



NORTH WEST DOCTORAL TRAINING CENTRE

Standard Studentship Guidance 2015/16
(Updated July 2015)

Introduction

These Notes of Guidance are intended for those who wish to apply to the Universities of Lancaster, Liverpool and Manchester for an Economic and Social Research Centre (ESRC) postgraduate award under the North West Doctoral Training Centre (NWDTC) scheme to support Master's and doctoral study in Social Sciences from September/October 2016. The guidance below sets out the types of awards provided, eligibility for awards and the application process.

It is therefore crucial that you read this guidance carefully before making your application.

Types of Awards

The ESRC-funded NWDTC provides funding to enable students to study at Lancaster University, the University of Liverpool or the University of Manchester at both Master's and doctoral level. These postgraduate awards programmes are administered in five different schemes:

1+3 Scheme (One Year Master's + Three Years Doctoral Study)

This scheme will provide support for students undertaking an eligible Master's programme which focuses on advanced study and research training explicitly intended to provide a foundation for further research at doctoral level, who will then progress to a doctoral programme.

2+2 Scheme (Two Years Master's + Two Years Doctoral Study)

This scheme is only available for students in Economics. It will provide support for students undertaking a two year MRes programme followed by a doctoral programme.

+3 Scheme (Three Years Doctoral Study)

This scheme will provide support for up to three years of full-time study, or six years of part-time study, on a programme leading to the award of a doctoral degree.

+2 Scheme (Two Years Doctoral Study)

This scheme is as the +3 scheme, but for students who are already in the first year of their doctoral study at one of the three eligible universities. Such students may apply for support for two years of full-time study, or four years of part-time study, on a programme leading to the award of a doctoral degree. Students who have completed more than one year full-time study (or two years part-time) are not eligible to apply for funding.

+4 Scheme (Four Years Doctoral Study)

This scheme is only available for students in Humanitarianism & Conflict response and in Educational Research: Policy & Practice. This scheme will provide support for up to four years of full-time study on a programme leading to the award of a doctoral degree.

Eligibility

Academic eligibility:

For all awards, candidates must have qualifications of the standard of a good undergraduate honours degree at first or upper second class level. For +2, +3 or +4 studentships, the student must also have a suitable Master's degree.

In the majority of cases, candidates will have undertaken an undergraduate course and/or Master's course at a recognised UK higher education institution. However, some may have qualifications from outside the UK, or be able to offer a combination of qualifications and/or experience. In both cases, it will be necessary to ascertain whether these qualifications can be equated to an honours degree, and at what level. The ESRC bases its assessments of qualifications attained outside the UK on the British Council's NARIC guide. For non-UK qualifications transcripts in English as well as details in the original language must be provided with the application form.

Candidates must be planning to study in an ESRC recognised pathways (see Appendix 1 for a list of recognised pathways for the NWDTC).

Please note that the supervisory fit of your prospective supervision team will be taken into consideration when the application is assessed during the competition.

Residential eligibility:

The legal basis for defining residence eligibility for postgraduate training awards is set down in the Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations 1991. The guidance below is based on the Regulations and on guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES):

Candidates for awards must have a relevant connection with the United Kingdom. A relevant connection may be established if, at the start of the course:

- The student 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 (EU students – see below) *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).

Candidates who meet all three of the above criteria may apply for a *full award*.

A relevant connection may be established for an **EU student** if the student has been resident in the UK throughout the 3-year period preceding the start of the course, even if for purposes of full-time education. EU students in this situation may apply for a *full award*. EU Students who have not been ordinarily resident in the UK for the last three years may apply for a *fees only* award.

Non-EU students who have not been ordinarily resident in the UK for the last three years are not eligible to apply.

The above criteria does not apply to applicants to the Economics pathway or those whose project is deemed to employ Advanced Quantitative Methods - such candidates are eligible to apply for a full award whatever their residential status.

