

[replace the text at <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/trainingaccounts/dta/> with the following:]

### **Background to Doctoral Training Accounts (DTAs)**

The majority of Research Council support for doctoral level training is now provided through Doctoral Training Grants (DTGs) awarded to universities.

DTGs were introduced in order to provide universities with maximum flexibility in managing their research studentship population. DTGs are allocated annually as equivalent cash sums to universities, opening up a wide range of options in the way that funds are used. For example, universities are free to offer stipends above the Research Councils' required minimum, or they can offer support for longer than the usual three years if a project requires it.

The University's official EPSRC and MRC DTA Coordinator is Liz Venn ([elizabeth.venn@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.venn@manchester.ac.uk)) in the Graduate Education Team situated in the Research Office, who acts as the point of contact between University staff/students and the EPSRC and MRC.

In addition, there is an administrative lead for each Research Council who is able to answer any queries you may have on DTG administrative management (see below). Further information specifically relating to the administrative and financial management of BBSRC, EPSRC and MRC DTGs can be found by the referring to the relevant set of guidance notes listed alongside the name of the administrative contact.

- **AHRC:** Nichola Ellis: [nichola.ellis@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:nichola.ellis@manchester.ac.uk)/Carole Douguedroit: [carole.douguedroit@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:carole.douguedroit@manchester.ac.uk).
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- **MRC:** James Power: [james.power@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:james.power@manchester.ac.uk) [insert link to pdf doc]

Last updated: 24<sup>TH</sup> September 2010

## Frequently Asked Questions

**These FAQs relate to EPSRC and MRC DTAs only. Where a note refers to only one of these Research Councils, this will be made clear.**

The following FAQs have been compiled to support staff involved in all aspects of DTA administration across the University. The information has been drawn together using current Research Council guidelines and information provided to the Research Office over several years in response to questions raised by staff involved in DTA administration. We hope you find these FAQs useful but please feel free to provide feedback on its content. We will provide regular updates to this information.

Additional further information specifically relating to the administrative and financial management of BBSRC, EPSRC and MRC DTGs can be found by referring to the relevant set of [guidance notes](#). [\[link back to opening page\]](#)

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**1. What is the difference between a DTG and a DTA?**

Each year a grant is issued to the University - the Doctoral Training Grant (DTG). Each grant lasts for four years, so a university may have up to four DTGs running at any one time. It is the combination of these grants that is the Doctoral Training Account (DTA). At the moment (August 2010), for example, the EPSRC DTA is made up of the 2006-10, 2007-11, 2008-12, and 2009-13 DTGs.

Each DTG starts on 1 October and finishes on 30 September four years later. Once a DTG has finished funds cannot be carried over to the next DTG. Grants are cash limited and funds will not be injected into them once they have begun (except in the case of Exceptional Overseas Fieldwork (EOF)/Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA)).

**2. What is a Collaborative Training Account (CTA)?  
(EPSRC only)**

The University was awarded a CTA following a successful application by the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) to the EPSRC in 2004. It is a single award like the DTA and is used to fund Master's Training Packages (MTPs), Industrial Co-operative Awards in Science and Engineering (CASE), Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP), Engineering Doctorate (EngD), Research Assistants Industrial Secondments (RAIS), and CASE for New Academics (CNA). The University of Manchester's CTA started on 1 April 2005 and will finish in 2012. The CTA is managed by the Faculty of EPS and the contact person is Adrian Jarvis ([Adrian.jarvis@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Adrian.jarvis@manchester.ac.uk)).

**3. What is a 'profile payment'?**

The profile payment is the regular payment (usually quarterly) that a Research Council makes to the University for a grant. For example, the profile payment of a £300,000 grant which has been awarded over a period of three years, to be paid quarterly, will be £25,000.

**4. What is the Je-S?**

Je-S stands for joint electronic submission. It is a web-based database which is owned by Research Councils UK (RCUK). The student researcher section of this data capture system is used to record personal and financial information on all DTA funded students. The system is now used by all of the Research Councils: the AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC and STFC.

The University is required to provide the Research Councils with standard information on students and their training programmes through the Studentship Details Batch Update section of Je-S for inclusion in the Research Councils' management information system.

Information should be submitted through Je-S within one month a student starting or by mid-November for October starts. The relevant Research Council must be notified of any changes to awards within one month of changes (e.g. terminations, extensions or transfers) being agreed by the institution.

