

Medical Research Council (MRC) Doctoral Training Grant Management

**Guidance on internal processes and procedures for administrative
and finance staff**

September 2010 (applicable for the 2010/11 academic year)

Research Office Graduate Education Team

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1. FACULTIES RECEIVING MRC DOCTORAL TRAINING GRANT (DTG) FUNDS

Faculty receiving the highest proportion of MRC studentship funding:

- Medical and Human Sciences

Other faculties that receive MRC funding:

- Life Sciences
- Engineering and Physical Sciences (a very small proportion)

2. GENERAL GRANT MANAGEMENT

2.1 University contacts

- **University contact for DTG enquiries:** James Power
(james.k.power@manchester.ac.uk)
- **Administrative lead:** James Power - FMHS
(james.k.power@manchester.ac.uk)
- **Financial lead:** Philip Cheetham - FMHS
(philip.cheetham@manchester.ac.uk)

Additional management responsibilities fall within FLS as they receive approximately 35-40% of annual institutional MRC DTG funding:

- **FLS administrative lead:** Anna Lawless
(anna.lawless@manchester.ac.uk)
- **Financial lead:** Karen Hall (karen.hall@manchester.ac.uk)

2.2 Document management

Records of the following documents are held within the Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences (certain documents will also be held within the University Graduate Education Team (GET) and other Faculties):

- Qualifying grants contributing to the final DTG award
- Grants not included in MRC return and justifications for this
- Calculations determining overall Faculty shares of DTG
- MRC DTG award correspondence and starting certificate
- CASE contracts (if applicable)
- Details on students funded from each DTG, projects undertaken, supervisors, fee/stipend value, any external collaboration, etc.
- Copy of studentship award letters to successful PhD applicants.
- MRC Studentships Handbook
- Quarterly MRC payment remittances
- Supplementary awards to DTG (Disability Support Allowance, Overseas fieldwork etc)
- Final Expenditure Statement including financial transactions over period of grant and summary of overall income/spend
- MRC Strategic Plan and DTG objectives (guidance from MRC)

- Submission surveys and returns

3. TYPES OF TRAINING AWARD

3.1 University DTG

This forms the bulk of the allocation and is the automatic core grant funding awarded to the University for doctoral training based on MRC qualifying grant/fellowship income. The University has considerable discretion over which Faculties/Schools receive shares of this funding and how it is allocated.

3.2 Capacity Building

Doctoral training awards allocated in specific areas of research priority to the MRC. Funding is determined through a competitive application process every two years. Recent priority areas have included biological and medical imaging, in-vivo sciences and modelling for public health. Funding can be sought for three or four years with successful applicants receiving the allocation as a supplement to their institutional DTG over a two-year period.

3.3 Industrial CASE

Doctoral training awards involving external partnership with industry. The industrial partner must provide a minimum annual financial contribution to the studentship (£2.5K stipend enhancement; £1.4K consumables for 2010/11), although in 2010 the MRC agreed to meet these commitments for Small Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs). Training placements are held within the industrial setting during the PhD with an industrial supervisor appointed. Studentships are allocated following an annual competitive application process with both the academic and industrial partners expected to contribute to the development of any application. Successful applicants receive the MRC funding component as a supplement to their institutional DTG with the industrial funding subject to contract.

3.4 Advanced Masters

Funding directed at Masters training that either responds to training gaps within the undergraduate system or provides preparatory training for PhD study. The competition runs every three years with funds allocated to the forthcoming institutional DTG. Successful Masters courses are determined following a competitive application process with funding supporting studentships over three intakes.

4. ALLOCATION PROCEDURES

The main institutional DTG is determined through an algorithm applied annually by MRC. The share of funding across institutions is based on their representative share of MRC grant and fellowship income held at a pre-determined point in time. For the 2010 DTG, the snapshot of qualifying grants was taken using a census date of 1 May 2009. The University has successfully argued for the inclusion of additional grants originally missing from the MRC qualifying list (with subsequent increases to our DTG allocation).