For more information on residential eligibility please see: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/images/ESRC-Postgraduate-Funding-Guide-DTCs_tcm8-28310.pdf

Financial basis of the awards

A full postgraduate award for full-time study provides (at Master's and at doctoral level):

- Payment of approved **Tuition Fees** to the relevant institution
- An annual **Maintenance Grant** (£14,057 in 2015/16 – rate subject to confirmation from the RCUK for 2016/17)

Students opting to study part time will receive a pro rata maintenance grant of the equivalent of a full time award.

Fees Only Awards for eligible EU students constitutes the payment of tuition fees and eligibility to apply for RTSG and Fieldwork funding.

All NWDTC Students are also entitled to claim certain research expenses from the NWDTC Research Training Support Grant (RTSG).

Students who receive a full-time award in Economics will receive an additional enhanced stipend of £3000.

Students who are undertaking a project which has been identified as employing Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM) are will receive an additional enhanced stipend of £3000.

Students who specify in their original application that their doctoral project will require fieldwork and/or Difficult Language Training may also submit a claim for additional financial support to enable them to undertake this, once they have commenced their studies. For more information on this please refer to the NWDTC web pages. Fieldwork and Difficult Language Training funding can only be claimed at doctoral level, not at Master's.

Students will receive additional disability allowance where appropriate.

The Application Process

Students will normally be expected to have been offered a place at one of the three NWDTC institutions prior to submitting their Studentship Application, on one of the programmes eligible for NWDTC funding (please see the NWDTC website for a list of eligible programmes for each pathway). However, Studentship Applications will be accepted from students who have submitted their institutional application but have yet to receive a formal offer, providing that such an offer has been made by the time of the Studentship Allocation meeting, which will take place on the 11th March 2016. In no case will a Studentship be officially awarded until the student has secured a conditional or unconditional place at the institution.

You should apply to one institution for admission onto your chosen postgraduate programme using the online application forms:

Lancaster: <https://www.postgraduate.lancs.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx>

Liverpool: <http://www.liv.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/applying/>

Manchester: <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/howtoapply/>

The Standard Studentship Application Form for NWDTC funding can be found on the NWDTC website [here](#)

Copies of transcripts and references included in your original programme application will also be required for your ESRC application. Please see Appendix 2 for referee guidance – it is advised that potential referees are sent a copy of this Application Guidance (most importantly, Appendix 2) when approached for a reference.

Closing Date

You should send a digital copy (not a paper copy) of the completed NWDTC application form with your transcripts and references to the relevant School PGR Administrator (see Appendix 3) by **5.00pm on 1st February 2016.**

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Please ensure you complete and submit an EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM with your application. This will not be made available to those reviewing your funding application, but will be used to survey equality and diversity of applicants and our funded students, and help us encourage widening participation.

Assessment of Applications

a. Panels

Your application will initially be assessed by the ***Institutional Pathway Panel***. The panel consists of senior academics from within the relevant pathway at the institution you intend to register. Each application is judged on its own merits based on the information provided in the NWDTC Application Form and your transcripts / references. This panel agrees a mark for each application and applications are then ranked.

The Institutional Pathway Panels will then present their top applicants at a ***NWDTC Pathway Panel***. This consists of one nominated pathway lead from each NWDTC institution. This panel decided which applications will go through the final committee panel.

Finally, the applications which have passed the previous two stages are presented to the ***NWDTC Studentship Committee*** by the overall pathway lead. This committee will then decide on studentship allocation across the NWDTC. This NWDTC Studentship Committee will take place on the 11th March 2016.

b. Outcome of Application

Successful candidates will be informed by email by 25th March 2016. If you are successful in being nominated for an award, you will be asked to confirm by the 8th April 2016 whether or not you wish

to formally accept the award. If you do not confirm by this date, the NWDTC reserves the right to reallocate the award.

The NWDTC Studentship Committee and the pathway leads will also agree a list of **reserve candidates**, and reserve candidates will also be informed by the 25th March 2016. If you are selected as a reserve candidate you may still be offered an award should one of the successful candidates decline their award / fail to formally accept their award.

Candidates who reach the NWDTC Studentship Committee stage but are **unsuccessful** will also be informed by the 25th March 2016. *Individual feedback on applications will not be available.* The NWDTC is unable to notify unsuccessful candidates who did not make it as far as the NWDTC Studentship Committee.