**5. What is the Financial Expenditure Statement?**

At the end of each DTG, the University must complete and return a Final Expenditure Statement (FES) detailing expenditure incurred over the full period of the grant, before the Research Council will pay the final instalments of the DTG to the University. The FES for the EPSRC is submitted via Je-s and the MRC FES is submitted in via an Excel spreadsheet. The FES must be received within three months of the end date of the grant. Once an FES has been

received by the Research Council, and the expenditure incurred has been reconciled against payments made, the statement will be considered as final. The Research Council may withhold final payments to universities if the terms and conditions of the grant have not been met.

The EPSRC FES is coordinated by the EPS Faculty DTA Accountant working closely with the Research Office and Faculty and School accountants. The EPS Faculty DTA accountant is responsible for submitting the final return to the Research Council. The MRC FES is coordinated by the MHS Faculty accountant and is submitted by the DTA Coordinator in the central Research Office.

**6. What are Enhanced Stipends?**  
***(EPSRC only)***

Funds for enhanced stipends are allocated to subjects where there is difficulty in recruiting or retaining students. These funds are designed to assist with paying a rate higher than the minimum stipend and may not be used for other purposes. In addition to standard DTA reporting requirements, EPSRC will seek an additional report on how the funds for enhanced stipends have been used. At the University of Manchester the Schools of Computer Science; Chemical Engineering and Analytical Science; Mathematics; Materials; MBS; Mechanical, Aerospace and Civil Engineering and Electrical and Electronic Engineering receive these additional funds.

**7. What are International Doctoral Scholarships (IDS)?**  
***(EPSRC only)***

The aim of EPSRC's International Doctoral Scholarships scheme is to give leading research teams in the UK the ability to recruit outstanding graduate students from anywhere in the world. Universities that have EPSRC-supported Portfolio Partnerships or Interdisciplinary Research Centres can transfer up to 10% of their yearly institutional DTG into the International Doctoral Scholarships scheme. This means that they can recruit some students without the residency restrictions that normally apply. The University has to cover any additional overseas fees.

At the University of Manchester, only the School of Materials and School of Computer Science have been eligible to participate in this scheme. However, for 2010 no Schools in the University were eligible.

**8. What are project specific awards?**

Awards such as the MRC Capacity Building Studentships, MRC Advanced Course Studentships and MRC Industrial CASE Studentships are project specific and, while not part of the main DTG, are paid to the University as a 'ring-fenced' supplement to it. The funds granted are broken down into headings - for example, stipend, tuition fees, Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), and conference/travel allowance - in the studentship award letter. It is not permitted to transfer the funds between these headings or to students on another project or course. The University can, however, supplement these funds in order, for example, to contribute more to a student's conference allowance.

**9. How is the DTG paid to the University?**

Payments to the University are made on a quarterly profile basis with each DTG consisting of 16 quarterly payments to reflect the four-year period of the grant.

## **10. How are funds allocated to Schools?**

The EPSRC divide the total DTG allocation into four EPSRC-defined 'programme areas': Physical Sciences; Information & Communications Technology; Process Environment & Sustainability and Materials, Mechanical & Medical Engineering. In addition, the University also receives funds for Mathematical Sciences (which is allocated by a peer review method) and Enhanced Stipends. Previously, the EPSRC provided a breakdown of the research grants that contributed to the value of the DTG so that universities were able to see where the DTG funds were generated. However, from the 2011-15 DTG onwards, the EPSRC will no longer provide detail of grants that contributed to the announced value, and all Universities are expected to allocate DTG funds following their own strategic policy.

The MRC administers its DTA funds differently. The University is provided with a breakdown of all the grants that contributed to the DTA and the University is given the opportunity to check this list of grants and query any that may be missing. Once the checks are made and the final DTA figure is confirmed, the Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences, which is the administrative lead for the MRC DTA, applies an algorithm to divide the DTG between the relevant Faculties.

Research Councils encourage universities to be strategic with their DTAs and not necessarily allocate the funds based on how they were originally determined.

## **11. What is the total cost of a studentship?**

The cost of a studentship changes every year and on average there is an annual 2.5% rise. RCUK set a maximum amount that they will pay for tuition fees and a minimum stipend that students must receive (see also question 15). Students can be funded for between three and four years depending upon the nature of their research project.

