



## **Guidelines for use of the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)**

### What is the value of the RTSG and who can be funded using it?

The RTSG must only be spent supporting AHRC-funded doctoral students.

The value of the annual RTSG paid to Research Organisations (ROs) is calculated on the basis of the number of AHRC-funded doctoral students at that RO. Each doctoral student is counted towards this calculation for a maximum of three years.

Full award, fees-only, full-time, part-time, and distance learning award holders are all eligible to receive RTSG support.

### What types of visit can be funded?

The RTSG can be used to fund UK or overseas study visits and the costs of attendance at overseas conferences.

The RTSG cannot be used to fund attendance at UK conferences.

We would not normally expect a student to go on more than one overseas study visit or receive funding to attend more than one overseas conference, although this is at the RO's discretion.

We would not normally expect a student to go on an overseas study visit to multiple countries, although this is at the RO's discretion.

Any funded study visits must be for the purposes of conducting primary research. It is the RO's responsibility to assess whether a student's proposed trip qualifies as primary research.

All study visits must be essential to the satisfactory completion of the student's thesis/course.

The duration of a study visit should not exceed 12 months, although this is at the RO's discretion.

It is the RO's responsibility to ensure that it is satisfied with the student's programme of research, and that the student has obtained the necessary visas and permissions for it, and taken proper account of any health, safety and security issues.

It is the responsibility of the RO to judge which applications for study visits/conferences it wishes to fund using the RTSG.

### When can visits be funded?

We would not normally expect a student to go on a UK or overseas study visit in the last three months of the funded period of their award, although this is at the RO's discretion.

Funding must not be provided for students in the writing-up stage of their course/project.

Study visits and conference attendance must not take place before 1<sup>st</sup> October in the first year of a student's award.

### How should our RO decide which of our students gets funding from our RTSG?

It is the RO's responsibility to decide which students it wishes to fund using the RTSG.

We would recommend that, when considering applications, ROs prioritise students who have not previously received RTSG funding for a previous visit during their course of study, although this is at the RO's discretion.

The RO should also ensure a process is in place for managing the RTSG such that it is responsive to the needs of its students.

### Costs that can be covered by the RTSG

As there are only limited funds available, we would recommend that travel should be by the most economical means available, and should be by standard-class public transport except in exceptional circumstances.

It is the RO's responsibility to ensure that the costs incurred on the visit are reasonable. As the RTSG is provided from the public purse, the RO should ensure that the funds are used responsibly.

The RTSG can be used to provide a contribution towards the costs of travel, additional accommodation, and other associated costs that are incurred as a result of the student's trip.

Although the total RTSG amount on a grant is calculated on the basis of an amount per doctoral student per year, there is no limit to the amount of funding any one student can receive from the total RTSG pot allocated to the RO for a grant. ROs are advised not to consider the RTSG a £200 per year 'voucher' for each individual AHRC-funded student, but rather to consider the total RTSG payment on a grant as a pot from which it allocates funds on the basis of student needs and priorities.

### Arrangements while students are away

Wherever possible, we expect students to remain in regular contact with their supervisor and Research Organisation during their time away.

Students with a full award will continue to receive maintenance payments while abroad, provided they have met all their obligations under the Council's terms and conditions.

#### Management of the RTSG and reporting/reconciliation requirements

The RTSG is paid quarterly, and will be reconciled at the end of the doctoral grant (i.e. after four years). The RO's total spend on RTSG must be calculated at the end of each training grant, and any underspend will be reclaimed by the Council.

As the RTSG covers several years of the grant, if there is an underspend at the end of any year of the grant the surplus can be used in the subsequent year(s).

Beyond the amount provided by the RTSG, the AHRC will not be able to provide any additional funding towards the costs of students' study visit/conference costs.

The RTSG will be included in the Funding Assurance Programme (FAP). ROs must have a process in place for monitoring that the funding provided has been spent appropriately.