



# Training Grant Funding Guide 2015-16

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# TRAINING GRANT FUNDING GUIDE 2015-16

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## Introduction

This Guide is aimed at assisting Research Organisations (ROs) in the management of AHRC training grants, and in understanding the AHRC's expectations with regard to the funding of postgraduate students. This Guide applies to all AHRC studentships supported through Studentship Grants, Block Grant Partnerships (BGPs), Block Grant Partnerships Capacity Building (BGP:CBs), Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs), Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs), Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs), Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDPs), KE Hubs, or Research Grants. These will be referred to as 'Training Grants' throughout this document.

This Guide should be read alongside the cross-Research Council Terms and Conditions and Guide. RCUK has also issued a [Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training \(opens in a new window\)](#), which outlines the Research Councils' collective expectations of research organisations and students in relation to doctoral training.

This Guide will be updated at the start of each academic year and may be amended from time to time during the year. Any changes to our rules, regulations or procedures will apply to all studentships unless otherwise stated.

Should an RO need to enquire about a Training Grant, they should contact UK SBS Ltd.

## AHRC's definition of research

The AHRC's definition of research is primarily concerned with the definition of research process, rather than outputs. The definition is built around three key features that students should address in full in order to be considered eligible for support:

- It must define a series of **research questions**, issues or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research. It must also define its aims and objectives in terms of seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding relating to the questions, issues or problems to be addressed.
- It must specify a **research context** for the questions, issues or problems to be addressed. It must specify why it is important that these particular questions, issues or problems should be addressed; what other research is being or has been conducted in this area; and what particular contribution the project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in

the area.

- It must specify the **research methods** for addressing and answering the research questions, issues or problems. It must state how, in the course of the research project, the student will seek to answer the questions, address the issues or solve the problems. It should also explain the rationale for the chosen research methods and why they provide the most appropriate means by which to address the research questions, issues or problems.

## **Practice-led research**

The above definition of research distinguishes between research and practice *per se*. Creative output can be produced or practice undertaken as an integral part of a research process. The AHRC expects this practice to be accompanied by some form of documentation of the research process, as well as some form of textual analysis or explanation to support its position and to demonstrate critical reflection. Creativity or practice which involves no such processes is not eligible for support from the AHRC.

For research to be considered as practice-led, the student's own practice must be an integral part of the proposed project, and the creative and/or performative aspects of the research should be made explicit. The research carried out should bring about enhancements in knowledge and understanding in the discipline, or in related disciplinary areas. Research to provide content is not considered practice-led research in this context. For example, if a film-maker wanted to make a film about refugees, the research questions should be about the process of making the film, not about the experience of the refugees. Work that results purely from the creative or professional development of an artist, however distinguished, is unlikely to fulfil the definition of practice-led research in this context.

## **The AHRC's definition of research training**

The AHRC uses 'research training' in its broadest sense to describe the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will need to successfully pursue their studies, complete a high quality thesis and prepare for a career once their studies have been completed. We aim not to be prescriptive about the type of training or how it should be delivered. 'Training' encompasses all the opportunities – formal and informal – available to postgraduate students to develop as researchers and practitioners in their fields and as highly qualified individuals in preparation for their future careers.

The focus is on the assessment of individual researcher needs and the provision of training to meet those needs. The AHRC considers training to be an ongoing process which takes place throughout a student's studies and is adapted as new needs arise. This means a programme of monitoring and assessment of the student's needs at regular intervals.

Please see the [AHRC's Research Training Framework \(opens in a new window\)](#) for full guidance.

**Annex A** to this document also provides a guidance and advice on collaborative research training.

## **The Role of the Supervisor**

A student's primary supervisor (or co-supervisors) plays a key role in supporting the student's progress and development – in terms of their research project, their development as a researcher, and their wider professional skills. The AHRC expects institutions to have mechanisms in place to ensure that supervisors are aware of the AHRC's and broader Research Council expectations, as well as awareness of the training opportunities available to students, either locally, or through a Doctoral Training Partnership or Centre for Doctoral Training, if appropriate. This should include awareness of the Research Councils' [Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training \(opens in a new window\)](#), and for supervisors of collaborative doctoral awards, the Research Councils' [Joint Vision for Collaborative Training \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The AHRC welcomes co-supervision of students between supervisors of different disciplines or different institutions. Where such arrangements are made, both supervisors should be recorded in Je-S Student Details.

## **Funding**

### **Fund headings**

Each grant will contain one or more of the following fund headings, depending on the scheme under which it was awarded.

**Stipend** – This fund heading covers students' maintenance payments for the duration of the grant. Where the grant is for CDA studentships, and where applicable, this fund heading also contains the additional CDA maintenance payment. London Weighting (an additional £2,000 per annum) has been included in the calculation of the costs for the grant (where this applies) and the additional stipend must be passed on to the student.

For studentships funded through both Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) and Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) calculations are based on a studentship duration of 3.5 years full-time at doctoral rates, and will be profiled over a 4-year period. The additional 0.5 year should be pooled to constitute the Student Development Fund (SDF). For guidance on the use of SDF, please refer to the section later in this Guide.

**Fees** – This fund heading contains funds to cover students' tuition fee payments for the duration of the grant. Note that for studentships funded through CDTs and DTPs fees are calculated on a 3.5 year term but are profiled over a 4-year period.

**Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)** – This fund heading contains £200 per doctoral student per annum to cover the Research Training Support Grant for the duration of the grant. This may be used to support study visits and conference attendance, as well as other research costs which are necessary for the student's primary research, for example, consumables or exhibition costs. For further guidance on the use of RTSG funding, see below.

**Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)** – This fund heading will contain funds to cover already-approved Disabled Students Allowance payments for the duration of the grant. A funding stream will be added at the end of the academic year for claims within that year. In the final year, funds should be requested at reconciliation. Additional DSA claims can be made using the [process described on the RCUK website \(opens in a new window\)](#):

**CDA Maintenance Payment** – £550 per annum is added to the student stipend for CDA students. This is intended to help towards any additional costs incurred by CDA studentships due to the need to work both at the host RO and the non-HEI partner site.

**Other** – This fund heading includes the Cohort Development Fund (CDF) for studentships held at both Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) and Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs). For guidance on the use of CDF, please refer to the section later in this document.

### **Virement**

It is permissible to vire into and out of any of these headings except 'Other' (CDF) and DSA.

### **Can money be moved between training grants?**

It is not possible to move funding between Grants as reconciliation will be against the funding provided on that Grant. You may, however, fund students from multiple Grants. For example, if a student's end date is beyond the end date of the Grant, and you have another Grant which has funding available to cover the student's remaining period, you



may draw the student's funding from this other Grant. You will need to update Je-S Student Details record to show that the student is now being funded from this second Grant. If it is not possible to move a student onto another grant, or if there is no other grant available, please contact the AHRC.

The exception is the RTSG, which can be "pooled" across Grants. This means that funding in this line of a grant can be used for any eligible AHRC student. You must ensure that records are kept as to how this funding has been allocated and you must not claim more than the total RTSG allocated for any particular Grant.

## Payments

All payments on the grant are made to the RO at which the student is registered or to the lead RO if it is a collaborative award. The AHRC is not able to make payments directly to students. The RO should not pay maintenance due to students in arrears; the RO should pay the total sum of the maintenance for that quarter in advance, in accordance with the student's entitlement.

For DTP and CDT awards, payments for each year will be profiled into four equal, quarterly payments. For existing awards, the profile was according to the duration of the studentships included in the grant (i.e. the total payments may decrease in later years/quarters as students on the grant reach their AHRC funding end date). The profile depended on the numbers of doctoral and Master's students anticipated each year.

