



The North West Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership ([NWSSDTP](#)) is an Economic and Social Research Centre ([ESRC](#)) funded postgraduate training consortium.

The NWSSDTP is one of 14 DTPs in the UK and brings together the Universities of [Keele](#), [Lancaster](#), [Liverpool](#) and [Manchester](#). The University of Liverpool leads on the management and administration of the consortium. Studentships are available across the full range of social science disciplines, and students have access to research expertise across the four constituent Universities.

This document is for NWSSDTP-funded students and their supervisors, to outline the key conditions and opportunities associated with an NWSSDTP studentship.

The NWSSDTP is governed by the regulations of the ESRC and its Postgraduate Funding Guide, the full version of which can be found at: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/esrc-postgraduate-funding-guide/>

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Section 1: Key conditions of an NWSSDTP Studentship

Financial details

A full NWSSDTP Studentship comprises:

- A maintenance stipend, at the UKRI recommended rate (£17,668 in 2022/23)
- Payment of tuition fees at the Home rate*

It also allows the student to apply for additional funding towards fieldwork, research expenses and other opportunities (see Section 2 below).

The ESRC award to the NWSSDTP includes £750 per student per annum for a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) and £450 per student per annum for overseas fieldwork (OSFW). However, at the instruction of the ESRC, **students do not automatically receive this as a personal allowance** – the funds are pooled, and students can apply for support using the processes outlined in section 2.

*All of the constituent institutions have committed to waiving additional fees for international students who are funded by the NWSSDTP. Tuition fees will be charged at a Home rate, which is then funded by the studentship. International Students will not need to pay additional Tuition Fees themselves.

Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA)

Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) are intended to help with additional expenditure for the costs of study-related requirements that may be incurred as a result of disability, mental health problems or specific learning difficulties that means additional support is needed to undertake a UK Research and Innovation funded studentship. The allowances can cover the cost of non-medical personal assistance, items of specialist equipment, extra travel costs and general expenses.

The Research Councils have adopted a harmonised approach to DSA. Additional guidance is available on the UKRI website (<https://www.ukri.org/skills/funding-for-research-training/>)

Universities will undertake the assessment of need and provide costs for the student when they are required. The University will then claim back eligible costs at the end of the academic year from the ESRC by submitting a completed DSA claim form to the individual research councils by 31 October.

Students should contact the Disability Adviser or named contact on disability matters at their University for advice:

- Keele University: support.dds@keele.ac.uk
- Lancaster University: disability@lancaster.ac.uk
- University of Liverpool: dsteam@liv.ac.uk
- University of Manchester: dso@manchester.ac.uk

Supervision

NWSSDTP students identify an appropriate primary supervisor at the point of application. Applicants should have been in touch with the supervisor **prior** to submitting the funding application, to discuss their project and the supervisory fit. The fit of the supervisory team is assessed as part of the application process, and as such it is crucial that any potential changes to supervision during the studentship are highlighted to the NWSSDTP.

Any requested changes in supervision will need to be approved by the student's Head of Department, School or Faculty, who has the right to turn down a supervisor if they are not deemed suitable/appropriate or have insufficient experience. Similarly, the NWSSDTP may intervene if suitable alternative supervisory arrangements are not made.

Ethics

As an important source of public funding for postgraduate training in the social sciences, the ESRC has an obligation towards the general public and academic community to try to ensure that such training is conducted in a professional manner and will not give rise to distress or annoyance to individuals. NWSSDTP students are expected to follow their institution's ethics approval process, but the ESRC has its own Framework for Research Ethics (<https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/>) which should also be consulted. It is expected that proper consideration has been given to any ethical issues that the research project may raise.

Transfers

It is possible, under certain circumstances, for a student's studentship to transfer to another institution, for example if their primary supervisor moves institution.

This will only be approved if the transfer is to an approved subject pathway within an accredited ESRC [Doctoral Training Partnership](#) or ESRC [Centre for Doctoral Training](#). If a student wishes to transfer to a university and/or pathway which is not accredited by the ESRC, or to a subject outside the ESRC's remit, then they will have to withdraw from their ESRC studentship.

