

Information for Students with Studentships

What is this document?

This document outlines some key information for students with studentship funding administered by the University of Reading for their PhD programme. It outlines some information about the nature of studentships, how they are administered at the University, and key things about the use of funds.

Please read the information carefully.

Please note, this document is for information only. The terms and conditions of your studentship are those included with the offer of a studentship and are in no way affected by information given here.

What is a studentship?

A studentship is funding for PhD study. Studentships may include funding for:

- Fees
- Stipend
- Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)

Please refer to your award letter (the letter offering you a studentship) for the details of what your studentship includes, its duration and its terms and conditions. You would have had to sign a document to accept the award and agree to the terms and conditions.

Fees

Those studentships which include fees pay your fees for the PhD programme at the rate specified in the offer letter and for the length of time stipulated in your offer letter. A sponsor record is created on the RISIS portal for you and when you enrol or re-enrol for your programme, you will not be asked to pay fees.

Please note that sponsor records have to be created manually and may not have been completed when enrolment opens. Please wait until mid-September before querying the sponsor record.

In addition, please note that the fees section of enrolment requires you first to accept that the fee level is correct before continuing to the section for payment where details of your sponsorship will show.

Stipend

A stipend, or living allowance, is money paid to you to support you in meeting your living expenses during a set period. The amount and period of funding are given in your award letter.

Stipends are paid quarterly (four times per year) in advance. For information, the quarters are January-March, April-June, July-September and October-December. As an example, you would be paid for the April-June quarter each year at the end of March.

Please note that no payments can be made until you have fully enrolled for your research degree, and that you will need to maintain up-to-date records of your bank details on the RISIS web portal. It can take up to six weeks from enrolment for the first stipend payment to be made, though it is usually much faster, so it is advisable to prepare financially for this.

RTSG

RTSG stands for Research Training Support Grant and is money available for use to support your research during your PhD programme. Details of whether your studentship includes such funds and the amount are given in your award letter. Use of these funds requires the authorisation of your supervisor.

Please read the information below about how to use these funds and about what can and cannot be purchased.

Please note: if your studentship is offered by a **Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)**, **Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA)**, **Doctoral Focal Award (DFA)** or **Doctoral Landscape Award (DLA)**, then funds to support your research and training may be offered through funds other than or in addition to RTSG. What is available and how to access it will be explained by the funding body (i.e. DTP, DFA, DLA etc).

Length of studentships

The duration of your studentship will be detailed in the award letter. **The duration of a studentship is not necessarily the same as the duration of your programme.**

Your **programme** has a minimum and maximum registration period which is determined by your mode of study (full- or part-time). Full-time study usually has a minimum registration period of three years and a maximum registration period of four years. Part-time study usually has a maximum registration period of four years and a minimum registration period of six years.

Your **funding** will have a fixed duration as specified in the award letter. This duration may or may not coincide with your minimum or maximum registration date.

Using RTSG funds

As outlined above, studentships cover fees directly and if your studentship covers fees, you will not need to pay fees for the duration of your studentship. Stipends are paid to you by the University's Finance office and are available via your bank for use as necessary. RTSG funds need approval from your supervisor to be used. They also require a project code in order to be used.

Your project code will be given to you near the start of your programme. It does not change and should be kept safe. If you do not know your project code, you should ask your supervisor and check with the [Doctoral Studentships Officer](#) if your supervisor does not have it.

For project codes which begin with an 'A', the annual allowance is added each year and any funds not used in a given year roll over into the following year. The funds remain available until the end date of the studentship.

Not everything you may wish to purchase with RTSG funds is necessarily an eligible use. Please check with the Doctoral Studentships Officer if you are unsure. Examples of eligible uses for RTSG include, but are not limited to:

- Conference and summer school fees
- travel for conferences and research activities
- accommodation for conferences or other research activities
- UK fieldwork expenses
- small items of specialist equipment not otherwise available at the University for research purposes (e.g. cameras, recorders)
- professional services (e.g. transcription or translation)
- survey costs (e.g. of printing, stationery, licenses)
- specialist training (including language training where it is necessary for research)
- payment of participants in activities directly linked to research subject to prior ethical approval.
- Reading material where it is not available through the Library

Examples of ineligible uses for RTSG include, but are not limited to:

- Personal computers
- Equipment deemed 'standard' or generally available in a department or HEI, e.g. stationery
- Stationery for home use
- Books and journals available through the Library (including Inter-Library loan)
- Costs related to supervisor visits
- Training all PGR students are required to attend

RTSG cannot be used outside of the funding dates of the studentship (i.e. they cannot be used prior to the start of the studentship or after the end date of the studentship award).