Funding for DTPs and CDTs has been provided on the basis of doctoral awards of 3.5 years. This will be paid over 4 years. However, it is not expected that every studentship will be for 3.5 years. The 6 months' funding (over and above a standard 3 year studentship) should be pooled to comprise the Student Development Fund (SDF). It is expected that the primary use will be to extend the duration of a studentship in a flexible way, i.e. depending on the additional development opportunities (placement, secondments, etc) that a student may take up at any time within the period of the studentship, therefore extending their funding end-date (see below for uses of the SDF).

ROs may use their funding flexibly, including matched funding, to support students for longer or shorter periods, but no additional funding will be provided by the AHRC. The student **cannot** be asked to self-fund any part of their study. In terms of recruitment, the RO should advertise the studentship as fully funded regardless of whether the full amount is coming from the AHRC. Studentships should not be advertised as being part funded.

It is the RO's responsibility to ensure that the costs incurred by students in participating in activities funded from the RTSG, CDF or SDF are reasonable, and that that these funds are used responsibly.

Where funding is being awarded from the SDF, CDF or RTSG on a competitive basis (which will be the case for the majority of uses), the process for applying for the funding and the basis on which decisions are made, must be made clear to all parties. The award holder must also have a clear complaints and appeals process in place to address any problems which might arise.

Tickets cannot be purchased for travel which will take place after the end of the studentship award or the end of the grant.

### **Student Development Fund (SDF)**

Funding within DTPs and CDTs is provided funding to enable longer PhDs to be supported. Funding for each studentship has been calculated on the basis of a duration of 3.5 years, but this additional 0.5 years of funding should be pooled by the RO to form a 'Student Development Fund'. This funding is primarily available to extend the duration of PhD studentships flexibly and responsively – i.e. to support an appropriate range of training for individual AHRC-funded students according to their individual needs.

The funding must be used to support needs-based training for individual students, in the form of development opportunities beneficial to a student's doctoral research. In many cases the SDF funding will mean that a studentship is extended beyond the normal 3 year period for full-time registration. For example:

Placements – where a student is undertaking a placement which is not an integral part of the research project.

International placements – where a student requires an extended period overseas, for example, to develop specific language skills to undertake their research project successfully. It is expected that the need to develop language skills will have been agreed at the start of the award, i.e. in these cases the student's initial offer will be for more than 3 years' funding.

Skills development – where extended time is intended for students who need to acquire additional skills, for example, high-level methodological skills, or significant and demanding new discipline-specific skills, such as palaeographical, papyrological or epigraphical skills. Where the development of new skills is required in order to undertake fieldwork, or new skills are developed *by undertaking* fieldwork, then this is an appropriate use of the SDF. Where fieldwork is being undertaken principally for

primary research e.g. access to an archive, then this should be supported from the RTSG..

There may be other circumstances in which the SDF is used to enable students to be supported for a longer period, and which were outlined in the original DTP/CDT application. These will have been agreed with the AHRC at the outset of the award. Equally there may be uses of SDF funding (e.g. to cover the costs of a specific training course relevant to a student's research or practice) which do not entail an extension to the period of the studentship. If the SDF is used in this way for high-cost training, the grant holder may need to seek appropriate financial approval from their RO to charge costs to the grant ahead of the grant profile.

Where a student is in receipt of 'fees only' funding from the DTP/CDT, they may also benefit from training funded from the SDF, provided this does not take the form of a stipend award (eg to cover the period of a placement).

The SDF should not be used to create additional Doctoral studentships. Neither should it be used to support any existing infrastructure, to reimburse the costs of university or partner staff resources such as Travel and Subsistence, or to be used to support activities that would normally be supported by ROs.

A student with a Bachelor's degree can be funded for Master's study through the SDF, but there must be a clear rationale for the subjects that are offered at Master's level. This might include the benefits to the individual students, the impact on capacity building and known gaps in support for some subject areas. An individual student receiving Master's support (from the SDF or from matched funding) may not automatically progress from their Master's to AHRC-funded doctoral study. All students are required to undergo a full application process in open competition to receive a doctoral award, regardless of when and where they completed their Master's degree, or how it was funded.

A student entering with an existing Master's qualification could simply be funded for their doctoral study; it is anticipated that most students will enter via this route.

Any Master's students funded from the award must be fully supported throughout and **must not** be expected to self-fund any aspect of their study.

### **Cohort Development Fund (CDF)**

ROs holding a DTP or CDT are allocated an additional sum under the CDF, which should be used to support innovative training and development activities for the wider cohort of DTP or CDT funded students. Generally, these activities should be accessible to the

entire cohort of DTP or CDT funded students. In some cases, more focussed subject-specific activities may be provided but these should be open to all eligible students.

CDF is **not** intended to support needs-based training for individual students, as there is provision for this under the SDF. CDF funding may be used to cover the travel costs of DTP or CDT funded students travelling to cohort events. However, tickets cannot be purchased for travel which will take place after the end of the studentship award or the end of the grant. It is the RO's responsibility to ensure that the costs incurred in the course of attending CDF activities are reasonable.

The AHRC has not provided a list of eligible and non-eligible uses for the CDF in order to allow consortia the freedom to address the needs of their distinctive cohorts. The only caveats are that we would not expect the CDF to be used to support any existing infrastructure, to reimburse the costs of university or partner staff resources such as Travel and Subsistence, or to be used to support activities that would normally be supported by ROs.

It is also possible that CDF-funded activities could be opened to other AHRC-funded students (CDA award holders for example) or the wider cohort of Arts and Humanities students within a consortium or RO (e.g. spaces could be made available at a CDF-funded student-led conference for students within a consortium who are not funded by the AHRC). If a consortium is able to extend CDF-supported events to non-AHRC students then this would be welcomed, provided that students supported through the DTP/CDT have priority.

### **Matched Funding of SDF or CDF**

Award holders may be able to secure matched funding for the SDF or CDF. To be considered as 'matched funding' we would expect this to be used for the same range of activities that are covered by the AHRC funding. However, within this it would be possible to use the funding for wider activities than those which are eligible for AHRC funding. For example, matched funding might include supervisor or partner travel which are not eligible from AHRC funding.

### **Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)**

The Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) can be used to enable doctoral students to undertake overseas and UK study visits, attend conferences, and to cover other primary research costs e.g. consumables or artist materials. These extended uses are at the discretion of the award holder and the consortium partners. The RTSG is included within all Training Grants through which doctoral students are supported, except Project Studentships. Full award, fees-only, full-time and part-time doctoral award holders are

all eligible to receive RTSG support. Project students and Master's level students are not eligible for RTSG support. It is the responsibility of the RO to determine how this funding is allocated, within the guidelines provided by the AHRC.

The value of the annual RTSG paid to ROs as part of a grant is calculated on the basis of the number of AHRC-funded doctoral students at that RO. Although the total RTSG amount on a grant is calculated on the basis of an amount per doctoral student per year, there is no limit to the amount of funding any one student can receive from the total RTSG funding allocated to the grant. ROs should not consider the RTSG a £200 per year 'voucher' for each individual AHRC-funded student, but rather to consider the total RTSG payment on a grant as a pot from which it allocates funds on the basis of student needs and priorities.

Funds from the RTSG may be pooled across all training grants and entitled schemes (Project Studentships are not eligible). At final reconciliation stage, ROs are required to declare how much in total has been spent against RTSG for the students funded from that grant (but a student-by-student breakdown will not be required). ROs and award holders should maintain a robust accounting system of the amounts spent on each eligible AHRC-funded student and should be able to demonstrate a transparent and fair process for awarding RTSG funding to eligible AHRC-funded students. These records will be included in the Funding Assurance Programme (FAP), and the AHRC is entitled to request these records at any time.