If you have not received confirmation of the outcome of your application by the 25th March 2016, please contact the relevant School PGR Administrator (see Appendix 3) for further information.

c. Taking up an Award

Award holders with normally expected to begin their programme of study in September or October 2016 and, providing we have received all necessary paperwork, holders of a full award will receive the first instalment of their maintenance grant in early October.

In certain circumstances, such as illness or where there is a need to give a period of notice to an employer, we will consider deferring the start date of a doctoral programme, normally by up to three months (subject to approval from the School PG office). Any application for postponement must be made immediately through the University in which you intend to register. You should write to the University, in advance, including supporting letters from your potential supervisor. Deferrals of twelve months or more are not permissible.

Deferrals are not possible for Master's' students.

If you are unable to take up your award in the year in which it was awarded, it will be rescinded and you will have to re-apply in the competition in the following year. You will need to inform us of your decision at the earliest possible stage, in writing, by letter or e-mail.

Progression from Master's to doctoral study for 1+3 candidates will be subject to the successful completion of the Master's programme.

The continuation of doctoral awards is subject to the submission of a satisfactory annual report at the end of each year of the award and you are subject to the University and school's standard monitoring and progression processes.

d. Change in circumstances

Studentships are awarded for a particular programme of study at the University of Liverpool, Lancaster or Manchester. Therefore all requests to make changes to the awards are only considered by the North West DTC studentship committee in very exceptional circumstances and only if the reasons are fully and clearly explained.

e. Resubmitting Applications

If you are unsuccessful in one year's competition you may apply in the next year's competition, should an award be available, without prejudice, providing you continue to meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

Application Timetable

1 st Feb 2016	Deadline for submission of application to relevant School PGR Administrator (see Appendix 3)
29 th Feb 2016	Deadline for Pathway Panels to forward final candidates and ranking
11 th Mar 2016	NWDTC Studentship Committee
By 25 th Mar 2016	Successful, Reserve and Unsuccessful Candidates informed by email
8 th April 2016	Deadline for successful candidates to confirm acceptance of the award
Sep/Oct 2016	New NWDTC Cohort start
October 2016	New NWDTC Cohort Welcome Event

Application Form Guidance

Please follow the instructions below to complete your application form.

1. Studentships available

Please tick the scheme you would like to apply for.

2. Institution at which you intend to register

Please tick the University in which you intend to register.

3. Name and address

We need to be able to contact you between March and September 2016. Under 'Address' you should provide the address at which you can be contacted for the majority of this period, even if this is different to the address you have given on the University application form. Should you be unavailable during this period, you may provide the name and address of someone who can correspond for you in your absence. Similarly, please give an email address and phone number which you can be contacted on between March and September 2016.

4. Project details

- Award type: Fees only or Full award

Please see residency eligibility on page 2 above for more details.

- Mode of attendance

Part time students are only eligible for the maintenance grant on a pro-rata basis. Further information on awards and stipends can be found on page 3 above.

- NWDTC Pathway/School/Institution

Please indicate the NWDTC pathway you are applying to, which must be one of the accredited pathways as listed in Appendix 1. Also include the School and Institution with which you intend to register. If you are uncertain about any of these details, please discuss this with your School PGR Administrator (see Appendix 3).

- Project title

The appropriate title of the project should be entered. 1+3 and 2+2 students are asked to give the working title of the proposed project but the NWDTC recognises the title may change as the applicant progresses through the Master's course and the topic is refined.

5. PhD Proposal

Please give details of your PhD proposal in 1500 words or less. Applications which do not follow this limit may be penalised. References/bibliography should be included within this word limit.

6. Qualifications

Please enter your relevant academic qualifications. As stated above, candidates must have qualifications of the standard of a good undergraduate honours degree at first or upper second class level. For +2, +3 or +4 studentships, the student must also have a Master's degree.

7. Relevant Experience

Please complete this section by entering the number of years of experience and give details. The assessors will use this information to establish any experience you have had which might contribute to the intended research topic or strengthen your application.

8. Supervision

Please state who your prospective supervisors are in accordance with the admissions offer letter received from your institution. The supervisory fit of your prospective supervision team will be taken into consideration when the application is assessed during the competition.

