

IAPETUS2 Research-Training Support Grants

Policy and Procedures Statement

Background

1. Each full-time NERC-funded studentship attracts £11,000 in funding over the duration of an award that is designed to be used by Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) to meet the costs and expenses arising from the student's research and training that are not part of the core provision provided by the award-holder's host organization. These resources are described by NERC as Research Training Support Grants (RTSG).
2. The IAPETUS DTP (the Partnership) receives funding for a number of new full-time studentships each academic year for the six years between 2019/20 to 2024/25. The initial number of studentships is 16 per annum, and NERC will announce in July of each year the allocation for the forthcoming year. NERC have stated that they only expect the number of studentships allocated to change in exceptional circumstances. Each (16-student) cohort attracts £176,000 of RTSG income for the DTP and over the lifetime of the DTP's current period of accreditation will generate £1,056,000 of income in total, assuming the current RTSG rate is not indexed at any point during the current period of accreditation.
3. NERC's (the Council) guidance to DTPs as to what RTSG income can be used for is open and inclusive. The Council is content for DTPs to utilize these funds in the most effective and flexible way that best supports the research and training of award-holders, provided items of claimed expenditure can be justified, funding is transparently allocated and resources managed in accordance with the Harmonized Terms & Conditions for UKRI Doctoral Training Grants.

Policy

4. The DTP is committed to maximising the funds provided by NERC to support the Partnership's award-holders, which will ensure students are resourced:
 - a) To successfully conduct their approved research project effectively, safely and ethically;
 - b) Attend and undertake training activities across the Partnership and beyond; &
 - c) Can disseminate their research findings, engage with research users and network with peers and colleagues.
5. In support of IAPETUS2's resourcing priorities, its RTSG funds will be allocated towards the following expenses and activities:
 - a) Consumables and equipment, including specialist IT, that are required for the student's research project;
 - b) Travel and subsistence for the award-holder whilst conducting fieldwork in the UK and internationally;
 - c) Travel and subsistence for the award-holder to attend and participate in conferences and other similar events in the UK and internationally;
 - d) Specialist research services that are required for the student's research project; &
 - e) Attendance at DTP and national training and cohort-development events.
6. The Partnership's RTSG funds will not be used to meet costs arising from the supervision of the student, including the topping-up and/or meeting of the costs of an award-holder's tuition fees or maintenance grant; or the costs of any aspects of the award-holder's host organization's core

provision for postgraduate students. If supervisors need to attend any of the student's fieldwork, it is expected that they pay their own expenses. If they are unable to self fund this, the supervisor must provide a case to Management Committee. Without this explicit permission, the supervisor's expenses are ineligible RTSG expenditure. Under no circumstances can RTSG funds be top-sliced and/or pooled by a Partner Organization to support its postgraduate student community.

7. IAPETUS2 will allocate RTSG funds via a flexible and transparent process, which is needs-based in approach.
8. Each proposed research project seeking IAPETUS2 accreditation and available for students to apply for during an annual studentship competition will specify the level of RTSG funding that is required. The accreditation of a project by IAPETUS2 does not denote the DTP's approval of the level of RTSG funding sought; however, any specific concerns and issues will be reported back to the project's Principal Supervisor at this point.
9. The DTP's Studentship Committee will set and confirm the amount of RTSG for each award-holder and their project that has been selected for funding following the completion of that year's studentship competition and prior to the commencement of the new award-holders' studies. At this juncture the DTP will take into account:
 - a) The specific research and training needs of the student and their project;
 - b) The level of funding provided to the project by its CASE partner (s), other external sponsor or host organization;
 - c) Comparative projects and the requests that are made by them;
 - d) IAPETUS2 agreed levels and expectations for RTSG funding; &
 - e) The need for sound financial management and stewardship of the DTP's funds.
10. The DTP will provide a minimum of £6,000 of RTSG in total to each award-holder, with higher amounts agreed by the DTP's Studentships Committee on a needs-basis. Where a higher amount of RTSG is sought such a request needs to be articulated and evidenced in the project's proposal. The maximum award will be £10,000 of RTSG as defined in the DTP2 proposal; the remaining £1,000 of RTSG for each student will be retained to contribute to central teaching costs.
11. The DTP reserves the right to use RTSG funds strategically to support joint training activities and facilities that benefit and involve all DTP award-holders from across the Partnership.
12. Non-academic external organizations who are CASE Partners may support an award-holder via the provision of additional funds to add to their RTSG allocation. All such funding should be detailed and documented within the CASE Partnership Agreement between the award-holder, their host Partner Organization and the CASE Partner. Although the UKRI Harmonized Guidelines formally note that additional moneys should come to the lead organization, discussion with NERC (email of 24th April 2019) notes that NERC are happy for the additional funds to go directly to the Host Organization, to avoid complications in relation to IPR and legal agreements.
13. Outwith the DTP's process of allocating RTSG funds, a DTP Director may make a request for supplementary funds to the Lead DTP Director in exceptional circumstances. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
14. Should an award-holder not utilize their RTSG allocation in full, any unspent RTSG funds will be returned to Durham University and recycled by the DTP.
15. Where a studentship is terminated, any unspent RTSG funds will be returned to Durham University and reconciled by the DTP Administrator (Durham).