RTSG should not be used for broader professional training and development costs (for DTPs and CDTs these are covered by the CDF and SDF). Nor should it be used to support costs of working with an external partner, this applies whether the external partner is part of a CDA or CDP or a partner for a placement or internship. The full range of activities which the RTSG will cover should be made clear to all parties. The process for applying for the funding and the decision-making process must also be transparent to all parties. Some general considerations which should be taken into account:

- We would not normally expect a student to receive more than one allocation from RTSG funding.
- Funding must not be provided for students in the writing-up stage of their study.
- Funded activities must not take place before 1st October in the first year of a student's award.

- Funding must be allocated for activities which are essential to the satisfactory completion of the student's thesis/course.
- The duration of a study visit would not normally exceed 12 months.
- It is the RO's responsibility to ensure that it is satisfied with the student's programme of research, and that the student has obtained the necessary visas and permissions for it, and taken proper account of any health, safety and security issues.
- We would not normally expect a student to go on a UK or overseas study visit in the last three months of the funded period of their award.
- The RTSG can be used to provide a contribution towards the costs of travel, additional accommodation, and other associated costs that are incurred as a result of the student's trip. It is the RO's responsibility to ensure that the costs incurred on the study visit or in attending the conference are reasonable.

### **Fees**

The fee payment includes an element to help departments and organisations meet the requirements of the Council's Research Training Framework. The Council expects ROs to use an element of the fee payment to develop and enhance their training provision for all AHRC-funded arts and humanities students, and to make this training available to all relevant students, where appropriate, including those not receiving AHRC funding.

### **What other funding is available?**

The AHRC runs a scheme which offers additional funding opportunities to students:

#### **International Placement Scheme**

The AHRC's International Placement Scheme (IPS) funds short-term fellowships at prestigious international research institutions for UK postgraduate students and early career researchers. The scheme is run annually, with approximately 50 places available across or seven current host institutions:

- Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin, USA
- The Huntington Library, California, USA
- Library of Congress, Washington DC, USA\*
- National Institutes for the Humanities, Japan
- Shanghai Theatre Academy, Shanghai, China

- Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., USA
- Yale Center for British Art, Connecticut, USA

The scheme is expanding annually, so it may have additional hosts from the 2015/2016 academic year. Please check the [IPS page on the AHRC's website \(opens in a new window\)](#) for details.

\*ESRC-funded candidates may also apply to the IPS, but only to the Library of Congress.

## Managing Studentships

In addition to the information below, **Annex B** to this document includes further guidance regarding the management of Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) and Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs), together with AHRC's expectations regarding our engagement and partnership with DTPs and CDTs.

### Student allocations

ROs do not need to seek permission in advance from the AHRC for adjustments to allocations which remain within the overall broad remit of their original award and are consistent with the AHRC's strategic direction. However, ROs must contact the AHRC to discuss any planned significant departure from the plans set out in their original proposal. For example, if they intend to withdraw completely from offering AHRC awards in a particular subject, or to offer awards in a new subject area not previously covered by their allocation.

### Recruitment

On all advertisements, regardless of the forum, it must be clearly stated that it is AHRC studentships that are being offered.

Studentships should be advertised as fully funded regardless of whether the full amount is coming from the AHRC. Studentships should not be advertised as being part funded.

ROs should not recruit students to specific, pre-determined research topics or courses through a BGP, BGP CB, DTP or CDT. These schemes need to foster and encourage innovation and students must be able to approach an RO with whatever project they want to undertake. ROs will need to determine and be satisfied that the proposed project or course falls within a subject area within the award.

When advertising for students, it would be permissible to highlight particular research strengths or research strategies and this may be in connection with research projects or teams where the student might benefit from working in a wider research environment.

CDAs differ in that students are being recruited to pre-determined projects, and hence need to be made aware of the context in which they are taking on their research. Equally, they must be allowed scope to help shape their thesis and have input into how the project will operate.

Where a student declines an offer of a studentship, the RO may wish to offer the award to a reserve candidate, but only where the individual is of sufficient calibre. For longer training grants, such as for DTP and CDTs, the RO or consortia may wish to leave the award unfilled and carry forward the funding to the next recruitment round.

### **Student Eligibility**

Every student, their subject, course of study and the RO at which they are studying must meet the eligibility criteria set out in the [Conditions of Research Council Training Grants \(opens in a new window\)](#) and [RCUK Training Grant Guide \(opens in a new window\)](#), along with any scheme-specific guidance. Information on the AHRC's subject domain can be found in Section 7 of the AHRC's [Research Funding Guide \(opens in a new window\)](#).

In terms of academic eligibility, a student should have gained an undergraduate degree (usually an Honours degree, such as a BA, BMus, BSc, LLB or equivalent) from a recognised RO, or be an undergraduate expecting to graduate prior to the studentship being taken up. Other qualifications should be considered only exceptionally.

If the student subsequently fails to gain an undergraduate degree, they are not entitled to receive AHRC studentship funding.

Students without an undergraduate degree may be considered for an AHRC studentship only if they are able to demonstrate substantial equivalent and relevant experience that has prepared them to undertake their proposed course of study.

In addition, those applying for a doctoral studentship should normally have, or be studying for, a Master's degree or similar postgraduate qualification. Where a student is studying for a Master's degree or similar postgraduate qualification, they should have met all the course requirements prior to the start date of their AHRC doctoral studentship.

If a student does not have experience of formal postgraduate study, they may be eligible for a studentship only if they can demonstrate evidence of sustained experience beyond undergraduate degree level that is specifically relevant to their proposed research topic, and could be considered equivalent to Master's study. The RO must have evidence as to how the training and development the student has received is equivalent to that



obtained through a Master's course and, therefore, prepares them to continue to doctoral study.

### **Master's Support**

In order to provide more integrated training, and since the AHRC will no longer be supporting standalone Master's degrees, any student taking a Master's degree, and funded by the AHRC, should be doing so with the intention to continue to a Doctoral degree. The AHRC will only support Master's studentships that are designed to lead on to doctoral research.

Masters students should be paid at least the minimum stipend applicable for the type of award they hold. [Rates for 2015/16 can be found here \(opens in new window\)](#). From 2015-16, we are no longer specifying a separate Master's rate, and for Masters studentships funded from DTP and CDT awards, it is expected that students will be funded a stipend at the doctoral rate.

The competitive award of Master's and Doctoral support remains an integral part of the AHRC's postgraduate strategy. Although 1+3 or 2+2 models for postgraduate study are possible, ROs must not offer studentships on that basis at the outset. Any AHRC-funded or matched funded Master's student wishing to continue to doctoral study (whether at the same or different RO) must apply separately for a doctoral award and compete with all other potential candidates. We do not wish students to be locked into or out of funding but rather we wish to ensure that the best quality students are supported at all stages. It may also be necessary for a student to transfer to a different RO to undertake their doctoral studies, which should be encouraged if it is in the best interests of the student.

### **Duration of study supported**

For DTPs and CDTs, the RO must consider carefully the duration of award that is being offered to the student. The SDF allows for a full-time award of longer than 3 years, in specific circumstances, and it is likely that this will be determined after the studentship has commenced. We would suggest that the student's offer should make clear that there is a possibility of extension. Irrespective of whether the studentship is offered for longer or if it is extended, the submission date must be no more than 4 years from the start of the award for a full-time student.