## **12. What is the 50% rule?**

In order to enable research organizations to flexibly fund students using a mixture of DTG funding and other sources, the Research Councils operate a 50% rule. At the time of updating these FAQs (September 2010), the 50% rule varied according to the Research Council. However, the EPSRC have informed the University that the 50% rule will be harmonized across all of the Research Councils from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010.

If universities do not follow the 50% rule then the Research Council will withhold some of the final payment of the grant because the terms and conditions of the grant will not have been met. If you are uncertain about whether a student meets the 50% rule please contact Liz Venn in the Research Office in the first instance.

### **EPSRC**

The EPSRC will have changed its 50% rule twice by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010: the rule changed in October 2006 and is set to change again in October 2010. Changes apply to subsequent grants from the 1<sup>st</sup> October of the year the rule is revised.

### **Pre-October 2006 50% Rule:**

"To be supported by the grant and, therefore, recognized as an EPSRC studentship, at least 50% of a student's **stipend** (where a stipend is paid) over the period of study must be funded from the grant. Up to 50% may come from other sources such as university funds or from research partners. Where a fees-only award is made, all the fees must be funded from the grant."

As such EPSRC expected that:

- The student be in receipt of at least the research council agreed minimum stipend;
- If the student were funded at 50% that an appropriate source of funding be found for the remaining 50% (this would include another DTG grant);
- That 50% of that stipend was to come from the DTG although 50% funding from other DTGs in the DTA as a whole was acceptable with the remainder coming from other sources.

**Key points:** the rule only applied to the stipend over the entire period of the studentship rather than each year of the studentship.

#### **Post-October 2006 50% Rule:**

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

The EPSRC expected and inferred that:

- The student receive at least the research council agreed minimum stipend;
- The "total cost" of the studentship be defined as and **include fees and the research council agreed minimum stipend** in the year the grant is issued (and where appropriate RTSG)
- The "total cost" in the condition refers to the total cost of the studentship in **any one year of that studentship** rather than the full cost of a studentship over a 3-4 year period; .
- Where a higher stipend than the minimum stipend is being paid, the 50% requirement will only be apply to the minimum stipend level and not the minimum stipend plus enhancement;
- If a student be funded at the 50% level that 50% of the total cost of the studentship in any one year be funded from a single doctoral training grant with the remainder being funded from other sources;
- Where a student is eligible to receive a stipend it must be paid wholly from the DTA (if support is at 100%) or from a combination of EPSRC and RO funds if the student is supported at the 50% level.
- No part of the stipend should be paid for (directly or indirectly) by the student.

**Key points:** the rule applies to the total cost (i.e. the fees, stipend and, where applicable, RTSG) and has to be met **each year** from a single DTG.

### **MRC**

#### **Pre October 2010 50% Rule**

"Where a student is eligible for a full award, at least 50 per cent of the annual cost of the studentship **in any one year** must be drawn from a DTG of a single Research Council. The remaining costs may be funded from other sources such as, another DTG, the research organisation's own funds, or research partners and industry. Joint Research Council funding of multidisciplinary awards is possible on the basis of 50:50 funding from two Councils' DTGs; in that case one of the Councils must be designated as the majority funder for monitoring

and information purposes. For a fees-only student, the Councils expect that all of the fees, for the whole PhD period, are paid from the DTA of a single Research Council. Therefore, an EU student who is halfway through their studies can not be supported for only a part of their course."

**Key points:** the rule only requires that 50% of the total cost (i.e. the fees, stipend and (where applicable) RTSG) in any one year (not each year) is met from the DTG.

### **All Research Councils (from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010)**

**Harmonized rule:** applicable to all Research Councils from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010. Under the new rule, the 50% rule for the EPSRC and MRC will change, and it will follow the current BBSRC rule.

"At least 50% of the total cost (i.e. fee, stipend and, where applicable, RTSG) of the studentship over the **full lifetime** of the studentship (i.e. 50% of a 3-4 year studentship) must be funded through DTA support (i.e. this could be from a single DTG or combination of DTGs depending on how the DTA mechanism is utilised)."

**Key points:** the rule applies to the total cost over the **entire period** of the studentship rather than each year of the studentship.

### **13. Can a student be funded from more than one DTG?**

Yes, provided the 50% rule is adhered to. For example, where the period of support for a student extends beyond the date of a DTG, the balance of support can be provided by the next or subsequent grant.

