificates for up to 13 weeks, within any twelve-month period. For longer periods of illness the award will be held in abeyance (see above) and no payments will be made to the student. Students who are absent for more than 13 weeks are advised to seek support from the Research Organisation's Access Fund as all NERC support will normally cease until study is resumed. Students and supervisors should note that where NERC agrees an abeyance, an overpayment of maintenance may result as maintenance payments are made in advance. All overpaid sums will be recovered.
95. Abeyances on account of illness require medical certificates and will not normally be approved for periods in excess of twelve months. Certificates must be submitted within three months of the end date of the certificate. NERC will not retrospectively consider requests for sick pay, based on certificates that are more than three months old.

Maternity Leave

96. NERC will fund **up to** 26 weeks paid maternity leave for female students on receipt of a MATB1 which is available from your midwife. The studentship may be put into abeyance for **up to** another 26 weeks, if requested. Students can begin their maternity leave at any time from 28 weeks of the pregnancy. Support for any time beyond 26 weeks should, in the first instance, be sought from the Research Organisation's Access Fund. If the student wishes to change the terms of her studentship on return from maternity leave, NERC must be consulted first but will endeavour to deal with particular circumstances in a flexible manner.

Paternity Leave

97. A total of ten days paternity leave may be taken at any time during a partner's pregnancy or within three months following the birth. No extra funding will be provided.

Adoptive Leave

98. NERC will fund **up to** 26 weeks paid adoptive leave. The studentship may be put into abeyance for **up to** another 26 weeks, if requested. Support for any time beyond 26 weeks should, in the first instance, be sought from the Research Organisation's Access Fund. If the student wishes to change the terms of their studentship on return from adoptive leave, NERC must be consulted first but will endeavour to deal with particular circumstances in a flexible manner.

Period of Tenure

99. NERC Research studentships are tenable for a minimum of three years, subject to satisfactory progress. Studentships may be held on a part-time basis. For PhD students, starting from the 2004 academic year onwards, there is some new funding available to support students for an average of three and a half years. See <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/studentinfo/extendphds.asp> for further details.

Section E – PAYMENTS (Doctoral Training Grants - DTGs).

100. Doctoral Training Grants (DTGs) will include all the funding for PhD training (except Disabled Students Allowance and Roberts Skills Funding – see section F). DTGs may contain funding for a single studentship project awarded through a competition (either Open CASE or a directed programme) or for single/multiple studentship(s) awarded through the studentship algorithm (NERC Quota allocation).
101. The Terms and Conditions for all NERC DTGs are in section I. NERC has adopted the DTG Terms and Conditions that are in place for EPSRC, BBSRC, MRC and STFC studentships, although there are a few Research Councils-specific T&Cs (section I and paragraph 114, this section).
102. NERC DTGs will be made up in one of two ways depending on whether they have been awarded via a competition or via the studentship algorithm. DTGs will be made up of the basic costs below, but the funding will be indexed to allow for enough funds to cover yearly increases in the maintenance grant and fees.

DTG Funding Algorithm Studentships

103. The NERC algorithm will be used to determine the number of notional studentships. For each notional studentship, the following funds will be included in the DTG:
- A maintenance award (£12,940 in 2008/2009) multiplied by 3.5 years
 - London allowance, where applicable (£2,000) multiplied by 3.5 years
 - University fees (£3,300 in 2008/2009) multiplied by 3.5 years
 - College fees, where applicable (£2,000) multiplied by 3.5 years
 - An enlarged Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) to cover all other costs.
104. An enlarged RTSG for the 2008/2009 studentships is based on the following costs, but the RTSG can be used flexible and not strictly based on these costs:

Previous funding arrangement (directly funded students)	Total funding in DTG – making up enlarged RTSG
RTSG - £1000pa over 3.5 years	£3,500
UK and overseas fieldwork and exceptional consumables (average amount paid per studentship in 2007/2008 was £4,770, with 2.8% inflation = £4,900)	£4,900
Conference allowance - £150pa over 3 years	£450
Third year funding - £500 in third year	£500
CASE Allowance - £350pa over 3 years, with 30% of students with CASE awards	£350
Total RTSG contribution per notional studentship	£9700

DTG Funding Competition Based Studentship(s)

105. Where a studentship proposal is submitted for the Open CASE competition or a Directed Programme competition, the extra costs associated with the project will be requested in the proposal and agreed by the Review Panel. If successful the funding will then be provided in the form of a DTG and would include the following funds:
- A maintenance award (£12,940 in 2008/2009) multiplied by 3.5 years
 - London allowance, where applicable (£2,000) multiplied by 3.5 years
 - University fees (£3,300 in 2008/2009) multiplied by 3.5 years
 - College fees, where applicable (£2,000) multiplied by 3.5 years

- A variable RTSG payment made up of the following:

Component	Total funding in DTG
RTSG - £1000pa over 3.5 years	£3,500
Third year funding - £500 in third year	£500
Conference allowance - £150pa over 3 years	£450
CASE Allowance, where applicable - £350pa over 3 years.	Either zero or £1050
UK fieldwork, overseas fieldwork, exceptional consumables, as requested on the proposal and agreed by the review panel	Variable.
Total RTSG contribution per notional studentship	At least £4450 (£5,500 for CASE)

CASE Awards

106. NERC still expects that 30% of algorithm studentships over any three year period should be CASE studentships, and reserves the right to reduce future allocations if these requirements are not met. CASE studentships should still receive at least £1,000 for the first three years from the CASE Partner (on top of their standard maintenance payment), but any further CASE allowance from the DTG is optional.