If a student has undertaken a 1 year Master's, a full-time studentship award for doctoral study would be anticipated to be 3 years (but see above for SDF opportunities which would extend the duration). If a student has undertaken a 2 year Master's at the same

institution, the period of the full-time doctoral studentship award would be expected to take into account the additional year's Master's study.

Students who have already commenced doctoral study are eligible to apply for AHRC funding, provided that, at the start of the AHRC award, they will have at least 50% of their period of study remaining. The award would be made for the remainder of their period of study, mirroring the co-funding requirement that at least 50% of the costs of a studentship come from a Research Council Training Grant. In determining the length of a studentship to be offered, the period may be reduced to take account of any time a student has already spent on doctoral study. Funding should only be offered for the period required to complete their studies as a fully registered doctoral student.

We expect students to receive full support from their RO to enable them to achieve the submission date which was agreed at the start of their award, notwithstanding other opportunities which may arise as noted above.

### **Changing between full-time and part-time study**

In cases where a student wishes to change between modes of study, ROs should calculate the remaining length of the studentship on the basis of funding already received.

Where a student has changed from part-time to full-time status, the student's submission due date should be set to be 12 months after the end of the studentship. ROs will need to input this information into Je-S.

Where an overpayment occurs as a result of a change of the mode of study, the AHRC will seek reimbursement during the reconciliation process.

### **Transfers**

The receiving RO will be required to accept all the terms and conditions relating to the studentship as it was offered to the student at the outset, including its start date and length, registration requirements and (in the case of a doctoral student) submission date.

If the transferring student is the only student on a particular grant, the entire grant and any remaining funds must be transferred to the receiving institution. In this situation both ROs should contact the AHRC to arrange for a transfer of the grant to the receiving RO.

### **Replacement of terminated students**

Students whose funding was obtained through the Open Competition or Studentship Competition may not be replaced if the student or RO terminates their studies. This is because the student was selected to receive funding on the basis of an assessment of their specific, individual application rather than through a nomination or RO recruitment process.

Students funded through other schemes may be replaced. Details of the replacement student must be recorded in Je-S. Similarly, if a student has been moved to a new grant, this needs to be reflected in the Je-S update.

### **Can a CDA student be replaced?**

The AHRC will allow some flexibility if a nominated student subsequently withdraws after commencing their studies. An RO may be able to re-recruit in full to the studentship place within the first year of the project. Studentships should be re-advertised in the same way, but it may be possible to offer it to a suitable candidate who had previously applied through open selection. Please contact the AHRC for further advice.

### **Suspensions**

If the suspension takes the student beyond the end date of the grant, the RO should either add the student on to a later grant covering the remaining period of the studentship, or request a no-cost extension to the grant if no other grant is available. Extensions are not typically allowed to training grants. Funds remaining on a training grant will not follow that student to the new grant. The flexible use of funding in the training grant should allow ROs to make the best use of the funding available, for example, to part-fund another student. If an RO is unsure how to deploy unused funds, please contact the AHRC to discuss options. Any funds left over will be reconciled once the grant has finished.

If it is not possible to move a student onto another grant, or if there is no other grant available, please contact the AHRC.

If a student is unable to resume their studies after a period of suspension, when the grant is reconciled, the RO will be expected to repay any funds that have been overpaid to the student.

Where problems arise with the management of funds within the terms and conditions of the training grant, the RO should discuss this with the AHRC. It should be noted that the AHRC will only permit the extension of training grants under exceptional circumstances.

Note: Changing student details in Je-S does not change the training grant itself, as the two are independent.

### **Internships and placements**

If the internship will be salaried, the student must suspend their studies during the period of the internship.

If the student will be paid hourly as an intern, and will not be working full-time, it is for the student and the RO to decide whether this will disrupt the student's studies. If the RO decides to agree to the student undertaking the internship while continuing their studies for a discrete period of time, the AHRC award does not need to be suspended. As a rule of thumb, if the internship will last for longer than five weeks, then the studentship should be suspended.

The AHRC does not expect a student to receive maintenance as part of an AHRC studentship if that student will be earning money for a placement or internship that will cover the same basic costs.

For DTPs/CDTs, if the student is undertaking an internship or placement as part of an SDF funded opportunity, it is possible to extend the studentship period to take into account the placement period e.g. a studentship which is originally awarded as three years but then has a two month placement would allow for a studentship of 38 months.

If the AHRC funding continues during the internship or placement, it is not possible to extend the submission date.

### **Changes of thesis title, research direction, course, or programme of study**

The AHRC accepts that projects evolve, but ROs must not agree a change to a course or programme of study that falls outside the AHRC's subject domain or outside the subject areas allocated for that particular award. If the programme falls in another subject area, the RO should consider this in respect of the overall balance of subjects within the award. If the RO is unsure, they should contact the AHRC.

### **Monitoring**

Students and ROs must complete and return any reports relating to the awards as may be required from time to time.

### **First employment destinations**

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) will conduct on the AHRC's behalf an annual survey of the first employment destinations of funded students and ROs will be

required to submit an annual return. This provides the Council with useful information about the progress of funded students in the labour market, and the AHRC asks students to co-operate by keeping their RO informed about their employment. There may also be other surveys undertaken by the Research Councils or undertaken on their behalf as well as national surveys such as DHLE, to which we would expect ROs and RC-funded, and previously funded, students to contribute.

### **Submission rate monitoring**

On accepting a studentship to pursue a programme of doctoral research a student also accepts a commitment to make every effort to complete their project, and to submit their thesis, if possible by the end of the period of funding.

For studentships commencing on or after 1 October 2011 the submission date is calculated from the end date of an award, with full-time students expected to submit one year after the end of an award, and no later than 4 years after the start of the award. Part-time students are expected to submit two years after the end of an award, and no later than 4 years FTE after the start of the award. This is assuming that the award is not suspended at any point (see sections below).

In the case of DTP/CDT studentships, if the period of the studentship is extended using SDF funding, students must still submit within four years for a full-time studentship or the equivalent for a part-time studentship.

Where a student has changed from full-time to part-time status, the student's submission due date should be set to be 24 months after the end of the studentship. If the change is from part-time to full-time, the submission date should be set to one year after the end of the studentship. ROs will need to input this information into Je-S.

By the end of the studentship, students are expected to have completed their thesis, or to be close to completion. The additional period after the end of a studentship and before the submission date provides an opportunity to meet any unforeseen circumstances that have arisen during the course of the studentship. The additional period is not funded by the AHRC.

On accepting an award which includes studentships to pursue programmes of doctoral research the RO also accepts a commitment to support the student throughout the duration of their studies to ensure that a high quality thesis can be submitted on time. However, it is not appropriate for the RO to require a student to submit a thesis that is below the necessary standard in order to enable the RO to maintain its submission rates.

For some students, the submission date will have been populated in Je-S by the AHRC. These dates reflect the previous rules on setting the submission date. The date should not be updated unless there is a change in the student's circumstances, for which a change in submission date is permissible. It is the RO's responsibility to inform students of any changes to their submission date resulting from suspensions or submission date extensions.

The end date of a student's AHRC funding should normally be extended by the length of the suspension. Periods of suspension should also be taken into account when the date by which the student should submit their doctoral thesis is calculated, with the submission date normally extended by the length of the suspension.

When the RO alters a submission date on Je-S, they will have to add a reason for the change which will be monitored as part of the submission rate survey. The RO should ensure there is sufficient detail recorded on Je-S regarding the reason for the change to enable AHRC to be assured of the decision and the rationale behind it with reference to the Terms and Conditions of the award. The RO should ensure that they do not include information of a personal or sensitive nature.

### **Submission rate survey**

The AHRC is accountable for the public funds it manages and distributes. The Submission Rate Survey is one method the Council uses to monitor the progress and outcome of studentships.

