



NORTH WEST DOCTORAL TRAINING CENTRE

Overseas Institutional Visits Guidance (Updated October 2016)

All ESRC PhD studentship holders are eligible to apply for financial support for Overseas Institutional Visits (OIVs) within their studentship period. This additional funding is intended to provide applicants with the opportunity to establish research networks, to disseminate early research findings, to participate in seminars and other academic activities that are directly relevant to their research, or to undertake specialist research training that is not available within the UK.

Scheme regulations

Applicants are asked to read and note the following OIV scheme regulations before completing the application form.

- Applications can only be considered from PhD award holders in the +3 component of their studentship. Students in the initial masters year of a 1+3 award are not eligible to apply.
- As OIVs are intended to be an integral part of the student's research training, any visit in the first year of the PhD must not commence within the first three months of the studentship period. Additionally, visits taking place in the final year of the studentship must be completed at least three months before the original end date of the award (prior to OIV extension being implemented).
- Applicants should consult the Foreign and Commonwealth Office guidance relating to their intended destination. Visits must not be undertaken if the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against visiting the country concerned.
- Only one application can be made during period of the studentship. Applications can be for up to three separate OIVs to the same host university or esteemed research institution during the course of the studentship as long as the total period of the visits does not exceed three months.
- Applications should usually be for visits to a University but in exceptional circumstances applications for visits to other esteemed research organisations will be considered. Applicants will need to demonstrate within their application justification for visiting the research organisation.
- OIV's are **not** designed to cover fieldwork expenses. There is a separate process for fieldwork applications and the paperwork for this scheme can be found on the NWDTTC website. It is recognised that under certain circumstances an element of fieldwork might be undertaken in what is principally an OIV. These circumstances should be clearly justified in the application.

- Successful applicants in receipt of a full studentship award will receive a paid extension equal to the period of time spent overseas. Fees only students will receive an extension to their fees and thesis submission date only.
- Confirmation of approval and the level of support will be sent to you by the NWDTC administrator prior to your first visit. You must not commence any visit until you have received formal written approval from your nominated RO contact.
- Retrospective claims will not be considered.

How to apply

Applicants are required to complete the Overseas Institutional Visits Application Form which can be found at <http://www.nwdtc.ac.uk/currentstudents/guidelines/>. The completed form should be sent to the NWDTC central office at nwdtc@liverpool.ac.uk by the deadline.

The application form requires supervisors to confirm that the OIV will form an important part of the student's research development.

This application form will then be assessed by the NWDTC Academic Management Committee soon after the deadline. Applications may be approved or returned to the applicant with a request for further information.

When to apply

There are two annual deadlines for the submission of Overseas Institutional Visit Application Forms to the NWDTC Central Office at nwdtc@liverpool.ac.uk

In academic year 2016/17: **28th October 2016** and **27th April 2017**

It may take up to four weeks after this date to process the applications, so please ensure you choose a deadline well before you intend to commence your OIV.

How to complete the application form

When completing the application form applicants are advised to consider the following.

Student details

Please ensure that you complete all information in full

Details of the visit(s)

Applications can be made for up to three separate OIVs to the same host university or research institution during the course of the studentship as long as the total period of the visits does not exceed three months.

Please ensure you provide:

- The start and end dates for each visit.
- The full address of the host university or research institution
- The total number of weeks for each visit

Case for support

Applicants should indicate the purpose of the visit and how it relates to their doctoral research. Please describe what has been achieved to date and how the proposed visit will extend/enhance this. Reasons for such a visit might include establishing research networks, disseminating early research findings, participating in seminars and other academic activities that are directly relevant to the student's research, or undertaking specialist research training that is not available within the UK.

If applicants are proposing to undertake more than one visit to the same university or research institution they should provide clear justification as to why more than one visit is required.

Applicants are asked to demonstrate the potential benefits of the proposed visit/s to their current or future academic career and, in particular, to demonstrate how the visit/s will offer 'added value' to their PhD experience. If the OIV is to be undertaken for research training purposes, the applicant must demonstrate why the training is integral to their research, and also why this training cannot be undertaken within the UK.

Please note that the OIV scheme is not to be used for undertaking fieldwork; however in exceptional circumstances there may be a requirement to carry out some fieldwork as part of an OIV. In these cases the applications must be of high quality and be integral to the work of the PhD and the fieldwork component is not being covered from the Overseas Fieldwork Fund.