In order to apply for a transfer the following documentation must be submitted to ESRC for prior approval:

- A request from the student confirming the grounds on which the transfer is being requested and the pathway and RO to which they intend to transfer
- A statement from the original RO relinquishing the studentship and confirming that alternative supervision is not available from across the DTP/CDT
- A statement from the new RO confirming their acceptance of the studentship

These documents should be sent to the NWSSDTP Manager, who will submit the case to the ESRC for final approval.

Part-time and Full-time Study Arrangements

NWSSDTP Students can undertake their programmes on a part-time or full-time basis. Stipend payments will be pro rata for part-time students.

It is possible for an NWSSDTP student to apply to transfer between part-time and full-time studentship award, or vice versa. Students need to apply via the transfer of registration process at their home institution. The ESRC recommends that, where possible, changes of mode of study should take effect from the beginning of a quarter (i.e. 1st October, 1st January, 1st April, or 1st July).

Whilst it is expected that permanent transfers would only occur once during the life of an award, it is recognised that there may be exceptional circumstances, such as changes to domestic arrangements, where a student needs to revert back to their original status. Such fixed-period transfers will be considered on a case by case basis.

The ESRC rules governing change of registration are:

- A case cannot be considered if it is made in the last six months of the award or will apply only to the last six months of the award except in very exceptional circumstances i.e. illness or

students returning from maternity leave. The NWSSDTP must refer all such cases to the ESRC for approval, so please allow sufficient time for this to be processed.

- Holders of CASE collaborative awards will require the agreement of the collaborating partner before any request can be considered.
- A transfer will not normally be allowed for acute health problems where suspension of the award is the appropriate course of action. However, where a health problem might prevent a student from permanently studying on a full-time basis, a case for a transfer to part time can be considered.
- A transfer from part time to full time cannot involve employment that would prevent the student from working on the PhD on a full-time basis.
- A transfer from full time to part time will be considered where a change in domestic circumstances means that a dependant requires more of the award holder's time, or where the award holder has taken up part-time employment
- Fixed-period transfers are unable to be considered within a pre-described Master's programme reserved for the research training element of the studentship.

Change to Project Details

Minor changes to thesis titles and research outlines do not need to be referred or approved by the NWSSDTP. Significant changes to the title and/or focus of research need to be approved **in advance** by the NWSSDTP. Such approval will not be given unless a clear justification is provided.

It is recognised that research outlines and proposed titles are likely to change during the master's programme of a 1+3 studentship, prior to the commencement of the PhD. Students should still notify the NWSSDTP of any significant changes. Only in exceptional circumstances will a major change in topic or direction be approved during a +3 studentship, or during the +3 phase of a 1+3 studentship.

Employment during the Studentship

ESRC NWSSDTP studentship award holders are permitted to undertake a certain amount of paid teaching or other research work during their studentship provided that they spend a minimum of 1,800 hours each academic year on their doctoral research and research training. Their programme of postgraduate training must be compatible with such work and their primary supervisor must formally approve this.

Where NWSSDTP students undertake demonstration or teaching, or other types of employment at their home institution, they should be paid for this in addition to any stipend they receive from the NWSSDTP. It should not be treated as a compulsory element of the award or of any research training.

Students may undertake a small amount of other paid work either in term time or during holidays, but the ESRC does not encourage such work, especially during the times when students are expected to be fully engaged in research training and thesis preparation.

Full-time studentship award holders cannot hold either a full-time job, or a permanent part-time job, during the period of their award. Part-time ESRC studentship award holders cannot hold a full-time job.

Full-time studentship award holders cannot change to part-time for reasons of employment during the final six months of their studentship.

Holiday Leave

Full-time students are allowed up to eight weeks' holiday (including public holidays) each academic year as approved by their supervisor. If a studentship covers a period of less than 12 months in any academic year, a student's holiday entitlement will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

Parental Leave

ESRC funded students are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave. The first 26 weeks are paid at full stipend rate. The following 13 weeks are paid at a level commensurate with statutory maternity pay. The final 13 weeks would be unpaid. Partners are entitled to up to 10 days paid Ordinary Paternity Leave on full stipend. There is no qualifying period for parental leave. ESRC funded students are not eligible for the government's shared parental leave scheme.