The Submission Rate Survey is an annual survey that calculates the rate of submission of doctoral students who have held AHRC postgraduate studentships. The census date of the survey is 30 September each year. Je-S Student Details is used to collect information from ROs about actual and expected submission dates of doctoral students due to submit by the survey census date. Once the census date has passed, ROs will be informed that the submission survey window is open and will be given the opportunity to check and amend the data for all students who were due to submit by the census date. ROs which do not meet the published deadline for completing the survey are recorded as a nil return. Once the deadline for completing the survey has passed, the submission and completion rates for individual institutions will be calculated.

The survey includes all AHRC-funded doctoral students who took up studentships four, five and six years previously. Doctoral students are expected to submit a thesis within one year of the end of their studentship, if they are studying full-time, and within two years if they are studying part-time. Sanctions will be applied by the AHRC if submission thresholds are not met (see below).

For example, for full-time students who took up awards on 1 October 2011, the AHRC would expect submission by 30 September 2015, but part-time students would not be expected to submit until 30 September 2018. Part-time students are included in the RO submission rate calculations alongside full-time students.

The AHRC also collects information on completion rates as part of the annual submission rate survey. For these purposes, completion is defined as the award of a doctoral or other degree. This is normally counted as the date of the successful viva examination and is the earliest date on which it is known that the doctoral degree can be recommended. If that information is not readily available, an alternative is the date the Degree Committee or equivalent recommended the award.

Where the award of a doctoral degree has not been recommended, ROs should amend Je-S Student Details to reflect the actual degree awarded. If a student submits a doctoral level thesis and is subsequently awarded a lower degree e.g. MPhil, the RO should record this within Je-S Student Details as 'No Degree Awarded'. Please note, this will still be shown as a submission for the purposes of the submission rate survey, as a doctoral thesis will have been submitted. However, if the decision is taken in advance of submission that a student should submit a thesis at a lower degree level, this will be shown as a nil-submission for the purposes of the submission rate survey exercise as no doctoral thesis will have been submitted.

The AHRC will also be requesting updated information on submission and completion for students that were first included in previous submission rate surveys, and where this information has not previously been provided. Should the 5 year rate be published, it will appear as an overarching figure for all AHRC doctoral studentships and will not be broken down by RO.

### **Sanctions policy**

The AHRC's monitoring of submission rates is intended to encourage the timely completion of a thesis, and incorporates a sanctions policy. ROs identified in the survey with submission rates below the target thresholds are ineligible to hold doctoral studentships for two years. We will continue to monitor and sanction at RO level, even if the RO is part of a consortium as it is the RO at which the student is registered which is responsible for that student.

The AHRC no longer applies sanctions at a departmental level. We do monitor by department and may contact the RO about the performance of individual departments if there are particular issues or causes for concern.

The Council aggregates the results for departments in a single RO. This is to ensure that high submission rates are maintained within each RO, and is in line with the other Research Councils. Sanctions are applied where an institution has 8 or more studentships included in their survey over the 4-year survey period (2012-2015) **and** an institution's submission rate is below 70%, **both** for those students surveyed in the current survey year (2015), **and** for the aggregated 4-year rate i.e. 2012-2015. This ensures that ROs with a smaller number of studentships, where a small number of nil submissions can have a significant effect on submission rates, are not penalised.

ROs facing sanctions will have their AHRC funding for support of new doctoral studentships withdrawn for a period of two years. This applies to all doctoral awards, regardless of the scheme through which they were originally awarded. Where the RO is part of a consortium, we will ask the consortium not to allocate doctoral awards to that RO for a two year period. Funding for current students will be unaffected and the RO will be able to hold Master's awards for that period (in cases where Master's are supported through the award). For single RO awards, the doctoral studentship funding will be withdrawn entirely for that two year period; ROs will not be able to re-allocate them to support Master's students or to add them to their allocation in the latter years of the award.

### **Institutional Warnings**

A warning will be issued to ROs where the submission rate falls below the 70% threshold but is above 60%. Sanctions will be applied if they fail to meet the 70% threshold in the following year's survey.

ROs cannot change submission or completion dates for individual students once they have been included in published survey results.

### **Changes affecting submission rate calculations**

The AHRC will take the following changes of circumstance/registration into consideration when calculating expected submission dates:

**Transfers between ROs** - If a student has transferred from one RO to another, the ROs concerned must ensure the student's records are properly updated in Je-S Student Details (note: that the receiving RO needs to update the registration record and the submission record), and that the student is showing as being registered at the receiving RO. Providing this has taken place, the student will appear on the survey of the receiving RO, and will count in the calculation of the submission rate of that RO.



**Transfer between ROs after the award has ended** - If an RO exceptionally agrees that one of its students may transfer between ROs or departments after the end of their AHRC award, but before their expected AHRC submission date, that student will still be surveyed under the original RO or department, i.e. where they were registered prior to the transfer.

The date at which the student first took up the award will remain the same for the purposes of submission rate calculations.

**Suspension of studies during the period of an award** - During the period of an award, the AHRC will allow suspensions of the award for up to 12 months for reasons such as maternity, adoption or shared parental leave, illness or other exceptional personal circumstances.

Since October 2010, ROs have no longer been required to seek AHRC approval of such suspensions, provided they were in accordance with the terms and conditions of awards. Periods of suspension approved by the RO and recorded in Je-S Student Details will be taken into account when calculating the expected submission dates. Periods of suspension approved by the Council prior to October 2010 will be taken into account when calculating the expected submission dates. However, AHRC reserves the right to revert to the original submission date if the suspension is not in accordance with its terms and conditions.

**Periods of certified illness during the period of an award** - As periods of certified illness of up to 13 weeks are included within the tenure of a studentship, extensions to submission dates on this basis should not be approved by the RO and/or recorded in Je-S Student Details at the time/during the tenure of a studentship. The expectation is that this period will be able to be made up within the tenure of the award. Periods of illness lasting longer than 13 weeks should be dealt with as suspensions as detailed above.

If, during the writing up period, the student makes a request for an extension to their submission date based on a certified period of illness experienced during the tenure of their studentship, the RO may extend the submission date. The date may be extended only by the period specifically covered by medical certificate(s), and only if the RO was notified of the period of certified illness at the time it occurred.

**Deceased** - Students who are recoded as deceased on Je-S Student Details are omitted from calculations of submission rates.

**Terminations** - Full-time students whose awards are terminated during the first year of the award will be excluded from all submission rate calculations. Similarly, part-time students whose awards are terminated during the first 2 years of the award are excluded from calculations. Students whose award is terminated after the periods indicated above will still be included in the calculations.

### **Extensions to submission dates**

The AHRC no longer needs to approve extensions to submission dates. The RO is responsible for considering the request in accordance with the guidelines below. If the extension is eligible and agreed by the RO, the RO should amend the submission date on Je-S Student Details, and add an appropriate reason, as shown in the bullet points below.

Requests must be made to the RO formally and in advance of the submission date. The RO should only consider requests to extend the submission date by up to one year. Extensions cannot be approved or recorded retrospectively therefore it is important that such cases are brought to the RO's attention in advance of the student's expected AHRC submission date.

If the reason for the extension is not in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award, or insufficient detail regarding the reason for this change has been recorded on Je-S Student Details, the AHRC reserves the right to contact the RO to query the change in submission date and to revert to the original submission date if the extension is not permissible within our terms and conditions.

During the Submission Rate Survey, the AHRC will check to see whether any amendments have been made to student submission dates through Je-S Student Details, and will consider the reason for the change provided by the RO. If a student's submission date is amended without providing an appropriate or eligible reason, the AHRC will consider the date amendment to be invalid, and the student will be counted as a 'nil-submitter' in that year's Submission Rate Survey.