9. Research training previously undertaken

Please include a brief description of the relevant research training previously undertaken which will support your proposed research project.

10. Research training needs

Please give details of any identified training needs for your doctoral programme which will equip and enable you to undertake your proposed research project. State whether or not this has been discussed with your supervisors.

Please clearly indicate whether you intend to do fieldwork abroad or learn a difficult language during your doctoral programme. Please indicate the destination and the duration of fieldwork if known at

this stage. Only students who specify potential fieldwork in their original application will be eligible to apply for fieldwork funding. Only students who specify potential difficult language training in their original application will have the opportunity to make a case for fieldwork / studentship extension to accommodate this.

11. Advanced Quantitative Methods

Please detail if you think your project will utilise Advanced Quantitative Methods and what training you will undertake during your doctoral programme to enable this. Please refer to the [‘What is AQM’](#) guidelines on the NWDTTC website for more information.

Please be sure to address each of the three criterion which are used to assess AQM. Failure to do so will significantly reduce the likelihood of AQM status being awarded.

Students classified as AQM will receive an additional stipend. Students in receipt of AQM enhanced awards will be expected to undertake an annual review to ensure they are utilising AQM as detailed in their original application and to undertake additional training.

11. CASE or Collaboration

Please only complete this section if your project incorporates a CASE (Cooperative Award in Science and Engineering) or a collaborative element with a non-HEI partner. Please note that before you can apply for a CASE award you must have discussed the collaboration with your supervisor, the proposed partner and your institution. If no contact has been made with a partner, please apply for a generic studentship. Contributions for a collaborating partner can be in cash or in kind.

12. Additional applications

Please indicate whether you have already applied for any other funding for this forthcoming year.

13. References and transcripts

You should provide two references along with your application and copies of your transcripts. Supporting documents should be in Word or PDF format. These may be the same references you submitted with the standard University Application form, but do not have to be.

Please see Appendix 2 for referee guidance – it is advised that potential referees are sent a copy of this Application Guidance (most importantly, Appendix 2) when approached for a reference.

14. Acknowledgment

Please sign and date the application form. Electronic signatures are sufficient.

Please ensure you complete and submit an EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM with your application.

Appendix 1: List of NWDTC Pathways

- Accounting and Finance
- Business and Management
- Development and Humanitarianism
- Economic and Social History
- Economics
- Educational Research: Policy and Practice
- Geography and Environment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Language-Based Area Studies (LBAS)
- Linguistics
- Planning and Environment
- Politics in a Global World
- Psychology
- Science, Technology, Innovation and Social Practices (STISP)
- Security, Conflict and Justice
- Social Anthropology
- Social Statistics
- Social Work
- Sociology

Appendix 2: Guidance notes for referees of NWDTC application forms

General

The NWDTC application must be supported by two testimonials from people able to comment on the academic ability and research potential of the candidate, e.g. previous undergraduate/postgraduate study.

It is strongly recommended that the applicant's undergraduate/postgraduate tutors complete the testimonials where possible. However, the NWDTC accepts that University staff expected to be involved with the candidate's subsequent studies (e.g. potential supervisors) can sometimes be appropriate if they have tutored the applicant previously. It is also accepted that some students may have undertaken some relevant professional work where the testimonial writer would be able to comment on their suitability for undertaking research. If this is the case then the circumstances should be fully explained.

Specific advice re the testimonial

- Potential supervisors can be a referee – but should **not** be used for both references.
- Referees should include a comment on the academic ability of the applicant (most successful NWDTC candidates have or are predicted a 1st in their undergraduate and a distinction in their Master's).
- Referees should comment on the candidate's suitability for postgraduate training in general and for the particular course and research he/she proposes to undertake.
- Information on how, and to what extent, the candidate has shown academic ability in terms of:
 - a) ability to grasp concepts and reason analytically;
 - b) motivation and perseverance in achieving objectives; and,
 - c) capacity for original thought.
- Where possible, the referees should comment on the research project in relation to the applicant and the supervisors.
- References should be wholly positive at all times. Referees should avoid generalisations, repetitions and 'lukewarm' statements in references such as "very good student".
- Extracurricular activities should also be highlighted in references to show that the referee knows the applicant well.
- Note the ESRC's strategic priorities for 2011-2015:
 - [Economic Performance and Sustainable Growth](#)
 - [Influencing Behaviour and Informing Interventions](#)
 - [A Vibrant and Fair Society](#)

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/mission-strategy-priorities/refining-priorities/index.aspx>

Appendix 3: List of contacts for submission of applications

Please choose the correct contact for the institution and pathway you are applying to.