Sick Leave

NWSSDTP Students can take up to 13 weeks sick leave within any 12 months period, and their studentship will be extended accordingly. Beyond 13 weeks, studentships should be suspended. Suspensions on account of illness cannot normally exceed 12 months. This cannot be applied retrospectively. Due to the structured nature of most master's programmes, the above sick leave policy does not apply during the master's year of a 1+3 studentship. Students who are taken ill during the master's for more than a few weeks will normally need to request a one year suspension, and return to the programme at the same point the following year.

Compassionate Leave

The NWSSDTP recognises that there may be occasions when students will need to request time away from their studies to deal with domestic emergencies or bereavement regarding a close family member or dependant. If you need support, please contact the NWSSDTP Office at nwssdtp@liverpool.ac.uk – or ask your supervisor to get in touch – and we can discuss the best way forward, which may include a period of paid compassionate leave where appropriate.

Suspensions and Extensions

Studentships are intended to be held on a continuous basis. Sometimes, however, a student may need to interrupt their studies, for example as a result of their own persistent health problems or those of dependants, or to take up the opportunity of a temporary, short-term post which can be justified as being highly relevant to their thesis or research training.

Please note that suspensions can only be considered during the funded period of the studentship. If a student interrupts their registration after their ESRC funding has finished a suspension cannot be considered.

The period of suspension cannot exceed one calendar year in any one instance, and the total periods of suspension should not exceed one calendar year during the lifetime of the award. The student's supervisor must approve the suspension, as well as the non-HEI partner supervisor in CASE Studentships. The student's supervisor must confirm that the suspension of studies will not delay the submission of the final thesis by more than the length of the suspension. Retrospective requests cannot be considered. Due to the nature of training received in the Master's year of a 1+3 award (and equivalent structures), suspensions should be for 12 months to allow the student to re-join the course at the same point at which they left it.

For details of how to apply for COVID-19 Extensions, please see <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/covid-19/>

Thesis Submission

All students are encouraged to submit their thesis at the end of the three year funded period. Students can no longer access RTSG expenses, or apply for additional DTP funded opportunities, after the end of the studentship. Students will have to pay for any fees, including Submission Pending fees, incurred after the studentship ends. If a student submits their thesis before the end of the studentship, the date of submission will become the studentship end date and no further payments will be made. Any overpaid maintenance will be reclaimed.

All full-time students must submit no later than one year after their funding end date and part-time students must submit within two years of their funding end date.

First destination data

The ESRC requires DTPs to provide data on the first employment destinations of all ESRC-funded students. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects destination data on behalf of all the research councils and Universities must ensure that they complete the research council funding fields accurately. DTPs are also required to provide some first destination data for their students as part of the annual report.

Publication of results

Decisions on whether the results of a student's work are published are at the discretion of the student and supervisor. Students are advised to refer to the ESRC Research Data Policy (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-grant-holders/research-data-policy/>) that is available on the ESRC website.

ESRC-funded students are strongly encouraged to offer copies of any machine-readable data created or repurposed during the lifetime of the award for deposit in the UK Data Service. Further guidance on data deposit with the UK Data Service is available at <https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/deposit-data>.

Published work should formally acknowledge the support of the ESRC, and quote the NWSSDTP Grant Number **ES/P000665/1**.

Data Protection Rights and Responsibilities

If you want to discuss any issues or queries related to your data protection rights, please in the first instance get in touch with your institutional contact:

- Keele University: Simon Clements s.clements@keele.ac.uk
- Lancaster University: information-governance@lancaster.ac.uk
- University of Liverpool: Dan Howarth daniel.howarth@liverpool.ac.uk
- University of Manchester: *Details pending*

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The NWSSDTP values and promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. The practices and procedures of the NWSSDTP are designed to provide equality of opportunity, to promote harmonious relations between colleagues and to eliminate all forms of discrimination. The four Universities in the partnership are individually and collectively committed to fulfilling their obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The NWSSDTP encourages applications from individuals from all backgrounds and provides flexible in-programme support that caters for a community of researchers with diverse needs.