### **14. Which students are eligible to receive stipends?**

*Edited extract from The MRC Postgraduate Studentships Handbook June 2010 (but also applies to EPSRC candidates):*

A student must have a relevant connection<sup>(1)</sup> with the UK (usually established by residence) at the date of application to be eligible to receive a stipend from a DTA.

Nationality or country of origin is not a criterion for eligibility. Meeting the residence requirement, as set out in the Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations 1997 and subsequent amendments, is the test of eligibility.

- UK nationals who have lived most of their lives in the UK will have demonstrated a relevant connection.
- Individuals who were not born in the UK but have been granted UK citizenship or have come to settle in the UK (eg immigrant status, refugee or an individual granted humanitarian protection) need to demonstrate that they have a relevant connection through ordinary residence<sup>(2)</sup>.
- European Economic Area<sup>(3)</sup> citizens who are migrant workers<sup>(4)</sup> (or their spouse or children) and can demonstrate ordinary residence in the EEA are eligible.
- EU nationals who have spent the three years prior to application resident in the UK (this can include residence while undertaking undergraduate study).

1. A *relevant connection* can be established if an individual has been ordinarily resident in the UK throughout the 3 years preceding the date of application. Candidates may be classed as demonstrating ordinary residence when they are temporarily absent overseas (see below), where

the nature of their profession demands that they spend periods overseas (eg research), or they have been receiving full-time education overseas.

2. Lord Scarman defined *ordinary residence* as "habitual and normal ... from choice and for a settled purpose throughout the prescribed period, apart from temporary or occasional absence" ... "voluntarily adopted"... "there must be some degree of settled purpose (and) a sufficient degree of continuity to be properly described as settled." Ordinary residence is proven if a candidate would have been in the UK (or EEA) if it were not for the fact that s/he, his/her spouse, parent or guardian is/was temporarily employed outside of the area.

3. *European Economic Area* comprises the member states of the European Union (currently Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and UK), as well as Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, and, by international agreement, Switzerland.

4. An EEA *migrant worker* can be defined (for these purposes) as a citizen of a member state of the EEA who is employed in the UK and who should be treated as a national of the UK. The employment of an EEA migrant worker can be full-time or part-time but must be relevant to the candidate's previous or future training. Candidates employed in part-time or short-term casual employment or who are effectively unemployed cannot be considered to hold migrant worker status. The European Economic Area is constantly growing; member countries should be checked regularly.

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

#### *Nationals of European Economic Area (EEA) Member States*

A migrant worker, or the spouse or the child of a migrant worker, is eligible for a stipend if they are employed in the UK at the time the application is made, and are either:

- (a) An EU national and would have a relevant connection to the European Union; or,
- (b) A national of a member state of the European Economic Area (EEA) not in the EU eg - Iceland, Norway, Switzerland or Liechtenstein - and would have a relevant connection to the EEA.

#### *Nationals of the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man*

Candidates from the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man are not normally eligible for funding. They will not have established eligibility for consideration for a studentship through any period of ordinary residence in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland during which they have been in full-time education.

This relates to the tax status of an individual or their parents, if no tax is received from residents of the Channel Islands and Isle of Man then they are not eligible for certain benefits. As tax is paid in the Islands it is these Islands that are responsible for the education costs of their subjects.

### **15. How much do we have to pay students?**

Eligible students must be paid at least the minimum Research Council recommended stipend (£13,590 for 2010-11). RCUK increase stipend levels annually in line with inflation at approximately 2.5%. Exact stipends will be published as soon as they are known. It is not permissible to award a fees only studentship to a student who is eligible to receive a stipend.

### **16. At what point are students required to pay income tax on their stipend?**



The first £15,480 of any maintenance/stipend paid should normally be tax free. It is then the responsibility of the student to include the difference between the total stipend and £15,480 on their personal tax return, as this may contribute to their personal allowance. If a student has no other income and the difference is less than the current personal allowance (£6,475 for 2009/10) then no tax will be payable. More detailed information can be found on the HMRC website or by contacting the relevant local tax office:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/eimanual/EIM06205.htm>

**17.Can a student be paid out of the DTA of more than one Research Council?**

Yes, as long as the overall Research Council studentship contribution is 50% from each Research Council. The project area would be expected to fit with the remit of both the Research Councils in question.

**18.Are EU students eligible for DTA funding?**

Yes, all EU nationals are eligible for fees only awards. Since no stipend is payable, all the fees must be paid from the DTA of a single Research Council. However, an EU national may be eligible to receive a stipend if a relevant connection with the UK has been established. A relevant connection may be established if they have been in full time education in the UK throughout the three years preceding the start date of the course (see Question 14).