The DTG is then allocated to Faculties based on their representative contributions to the qualifying grants. This exercise is undertaken within the Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences once the institutional DTG is known. Each qualifying grant is checked to determine the contributing investigators with splits of the DTG shared accordingly. For example, a qualifying grant

with 50% ownership from a PI in FLS and 50% from a PI in FMHS will see its representative DTG share split evenly between the two Faculties to reflect the grant. The overall qualifying grant share held within each Faculty is then aligned with the institutional DTG to determine the Faculty DTG allocations. Each Faculty opens an 'FA' code for their representative share of DTG income. This information is passed to Phil Cheetham as the DTG financial lead so the institutional DTG payments can be correctly transferred to these accounts from October.

The DTG award letter is initially received by the University GET with copies provided to the various Faculty administrative and financial managers. The award letter is typically received in February each year but can be subject to future revisions on the basis of any additional awards allocated through Capacity Building or Industrial CASE studentships ahead of the 1 October start date. An indicative institutional DTG is provided by the MRC around 12 months before the DTG start date based on the qualifying grant exercise referred to above – this supports internal planning significantly.

The DTG award letter contains a Starting Certificate that must be signed off by an institutional contact – this is arranged through Liz Venn in GET. The grant acceptance is not yet managed through Je-S.

5. VALUE & PAYMENT OF STUDENTSHIPS

5.1 Studentship value (tuition fees and stipend levels)

The values of individual DTG awards issued to students are largely determined by the receiving Faculty/School with some notable exceptions:

- The annual stipend award must be at least equal to the minimum rate set by RCUK for that particular academic year (£13,590 for 2010/11).
- Students awarded through the Capacity Building scheme must receive a £2K annual enhancement to the RCUK minimum stipend.
- Students awarded through the Industrial CASE scheme must receive at least a £2.5K annual enhancement to the RCUK minimum stipend.
- Residency eligibility requirements apply (as across all of the Research Councils). Non-UK EU students who have not been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least three years prior to the start of their award are only eligible for funding covering their fees from the DTG.

Within FMHS, all students funded through the main institutional DTG receive the minimum RCUK stipend (£13,590 in 2010/11). They all have their standard annual tuition fee (£3,466 in 2010/11) funded through the DTG and receive £750 annual Research Training Support Grant (RTSG). The RTSG is earmarked for each student's career development (i.e. conference/workshop attendance, external placements, etc) rather than to support direct project expenses. All project expenses must be supported through the host research group. Within FMHS we fund all our DTG studentships on a 50/50 basis, with 50% of each award sourced from non-DTG funds. This allows us to appoint greater numbers and develop further research capacity in line with MRC objectives.

5.2 Payment of studentships

Students are typically paid their stipend monthly in advance unless they request quarterly instalments. All stipend payments are managed through Campus Solutions (Financial Aid) and Oracle Financials (OF). Stipends are

recorded on CS by the appropriate Faculty DTG administrator or a nominated colleague (typically against an 'FA' finance code) and then transferred onto OF for release of payment. The transfer of payments from CS to OF is overseen by the Student Services Centre (SSC) with any problems resolved through a combination of SSC and Faculty staff. Payment of tuition fees is managed through the Student Financials component of CS, with Faculty administrators calling up the relevant FA code under 'Third Party Contract' and then identifying the student(s) they wish to sponsor against the DTG code. SSC support is provided through the Fees (Jennifer Burgess) and Funding (Patrick Ryan) teams. All new FA codes must be provided to SSC in advance to allow set up on CS.

Should a DTG funded student withdraw ahead of the end of their training period the 'unallocated' fee component is calculated on a pro-rata basis determined by the number of days the student was in attendance prior to being withdrawn. Given that students are paid monthly in advance, stipend reimbursement will be sought directly from students (via cheque) should they withdraw within a week of receiving a monthly instalment. The unallocated funds are rolled back into the main Faculty DTG allocation allowing them to be re-directed towards supporting additional studentships.

