

Update on changes to the UKRI Doctoral Training Policies

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October 2025

UKRI policy changes

Increase in minimum stipend: Rise of 8% to **£20,780 from 1 October 2025**

- Automatic update by Student payments
- University match-funded and University studentships will align with the UKRI rate.

New UKRI policy documents published on the 1st October 2025.

Links below:

[Updated standard terms and condition of training grant](#)

[Updated training grant guidance](#) - please read

[Disabled Students' Allowance Framework \(DSA\)](#)

UKRI training grant guidance

From: UKRI
Published: 1 October 2025

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This guidance provides additional information for Training Grant Holders and should be read in conjunction with the Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant (the "Standard Conditions") and any Specific Conditions that apply to your grant.

Introduction

This guidance is primarily for use by Research Organisations (universities, research institutes and other bodies) in receipt of Training Grants awarded by any of UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) Councils:

- Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
- Medical Research Council (MRC)
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)
- Research England
- Innovate UK

The guidance should also be considered by organisations in receipt of funds from other institutions that refer to the UKRI Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant. Where we use Training Grant Condition numbers (for example, 'TGC 1'), this refers to a specific condition or set of conditions in the Standard Conditions.

Medical leave

Increased:

- **28 weeks medical leave** in a rolling 12-month period – up from 13 weeks.
 - Can be taken in smaller blocks – not consecutive.
- **52 weeks max** across total studentship.

Evidence required:

- Medical certificates only required for absences over 7 days.
- Medical evidence only required once per illness/diagnosis/reason and allow multiple absences against the same evidence.

Now includes:

- **Sick leave**
- **Pregnancy-related illness**
- ❖ **Antenatal appointments** (where medically advised and not manageable through flexible study)
- ❖ **Fertility treatment** (where medically advised)
- **Disability-related illness** (including chronic illness)
- **Disability-related appointments**, for example: diagnosis, therapy or treatment
- ❖ **Gender reassignment** (where medically advised)

❖ ***New categories***

Family leave

- **Maternity**

Maternity leave can now begin up to 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth.

- **Paternity**

Still 2 weeks paid leave but can be taken any time within 52 weeks after birth. New wider eligibility criteria.

- **Neonatal care**

New allowance of up to 12 weeks paid stipend. In addition to maternity/paternity leave.

Special Leave

Bereavement, Emergency and Carers Leave (up to 10 days pro-rata)

Annual leave (*taken within normal studentship term*)

- 30 days plus bank holidays (and University closure days).
- Can accrue annual leave whilst on medical or family leave.

If you have a Study Visa, please note these terms supersede the UKRI policies.

Recording your leave (under 1 month)

Use the Student Portal to capture all types of leave (medical, family, disability and special leave)

- **1 or 2 days** - Inform supervisor of absence
- **3 to 7 days** - Self-certify and complete the 'Absence Request Form' in the Student Portal.
- **More than 7 working days** - Complete the 'Absence Request form' in the Student Portal and upload any supporting evidence. For example:
 - Sickness - obtain a medical fit note from your GP
 - Disability – this could be your Student Support Plan or Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) assessment report.
 - Public duties request letter

Records must be kept to support any requests for a funding extension.

Recording Absence

View of Student Portal



Home > Dashboard > My Requests

My Requests

Manage your PECs, absence requests, visa support, personal information change requests and download documents

PECs

Submit and manage your Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Requests.

Absence Requests

Submit and manage your Absence Requests.

will hear directly from your School if they require further information.

Submitted Absences
Draft Absences

Create new absence request

Absence Reason	Sickness - Self Certified
First date of absence	17-07-2024

New Absence Request

SAP Notification No.

Absence Reason *

Sickness - Medical Certified

First date of absence *

DD-MM-YYYY

First time of absence *

07:00

Last date of absence *

DD-MM-YYYY

Last time of absence *

19:00

Details of absence *

Recording your leave (Over 4 weeks)

- **Inform your Grant Management** of any expected leave that requires an Interruption of Studies (which temporarily interrupts your studies - 'stops the clock').
- Complete a **mitigating circumstances form** in the **Code of Practice System**: <https://postgrad.ncl.ac.uk/> and request an Interruption of Studies.
- Whilst you are on an Interruption you can still access Student support services – Well-being, disability etc.