We recognize the need to recruit postgraduate and postdoctoral candidates from a broad applicant pool and value the benefits that attracting a diverse population of researchers can bring. This commitment is made with specific reference to a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religious belief & non-belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The NWSSDTP actively encourages its researchers to consider a wide range of career choices and is supported by guidance from experts at careers and employability centres at HEIs within the partnership. The NWSSDTP is committed to providing an environment which recognises and values people's differences, maximises on the strengths that those differences bring and supports all staff and students to fulfil their potential.

Section 2: Additional Funding Opportunities

Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)

NWSSDTP students have access to a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), which can be used for a number of research related purposes including conference attendance, UK fieldwork and the purchase of books or other key resources. All NWSSDTP-funded students can access this fund, including master's students and fees only students.

The process for claiming RTSG expenses can be found on the NWSSDTP Website here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/rtsg/> Please read this documentation carefully prior to submitted a claim.

There are two deadlines per month for RTSG Claims to be submitted. These are the 15th and 28th of the month, or the next working day.

Internships

NWSSDTP students can apply for additional funding, and a funded studentship extension, to undertake an internship. Students are responsible for developing their own prospective internship, but there is a DTP Coordinator in post who will be able to advise and assist in the development of such internship ideas.

NWSSDTP-funded students (including fees only students) can apply to undertake an internship during their PhD – master's students are not eligible to apply. Internships should not take place during the first three months of the PhD, and any internships taking place in the final year of the studentship must be completed at least three months prior to the original end date of the studentship.

The process for applying for internship support can be found on the NWSSDTP Website here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/internships/>

There are three deadlines per year for Internship applications to be submitted. It is not possible to apply outside of these deadlines. It will take up to three weeks for applications to be reviewed and outcomes communicated, so please ensure applications are submitted well in advance of the planned activity.

Overseas Institutional Visit (OIV)

NWSSDTP students can apply for additional funding, and a funded studentship extension, to undertake an Overseas Institutional Visit (OIV).

NWSSDTP-funded students (including fees only students) can apply to undertake an OIV during their PhD – master's students are not eligible to apply. OIVs should not take place during the first three months of the PhD, and any OIVs taking place in the final year of the studentship must be completed at least three months prior to the original end date of the studentship.

The process for applying for OIV support can be found on the NWSSDTP Website here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/oiv/>

There are three deadlines per year for OIV applications to be submitted. It is not possible to apply outside of these deadlines. It will take up to three weeks for applications to be reviewed and outcomes communicated, so please ensure applications are submitted well in advance of the planned activity.

Overseas Fieldwork (OSFW)

NWSSDTP students can apply for additional funding to support Overseas Fieldwork (OSFW) trips in support of their doctoral research.

NWSSDTP-funded students (including fees only students) can apply to this fund for overseas fieldwork taking place during their PhD. Master's students are not eligible to receive OSFW funding during their master's programme, but can submit an application during this time in preparation for OSFW research trips during their PhD. Fieldwork should not be undertaken in the last three months of the studentship.

The process for applying for OSFW support can found on the NWSSDTP Website here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/osfw/>

There are three deadlines per year for OSFW applications to be submitted. It is not possible to apply outside of these deadlines. It will take up to three weeks for applications to be reviewed and outcomes communicated, so please ensure applications are submitted well in advance of the planned activity..

Difficult Language Training (DLT)

Students who require additional language training in order to complete their fieldwork and/or their research can apply for an extension to their award to allow them time to undertake this training. This will often be undertaken during their fieldwork period.

The process for applying for a DLT extension is outlined in the Overseas Fieldwork Guidance, which can be found on the NWSSDTP website here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/osfw/>

There are three deadlines per year for DLT Applications to be submitted. It is not possible to apply outside of these deadlines. It will take up to three weeks for applications to be reviewed and outcomes communicated, so please ensure applications are submitted well in advance of the planned activity.