6. DISABILITY SUPPORT ALLOWANCE (DSA)

The MRC will consider additional financial and training support for any DTG funded student who, because of their disability, is obliged to incur additional expenditure in connection with their postgraduate training. Awards will only be considered once a student has discussed their training needs with the University Disability Support Office (DSO) and undertaken a formal needs assessment. All needs assessments for the University of Manchester are conducted by Access Summit.

The needs assessment is reviewed at Faculty level with the decision confirmed to the student in writing from the appropriate Faculty office following consultation with MRC. Should the MRC agree financial support, the procuring of equipment, non-medical assistance, etc, is the responsibility of the Disability Support Office (audrey.m.williams@manchester.ac.uk) with costs charged to the appropriate DTG 'FA' code in the first instance. Receipts must be provided for all DSA related purchases and are sent directly to MRC who arrange reimbursement (issued alongside the subsequent relevant DTG institutional profile payment). The DTG financial lead is kept abreast of any DSA claims for this reason.'

7. FIELDWORK/OVERSEAS FIELDWORK

Where it is an essential part of a student's training, the MRC will consider contributing towards the costs of overseas fieldwork or visits to foreign organisations. The level of funds awarded is determined by a country banding system with funding providing a 'front-end' element (pre-departure support such as flight bookings, insurance, etc) and a weekly allowance during the overseas training. The banding system is provided in the appendices to the MRC Studentships Handbook (June 2010 edition).

Applications for Overseas Fieldwork Expenses (OFE) are initially handled by the University before being reclaimed via the MRC. A University OFE application form is submitted by the student that requires their primary supervisor to approve the application and justify the fieldwork. This is submitted to Liz Venn as the University DTG contact before being issued to the appropriate Faculty DTG administrative manager for assessment. If awarded, correspondence is sent to the student from the Faculty confirming the value of the award and any terms/conditions. Funds are released as a supplement to the student's stipend by enhancing their payments on Campus Solutions.

An OFE claim form is attached to the award letter that the student must return (with original receipts for all OFE related expenses) within a month of returning to the UK. This form is then sent to the MRC alongside original receipts to allow the funds to be reimbursed to the institution alongside our subsequent DTG profile payment.

8. MATERNITY/ADOPTION PAY

There is no formal application process for maternity/adoption pay. DTG funded students receive the minimum requisite support with confirmation provided by Faculty when their formal interruption is approved. FMHS provides six months stipend cover for maternity leave at the standard rate. See also the University's Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Pay Policy for Funded Postgraduate Research Students at <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/code/changestodegrees/>.

9. SICK PAY

There is no formal application process for sick pay. DTG funded students receive the minimum requisite support with confirmation provided by Faculty when their formal interruption is approved. FMHS provides up to 12 weeks stipend cover for sickness leave at the standard rate. See also the University's Sick Pay Policy for Funded Postgraduate Research Students at <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/researchoffice/graduate/code/changestodegrees/>.

10. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

10.1 Payment to the University

MRC DTG funds are paid to the University on a quarterly profile basis with each DTG consisting of 16 quarterly payments to reflect the four-year period of the grant. The final instalment for each grant is subject to the Final Expenditure Statement (FES) return. Should the FES reveal an under-allocation of DTG funds the shortfall is withheld from the final MRC payment to the institution. The payment remittances are initially obtained by central accounts receivable before being sent to Phil Cheetham as the MRC DTG finance lead. Phil arranges the journal of quarterly remittances to the appropriate School/Faculty FA codes based on a list of codes and anticipated DTG income over the course of each grant.