Maintenance Award and Fees

107. Any students funded from the DTG have to meet the eligibility requirements as detailed in Section B. For a fees only student, all the studentship fees must be funded from the NERC DTG.
108. Where a student is eligible for a full award, they must receive at least the minimum Research Council agreed maintenance award (plus London Allowance where applicable). The latest rates can be found at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/postgradtrain.htm>. At least 50% of the total cost of the studentship should be drawn from the NERC DTG, but the remaining funding could be drawn from other sources. You could provide 50:50 funding from two different Research Council DTGs (EPSRC, BBSRC, MRC or STFC – not AHRC or ESRC currently) in order to support an interdisciplinary area.
109. The DTG funding can be used flexibly and could be used to provide an enhanced stipend in an area of recruitment and retention difficulty.
110. The level of maintenance award and fees in the DTG are based on the location of the Research Organisation holding the DTG. The DTG will not be supplemented with extra funding to cover London allowance or College fees, but DTG funding can be used, where required, to cover these extra costs (for example, where a student spends time at a CASE Partner in London).
111. The amount provided in the DTG for university fees is based on the Research Council set level (£3,300 in 2008/2009). Where applicable college fees (£2,000 in 2008/2009) are included. Further funding for fees can be taken from the DTG as required, but students should not be expected to fund any extra fees themselves. The tables above break down the RTSG payments, in order to identify how the funding level has been decided. The DTG funding can be used flexibly and doesn't need to be used exactly as in the table, so for example the third year funding component could be used to provide extra conference travel, or extra consumables.

DTG and Studentship Duration

112. Studentships should be funded for between three and four years. The duration of individual awards can be decided at the start or during the studentship as long as clear, transparent rules are in place. Students are expected to submit their thesis within four years. A studentship could be funded from more than one DTG, both concurrently (e.g. 50% funding from NERC and EPSRC) and over the course of the studentship (e.g. the latter part of the studentship could be funded from a subsequent DTG).
113. DTG's will be based on 3.5 years funding, but will last four years. The funding will be front-loaded on the basis that most of the expenditure will occur in the first 3.5 years. The four year grant end date allows for situations where a student starts late or where the studentship is extended for reasons such as sickness or

maternity.

114. NERC would expect all students funded through a DTG to receive a similar level of support for illness/maternity etc. as those funded directly by NERC (see section D). Due to the nature of some NERC DTGs which have funding for a single studentship, NERC may exceptionally agree to an extension of the end date and supplementation of the DTG for the purposes of maternity/sick leave. Where departments are in receipt of larger and successive DTGs, the standard DTG Terms and Conditions apply (see Section I).

Termination of Studentships

115. If a DTG-funded student terminates, the termination date and reason should be submitted to NERC via the Je-S SRDP. NERC will not supplement DTGs, but the remaining DTG funds could be used to fund/part-fund another student. If the remaining funds can't be used to fund a subsequent studentship (for example, where insufficient funds can be found from a subsequent DTG or other source to fund any short-fall), NERC should be informed and will terminate the DTG.

Section F – Information and Expectations for all PhD Studentships (Directly funded and DTG funded)

Disabled Student's Allowance

116. NERC may pay up to £1,640 pa in 2007/08 (£1,680 pa in 2008/09) to a student who, because of a disability incurs additional expenditure in attending his/her Research Organisation. Additional allowances of up to £12,420 pa in 2007/08 (£20,000 pa in 2008/09) (to cover non-medical personal helpers) and £4,905 per course (£5,030 per course in 2008/09) (to cover specialist equipment) are also available. Medical evidence to substantiate applications for assistance will be required. As far as possible claims should be made at the beginning of the studentship. 50% Masters students receive 100% of the agreed costs for Disabled Students Allowance. NERC rates are based on the allowances for undergraduate students in the document: Bridging the Gap: A guide to the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) in higher education. http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG_10034898
117. Individuals should contact the Disability Officer at the Research Organisation at which their studentship is registered for assistance with their application. All students will be expected to undergo a new needs assessment, for which NERC will fund. For further information on DSA please contact the DSA contact at the NERC (see <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/contacts.asp>).

Careers and Transferable Skills Training

118. NERC also encourages all PhD students to attend a **GRAD School** in either their second or third year. There are a number of different courses available, varying in length, location and content. The number of national courses will be reducing over the next three years, but there will be more local GRAD schools. They can be a good source of transferable skills training. NERC will meet the costs of second or third year students attending one UK GRAD School. See <http://www.gradschools.ac.uk/>, for details.
119. NERC believes that all research students should receive appropriate training in technical and personal skills. The Joint Research Councils' Statement on Skills Training Requirements can be found at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/documents/studenttraining.pdf> for guidance. NERC and the other Research Councils provide Research Organisations with extra "Roberts Skills Funding" to implement the Roberts Review recommendation for additional training (mainly in transferable skills) for PhD students. The recommendation is for students to receive around two weeks training per year. More information can be found at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/training.htm>.
120. NERC are co-sponsors of 'Researchers in Residence'. This is a scheme open to PhD students who are interested in promoting and explaining science to a wider audience enabling them to spend four days working with children and teachers in schools. For more information and online registration for placements, visit , and further details can be found at, <http://www.researchersinresidence.ac.uk/rir/> or phone the NERC office contact on 01793 411604.
121. The Science and Engineering Ambassadors (SEAs) Programme aims to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by proving enthusiastic, vetted volunteers to work with young people and teachers. Further details can be found at: http://www.stemnet.org.uk/ambassadors_seas.cfm.

CASE Studentships

122. NERC is keen to encourage collaboration with public and private sector partners. The Co-operative Awards in Science and Engineering (CASE) scheme aims to promote partnerships between HEIs and other bodies, which will enhance the training received by the student and will help the student to gain first-hand experience of work outside the purely academic environment.
123. CASE projects must provide a sound training in the methods of research and a stimulating intellectual challenge for a student. An essential requirement is that students will spend a part of their training period with the co-operating body. This period must be a minimum of three months during the three-year period of award, but would not normally exceed eighteen months. Both academic Research Organisations and co-operating bodies will be required to nominate supervisors who will be responsible for overseeing students' training.
124. The CASE partner must supplement the student's maintenance grant by paying at least £1,000 pa for three years. It is the obligation of the CASE partner to agree this additional funding before the start of the studentship. Other terms and conditions should also be agreed with both the student and the awarding Research Organisation prior to commencement of the studentship.