UKRI Policy Internship Scheme

In addition to NWSSDTP students being able to propose their own internships through the DTP, there is also an annual UKRI Policy Internship Scheme open the ESRC-funded students. Details of the scheme can be found here: <https://www.ukri.org/skills/policy-internships-scheme/>

Section 3: Training Opportunities

Methods North West

Methods North West is a methodological training scheme, which has developed out of the ESRC North West doctoral training collaboration. It highlights the depth and breadth of methodological expertise in the social sciences within the Universities of Manchester, Liverpool, Lancaster and Keele. It promotes and facilitates methodological excellence, innovation and interdisciplinarity – within and beyond the social sciences. Details of upcoming events can be found on the Methods North West Events webpage: <http://www.methodsnorthwest.ac.uk/events/> and on the NWSSDTP website: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/about/methods-north-west/>

Methods North West, led by the University of Manchester, is a collaboration between the methodological training schemes for the four NWSSDTP universities:

- ***methods@manchester***

<http://www.methods.manchester.ac.uk/>

methods@manchester is a faculty funded initiative, highlighting Manchester's strength in research methods in the social sciences. The initiative aims to highlight Manchester's strength in research methods in the social sciences, promote interdisciplinary and innovative methodological developments and foster further developments, including training, through external funding

- ***engage@liverpool***

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/engage/>

engage@liverpool is a cross-faculty research and methods initiative at the University of Liverpool. Interdisciplinary in character, it supports research across the social sciences, the arts and humanities and the natural, life and formal sciences by stimulating, encouraging, and promoting excellence and innovation in the area of research methods and methodology in particular.

- ***methods@lancaster***

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/methods-lancaster/>

methods@Lancaster is the home of multi-disciplinary research at Lancaster University. It provides a hub for research and collaboration, bringing together the many diverse networks from across the University, showcasing the breadth of research, and providing opportunities to learn, share, collaborate and explore new and interesting opportunities both at Lancaster, and across the North West.

- ***links@keele***

www.keele.ac.uk/links

links@keele will provide specialist research methods courses for postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers and university staff. *links@keele* promotes interdisciplinary and innovative developments in research methods and will facilitate, host and promote cross-faculty methods-related events. The ethos of *links@keele* is to foster interdisciplinary dialogue around innovation and imagination in approaches to high-impact research and to stimulate non-academic collaborations, widening participation and regional engagement.

National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM)

The NCRM is an ESRC-funded initiative, which is a focal point for national research and training activities in social science research methods. Information about upcoming training and events can be found here: <https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/training/>

Joint Events with the AHRC NWCDTP

The NWSSDTP works closely with the AHRC-funded North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership ([NWCDTP](#)). We offer joint opportunities and events, in cross-cutting key areas such as impact and employability. Students will be notified of these opportunities via the monthly NWSSDTP newsletter.

Section 4: Expectations of NWSSDTP Studentship Holders

Development Needs Analysis (DNA)

All NWSSDTP-funded students are expected to undertake an annual Development Needs Analysis (DNA) process, during both their Master's and PhD. Reminders will be sent when it is time to complete the DNA form. The completion of this form is a strict requirement of NWSSDTP funding.

The purpose of the DNA Process is twofold:

- 1) It is a mechanism by which individual students can assess and monitor their training needs, and identify training opportunities, in liaison with their supervisors.
- 2) The results of the DNA process will be reviewed by NWSSDTP Training, Employability and Knowledge Exchange Panel to identify recurring training needs across the cohort, and thus tailor and expand DTP activities in line with student requirements.