While the AHRC will normally accept a submission date extended by the RO to take account of any period of suspension notified during a studentship, only in exceptional circumstances will we accept the RO extending the target date for submission on account of difficulties that arise during the writing up period.

The exceptional circumstances where an extension to a student's expected AHRC submission date will be considered are:

- Illness or accident – this refers to any period during the writing-up period where the student was unable to work on their thesis for medical reasons.
- Exceptional personal circumstances – this includes bereavement and any other difficult personal circumstance that has rendered the student unable to work on their thesis during the writing-up period.
- Scholarships – when a scholarship is awarded after a studentship has finished and before submission. The scholarship must provide additional value to the original thesis or offer the student a rare opportunity to research a related topic.  
Extensions should not be granted if a scholarship is awarded to fund an additional year of research on the student’s current thesis topic.
- Maternity, adoption, or shared parental leave – a maximum of 12 months for each individual period of maternity, adoption, or shared parental leave during the writing-up period.

Periods of paternity leave of up to 2 weeks granted during the period of the studentship or the writing up period will not be taken into consideration when submission dates are calculated. Requests to extend submission dates on the basis of a period of paternity leave during the period of the studentship should only be considered during the writing up period. Such requests should be submitted to the RO in advance of the expected submission date, and recorded by the RO in Je-S Student Details if approved.

Periods of shared parental leave of up to 50 weeks granted during the period of the studentship should be dealt with as an interruption to studies and recorded in Je-S Student Details in the normal way, and will automatically be taken into consideration when submission dates are calculated.

Any requests for extensions to submission dates relating to periods of paternity or shared parental leave that occur during the writing up period, regardless of duration, should be submitted to the RO in advance of the expected submission date, and recorded by the RO in Je-S Student Details if approved.

The following cases are not considered grounds for an extension:

- Taking up full-time employment after the award has ended - The RO should not grant an extension to the submission deadline if the submission has been delayed because the student has taken up full-time employment after an award has ended, i.e. during their writing up year. It may be possible for students to take up a short-term teaching appointment, but only during the period of a studentship and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award. Taking up

employment at the end of a studentship is considered a normal outcome of doctoral study and is therefore not a reason for extending a submission date.

- Transfers from full-time to part-time study after a studentship has ended - The RO should not approve extensions to submission dates because the student has changed their mode of registration after their studentship has ended, i.e. during their writing up year.
- Requests submitted after a student's submission date has passed - The RO cannot grant extension requests retrospectively. If a student does not submit their thesis or a legitimate extension request on or before their submission date, they will count as a nil submitter.
- Periods of illness without a medical certificate - Extensions to submission date will not be approved for periods of illness if appropriate medical certificates were not submitted to the RO at the time.

If, having read the guidance above, you are still unsure whether a student within their writing up year has a valid reason to extend their submission date then please contact the AHRC via email at: [psa@ahrc.ac.uk](mailto:psa@ahrc.ac.uk).

## **Annex A: Collaborative Working, Academic and Non-Academic**

This section applies to both academic and non-academic partnership/collaborative working. It should be read in conjunction with the AHRC's *Partnership Working the in the Arts and Humanities, A Guide to Good Practice*", available on the AHRC's website here, and the Research Councils' [Joint Vision for Collaborative Training \(opens in a new window\)](#).

### **Developing and Demonstrating a Collaboration**

The first step in setting up a collaboration, whether academic or non-academic, is to establish who may be a suitable partner for the project. Non-HEI organisations may wish to contact a HEI's Research, Development or External Liaison Office to discuss how their activities may benefit a project. Alternatively, HEIs may seek to find a non-HEI organisation which could utilise a particular area of research or knowledge. HEI departments should also contact the appropriate office/person in their organisation for guidance and support. This office/person may be particularly useful with regard to setting up agreements or contracts.

Colleagues who are already running successful collaborations may also be a good source of help and information in setting up a partnership. We encourage new collaborators to seek them out and utilise their expertise.

Initiating or joining a network of partnership projects can be useful in developing new partnerships as well as providing a forum for discussing ideas, problems and good practice. Anecdotal feedback has also shown that AHRC CDA students find real value in networking opportunities amongst themselves.

Collaborative working can be extremely rewarding and exciting, but it is not an easy option as it takes effort, hard work and most of all commitment to make it work and to manage it successfully. Partners should not underestimate this in setting up a project, and should not enter such a partnership if there is any doubt that they will be able to make that commitment. Academic supervisors should expect that the supervision of research students who are working on a collaborative project will involve an increased workload in comparison to the supervision of a standard doctoral student. In relation to the length of the commitment, partners must be prepared to commit to the project for the full length of the award, at least up to the submission of the research students thesis.

Non-academic partners should not be discouraged from entering a collaboration because they consider they do not have the capability, or capacity to offer academic supervision to a PhD student. The responsibility for academic supervision lies with the academic supervisor. While some organisations/individuals may be able to offer some academic support, the non-academic supervisor role offers something different. It provides specific training and access to resources, people, collections, processes, knowledge and expertise that are vital to the success of the research project, and which would not be possible without the collaboration. It is imperative that the non-academic supervisor has the full support of their organisation and is able to co-direct the project and ensure that not only are the organisation's objectives being met, but that the student's research is fully supported and kept on track.

Non-academic organisations may also wish to approach a collaboration with the view that involvement in collaborative projects provides good opportunities not just for students, but for their own staff development and skills training. In all cases, the AHRC encourages both academic and non-academic partners to make good use of the opportunities afforded by collaborating to share their skills and knowledge and learn about each other's organisations and ways of working.

Those considering establishing a collaborative arrangement must be able to demonstrate that a true/real relationship exists between the partner organisations, and that it is established as an equal partnership. Whilst the student and their PhD are central to the award and the PhD must meet the requirements and regulations of the HEI concerned, one of the main aims of collaboration is to establish and maintain links between academia and external partners that have some real, tangible and long-lasting benefits.

The main indicators of a strong collaboration are listed below and should be considered both in the formation of a collaboration and development of a proposal. These are based on the development of a joint PhD project but the principles apply equally to shorter term projects which might form a placement opportunity:

- Do we agree what the project is about, will it make a good doctoral project and what are the wider benefits?
- Does the project meet the needs of both collaborating partners?
- What is the 'bottom-line' in terms of expectations?
- Is it feasible within the period of an AHRC studentship?
- Do we have a common understanding of language – do we agree what the terms *supervisor* and *training*, for example, mean?
- Do partners have the necessary time and resources to commit to the project?

- Are we clear on:
  - The arrangements for joint supervision of the project/student
  - The arrangements for sorting out confidentiality or ethical issues and intellectual property rights
  - The means for identifying an appropriate student
  - Provision for training, monitoring and review of the student/project
  - Provision of and access to the required resources, collections etc.
  - Financial commitments, contributions & procedures
  - Expected outcomes, timing and availability of research results.
- Do we have a mechanism for establishing a formal agreement setting out expectations and responsibilities for the above?
- Is there clear agreement that it is an **equal partnership with mutual benefits**.

### **Other Sources of Information**

[The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement \(opens in a new window\)](#)

includes further useful information and suggestions for building and maintaining collaborations.

### **Collaborative working – academic**

Where two or more ROs are working in a consortium, the AHRC award is made to all ROs identified in the proposal, although we expect the award to be administered and coordinated by the lead organisation, and expect the Coordinator to be based at the lead organisation.