125. **It is expected that cooperating bodies will meet the extra expenses incurred by students visiting and working in their establishments.** Co-operating bodies are also expected to contribute in cash or in kind towards necessary materials or facilities not possessed by the Research Organisation concerned.
126. NERC is seeking to promote the partnership and benefits of CASE studentships. Departments in receipt of NERC algorithm awards will be expected to register an average of 30% of these as CASE over 3 years. Thus for the allocation for academic year 2009/10 sanctions will be imposed on departments that have not achieved an average of 30% algorithm CASE awards over the academic year 2006/07 – 2008/09. Departments with three or less students over the 3 years will not be penalised.
127. NERC will consider requests for studentships to be converted to CASE awards within the duration of the studentship, as long as the CASE requirements are met. Students will receive the extra CASE supplement from the next quarterly payment (directly-funded students only). No back payments will be made. For DTG-funded studentships, CASE partner details should be added to the Je-S SRDP. Only studentships converted to CASE within year 1 of the award will count towards the algorithm calculation.

Place of Tenure

128. Research studentships may be held in any institution of higher education in the UK acceptable to NERC. NERC reserves the right to determine the places that are best fitted to provide the training required by students. Studentships tenable at UK Research Organisations may be held partially overseas.
129. In particular, NERC wishes to ensure that some postgraduate students undertake part of their training at universities or institutes overseas. It therefore encourages awards that include spells of the order of six months to one year to be spent at those institutions.

Suspension of Awards (Abeyance)

130. NERC expects students to complete their training in a single continuous period and does not encourage the suspension of awards. For directly-funded students, NERC's prior approval must be sought for any proposed period of abeyance, and abeyances cannot be granted retrospectively. The request for an abeyance must have the full support of the student's supervisor. The maximum period of suspension will normally be 12 months. NERC will not approve any request for a suspension based on financial hardship. Sympathetic consideration will be given to requests for abeyance due to personal or family reasons. For students wishing to suspend their studies in order to take up a Marie Curie fellowship (see http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/home_en.html) the abeyance will be for the duration of the Fellowship.
131. Visits to centres of excellence for a purpose directly related to the research topic will be considered for approval as an integral part of the research training. Consequently no abeyance or an extension to the period of the award will be necessary. Approval for visits where NERC is invited to contribute should be sought as for fieldwork.
132. **Any overpayment to the student and/or Research Organisation resulting from an abeyance will be recovered.**
133. Under very exceptional circumstances NERC may agree to funded extensions for reasons other than medical grounds. **NERC should be contacted as soon as possible if a student is experiencing any difficulties.** Each case will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the final decision rests with NERC.

Illness/Maternity/Paternity/Adoptive Leave

134. NERC would expect all students funded through a DTG to receive a similar level of support as those funded directly by NERC (see section D).

Termination of Studentships

135. NERC reserves the right to terminate a studentship or vary its conditions at any time. NERC may terminate the award of any student whose progress or conduct is not considered to be satisfactory by the Research Organisation. The Research Organisation should ensure that the appropriate termination and grievance procedures have been followed before terminating a studentship.
136. For directly funded students, supervisors must inform NERC immediately if they consider students to be unsatisfactory or if a student leaves, or states their intention to leave their training before the end of their award. The Early Termination form (ETform), available on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/studentships/>, should be completed and sent to NERC as soon as the decision has been made to end the studentship. The date of termination should be mutually agreed between the supervisor and student, taking into account any holiday entitlement and a period of reasonable

notice to allow the student to terminate local domestic commitments. Where necessary, NERC reserves the right to terminate the studentship in the absence of the ETform, for example, where a student has stopped doing their PhD but can not be contacted. For DTG-funded students, termination details must be submitted via the Je-S SRDP.

137. An award ends on the date when the student completes their training (including any allowances for holidays as outlined in these regulations). Where this happens before the scheduled end of the award, the student must refund NERC with any funding paid for the period after the new end date. **Awards cannot be continued on or after the date on which students take up paid employment.**
138. For directly-funded studentships, NERC will consider replacing a student in full if the original student resigns within the first three months of the award. If the student resigns between three to twelve months into the award, NERC may allow the department to retain the studentship award if the awarding Research Organisation agrees to provide funding for an equivalent period to that already supported by NERC. The awarding Research Organisation will be required to provide the funding at the end of the award, at the NERC base rate stipend. However, the period of a project studentship must fall entirely within the duration of the research grant. Therefore, a replacement project studentship will only be considered, where a maximum of 6 months no-cost grant extension is required, to enable the studentship to be completed within the duration of the grant.
139. Replacement algorithm/quota studentships do not have to continue the original proposal or fieldwork. However when awarding fieldwork funds for the replacement studentship NERC will take into account any funds paid to the Research Organisation in respect of the original student. Where a studentship was awarded for a specific project through a Directed Programme, any replacement studentship would be expected to fall within the remit of the Directed Programme.
140. Any student who terminates after the first 12 months of their award will still be included for submission data purposes.

Holidays

141. Reasonable holidays, not exceeding eight weeks in the year including public holidays, may be allowed by supervisors. Up to a maximum of four weeks holiday may be taken at the end of the period of award, provided the holiday period does not extend beyond 30 September (or equivalent date for early or late starters), or the date on which students enter paid employment, whichever is the earlier. Holidays during award periods of less than 12 months will be reduced pro rata.

Demonstrating, Teaching and Other Paid Work

142. NERC research studentships are normally held full time; however, NERC encourages students to undertake some teaching or demonstrating work when this is compatible with their training and provided their supervisors approve of this. The total time spent (including preparation and marking) should not exceed six hours in any week during term time. The provision of teaching and demonstrating is the responsibility of the Research Organisation, and so must be paid for at the Research Organisation's usual rate and supported by appropriate training. Students may also undertake a small amount of other paid work, provided the supervisor gives consent to this and it does not delay or interfere with the research training.
143. For directly funded students, NERC may agree to up to a three-month abeyance of the award to enable the student to undertake a work placement (directly related to the students' training), provided this is well justified and requested in advance. NERC will not agree to an extension to an award or writing up period, where a placement has been undertaken during the award without NERCs knowledge.