The DNA process asks students to reflect – with the support of their supervisor – on their confidence and training needs in eight key areas:

1. Subject Knowledge
2. Research Methods – Theoretical Knowledge
3. Research Methods – Practical Application
4. Information Literacy, Research Skills
5. Cognitive Abilities and Creativity
6. Professional and Career Development (including research management)
7. Research Conduct
8. Engagement and Impact (including communication and networking skills)

Further information can be found on the NWSSDTP website here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/dna/>

Researchfish

Researchfish® is the system that the UK Research Councils use to gather feedback from all Research Council funded researchers about the outcomes from their work. The Research Councils agreed that it was important for Research Council funded doctoral students to also be able to report on their activities and successes, how they contribute to their respective areas of research and how they engage with partner organisations and communities.

NWSSDTP Students are responsible for providing information about the outcomes from their studentship. Once a studentship has been added to researchfish, students will be invited to enter and submit data every year until three years after the studentship has finished (since many outcomes occur towards or past the end of studentships). Primary supervisors should also have been given access to the studentship details on researchfish (added as a 'team member') and will be able to help in providing the outcomes information.

Students can enter outcomes data at any time, but will specifically be asked to confirm that all of their information is accurate and complete during the annual Submission Period. The Submission Period falls between early February and mid-March each year.

Research Councils will not use researchfish data to assess the performance of individual students or review the progress of individual studentships. In addition, there is no expectation that doctoral students will necessarily have specific outcomes or outputs to report.

If any student has problems accessing their researchfish account please contact the researchfish support help desk at support@researchfish.com

NWSSDTP Week and Induction

Each year, during the November, the NWSSDTP organises a week-long programme of events for its students. This programme includes compulsory induction sessions for new starters and serves as a chance to learn more about the opportunities and expectations of being a NWSSDTP-funded student, as well meeting the team behind the NWSSDTP, and networking with postgraduate students from across the institutions and disciplines of the DTP.

There are also a number of sessions targeted at continuing students, included our annual Impact event (joint with the AHRC NWCDTP) and sessions on post-PhD possibilities.

In 2022, the NWSSDTP week will run 7th – 11th November (online).

Attendance at the induction sessions on the Monday of the NWSSDTP Week is mandatory for new NWSSDTP-funded students when they commence their studentships. All sessions will be accessible and relevant to both Master's and PhD new starters. Any Master's students who cannot attend at the outset of their 1+3 due to clashes with their classes will be expected to attend the following year, when they commence their PhD.

Section 5: Key Contacts

Institutional Administrative Contacts and Academic Leads

Each institution within the NWSSDTP has its own administrative contacts and academic leads.

The institutional administrative contact should be contacted with any queries about institutional-specific matters (e.g. annual progression or university policies), or about maintenance stipend or fees payments, as these are handled locally.

- ***Keele University***

Administrative Contact: [Donna Bailey](#)

Academic Institutional Lead: [Dr Fabienne Emmerich](#)

- ***Lancaster University***

Administrative Contact: [James Heard](#)

Academic Institutional Lead: [Céu Mateus](#)

- ***University of Liverpool***

Administrative Contact: [Julie McColl](#)

Academic Institutional Lead: TBC

- ***University of Manchester***

Administrative Contact: [Carole Douguedroit-Arrowsmith](#)

Academic Institutional Lead: [Professor Sue Heath](#)

NWSSDTP Office

The University of Liverpool leads management and administrative the consortium, and the central NWSSDTP office is based at Liverpool. The NWSSDTP team are:

NWSSDTP Director: [Professor Gabe Mythen](#)

NWSSDTP Deputy Director: [Dr Laura Radcliffe](#)

NWSSDTP Manager: [Hayley Meloy](#)

NWSSDTP Coordinator (Impact and Collaboration): [Julie McColl](#)

NWSSDTP Administrator: [Sarah Elsdon](#)

Queries about RTSG, additional funding competitions, events and ESRC / NWSSDTP policy should be directed to the NWSSDTP Office at nwssdtp@liverpool.ac.uk.

Pathway Representatives

Each subject Pathway has an academic Pathway Representative at each institution involved in the pathway. One of these Institutional Pathway Representatives will also act as the overall Pathway Lead, representing the pathway at allocation committees and pathway forums.

A full up-to-date list of Pathway Representatives, including details of the Overall Pathway Lead, can be found here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/about/pathway-leads/>