

MPS Research and Training Support (Grant) Policy

Aims

- Maximize PGR training opportunities and mobility and ensure access to funds where necessary.
- Give doctoral researchers a degree of responsibility over funds, in consultation with their supervisor (ease administration burden).
- Provide an attractive package in competing for the best candidates.
- Ensure economical and effective use of funds

Background: RCUK provide, besides maintenance and tuition, additional funds for research student training. These payments are calculated on a per capita basis. They are regularly paid into “Research and Training Support Grant” budgets for each student. For some time, the school has provided a small budget for doctoral researchers who do not access to RTSG, as well as a School conference support grant scheme (see Appendix)

Policy

1. Every doctoral researcher has access to an RTSG budget. They manage these funds and how they are spent themselves, in consultation with their supervisors.
2. Doctoral researchers are informed about their budget and how to access it when they first register, by the Research Degree Coordinator or nominee.
3. Initial values and top-ups for RTSG, as well as approvers, are set out in schedule A.
4. RTSG can only be spent on eligible costs, including personal computing equipment for use by the doctoral researcher and attendance at Schools, conferences, workshops, or collaboration visits.
5. All ITS purchase requests must come to the research support team in the first instance. The expected standard spend on a laptop is approximately £1,250, any requests for equipment over this amount will need to be supported with a brief justification of the cost from a supervisor. Where required ITS purchases may be reviewed by the Director of Doctoral Studies and/or Senior Research Manager (or delegate)
6. All equipment purchased from RTSG reverts to the school at the end of the PhD course, or when it is replaced, whichever is earlier, for reuse towards doctoral training (direct or through monetizing).
7. The balance of RTSG budgets will be reused toward doctoral training in MPS.
8. Doctoral researchers who have exhausted their RTSG can apply for funds through the school conference travel support schemes, as set out in schedule B. In exceptional cases they may apply for other eligible RTSG costs to this scheme.
9. The Director of Doctoral Studies together with the Research Support Team oversee the application of the policy.
10. The School Research Degree Committee receives an annual report from DDS and REC on spending under the policy, normally at a meeting in September.
11. The School Research Degree Committee reviews and updates the policy, normally on an annual basis. At a meeting in September.
12. RTSG amounts can vary depending on the funding source, doctoral researchers should check their studentship offer letter or contact the school office for guidance if they are unsure.

As agreed by SMT July 2020, extending, and superseding the previous policy from 2016.
Reviewed, updated, and approved by SMT November 2022.

13. As payments to the institution, the balance of RCUK-funded RTSG can be retained after the studentship ends, these funds have contributed to the costs of these schemes, besides certain central costs such as PGR induction.

Schedule A – payments into and out of RSTG budgets

1. Every RCUK-funded doctoral researcher receives an initial payment, and annual top-up at the nominal RCUK payment.
2. Self-paying doctoral researchers, as well as any externally funded doctoral researchers who do not have another source of RTSG funds, receive £1,250 RTSG per annum (pro rata'd for part time)
3. Any further payments from the school for a doctoral researcher would require an application to the School under the MPD Travel Grant Scheme.
4. RTSG expenses are to be approved by a designated approver.

Schedule B – MPS Travel Grant Scheme

1. MPD doctoral researchers are able to apply to the MPS Travel Grant Scheme.
2. Each application will consist of a case for support, written by the student, and a statement of support, prepared by the main supervisor. Each of these to be a maximum length of one side A4, 12pt.
3. Applicants are expected to have exhausted their RTSG and to demonstrate that they have applied to other sources of funding such as the university's overseas conference support scheme or have no recourse to those. A list of funding sources is provided on the MPS PGR web page.
4. An award may consist of a payment into the RTSG budget or a promise to pay an expense claim. Where the result of an application to an alternative funding source is not yet known, a school award will be treated as an underwriting and expenditure recovered at a later time if the external application is successful.
5. Evaluation criteria:
 - a. Scientific excellence of the proposal
 - b. Benefit to the doctoral researcher and or the school (training, academic impact, career progression as appropriate to the event and stage of the doctoral researcher)
6. Each proposal will be assessed by a subset of the School Research Degree Committee, normally the DDS and sub-Director (s) of Doctoral Studies, with a suitable substitute where there is a conflict of interest.
7. Exceptionally, students can apply for other RTSG-eligible costs under the travel grant scheme (eg. To replace a broken laptop).