Funding extensions

- An **extension “may” be provided for any period over one week and “must” be extended for a period of leave over one month.**
- **Separate periods of leave accrued** due to medical, caring or disability reasons can be reviewed by your grant management and extensions considered to cover time missed.

Exemptions:

- Extensions should not be provided for sick leave for colds, stomach bugs or other illnesses that we might all normally expect to experience from time to time.
- **The total extension must not be more than one calendar year (this also applies to part-time students)** unless the extension is due to either a period of family leave (such as maternity leave), or due to adjustments potentially allowable through UKRI's DSA Framework.

How do I request a funding extension?

Absences under 1 month

- Contact your grant management to inform of absence(s) and ask for **individual or accumulated periods of leave** to be considered.
- Grant PI will review request and provide a decision.

Absences over 1 month

- Once your request has been received/approved this funding extension will be automatically applied.

**If you have a study visa some restrictions may be in place.*

Phased return to study

- A period of **four weeks phased return** is allowed in relation to return from any period of medical, family or additional leave.
- Expect a student to receive their **normal stipend during** a period of phased return.
- **The amount of time not studying is recorded as leave.** Any eligible leave type might be used, for example a student who has been on 24 weeks of Medical Leave has an outstanding allocation of four weeks of Medical Leave. Or annual leave can be used.
- Recommend **return to study meeting** after interruption of more than two months
- Seek support from the **Student Health & Well-being Service (DSA)** where appropriate.

Modes of study and flexible study

- Removed **restriction on the number of times that a student may change mode of study** in TGC 7.1.1.
- You can request to change from FT – PT and vice-versa at any time before your writing-up year, due to Medical, caring or disability reasons.

Disability

Link to policy: [UKRI Disabled students' allowance framework \(DSA\)](#)

Updates:

- You can **request reasonable adjustments at the earliest opportunity**
- Can now **purchase on-campus equipment** as well as home equipment.
- DSA support can **continue after end of funded period for 18 months**, or at completion of degree (pass list).

Find out more and book an appointment with the Newcastle disability support team asap here:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/wellbeing/disability-support/>

We have a specific workshop for Postgraduate Researchers:

5th February 2026 10:00-12:00	How to Practice Inclusion for Impactful PGR Research	HDB 1.04 Event Space, Level 1, Henry Daysh Building (HDB.1.04)	https://workshops.ncl.ac.uk/view/book/modal/56979/
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Plus, you can access our EDI knowledge Hub for further training & support resources:

EDI Knowledge Hub

The EDI Knowledge Hub equips colleagues with the tools to drive meaningful change in equity and inclusion. Our collection of workshops and digital resources offers a reflective, supportive space for you to deepen your skills and knowledge in equity and inclusion, foster curiosity, and ask questions. The Hub is designed with flexibility at its core, so that you can engage with its content in a way that best aligns with your interests, professional responsibilities, and evolving needs.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) can feel like an ever-moving landscape, and it can be hard to know where to look for information. Through the Knowledge Hub, we've brought together a range of resources from within the University and elsewhere to help you feel confident and informed. We are constantly evolving the content available in response to your feedback and ongoing developments in EDI, to make it as relevant as possible.



[Workshop Programme >](#)

Develop your EDI skills in a collaborative environment with in-person and online workshops led by our EDI Team.



[Self-paced Courses >](#)

Coming soon - Access online courses and workshop materials in your own time, helping you learn at your own pace.



[Digital Resources >](#)

Our EDI digital resource library.

edi-team@newcastle.ac.uk | [LMS: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion](#) | <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/edi/>

Any questions?



Useful Contacts

HaSS and SAgE Graduate School – gradschool@ncl.ac.uk

FMS Graduate School – fmsgradschool@newcastle.ac.uk

SAgE Doctoral awards contact: doctoral.awards@ncl.ac.uk

Visa Support Team – visa@ncl.ac.uk

Alternatively, please contact your local grant management team.