**19.Are non-EU students eligible for DTA funding?**

If a student does not have a relevant connection with an EU country they will not be eligible for funding from a DTA (with the exception of IDS students - see Question 7).

**20.Can we fund a student who wants to start in September or earlier?**

Yes, but the Research Councils will not start the grants earlier, so such students will need to be paid out of other funds until 1 October.

**21.Can part-time students be supported?**

Yes. It is expected that the period of study will reflect the percentage of time spent pursuing doctoral studies; for example, if a typical full-time duration is three years, a part-time student might expect support for up to six years. The funding would be pro rata to a full time studentship. Part-time studentships should usually be awarded for no less than 50% of full-time, and on the understanding that the approved programme of research training can be carried out effectively.

**22.What is the minimum period a DTA funded student must be funded?**

A DTG funded student must be funded for at least one year. Once a student starts being funded from a DTG, the funding must continue until the end of the programme.

**23.Can EPSRC studentships be converted into CASE awards?  
(EPSRC only)**

CASE awards are a type of doctoral studentship designed to incorporate an element of industrially related training to broaden experience. DTA studentships can now be converted to CASE (previously this was not permitted). A company can contribute funding to a DTA studentship and a student may spend time in industry. This can be facilitated in a number of ways as long as a minimum of 50% of the studentship is funded from the DTA (see Question 12). This funding model should normally follow the same structure as an Industrial CASE award.

#### **24. Can the MRC DTA be used to fund collaborative studentships?**

MRC also supports the funding of collaborative studentships (which could either be between academic partners or between the University and an industry or charity etc). A company can contribute funding to a DTA studentship and a student may spend time in industry. This can be facilitated in a number of ways as long as a minimum of 50% of the total studentship is funded from the DTA.

In addition, MRC holds an annual competition for industrial collaborative studentships. With these, the industrial partner is the primary applicant. Students will be jointly supervised by both the academic and industrial supervisors. Industrial collaborative students are based at the University but can expect to spend a minimum period of three months during the tenure of the award with the collaborating industrial company. These awards are funded as a ring-fenced supplement to the academic partner institution's DTA. As a measure of its involvement, the industrial partner is expected to make a financial contribution to the cost of the studentship.

#### **25. What else can DTA funds be used for?**

*From DTA Terms and Conditions*

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

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

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

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

The University is accountable to the Research Councils for the use of all funds in a DTG and should keep sufficient records to ensure that this can be done. However, there is no expectation that universities will be required to detail the payments made from the fees and other costs heading nor provide a breakdown of payments by project. Should the Research Councils seek information on the use of these funds, for example during a dipstick visit, the interest is in the processes for distributing the funds according to the needs of individual students and their projects. For example, it may be that some projects will require a lower level of funding and others a higher level. The needs should be considered across the university, in the context of the overall sums available under this heading. The interest would be in the arrangements for distributing the funds, whether those involved in agreeing levels of funding have the necessary information and that there is evidence that the arrangements are followed.

#### **26. What is the Research Training Support Grant?**

The RTSG is no longer identified as a separate sum, but is included in the 'Fees and other costs' heading on the DTG. It is intended for the incidental costs incurred in the training of doctoral students. Please note that this is NOT the same as the Roberts' money which is a separate funding stream for generic skills training and is coordinated centrally by the University's Research Office.

Under the DTA system the institution can decide how much to award for RTSG and conference/travel. However, as an example, pre-DTA MRC funded students receive £1000 RTSG and £300 conference/travel allowance per year.

**27. Can we claim maternity/adoption pay from the Research Councils?**

No, the cost of maternity leave cannot be reclaimed from the EPSRC or the MRC and the Research Councils ask that these need to be taken into account when calculating DTA allocations and projections. From September 2009, it became University policy that maternity and adoption pay should be provided to DTG-funded students, subject to their fulfilling eligibility criteria. See the relevant Code of Practice section at

<http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/code/changesto/degrees/> for full details.

**28. Can a student continue to be funded from a DTG once they have submitted their thesis?**

No, a student cannot continue to be funded once they have submitted their thesis.

**29. Can a student be funded during their submission pending period?**

No, under EPSRC DTG terms and conditions, it is not permitted to continue to pay a student's stipend, fees or any other costs from a DTG during the submission pending period.