Curation of Collections

144. NERC strongly encourages students to ensure that collections of specimens obtained whilst undertaking their research projects are adequately curated. This ensures the preservation of a representative collection of specimens and provides the student with training in curatorial methods.

Section G - MASTERS STUDENTSHIPS (MSc, MRes)

145. Masters studentships may only be held by eligible students attending MSc and MRes courses listed in the NERC Display Notice at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/awards/masters/2008.asp>. Allocations of masters studentships are determined every five years and details of the 2005 Masters Review can be found at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/studentinfo/mastersreview.asp>. The new portfolio runs from 2006 to 2010.
146. Students must apply directly to the Research Organisation running the course; **NERC does not accept applications directly from students.**
147. From 2006/7, NERC will provide its masters support via Masters Training Grants (MTG). Each MTG will provide funding for a fixed number of full awards. A full award will be based on:
- Maintenance award/stipend
 - Fees
 - RTSG/fieldwork contribution
 - London Allowance (LA) or Oxbridge college fees, where applicable
148. The MTG must support at least the number of studentships announced on the Display Notice and which forms the basis for the MTG. NERC students must receive at least 50% of the “full” stipend and 50% of the fixed fees level from the MTG. The minimum requirement would be for a MTG for three full awards to support three studentships (at 50% or above), with the extra funding being used towards associated studentship costs. Research Organisations no longer need to nominate students and can now continue to offer studentships up until the start of the course (and beyond where funding is still available, for example, following a termination).
149. Awards are made to the main Research Organisation in which the course is based. The course organiser will be named as the Principal Applicant, but can not transfer the MTG to any other Research Organisation. NERC should be notified of any change in the course organiser/principal applicant.
150. The MTG must not be used to support other masters courses. NERC should be notified immediately if the named course is to be closed. Whilst Research Organisations are encouraged to use the flexibility afforded within the MTG, NERC reserves the right to re-profile the account if it considers that payments to the Research Organisation are significantly at variance with expenditure.

Eligibility

151. The eligibility rules remain the same for students funded directly by Universities through the MTG. See section B of the handbook.

Maintenance Award/Stipend

152. The MTG will include a fixed number of stipend payments. The full masters stipend for 2007/8 is £8,080 and for 2008/09 is £8,280. The MTG for courses based in London includes a fixed payment of £2000 per studentship for London Allowance (LA). NERC students must receive at least 50% of the full stipend level (to include LA where applicable), so in 2007/8, they should receive at least £4,040 (£5040 with LA). The fees and stipend level per studentship does not have to be equal, as long as they are both at least 50%.

University Fees

153. The MTG will include a fixed number of fees payments. The level of the fees payments is set each year on a cross-Research Council basis. For the 2007/8 academic year the fees payment will be £3,240 and for 2008/9 £3,300 (see: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/postgradtrain.htm>.) NERC supported students must have a minimum of 50% of this set fees level paid from the MTG. Where a student receives less than 100% of the fixed fees level from the MTG, they would be expected to make the fees up to the 100% level. The fees and stipend level per studentship does not have to be equal, as long as they are both at least 50%.
154. NERC students must not be charged extra fees in excess of the Research Council set level. Extra fees could be taken directly from the MTG, as necessary. For example, a student could be offered 90% of the full stipend level and the other 10% be used to “top up” the fixed fees level. The RTSG/Fieldwork component of the MTG might also be used to top up the fixed fees level, especially where an element of the fees is to cover fieldwork and direct studentship costs.

Oxbridge fees

155. For courses based at Oxford or Cambridge University, the MTG includes a fixed payment per studentship (£2,000 in 2006/7) as a contribution towards college fees. Departments can use the MTG flexibly to pay any necessary college fees. NERC students must receive at least 50% of their college fees paid from the MTG.

RTSG/Fieldwork Contribution

156. Studentships are not currently subject to Full Economic Cost (FEC) rules (as with research grants) and HEIs receive other funding towards some of the teaching and other costs of masters course provision. This extra funding is a contribution towards some of the costs directly associated with the studentship. The MTG is not expected to cover university estates, infrastructure or other indirect costs (beyond that included within the tuition fees).
157. Courses have been awarded one of five levels of RTSG/Fieldwork contribution (Band A: £250, Band B: £500, Band C: £1,000, Band D: £1,500, Band E: £2,000), based on:
- Information on fieldwork and project costs submitted in the masters review application, in particular, in section 17.
 - Previous claims (for courses supported between 2001-2005)
 - Comparable bands for similar types of courses.
158. The funding is primarily a contribution towards fieldwork costs for the studentships, but the funding can also be used for specific studentship related costs, such as consumables. NERC supported students should benefit in the same way as they would have done when they could claim back costs directly from NERC. Departments can use this funding flexibly, to the benefit of the NERC supported students.

Part-funded students

159. Previously NERC would fund studentships at either 50 or 100%. This new MTG mechanism allows the funding to be used flexibly as required. NERC students must receive at least 50% of the funding from the MTG (50% of their stipend and fees). However, there is now more flexibility and the MTG could support, for example, a fees only student and another studentship at around 70% funding.

Fees only Students

160. The same eligibility rules apply to these studentships as previously (see Section B). Where an EU student who is eligible for a fees-only award is offered a NERC studentship, the fees component can be funded from the MTG, (as well as some RTSG/fieldwork costs). The stipend should not be funded from the MTG.

Start date and duration of Studentships

161. NERC would normally expect the studentship to start in September or October and continue for 12 months. Where a studentship is extended, through sickness, maternity or part-time working, into the period after the end date of the MTG, an extension to the grant must be requested.