Pathway	Liverpool Contact	Manchester Contact	Lancaster Contact
Accounting & Finance	Jill Roberts ulmsphdenq@liv.ac.uk	Lynne Barlow-Cheetham lynne.barlow@mbs.ac.uk	Sarah Patterson s.patterson@lancaster.ac.uk
Business & Management	Jill Roberts ulmsphdenq@liv.ac.uk	Lynne Barlow-Cheetham lynne.barlow@mbs.ac.uk	Sarah Patterson s.patterson@lancaster.ac.uk
Development & Humanitarianism	Jayne Avies soesresearch@liv.ac.uk	SEED: Christopher Kitchen christopher.kitchen@manchester.ac.uk SALC: Joanne Marsh Joanne.Marsh@manchester.ac.uk	Anne Thorley a.thorley@lancaster.ac.uk
Economic & Social History	Chris Pearce HLC-PGR@liverpool.ac.uk	Joanne Marsh Joanne.Marsh@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Purcell fass-pg@lancaster.ac.uk
Economics	Jill Roberts ulmsphdenq@liv.ac.uk	Victoria Barnes victoria.barnes@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Patterson s.patterson@lancaster.ac.uk
Educational Research		Christopher Kitchen christopher.kitchen@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Purcell fass-pg@lancaster.ac.uk
Geography & Environment	Jayne Avies soesresearch@liv.ac.uk	Christopher Kitchen christopher.kitchen@manchester.ac.uk	Anne Thorley a.thorley@lancaster.ac.uk
Health & Wellbeing	Jennifer Pellegrini pcbspgr@liverpool.ac.uk	James Power James.K.Power@manchester.ac.uk	Dawn McCracken d.mccracken@lanacs.ac.uk
LBAS	Chris Pearce HLC-PGR@liverpool.ac.uk	SoSS: Victoria Barnes victoria.barnes@manchester.ac.uk SALC: Joanne Marsh Joanne.Marsh@manchester.ac.uk	

Linguistics		Joanne Marsh Joanne.Marsh@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Purcell fass-pg@lancaster.ac.uk
Planning & Environment	Jayne Avies soesresearch@liv.ac.uk	Christopher Kitchen christopher.kitchen@manchester.ac.uk	
Politics in a Global World	Chris Pearce HLC-PGR@liverpool.ac.uk	Victoria Barnes victoria.barnes@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Purcell fass-pg@lancaster.ac.uk
Psychology	Lindsay Edmonds ledmonds@liverpool.ac.uk	James Power James.K.Power@manchester.ac.uk	Anne Thorley a.thorley@lancaster.ac.uk
Security, Conflict & Justice	Clare Kelly slsjpr@liverpool.ac.uk	Helen Davenport helen.davenport@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Purcell fass-pg@lancaster.ac.uk
Social Anthropology		Victoria Barnes victoria.barnes@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Purcell fass-pg@lancaster.ac.uk
Social Statistics	Jayne Avies soesresearch@liv.ac.uk	Victoria Barnes victoria.barnes@manchester.ac.uk	Anne Thorley a.thorley@lancaster.ac.uk
Sociology	Clare Kelly slsjpr@liverpool.ac.uk	Victoria Barnes victoria.barnes@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Purcell fass-pg@lancaster.ac.uk
Social Work	Clare Kelly slsjpr@liverpool.ac.uk	James Power James.K.Power@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Purcell fass-pg@lancaster.ac.uk
STISP		Michael McGlinchey Michael.Mcglinchey@manchester.ac.uk	Sarah Purcell fass-pg@lancaster.ac.uk