A consortium award is made on the assumption that the lead organisation of the consortium will take the overall responsibility for the leadership and management of the award. The AHRC will direct all correspondence relating to the award to the lead organisation, and expects this organisation to keep the AHRC informed of progress and any change in circumstance relating to the award.

In accepting the award, the lead organisation is confirming the acceptance of the terms and conditions of the award by all organisations within the consortium.

We recommend that, before commencing an AHRC award, the collaborating organisations have in place a signed agreement describing how the collaboration will operate, and setting out expectations and responsibilities for each partner organisation.

This should cover areas such as:

- Specific objectives, obligations, and responsibilities of each partner
- Provision of resources

- How awards are allocated between organisations
- How decisions will be made
- How any disputes will be resolved
- Issues of ethics or confidentiality
- Ownership of research results and intellectual property
- Outcome of studentships
- Supervision and training
- Monitoring and review
- Financial contributions.

The AHRC reserves the right to request a signed copy of any such agreement for its records.

The AHRC will not intervene in any disputes between the collaborating organisations but reserves the right to withdraw or terminate the award if the agreement is broken or terminated by one of the parties or if disputes cannot be resolved satisfactorily.

The AHRC accepts no responsibility for any financial arrangements made between the consortium organisations.

### **Collaborative working – non-academic**

Collaborative working between a student and a non-academic partner can take place in a number of ways, including internships and work experience placements, as well as through the CDA and CDP schemes. It is expected that all collaborative working opportunities are managed and adhere to certain principles.

Research Councils expect the RO and collaborating organisations to have an agreement in place before the project begins, which recognises the student's contribution, and ensures that the IP arising from the research and/or training can be managed effectively.

It is recommended that the student receives an induction programme in the non-academic organisation similar to that provided for new employees, although this will vary depending on the nature of the project and the size of the organisation. Induction should be tailored to the needs of the student and the project and if necessary should also be offered to the academic supervisor where it might serve the needs of furthering trust, understanding and effective working relationships.

Where the non-academic collaborating partner has agreed to make additional payments to the student, arrangements should be made between the partners and the student as to the amount, frequency and mechanism for payment. The AHRC will assume no



responsibility or involvement in such payments, nor will it act as intermediary in any disputes over such payments.

Partners and students should note that costs incurred whilst working at or visiting the premises of the non-academic collaborating organisation are not eligible for support from the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG).

The AHRC recognises that despite good planning and project management, working in a collaborative environment could in some cases leave students subject to external changes or forces that are out of their control. For this reason it is important that the RO is informed at the time of any impediment to progress and where this may have a significant impact on a student's ability to submit their thesis within the required timeframe.

### **Specific Guidance for Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs) and Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDPs)**

The recruitment and selection of students to CDAs and CDPs should involve both the academic and non-academic partners to ensure both are in agreement that the best student is selected and to engender a shared ownership of all decisions relating to that studentship. Selecting, retaining and supporting the right student is key to the success of the project, so the collaborators must be fully involved and supportive of both project and student.

It is recognised that some collaborative projects will have originated with a particular student. Where that student has the appropriate ability and as long as they meet the eligibility criteria, it would be unfair and inappropriate for the studentship to be advertised. There may also be instances where a very particular knowledge or skill-set is required, which means that a project is developed with a student in mind or that the field of potential well qualified students is extremely limited. In such cases, recruitment of the student without competition may be justified, but it is considered advisable that the majority of collaborative studentships should be advertised.

The AHRC will allow some flexibility if a nominated student subsequently withdraws after commencing their studies. An RO may be able to re-recruit in full to the studentship place within the first year of the project. Studentships should be re-advertised in the same way, but it may be possible to offer it to a suitable candidate who had previously applied through open selection. Please contact the AHRC for further advice.

CDA and CDP awards are made on the basis of a partnership between an RO and a collaborating external organisation. A student will have agreed to working with those

partners on the specified project and to remaining registered at the relevant RO. A student will not be permitted to transfer their studies on the project to another RO. There may be exceptions to this where the academic supervisor moves to another RO. If this is the case the AHRC will consider transferring the award and the studentship(s) to the new RO, but only where it is considered imperative to the continuation of the project. In such cases all parties involved must be in agreement and a student would not be under any obligation to transfer.

Collaborating partners are required to have mechanisms in place to ensure the continuation of the project. However, if for any reason the collaborative arrangement were to cease before the end of an AHRC studentship it may be possible for any student concerned to continue as a standard doctoral studentship provided that their research is still viable, that adequate supervision is available and that they will be able to complete their thesis within the required time.

Fees-only students will be eligible for tuition fee payments from the AHRC but not for maintenance grant payments (including the additional CDA maintenance contribution). The AHRC will not require the non-academic partner to make maintenance payments to such students, but they may do so if they wish.

During the studentship a collaborative doctoral student will spend time working in the non-academic organisation's premises. During this time the student must be engaged in activities which are an integral component of the research to be presented in the thesis. The recommended minimum is three months and the maximum eighteen months, although when and how this time is spent will vary according to the nature of the project and is subject to negotiation between the partners and the student. It is recommended that this forms part of the formal agreement.

## **Annex B: Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres for Doctoral Training: Post award guidance**

The following guidance is intended for the use of DTP/CDT award holders, and should be read in conjunction with the *RCUK Terms and Conditions of Training Grants*, the *RCUK Training Grant Guide*, and other sections of the this Guide.

### **Dialogue and partnership with the AHRC**

#### **Introduction**

DTPs and CDTs represent a significant investment in postgraduate research training in the arts and humanities. The AHRC will be looking to work in partnership with the DTPs and CDTs, through the Directors, to maximise the impact of this funding. Equally, the innovative research training environments created by DTPs and CDTs, and the experience of their PhD students, is likely to inform the AHRC's own future strategy.

#### **Partnership visits**

The AHRC will visit each award holder periodically over the course of the award to maintain engagement with the award holders, partners and students. Though we will aim to keep these visits informal, we may request an update on specific areas to ensure that we have a consistent picture across the awards.

A more formal, mid-term visit will also take place to enable discussion of the achievements of the DTP or CDT and progress against commitments made in the proposal, as well as any challenges that the DTP or CDT is encountering and their plans for future developments. These visits will have a set format and agenda, which will be circulated in advance. For convenience, and whether the visit is formal or informal, the AHRC will be happy to combine a visit with an existing management board meeting, where possible.

We expect to meet periodically with groups of students, funded from the partnership or centre, for a closed-door session around their experience. We will notify award holders in advance so that they can organise this session but again, for convenience, the AHRC will be happy to combine a visit with an existing cohort event, which brings students from across the DTP or CDT together. In general, we welcome invitations to events or activities being undertaken by the DTP or CDT. We are particularly interested in hearing about novel or innovative activities which we might wish to showcase.

The AHRC reserves the right to visit on a more frequent basis, should the need arise. Other AHRC visits to a university may also include meetings with key staff involved in a DTP/CDT, as well as students, to further facilitate engagement.

### **Attendance at DTP and CDT Governing Boards**

It would not be appropriate for the AHRC staff to be members of DTP or CDT Governing Bodies, as such membership could be perceived as a conflict of interest in regard to the monitoring of progress by the AHRC, or development of future funding rounds.

The AHRC should, however, be notified in advance of Governing/Steering board meetings, and would welcome receiving invitations to attend specific meetings in an observer capacity, where this might be useful. The AHRC also reserves the right to attend management board meetings as part of its monitoring activities.

A list of Governing/Steering board meetings for the academic year should be sent to Jenny Gordon (j.gordon@ahrc.ac.uk) by 31 October in all years of the training grant.