10.2 Financial Expenditure Statement

The FES is typically requested during May/June via email with the FES return completed on an Excel spreadsheet as oppose to Je-S. FES preparations should be ongoing, as monitoring of predicted income/expenditure against any DTG 'FA' code can be conducted continuously. This ensures any variance against planned spend can be highlighted early and rectified as necessary. FES co-ordination typically starts in June/July when there is limited remaining spend anticipated against the DTG ahead of its expiration at the end of September. A breakdown of fee/stipend/RTSG/DSA/OFE spend is provided by Phil Cheetham based on transactions recorded in Oracle against the appropriate FA codes. Each Faculty FES is then merged to provide an overall institutional FES.

The MRC FES is not reported directly from Je-S, so there is no correlation between the FES and Je-S data (unlike EPSRC). The FES is issued to the University as a blank Excel spreadsheet in a format allowing for an annual summary to be provided of fee, stipend, RTSG, DSA and OFE spend per student.

Phil Cheetham pulls together reports on the various Faculty FA codes relating to the DTG then groups expenditure into these categories. Information is displayed by Faculty and collectively as an institution. This allows any predicted over/under spend to be scrutinised so Faculty performance against their original allocations can be measured. All historical EPS MRC DTG allocations are now held by FMHS, so the FES is effectively managed through the FLS/FMHS DTG administration and finance managers. The return is finalised and agreed between FMHS/FLS before being sent to Liz Venn in GET as the MRC DTG co-ordinator to return to MRC ahead of their annual 31 December deadline.

11. RECORD MANAGEMENT

The following information is requested on Je-S when submitting details on a funded DTG student researcher:

- Personal details (title, name, address, contact details, ethnicity, DOB, nationality, disabilities etc)
- Alternative contact details (if applicable)
- Previous degree(s) (grade, institution, subject) and relevant experience
- Registration date, funding end date, expected submission date
- Termination date (if applicable) – reason for termination
- Funding details (annual stipend, fee, RTSG, % of support from DTG, FTE)
- Project details
- MRC Research Board Classification (i.e. which MRC research board most befits the nature of the project being undertaken)
- Ethical considerations (use of animals, humans, tissues etc and details of ethical approval, if applicable)
- Host institution, department and supervisors
- Start and end date at institution
- Confirmation of DTG that is funding the student (i.e. G0900195)
- Project partner details (if applicable) – location, industrial supervisor, financial contribution, summary of placement training etc.
- Research priority area (if Capacity Building award)
- HUSID
- NUMHUS

These details must be submitted on Je-S within one month of a student starting or by mid-November for October starts. Failure to provide this information may result in sanctions being imposed on future DTA payments by the MRC. Data input and submission is the responsibility of each Faculty DTG administrative manager.

Staff must create an account on Je-S themselves and then request particular access rights by contacting Laura Short in the Research Office.