Part-time Students

162. Where appropriate, the MTG could be used to support a studentship on a part-time basis (generally at least 50% of full-time).

Replacements

163. Where a student terminates their award before completing the course, or where they complete the course early, NERC will expect any major overpayments to be refunded to the University. Any remaining funding could then either be used to support another eligible student in the same year, or be retained and used to support a student in the next academic year, as long as that is within the period of the MTG.

Sickness

164. NERC would expect the majority of cases of sickness to be for a relatively short duration and that the student will still complete their masters course within the period of agreed support (normally 12 months). Where the student was ill for a significant period during the award, resulting in the studentship being extended beyond the initial agreed period, NERC would fund the extra costs to the MTG. Extra funding of **up to** 13 weeks of sick pay (based on the percentage of the full stipend that the individual is receiving) would be funded as part of the reconciliation process for the grant. NERC reserves the right to check medical certificates have been received to cover any extra costs being recovered on a MTG.

Maternity/Adoptive Leave

165. NERC will fund **up to** 26 weeks paid maternity/adoptively leave for students (based on the percentage of the full stipend that the individual is receiving), where necessary, during the reconciliation process for the grant.

Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

166. Any NERC-supported masters students can still apply directly to NERC for DSA. See section F for more details. DSA payments are currently paid separately to the MTG. Depending on the outcome of a cross-Research Council review of DSA mechanisms, DSA payments may in future be added to the MTG.

Studentship Data

167. Information on all NERC-funded students must be provided by the University when requested via the Je-S Student Researcher Data Portal (SRDP). This new joint Research Council system is now available. NERC will require this data by the end of November each year. The system should be updated as necessary during the year, for example, where students terminate and are replaced. The University will also need to provide submission data through this system.

Payments

168. The initial MTG will be for three years. The grant will be paid quarterly, in advance. The funding for each academic year is based on a fixed number of full awards. The funding will be indexed over the three years of the grant. Grants are cash-limited from the outset and NERC will not accept any request for additional funding, except within the provisions of the Terms and Conditions, with respect to maternity/adoptively and sick leave.

Grant Announcement and Schedule of Payments

169. An announcement letter and payment schedule will be issued at least two months prior to the scheduled first payment of the grant. The Research Organisation 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.

Final Expenditure Statement (FES)

170. NERC requires that a Final Expenditure Statement is received at the end of the award. Failure to submit such documentation may result in sanctions being imposed on the institution, including cessation of any further masters course support. In cases where payments still need to be made after the end date of the MTG, for example, because of sickness, maternity or part-time working; the grant end date will need to be extended to cover any required payments. Once an expenditure statement has been received and the expenditure incurred has been reconciled against payments made, it will be considered as final. Costs arising from maternity leave or sick leave should be identified in the exceptional items heading of the statement.
171. NERC reserves the right to require the Research Organisation to complete and submit a statement of expenditure at any time during the course of the MTG, or to provide supplementary information in support of an interim or final expenditure statement.

Financial Propriety

172. NERC reserves the right to examine, in detail, all terms of expenditure charged to an award, and in addition will visit selected institutions as part of the cross-Council Dipstick Test Initiative.

Section H: Additional Information

Communications

Researchers need to communicate their work to other scientists and researchers in the academic community. But NERC also expects you to communicate and engage with people in the wider community, such as journalists, schoolchildren, teachers, industry and policy-makers. You can take part in existing national schemes such as Researchers in Residence or become a Science and Engineering Ambassador. For local activities during National Science Week grants up to £2000 are available. Alternatively grant-holders can develop their own ideas outside of these schemes.

For advice you can contact the NERC communications team, based at Swindon Office, which provides professional, external communications services to staff throughout NERC, our research centres and to our scientists and students in universities. Your own research centre or university may well have people to help you with public engagement and science in society activities. From 2008, five or more dedicated public engagement centres will open in universities across the UK. These Beacon centres have the specific task of encouraging researchers to interact with the public.

Order our free guidance notes [Communicating Your Ideas](#)

For a list of schemes available to grant-holders and students see the [Research Councils UK](#) website.

Press and publicity

All grant holders and students must inform the communications team (pressoffice@nerc.ac.uk, 01793 411727) if they are planning any publicity surrounding NERC-funded research, for example, a press release to publicise a science paper. We can provide excellent links to local, national and international media and we can determine the best course of action to maximise coverage of your story. Your university press office should also be aware of any proposed media activity – the NERC press office can arrange this.

Scientists often have to deal with contentious issues. Dealing with journalists or a questioning public in these circumstances can be intimidating. The NERC communications team is trained to deal with these situations and can offer advice, guidance and support. Contact us immediately if you have any concerns about how to deal professionally with the media.

Publications

We **edit, design and produce** the award –winning free magazine *Planet Earth*. Order your free copy [here](#). See the NERC website for other publications that you might wish to use when you are talking with the public.

Communications courses

Brush up your communications skills and find out how national science correspondents put their stories together. We run FREE communications courses for our students, grant-holders and staff and we have produced a booklet and online guide to successful science communication whether in print, broadcast, at events or even lectures.

Contact Caron Winter. Tel: 01793 411568, email: cwint@nerc.ac.uk

Exploitation and Intellectual Property

Details can be found on the NERC website at:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/business/commercial/intellectualproperty.asp>

NERC Scientific Services and Facilities

Details can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/facilities/list.asp>

NERC Designated Data Centres

Details can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/data/>

Data Availability

It is NERC policy to increase the visibility and awareness of environmental data and to improve their management as an overall resource. Award-holders should therefore make sure that NERC Designated Data Centres (Additional Information section) are aware of significant datasets generated, or to be compiled, under the award so that their long-term stewardship can be assured or planned.

