

NORTH WEST DOCTORAL TRAINING CENTRE

Guidance for Applicants for ESRC North West Doctoral Training Centre
Postgraduate Awards

(September 2012)

INTRODUCTION

These Notes of Guidance are intended for those who wish to apply to the Universities of Liverpool, Lancaster and Manchester for an Economic and Social Research (ESRC) postgraduate award under the ESRC North West Doctoral Training Centre (NWDTC) scheme to support masters or doctoral study in Social Sciences from September 2012. It sets out the types of awards provided, eligibility and the procedures for application.

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

1. THE FUNDING SCHEMES

The ESRC provides funding to enable students to study at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK 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 a 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 five years of part-time study, on a programme leading to the award of a doctoral degree.

+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.

2. ELIGIBILITY

Academic eligibility:

- For all awards, candidates must have qualifications of the standard of a good honours degree at first or upper second class level. For +3 or +4 studentships, the student must also have a Masters degree.
- In the majority of cases, candidates will have undertaken an undergraduate course and/or Masters 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.
- Candidates must be planning to study in an ESRC recognised pathways (see appendix 1 for a list of recognised pathways).

Residential eligibility:

- Candidates must have a relevant connection with the UK in order to qualify for a full award. This includes candidates who have been ordinarily resident in the UK throughout the 3 year period preceding the date of application and resident for this 3 year period for reasons other than education. Also candidates that have settled status in the UK within the meaning of the Immigration Act 1971.
- Candidates from EU countries other than the UK are now eligible for full awards maintenance, tuition fees and Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) if they have been resident in the UK for at least three years prior to the start of their programme.
- Candidates from EU countries who have not resided in the UK for three years prior to the start of their programme will be eligible for a fee only award. This does not apply in the case of candidates for Economics and Advanced Quantitative Methods awards, who are eligible for full fees, stipend and RTSG awards without adhering to the current residential eligibility rules

For further information on residential eligibility please refer to the ESRC webpage:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/looking-for-funding/eligibility.aspx>

3. THE FINANCIAL BASIS OF THE AWARD

A full postgraduate award for full-time study provides:

- Funds to cover the payment of full approved **Tuition Fees** to the institution
- A **Maintenance Grant**
- A Research Training Support Grant (**RTSG**)

Rates for the academic year 2012-13 will be as follows (subject to confirmation from the ESRC):

Maintenance Grant	£13,590
RTSG	£ 750

Please note that:

- Students in Economics will also be eligible to receive an **Enhanced Stipend** of £3,000 per year.
- Students in Advanced Quantitative Methods will be eligible to receive an **Enhanced Stipend** of £3,000 per year plus an extra £250 RTSG per year.

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

Student will receive additional disability allowance where appropriate.

The ESRC also provides **fees-only awards** for eligible EU students. 'Fees-only' award holders are not eligible to receive a maintenance grant from the ESRC, they will only receive the cost of their **Tuition Fees** and a Research Training Support Grant (**RTSG**)

4. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Form and Transcripts

To apply for an award you must hold an offer of a place at one of the three NWDTC institutions.

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

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/>

Once your application has been approved, you may apply to the ESRC for funding. You will need to complete the ESRC Application Form at: <http://www.nwdtc.ac.uk/prospective.html>

Copies of transcripts and references included in your original programme application will also be required for your ESRC application.

Closing Date

You should complete the NWDTC application form and attach your transcripts and references to the School Postgraduate Office/ Student Registry in which you intend to register by **5.00pm on 23rd March 2012**.

Some pathways choose to impose earlier internal deadlines, so please check with the pathway lead at the institution you intend to register which deadline applies to you. Contact details can be found at <http://www.nwdtc.ac.uk/home/contacts.html>

5. ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

a. The Pathway Panels

Your application will initially be assessed by the relevant institution's Pathway Panel. The panel consists of senior academics from within the relevant pathway within the institution you intend to register at. Each application is judged on its own merits based on the information provided in the ESRC Application Form and your transcripts / references.

The panel agrees a mark for each application and applications are then ranked. The pathway panels will present their top applicants to a general institutional panel who will decide which applications will go through the final NWDTC studentship committee. The committee will then decide on studentship allocation across the NWDTC.

b. Outcome of Application

The outcome of the NWDTC studentship committee will be known by the week of the 16th April 2012. Successful candidates will then be informed in writing. The panels will also agree a list of reserve candidates. If you are successful in being nominated for an award, you will be asked to confirm whether or not you wish to formally accept this.

c. Taking up an Award

Award holders are normally expected to begin their programme of study on, or around, **18 September 2012** 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 are not possible for masters' 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, should an award be available. You will need to inform us of your decision at the earliest possible stage, in writing, by letter or e-mail.

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.

f. Appeals Process

The competition is fierce and, inevitably, many highly qualified and strongly-supported applicants do not get an award. Each application receives careful scrutiny by the assessors, and their decision is reached in the context of competing applications.

The Universities have complaints and appeals procedures, details of which can be found on our web sites at:

Lancaster: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/sbs/all/complaintsandappeals.htm>

Liverpool: <http://www.liv.ac.uk/students/student-administration-centre/policies-procedures/appeals.htm>

Manchester: www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ssc/appealsandpolicies/

6. APPLICATION TIMETABLE

23 rd March 2012	Deadline for studentship applications to relevant schools
30 th March 2012	Deadline for Pathways to put forward their top applicants
By 6 th April 2012	Institution eligibility checks
16 th April 2012	NWDTC studentship committee
By 25 th April 2012	Successful and reserve candidates to be notified of the outcome
18 September 2012	Start of the NWDTC first students cohort

7. APPLICATION 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 you intend to register

Please select the University you are applying to and in which you intend to register.

3. Name and address

We need to be able to contact you between March and September 2012. Under 'Address' you should provide the address at which you can be contacted for the majority of this period, 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 2012.

4. Project details

- Award type: Fees only or Full award

Please see residency eligibility under section 2 (page 2) 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 under section 3 (page 3).

- Programme/Pathway

Please indicate the programme or pathway which you intend to register (further details of accredited pathways can be found in Appendix 1). Please note that if you are unsure you should discuss this with your School Postgraduate Office or Student Registry.

- 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 area of study. The NWDTC recognises the title may change as the applicant progresses through the Masters 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. 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 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.

6. Qualifications

The student is expected to enter their relevant qualifications.

7. Relevant Experience

Please complete this section by entering the number of years of experience and give details. The examiners will use this information to establish any experience you have gained that might contribute to the intended research topic.

8. Supervision

Please state who your prospective supervisors will be according to the offer letter received from your institution.

9. Research training previously undertaken

Please include a brief description of the relevant research training previously undertaken.

10. Research training needs

Please give details of any identified training needs for your doctoral programme and state whether or not this has been discussed with your supervisors. Please also state whether you intend to go on fieldwork abroad and/or attend difficult language training. As stated above, only students who specify potential fieldwork in their original application will be eligible to apply for fieldwork funding and 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. Advance Quantitative training

Please detail if you will be undertaking any advance quantitative training during your doctoral programme and provide details of the training if known.

12. Additional applications

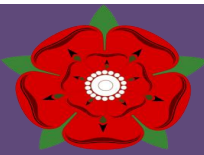
Please indicate whether you have already applied for other funding for this forthcoming year.

13. References and transcripts

You should provide two references along with your application and copies of your transcripts. These may be the same references / transcripts you submit with the standard University Application form.

14. Acknowledgment

Please sign and date the application form.



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APPENDIX 1 –LIST OF PATHWAYS

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