### **Annual Directors' Conference**

We will hold an annual conference with all CDT/DTP Directors to discuss issues, share best practice and develop informal networks across consortia/institutions. These meetings are intended to be reasonably informal, with an emphasis on creating an on-going dialogue around the practicalities of handling the awards, as well as the evolving nature of postgraduate research training in the arts and humanities more broadly.

We intend to share with Directors each year the subject profile that has emerged across the combined recruitment of the DTPs and CDTs, as reported to the AHRC through JeS Student Details. This will provide an opportunity for the AHRC and Directors together to consider any emerging recruitment patterns or recruitment problems in specific areas.

## **Management of funding**

### **Costs incurred before the commencement of the grant**

It is permissible for the RO to incur limited expenditure before the start date of a grant which is subsequently charged to the grant, but only where this relates to the development of Cohort Development Fund (CDF) related activities and where these have been specified in the proposal. For example, this might cover the set up and development costs for an online learning environment, where this has been specified in the proposal as an element of the RO's or Consortia's plans for the CDF.

### **Ineligible costs**

The lead RO should not charge costs for advertising, marketing, recruitment, branding, etc. directly to the training grant. In common with other Research Councils, we expect these costs to be covered from the postgraduate fees that ROs charge for their PhD programmes.

### **The relationship between DTP/CDT and existing AHRC-funded students**

DTPs and CDTs can, if they wish, open up aspects of their training programmes to current AHRC-funded students at the institutions which are part of the DTP/CDT – for example, involving existing students in subject or interdisciplinary cohort activities. However, SDF funding should be used solely for the benefit of AHRC students recruited to the DTP/CDT. If a DTP/CDT wishes to allow existing AHRC students to take up these opportunities, other sources of funding should be used.

### **Extensions for AHRC-funded students**

Where a current AHRC-funded student at an institution which is part of a DTP or CDT is granted an extension to their studentship (eg for maternity leave, suspension of studies, etc), and this causes the studentship to extend beyond the end of the training grant that they are currently being funded from, they *should* be funded, if necessary, from the DTP/CDT grant. The AHRC expects Directors of DTPs or CDTs to make appropriate provision within the grants for this possibility, in discussion with other members of the consortia as appropriate.

### **Funding Flexibility**

DTPs and CDTs are encouraged to make full use of the flexibility permitted by the terms and conditions of the training grant to create and maintain high-quality research training environments, and recruit the strongest students. The main restriction, specific to DTPs and CDTs, is that the Cohort Development Fund (CDF) should be ring-fenced for cohort development activities and not used, for example, to create additional studentships. Further information on the types of expenditure that are appropriate under other fund headings is given elsewhere in the Training Grant Funding Guide. The SDF is not a separate fund heading, but the term used to cover the way that the additional 0.5 years duration of funding provided within each studentship is treated as a flexible pot. This enables award holders to extend the duration of studentships flexibly and responsively to individual student needs.

The terms and conditions specify requirements relating to the joint funding of a studentship (e.g. jointly between the AHRC grant and institutional funding). We particularly draw your attention to the situation regarding students who are only eligible

for a 'fees only' award. In this situation, 100% of the fee must come from the AHRC grant, but the RO is at liberty to provide a maintenance support scholarship from its own funding.

If overseas students (ie students not eligible to receive any Research Council funding) are accepted onto a DTP/CDT programme, 100% of any funding support offered must come from institutional or other sources, and they cannot be returned as AHRC funded. However, this funding can be counted as part of institutional co-funding commitment, provided the students are fully part of the programme (see below).

Where a studentship is co-funded in accordance with the flexibility permitted by the terms and conditions of the training grant (e.g. 50:50 funded with institutional funding), and therefore is badged as an 'AHRC Studentship', the studentship must have been awarded through open competition. This means that institutional funding that is targeted to specific ROs or subject areas cannot be used alongside AHRC funding to co-fund a studentship unless that student would be funded based on an open competition, i.e., they have been prioritised for funding in the rank ordered list. As a general point, it is not permitted to 'ring-fence' AHRC funding for any reason e.g. for particular ROs, specific subject areas or for inter-disciplinary awards, etc. AHRC awards must be allocated on an open and competitive basis.

### **Institutional Commitment and Match Funding**

We expect all ROs to honour the financial or in-kind commitments made in the original proposal document, this applies to lead and partner ROs and to any commitments made by partner organisations. If for any reason there are changes to what an RO or partner is able to provide, the AHRC should be contacted immediately to discuss the situation. The AHRC will need to treat very seriously any suggestion that an organisation may have made unrealistic commitments as part of a DTP or CDT proposal. The AHRC will address the issue with the senior management of the RO concerned, and may require a DTP or CDT to limit, or exclude, an individual RO from receipt of further funding from the award.

We recognise that ROs may wish to recruit students onto a CDT/DTP programme who are not eligible for AHRC funding (for example, overseas students). These students should not be reported to AHRC through Je-S Student Details, but can be included in the annual report as part of recording institutional co-funding commitment.

The annual report (see below) will give ROs the opportunity to report the full range of their institutional investment, e.g. including the funding of studentships that are awarded through the DTP or CDT mechanisms but which are 100% institutionally funded

(for example, because they are international students not eligible for Research Council funding).

### **Changes to the grant**

The AHRC recognises that changes in circumstances are inevitable over the course of a long award, and equally wishes to encourage the development of new and innovative approaches to research training. Most of these changes can be agreed by the research organisation or consortium and, if necessary, reported in the annual report or raised with AHRC during their visits.

However, any significant changes may only be made with the prior approval of the AHRC, for example, where changes have an impact on what was proposed in the award, e.g. an aspect of the programme can no longer be delivered. The Director should contact the AHRC lead for their award with details of the change, the impact it will have, and any action that is being taken in mitigation.

### **AHRC Visibility**

It is vital for the AHRC to be able to demonstrate and promote the cultural, social, artistic and economic value of publicly funded research and training. Our DTP/CDT is a part of this public investment and we expect award holders to publicise the AHRC's investment, and to ensure that students know that their funding is from an AHRC award. We would also be keen to hear about any interesting projects or activities undertaken by individual AHRC-funded students or student cohorts, which demonstrate the depth and breadth of the high quality training and development opportunities which have been provided.

The AHRC logo must be included in any recruitment material, publications, publicity, or marketing material relating to the DTP or CDT - including printed material, event signage or electronic communications such as a website or blogs. In the case of media coverage in newspapers, magazines, radio or on television, acknowledgement should also be given where possible. [Information on how to use the AHRC logo can be found here \(opens in new window\)](#).

### **Monitoring and progress reporting**

The AHRC expects a DTP or CDT to deliver on the plans set out in its proposal, and to have mechanisms in place to review its own progress against the DTP or CDT aims and objectives. Directors should contact the AHRC as soon as possible if a significant change to the plans set out in the proposal is envisaged (see above).

As part of the monitoring process the DTP or CDT grant-holder must submit an annual report to the AHRC. This annual report will supplement the information on individual students and their projects that must be reported annually through Je-S Student Details. The report is intended to capture information on the management of funding and training provided; particular achievements and challenges; institutional co-investment; collaborations and partnership working; and use of CDF and SDF.

Reports will need to be completed by mid-January of each year of the award. We are keen to ensure that the report can build on a DTP or CDT's own internal reporting processes, and so is timed to follow on from the review of recruitment that DTPs or CDTs will themselves wish to undertake each year in the October-December period. Grant holders will receive a reminder of this requirement in September each year.

Reports should be submitted electronically directly to the AHRC and NOT through Je-S or the UK SBS Ltd. Instructions will be sent nearer the time.