NERC Mission

Details can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/about/work/mission.asp>

NERC Science Areas

Details can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/areas/>

NERC Complaints Procedure

Details can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/site/feedback/complaints.asp>

Statement of Council Policy on Vested Interests

Details can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/about/work/policy/vestedinterests.asp>

Overseas Fieldwork Bands

Details can be found on the NERC website at: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/studentships/>

Section I: Doctoral Training Grant (DTG) Scheme Terms and Conditions

A Doctoral Training Grant (DTG) is a grant paid by a Research Council to a Research Organisation for the provision of postgraduate study.

Doctoral Training Grants aim to:

- assist the Research Organisation to attract the best people into postgraduate research and training;
- allow a maximum of local discretion in managing and organising doctoral training within clear financial and accountability arrangements;
- Provide resources in a flexible and transparent funding stream.

Subject to these terms and conditions, Research Organisations can decide on the level of stipend; the duration of a studentship; the format (e.g. part-time, industrial placement), and can adjust the number and start of awards within year and between years.

Individual Councils may add additional conditions to the grant to reflect the particular circumstances and requirements of their organisation, or the nature of a particular grant. Acceptance of a Doctoral Training Grant constitutes acceptance of both the core conditions and any additional conditions.

References in these terms and conditions to statutory provisions and guidance include any subsequent amendments or re-enactments.

The Research Council reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions, and where appropriate will consult the Research Organisation before major changes are introduced.

Definitions

Funding Assurance Programme (FAP): A programme of visits and office-based tests to seek assurance that grant funds are used for the purpose for which they are given and that grants are managed in accordance with the terms and conditions under which they are awarded.

Doctoral Training Account: A Doctoral Training Account is made up of the overlapping Doctoral Training Grants to a Research Organisation.

Doctoral Training Grant: a grant providing funds for the training of research students leading to the award of a recognised qualification, usually a PhD.

DTA Coordinator: the principal contact at a Research Organisation for the Doctoral Training Grant. The role includes responsibility for ensuring the provision of data on the students funded through the Doctoral Training Grant.

Departmental Account Manager: Where the DTA supports postgraduate training across the whole Research Organisation, the Research Organisation may wish to identify individuals who act as the main contact point within particular departments for funded students.

Fees: The funds required by a University for a Student to register for a higher degree.

Je-S Student Researcher Data Portal (SRDP): the Research Councils' web-based data collection system which Research Organisations use to return details of the students and student research projects funded from the Doctoral Training Grant.

Research Council: the following bodies awarding Doctoral Training Grants:

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)

Medical Research Council (MRC)

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

Science and Technology Facilities Research Council (STFC)

Research Organisation: The organisation to which the DTG is awarded and which takes responsibility for the management of the research training programme and the accountability of funds provided.

Stipend: The funds awarded by the Research Organisation to students to cover their maintenance while undertaking a course of research training leading to the award of a research degree.

Students: The term used to identify postgraduates who are funded through the Doctoral Training Grant.

Studentship: The term used for the funding award made by a research organisation to a student for the purpose of undertaking research training leading to the award of a research degree.

Data Protection Regulations

The Research Councils will use information provided in relation to the administration of the Doctoral Training Grant for the award of any subsequent grant, and for the payment, maintenance and review of the grant. This may include:

- Statistical analysis in relation to the evaluation of doctoral research and the study of trends;
- Policy and strategy studies.

To meet the Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, details of grants and student projects funded from a DTG may also be made available on the Research Council's web site and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations

Attention is drawn to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs). Research Councils have issued Publication Schemes which set out the types of information publicly available on their websites or published as documents. In addition, Research Councils have an obligation to respond to specific requests and may be required to disclose information about or provided by Research Organisations. In some cases the Research Council may consult the Research Organisation before disclosure, but it is under no obligation to do so. If a Research Organisation considers that any information it provides to a Research Council would be subject to an exemption under FOIA or the EIRs it should clearly mark the information as such and provide an explanation of why it considers the exemption applies and for how long. The Research Council will consider this explanation before disclosure, but it is not obliged to accept it as binding.

Where a Research Council determines that a Research Organisation is holding information on its behalf that it requires in order to comply with its obligations under FOIA or EIRs, the Research Organisation undertakes to provide access to such information as soon as reasonably practicable on request of the Research Council and in any event within 5 working days.

In some cases Research Organisations may be directly responsible for complying with FOIA and the EIRs; in such cases the Research Councils accept no responsibility for any failure to comply by the Research Organisations.

DTG 1 Responsibilities of the Research Organisation

The Research Organisation is responsible for selecting, administering and supervising students throughout their period of training, in accordance with current good practice as detailed in the *QAA's Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes* (2004), and in accordance with any additional Research Council requirements.

In particular, the Research Organisation must ensure that:

- Adequate facilities and resources are made available for the research training;
- A safe working environment is provided, meeting the requirements of health and safety legislation, and any other legislation concerning the health, welfare and rights of students, including the Data Protection Act;
- Projects lie broadly within the remit of the Research Council funding the DTG.
- Research Training Programmes contain good training in generic and transferable skills

The Research Organisation must ensure that the research supported by the grant complies with all relevant legislation and Government regulation, including that introduced while work is in progress. This requirement includes approval or licence from any regulatory body that may be required before the research can commence.

The Research Organisation must ensure proper financial management of DTGs and accountability for the use of public funds. Research Organisations are expected to take reasonable steps to recover monies paid to students in advance who leave or whose studentship is terminated.

DTG 2 Research Governance

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to ensure that the research is organised and undertaken within a framework of best practice that recognises the various factors that may influence or impact on a student's research project. Particular requirements are to ensure that all necessary permissions are obtained before the project begins, and that there is clarity of role and responsibility among the research team (including the student) and with any collaborators. The Research Councils expect research to be conducted in accordance with the highest standards of scientific integrity and research methodology.

Research Ethics

The Research Organisation is responsible for ensuring that ethical issues relating to a student's research project funded from the DTG are identified and brought to the attention of the relevant approval or regulatory body. Approval to undertake the research must be granted before any work requiring approval begins. Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and may encompass, among other things, relevant codes of practice, the involvement of human participants, tissue or data in research, the use of animals, research that may result in damage to the environment and the use of sensitive economic, social or personal data.