12. SUBMISSION SURVEYS

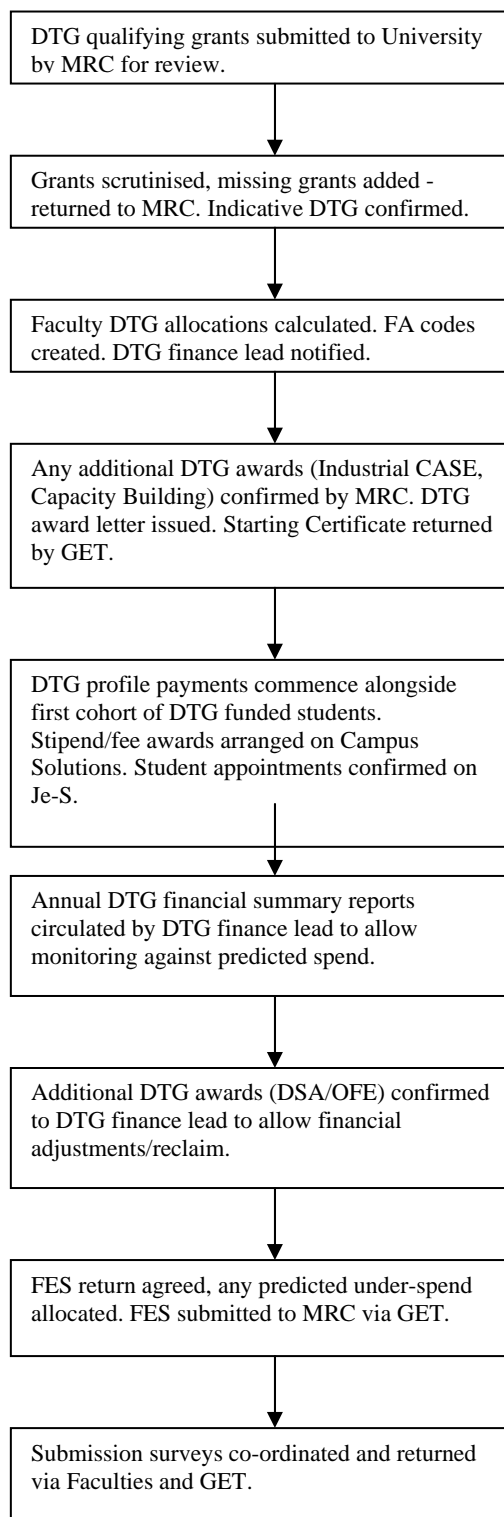
The PhD submission survey is requested each January/February. The Faculty DTG administrative managers are responsible for co-ordination and submission alongside members of GET. Submission is requested within a month of the survey being released (for the 2009 return the deadline was 9 February 2010).

Surveys are currently submitted in two formats. For the Councils whose students are already recorded on Je-S, the exercise is managed through Je-S. For those whose students pre-date Je-S the survey is conducted via a separate online exercise. For MRC, the submission survey is managed entirely through Je-S. The survey requests confirmation of the PhD/Masters submission and award dates and any reason behind non-submission or award.

- PhD submitted date (dd/mm/yyyy)
- Qualification awarded

- Masters submitted date (dd/mm/yyyy)
- Awarded date (dd/mm/yyyy)
- Reason not awarded
- Reason for non submission

13. FLOW DIAGRAM – LIFETIME OF AN MRC DTG



14. USEFUL CONTACTS INVOLVED IN MRC DTG MANAGEMENT

GENERAL QUERIES

- Liz Venn, DTA co-ordinator and MRC studentships contact for The University of Manchester: Elizabeth.Venn@manchester.ac.uk
- James Power, MRC Administrative Lead: james.k.power@manchester.ac.uk

FACULTY

MHS

- James Power, Administrative Lead: james.k.power@manchester.ac.uk
- Philip Cheetham, Financial Lead: philip.cheetham@manchester.ac.uk

FLS

- Anna Lawless, Administrative Lead: anna.lawless@manchester.ac.uk
- Karen Hall, Financial Lead: karen.hall@manchester.ac.uk

STIPEND PAYMENTS

- Patrick Ryan, Student Funding & Financial Support, Student Services Centre: patrick.ryan@manchester.ac.uk

TUITION FEE PAYMENTS

- Jennifer Burgess, Senior Registration & Fees Officer, Student Services Centre: Jennifer.Burgess@manchester.ac.uk

DISABILITY SUPPORT

- Audrey Williams, Disability Support Office: audrey.m.williams@manchester.ac.uk

JE-S ACCESS

- Laura Short, Research Operations Officer: Laura.s.short@manchester.ac.uk

USEFUL WEBSITES

Medical Research Council (MRC) (studentships section):
<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Studentships/index.htm>

Research Councils UK (RCUK) (studentships section):
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/postgradtrain.htm>

Je-S (the online system used by the Research Councils to record the data of students receiving studentship funding):
<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Jes2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx?cookies=yes>

MRC Studentships Handbook:
<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Utilities/Documentrecord/index.htm?d=MRC002630>