It is the **responsibility of the student not to overspend on their RTSG allowance**. It is important to keep accurate records of expenditure to ensure no overspending.

Not every purchase you may wish to make can be made by you and reimbursed. Many RTSG purchases need to be made on your behalf by the Executive Support (or equivalent) team in your School.

An indicative but not exhaustive list of things which **cannot** be purchased by you is:

- Air travel
- Accommodation
- Professional services (e.g. transcription, translation, etc.)
- Office supplies
- Licenses
- Printing
- Stationery

Summary of key points around RTSG:

- For queries about eligible uses for RTSG, please consult the [Doctoral Studentships Officer](#)
- For authorisation to use RTSG money, you need to ask your PhD supervisor
- Consult Executive Support (or equivalent) in your School for assistance with making purchases.

The expenses procedure

As indicated above, to use RTSG money you need to make sure the proposed use is eligible, you need authorisation from your supervisor, and you need to consult with Executive Support (or equivalent) in your School to see whether they can (or have to) make the purchase on your behalf.

In cases where you are making a purchase yourself and need to claim reimbursement for the money spent, you will need to follow the correct process.

1. Check the purchase is eligible for RTSG funding.
2. Seek authorisation from your supervisor.
3. Speak to Executive Support (or equivalent) in your School to see if they can make the purchase on your behalf and to make certain the purchase is not something they MUST purchase on your behalf.
4. Having ascertained you are allowed to make the purchase yourself and that it is the best way to proceed (i.e. Executive Support cannot purchase for you), you need to [download the expenses form](#).

(A link to the form is found at the bottom of the box on the righthand side of the page)

Always make sure you download a new copy from this link. The form changes frequently and Finance cannot accept claims on old versions of the form. So do not save a copy of the form and attempt to use it for every claim.

5. Complete the form carefully and accurately. Each expense needs a separate entry. Receipts must be included for EVERY item and should be carefully labelled in correlation with the entries on the form. Include your project code and cost centre code(s). If you are unsure of the cost centre code, please contact the Doctoral Studentships Office.
6. Attach the completed form and ALL receipts to an email and send it (cc'ed to the Doctoral Studentships Officer) to your supervisor asking him/her/them to forward the email with attachments to [Invoices](#) (invoices@reading.ac.uk) with a single line to say the claim is authorised. You can submit a paper copy with your supervisor's physical signature instead. In this case, you need to print the form, complete it (as above), collect and label receipts, ask your supervisor to sign the form, and then put everything in an envelope and take it/put it in the internal post to Invoices who are located in Whiteknights House.

Where to go for assistance

Queries about **studentships** can always be directed to:

[Doctoral Studentships Officer](#)

Graduate School, Old Whiteknights House, G22 (Tuesday and Wednesday only)
0118 378 4161

The [Doctoral Research Office](#) create the **sponsor records** for studentships which cover **fees**, and queries about the payment of fees can be directed here.

Queries about **stipend payments** are best directed to the [Doctoral Studentships Officer](#)

Queries about the use of **RTSG** money are best directed to the [Doctoral Studentships Officer](#)

For queries about your **PhD programme** rather than your studentship, the best person to contact in the first instance is the PGR Administrator for your School. [You can find a list here](#) (under the 'School Support Team' tab).

For queries about **suspensions, requests to work away, requests to change mode of study, visas, extensions** you can contact the [Doctoral Research Office](#) but it is also a good idea to copy such emails to your PGR Administrator.

For queries about how your studentship might be affected by changes to your mode of study or by or the [Doctoral Research Office](#).

It is always best to ask about anything if you are unsure. And where you have queries about anything to do with your studentship, please always feel free to contact the [Doctoral Studentships Officer](#) in the first instance.

October 2025