Use of animals in research

Wherever possible, researchers must adopt procedures and techniques that avoid the use of animals. Where this is not possible, the research should be designed so that:

- The least sentient species with the appropriate physiology is used;
- The number of animals used is the minimum sufficient to provide adequate statistical power to answer the question posed;
- The severity of procedures performed on animals is kept to a minimum. Experiments should be kept as short as possible. Appropriate anaesthesia, analgesia and humane end points should be used to minimise any pain and suffering.

The provisions of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, and any amendments, must be observed and all necessary licences must have been received before any work requiring approval takes place.

Medical and Health Research

The Research Organisation is responsible for managing and monitoring the conduct of medical and health research in a manner consistent with the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care. There must be effective and verifiable systems in place for managing research quality, progress and the safety and well-being of patients and other research participants. These systems must promote and maintain the relevant codes of practice and all relevant statutory review, authorisation and reporting requirements.

Health-related research within the social sciences that falls outside the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework must meet the provisions and guidelines of ESRC's Research Ethics Framework. While this research may involve patients, NHS staff or organisations, it is defined as research that poses no clinical risk or harm to those who are the subjects of research. Research Organisations must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for independent ethics review of social science research that meet local research ethics committee standards.

Significant developments must be assessed as the research proceeds, especially those that affect safety and well-being, which should be reported to the appropriate authorities and to the Research Council. The Research Organisation must take appropriate and timely action when significant problems are identified. This may include temporarily suspending or terminating the research.

The Research Organisation is responsible for managing and monitoring statutory requirements for which it accepts responsibility, for example, in relation to legislation on clinical trials, use of human organs, tissues and data.

Guidance by the MRC on the conduct of medical research, and by ESRC on the conduct of social science research, provided on behalf of all Research Councils, must be observed.

Health and Safety

The Research Organisation is responsible for ensuring that a safe working environment is provided for all individuals associated with a student's research project. Its approach and policy on health and safety matters must meet all regulatory and legislative requirements and be consistent with best practice recommended by the Health & Safety Executive.

Appropriate care must be taken where a student is working off-site. The Research Organisation must satisfy itself that all reasonable health and safety factors are addressed.

The Research Councils reserve the right to require the Research Organisation to undertake a safety risk assessment in individual cases where health and safety is an issue, and to monitor and audit the actual arrangements made.

Misconduct and Conflicts of Interest

The Research Organisation is required to have in place procedures for governing good research practice that meet the requirements of the Research Council's guidance on good practice. The Research Organisation must ensure that there are reliable systems and processes in place for the prevention of misconduct e.g. plagiarism, falsification of data, together with well-defined and clearly-publicised arrangements for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct.

Where an allegation of misconduct arises in respect of a student supported by a Doctoral Training Grant, the Research Council must be informed immediately and notified of the outcome of any investigation.

The Research Organisation must ensure that potential conflicts of interest in research are declared and subsequently managed.

DTG 3 Use of Funds

Subject to the following conditions, DTG funds may be used, without reference to the Research Council, in such a manner as to best undertake the provision of training leading to the award of a research degree falling within the scientific remit of the Council concerned.

DTG funds are cash limited and the grant is made on the understanding that its value will not be increased, except as stated in these terms and conditions.

Student Eligibility

The use of funding to provide full awards or fees-only awards should be in accordance with student eligibility as determined by the Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations 1997 and subsequent amendments. An equivalent set of Regulations exists for Scotland.

Student Training

Funds may be used for student stipends, fees, project costs and the incidental costs of research training, such as travel and conference attendance.

Students may be full or part-time. The Research Organisation may decide on the period of support for individuals (up to 4 years full time support). Part time awards should not normally be less than 50% of full time. Where the period of support for a student extends beyond the end date of a grant, the balance of support can be provided by the next or subsequent grant or from another source.

For any studentship where funding is drawn from a DTG, either:

a) for a fees-only student, all the student's fees must be funded from the DTG of a single Council;

or

b) where a student is eligible for a full award, at least 50% of the total cost of the studentship must be drawn from the DTG of a single Council. The remaining costs may be funded from other sources, such as the research organisation's funds or from research partners. (Joint Research Council funding of multidisciplinary awards is possible on the basis of 50:50 funding from two Councils' DTGs; in that case one of the Councils must be designated as the majority funder for monitoring and information purposes.)

Where a student is eligible for a stipend, the stipend awarded must be at least equal to the Research Councils' minimum rates for the relevant academic year. The Research Organisation may, if it wishes, pay a higher level of stipend, provided that it does not overspend the value of the grant.

The allocation of funds for the incidental costs of research training should have regard for the nature and complexity of projects and the need for fieldwork, conferences, broadening training and industrial placements.

Extensions, Suspensions and Terminations of Studentships

The Research Organisation must make suitable arrangements for coping with absences of students for illness, maternity, paternity and holidays. The Research Organisation must ensure that it is aware of unauthorised absences by students, so that future payments may be stopped and those already made in advance of need can be recovered. The period of a student's support may be extended at the Research Organisation's discretion to offset a period of genuine absence, subject to finding the necessary funding from within the Research Organisation's Doctoral Training Account.

Student Transfers

The grant will not be amended to take account of the transfer of a student from one Research Organisation to another, or from one department to another within the Research Organisation. Transfers may be arranged where they are essential to the student's training e.g. when a supervisor is moving, and should be by agreement between the Research Organisations concerned. Research Council expects that the arrangements for such a transfer would include the relevant funds.

Disabled Students Allowances

Students funded from a DTG are eligible for additional support where, because of disability, they are obliged to incur additional expenditure in undertaking their training. Application and payment arrangements will be as specified by the Research Council.

Where a student is funded from two Councils' DTGs, the application will be considered by the Council which is acting as the majority funder (see above).