The case for support should not exceed two sides of A4.

Detailing visit costs and justifications

Applicants should clearly break-down the proposed costs of the visit with notes detailing the justification for each cost. Information on flights and accommodation should be provided, in addition to costs for general living expenses. The costs of the visit should be reasonable and dependent on the country, time period and activity proposed.

There is a cap on the total costs of the visit of £4000, though applicants should note that the value of financial investment will be taken into consideration when assessing applications so should not automatically apply for the maximum amount.

Applicants may wish to liaise with their School administrative office to complete this section.

Confirmation of support from the supervisor

Supervisors are asked to comment on the quality of the student's research to date and how the proposed visit will extend/enhance this. If the OIV is to be undertaken for research training purposes, please explain why the training is integral to their research, and also why this training cannot be undertaken within the UK. Students are expected to continue their PhD research and training throughout the course of the visit(s) and maintain regular contact with their supervisor. Supervisors are asked to demonstrate what arrangements are in place to meet this requirement.

What are the basic funding criteria?

The content and quality of the proposal you submit to the ESRC for your Overseas Institutional Visit will determine whether or not you are successful. Funding decisions for visits are based on the quality of four key assessment criteria:

- the purpose of the visit provided by the applicant
- the intended work plan provided by the applicant
- arrangements for continued supervision provided by the supervisor
- the confirmation of support provided by the proposed host university.

Many proposals are unsuccessful not because they lack interesting or important ideas, but because they fail to communicate adequately how the visit will integrate into the overall PhD programme or provide “added value” to the student, such as how the visit will contribute to their current or future career or academic endeavours. This should be explored and translated into an achievable plan of action. Therefore it is vital that you have a full understanding of what is required, as well as knowing the various stages of the application process, so that you maximise your chances of gaining an award.

Think about the “added value”

Have a think about the way that you can get the most from your visit.

- Are there any conferences or seminars that you could attend while you’re there? (Remember conference costs can be covered by your RTSG).
- Speak to your University International Office; does your University have any links with Universities or Research Organisations in the area that could provide you with opportunities?
- Does the British Council have a presence in the country or region that you are hoping to visit? Are there any events that you could attend or is there someone you could contact to help plan relevant activities?
- Does the Science and Innovation Network have any presence in country that you are hoping to visit? Do they have any events you could attend?
- Has RCUK got any initiatives or collaborations that you could look into in the country? This is especially relevant if you are hoping to visit the US, China or India.

Reporting

When you return from your Overseas Institutional Visit you will be expected to complete an End of Award Report. An example of this report is included in Appendix 1 below.

Don’t forget to...

- Leave plenty of time to sort out your visa if you need one.
- Make sure you sort out your travel insurance.
- Contact your Doctor if you are travelling somewhere where you might need vaccinations or medication.
- If you are hoping to develop your language skills on the OIV, speak to your University about whether there are any opportunities available before you go

Appendix 1: Overseas Institutional Visit End of Award Report

Please complete this report in full no more than one month after you return from your (final) visit to the Overseas Partner and send to the NWDTC central office at nwdtc@liverpool.ac.uk

Applicant Details

Name of award holder (in capitals):	
Institution:	
NWDTC Pathway:	
University ID number:	
Current Address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

Student's report

Please detail below the benefits of your recently completed trip to an overseas university or esteemed research organisation. For example, did the visit meet the aims initially identified in the application for funding? Were there any unexpected benefits?

Do you think your visit made or will make an impact to your PhD research or future career?
If so, how?

Would you recommend the OIV Scheme to other students? Please give reasons.

Signature of Applicant: Date:

Name (block letters): Title:

NOW PASS THIS FORM AND A COPY OF THE GUIDANCE NOTES TO YOUR SUPERVISOR FOR COMPLETION

Supervisor's report

In addition to the student's comments the ESRC also seeks the views of their supervisor on the benefits and possible follow up action after completion of the funded studies overseas.

Did the Overseas Institutional Visit scheme meet your expectations?

Signature of Supervisor: Date:

Name (block letters): Title:

Host Organisation's Report

Lastly, it is also a requirement that the main collaborating academic at the overseas university or esteemed research organisation should also provide brief written comments on the benefit of the student's trip. This should include any perceived benefit that the student has imparted to the host organisation or its staff. Email correspondence would be sufficient.

Please send your completed form to the NWDTc Central Office at nwdtc@liverpool.ac.uk