16. The Partnership will manage and account for its RTSG fund via its Research Training Support Fund (the Fund).

Procedures

17. The disbursement and accounting of the Partnership's Research Training Support Fund is coordinated by the DTP Administrator at Durham University (the DTP's administrative lead organization).
18. Once the DTP has confirmed the level of RTSG funds allocated to each funded project that has a student attached to it, the DTP Administrator (Durham) will formally notify in writing the Principal Supervisor of each project and the DTP Director of the relevant Partner Organization. Following on from this, the DTP Administrator (Durham) will confirm the total overall amount of studentship funding allocated to each Partner Organization in relation to that year's new cohort. These agreed funds will subsequently be claimed by each Partner Organization in accordance with the DTP's Partnership Agreement.
19. RTSG funds will be profiled evenly over the duration of a studentship, unless the Partner Organization requests a variance. Such a variance should be listed and noted when invoicing Durham University, under the financial arrangements detailed in the DTP's Partnership Agreement.
20. It is the responsibility of the award-holder's host organization to manage the RTSG funds that have been allocated to them by the DTP for the studentship. Each Partner Organization must ensure that they have robust procedures for managing and accounting for these funds at an institutional level, which are open to internal and external audit. The DTP does not handle specific student or supervisor requests for funding: all such transactions are handled by the award-holder's host organization. At Durham University, RTSG funds are allocated to academic departments to manage on a day-to-day basis.
21. It is recommended that each of the DTP's Partner Organizations establishes a dedicated account code within their internal financial system for accounting for DTP RTSG funds incurred by their award-holders, which is recognized by their Finance Department as holding external grant income and so can be carried over financial years.
22. The Partnership's RTSG Fund will be reconciled on an annual basis by the DTP Administrator (Durham) in accordance with the DTP's Partnership Agreement. During these exercises all over and under payments of RTSG will be confirmed and addressed. All approved and reconciled expenditure will be recorded on JeS against the relevant Doctoral Training Grant.
23. Supplementary RTSG funded provided by CASE Partners are handled and accounted by the host Partner Organization of the award-holders. Additional funds must be detailed and documented within the CASE Partnership Agreement between the award-holder, their host Partner Organization and the CASE Partner, and also correctly reported within the award-holder's JeS record.
24. The DTP Administrator (Durham) reserves the right to request and receive copies of receipts and other documentation relating to invoices submitted by Partner Organizations for RTSG funds.
25. Exceptional requests for RTSG funds must be made in writing (email or letter) by the DTP Director of the award-holder's host Partner Organizations to the DTP Administrator (Durham).

Any correspondence received by the DPT Administrator (Durham) directly from an award-holder or supervisor will be forwarded to the relevant DTP Director.

Further Information

Philip Stephens (Academic Director) or Jen Gadouleau (DTP Manager) // IAPETUS2 DTP
Email: contact.iapetus@durham.ac.uk

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