DTG 4 Grant Arrangements and Starting Procedures

Grants are for a specified number of years, without extension, adopting fixed start and end dates. The Research Organisation must complete and return a starting certificate; this notification will be taken as

acceptance of the grant on the terms and conditions stated, and will activate profiled payments.

Submission of the starting certificate is required not more than 42 days after the start date shown on the starting certificate. Payment arrangements will be as specified by the Research Council.

DTG 5 Inspection

The Research Council reserves the right to have reasonable access to inspect the records and financial procedures associated with Doctoral Training Grants or to appoint any other body or individual for the purpose of such inspection.

The Research Organisation must, if required by the Research Council, provide a statement of account for the grant, independently examined by an auditor who is a member of a recognised professional body, certifying that the expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the Doctoral Training Grant terms and conditions.

Research Councils will undertake periodic reviews of Research Organisations within the Funding Assurance Programme (FAP) programme to seek assurance that Doctoral Training Grants are managed in accordance with the terms and conditions under which they are awarded.

DTG 6 Final Expenditure Statement

At the end of the grant, the Research Organisation must complete and return a final expenditure statement (FES) detailing expenditure incurred over the full period of the grant. The FES must be received within three months of the end date of the grant. Once an FES has been received by the Research Council, and expenditure incurred has been reconciled against payments made, the statement will be considered as final. Facsimile or photocopies of the FES will not be accepted.

DTG 7 Sanctions

If the Final Expenditure Statement is not received within the period allowed, the Research Council may recover 20% of the expenditure incurred on the grant. All payments may be recovered if the statement is not received within 6 months of the end of the grant.

DTG 8 Public Engagement

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation and the Supervisors to actively communicate the research to the public at both local and national level, and to raise awareness of the role of science and research in any related issues of public interest. Special schemes exist in some Research Councils providing additional support for these activities, or earmarked funding may be provided in the grant for this purpose.

DTG 9 Monitoring and Information Requirements

The Research Organisation will be required to provide the Research Council with standard information on students and their training programmes through the Je-S Student Researcher Data Portal for inclusion in the Research Council's management information system.

Where a student is funded from two Councils' DTGs, the information should be returned to the Council which is acting as the majority funder (see above), and not returned to the other council.

Information should normally be entered within one month of the student starting their studies. Failure to provide this information may result in sanctions being imposed on future payments.

The Research Organisation should inform the Research Council of any significant changes to the student's research project funded from the DTG, including change of supervisor or project objectives.

The Research Council expects that the start and end dates for the funded period of study will be agreed at the outset and would not be amended during the doctoral project unless exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. if there is prolonged absence due to illness. The Research Council will monitor any amendments to the start and end dates and reserves the option to apply original dates for assessing when thesis submission is due.

The Research Council should be notified through the Je-S Student Researcher Data Portal of students whose awards have been terminated, extended or transferred within a month of the change being formally agreed by the Research Organisation.

Research Organisations are also required to return information on the date of submission of the student's thesis.

The Research Organisation must make a clear statement, in relation to the Data Protection Act 1998, that personal information on students is being collected on behalf of the Research Council.

DTG 10 Commercial Exploitation

Unless alternative arrangements are agreed between the Research Organisation, the student and any collaborator, intellectual property rights will belong to the student who generated them.

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation, and all engaged in the research, to make every effort to ensure that any potentially valuable results obtained in the course of the research are exploited, and that there is a suitable return to the Research Organisation and the researchers from any such exploitation. The Research Organisation must ensure that all those associated with the research are aware of, and accept, the arrangements for the commercial exploitation of research.

Collaborative arrangements are expected to be put on a formal basis through an agreement covering the contributions and rights of the organisations and individuals concerning exploitation. Such agreements must be in place before the research begins. The terms of collaboration agreements must not conflict with the Research Councils' terms and conditions.

DTG 11 Publication and Acknowledgement of Support

Publications and other forms of media communication, including media appearances, press releases and conferences, must acknowledge the support received from the Research Council(s).

DTG 12 Disclaimer

The Research Council accepts no liability, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or liability arising from the research funded by the grant, except as set out in these terms and conditions, or otherwise agreed in writing.

Where studies are carried out in an NHS Trust, the Trust has a duty of care to its patients. The Research Council does not accept liability for any failure in the Trust's duty of care, or any negligence on the part of its employees.

The Research Councils reserve the right to terminate the grant at any time, subject to reasonable notice and to any payment that may be necessary to cover outstanding and unavoidable commitments.

DTG 13 Status

These terms and conditions will be governed by the laws of England and Wales; all matters relating to the terms and conditions will be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

If any provision of these terms and conditions is found by a court or other legitimate body to be illegal, invalid or unreasonable, it will not affect the remaining terms and conditions which will continue in force.

These terms and conditions, together with any additional conditions set out in the grant, contain the whole agreement between the Research Council and the Research Organisation in relation to the stated grant. The Research Council and the Research Organisation do not intend that any of these terms and conditions should be enforceable by any third party.

Council-Specific DTG Terms and Conditions

NERC Specific

DTG 9

All NERC studentships must be funded for between three and four years. In line with the NERC policy on the flexible use of “fourth year” funding, Research Organisations can agree the funding end date at the outset or during the doctoral project, as long as they have a clear, transparent mechanism. NERC students are still expected to submit their thesis within four years.

CASE Awards

NERC still expects that 30% of algorithm studentships over any three year period are CASE awards and reserves the right to reduce future allocations if these requirements are not met.

Annual Statement

NERC will send to the institution a statement in April of each year showing the payments made during the previous financial year. The institution will be required to certify, by signing and returning the statement, that:

- expenditure of the doctoral training account funds has been incurred in accordance with the prevailing terms and conditions, *and*
- the account shown is continuing

No further payments will be made until the signed annual statement has been returned to NERC.

Payments

Whilst Research Organisations are encouraged to use the flexibility afforded within the DTG, the Research Council reserves the right to re-profile the account if it considers that payments to the Research Organisation are significantly at variance with expenditure.