



## AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships Student Development Fund (SDF)

### Guidance

Students funded through an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership studentship that started in October 2016 or later are eligible to draw additional funding from a Student Development Fund to support the cost of training, work placements, and other development opportunities that will benefit the student’s doctoral research and future career development as a researcher in a University or Museum/Library/Archive/Heritage sector organisation. The SDF will enable students to develop skills for both the university and the non-university sector, these might be research roles but, they might also use the skills they have developed in their PhD in roles which may not involve research. These options are covered in the Research Training Framework:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/earlycareerresearchers/rtframeworks/>

This funding is primarily available to extend the duration of the PhD studentship flexibly & responsively. For more detail on how the fund can be used please refer to the AHRC’s Training Grant Funding Guide 2015/2016: The guide includes clarification on RTSG (Research Training Support Grant) and the SDF in respect of fieldwork.

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/guides/training-grant-funding-guide-2015-16/>

The total funding available to each full-time student has been calculated by the AHRC on the basis of a six month extension per funded studentship. **This is NOT an automatic extension of the student’s maintenance payments by six months.** Students are able to apply for funds up to this notional amount over the course of their programme of study. Any use of the Student Development Fund must be mutually agreed by the student, their University Supervisor and their Partner Supervisor, and approved by the appropriate administrative authorities of the University and the Partner.

The Student Development Fund can be applied to in order to cover a wide range of activities. Students may apply to the Fund multiple times provided they do not exceed the total funding allocation available to them. The fund cannot be used retrospectively to pay for expenditure that has already taken place, so students must ensure they leave sufficient time for a decision to be made on their application.

In many cases the Student Development Fund will cover **funded extensions to PhD study** for:

- **Placements of up to six months duration in total over the period of the studentship:** where a student is undertaking a placement that is not an integral part of the research project. This placement can be with another organisation, NGO or company that might have a positive impact on that project, on the student's overall development as a researcher, or on the student's broader career development;
- **International placements to develop language skills:** where a student requires an extended period **overseas** to develop specific language skills to undertake their research project successfully. It is expected that the need to develop language skills will have been agreed at the start of the award.
- **Specific skills development:** here extended time is intended for students who need to acquire additional skills, for example high-level methodological skills, or significant & demanding new discipline skills e.g. particular scientific, digital humanities or methodological techniques and skills.
- **Impact activity:** e.g. planning & delivering a public engagement project of significant scale such as a programme of activities, involvement with staging an exhibition, or creating web resources.
- **Longer study visits** which are not integral to the PhD project, but might benefit that project, the student's overall development as a researcher, or the student's broader career development

In addition, the Student Development Fund can be used to pay for the **direct costs** of undertaking a development activity, such as:

**Placements:** Costs of accommodation and travel to enable a student to undertake a placement.

**High-cost additional training:** The course costs to attend specific training activities, as well as costs of accommodation and travel to participate in training.

**Fieldwork, Archival Work or Work with Collections:** Where fieldwork etc is considered eligible, the SDF can be used to extend the award and/or to cover reasonable T&S during the period.

**Development Opportunities to facilitate impact from the Student's research:** e.g. materials, equipment, room hire etc.

Students can not apply to make use of the Student Development Fund after they have submitted their thesis.

## **How the Student Development Fund can be used?**

The primary use of the Student Development Fund will be to extend the period the student is paid their student maintenance payments by up to an additional six months to cover the time they have spent carrying out a placement, undertaking additional training, completing extended periods of fieldwork, archival work etc. For example, if a student spends 3 months on such a placement or training opportunity, their maintenance payments and tuition fees are paid for over that time period, and they can extend their award, and their maintenance payments for an additional 3 months on top of the 3 years of standard payments (a stipend for 39 months instead of 36).

Where an activity will involve paying for travel, accommodation, course fees, materials etc., these will be deducted from the total available to cover the 6 months additional maintenance payments. As such, if the student spent 1 month on a training course, the SDF would cover the costs of the course, accommodation and travel for the student, and cover extending their award by an additional one month on top of the 3 years of standard payments, so long as the total of both does not exceed the total available in each SDF.

## **Part-Time and Fees only Students**

Part-time students can use the SDF as well as full time students. If the student is registered as a part-time student when the activity then the length of the studentship can be extended the equivalent length of time. So three months part time placement would extend the studentship by three months, but a three month full time placement would only extend the length of the part time study for one and half months.

Where a student is in receipt of 'fees only' funding, they may also benefit from both extensions to PhD training & additional costs of training funded from the SDF, e.g. Knowledge Engagement activity, fieldwork etc, provided this does not take the form of a stipend award.

## **Administering the Use of the Student Development Fund**

The Student Development Fund for each Collaborative Doctoral Partnership student will need to be administered individually through their University. The available funding is given to the University by the AHRC, and the use of the fund will need to be recorded on the JeS system by the University. Whenever students agree an extension of their award as a result of a Student Development Fund opportunity it is important that the University changes the end date of the award is recorded in Je-S Student Details, noting that the end date but not the submission date would be changed. A brief note should be added to state the reason for the change, e.g. '3 month placement opportunity'.

The Student Development Fund will need to be administered differently to the similar funding provided to Doctoral Training Partnerships. For these, the fund is administered as a central pot of money pooled for all the students within a DTP to apply for funding from. For Collaborative Doctoral Partnership studentships the Student Development Fund is linked to each individual studentship. This is likely to cause confusion and problems for some University administrators.

Our general line is that the studentships are for 3 years and the additional support is to allow flexibility for development opportunities which arise during the award. Each individual studentship will need to record and monitor the agreed use of the individual Studentship's Student Development Fund. Students and both their co-supervisors at their University and Partner institution will need to agree in writing how the fund will be used by each student and the final decision will be made by the partner organisation's student coordinator. Copies of all decisions about the use of the Student Development Fund will need to be kept by the relevant person in the Partner Institution who oversees that Institution's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership and who will also be responsible for monitoring spend, as well as communicated to the relevant person in the University's Graduate office.

As the Student Development Fund will be administered by the University, expenses for travel and accommodation, course fees etc. will need to be administered through the University's finance systems and comply to the University's finance rules and regulations. Where a partner or other organisation may be responsible for directly paying for materials or others costs incurred because of the Student's opportunity, they will need to invoice the University for this sum (e.g. room hire, or specific costs involved for public engagement or impact activities).

**It is important to remember that for full time students who have taken the opportunity to use the SDF that they are still expected to have submitted their thesis with in four years of starting.**

## Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships AHRC Student Development Fund Application Form

**Applications will be assessed by the co-supervisors and the Partner organisation student coordinator**

1. Name of student	
2. AHRC JeS Reference	
3. Department and University	
4. Partner Organisation	
5. Email	
6. Full/Fees award	
7. Start and end dates of proposed activity (Please round up to the nearest whole month)	
8. Is Student Development Funding being requested to extend the duration of the studentship (YES / NO)? If YES, for how many months?	
9. Is the activity an integral part of your research project?	Y/N
10. What type of activity are you applying for (Work Placement, Training Course, Skills Development, Extended Fieldwork or Archives or Collection work etc.)	
11. Please provide details of the activity (no more than 250 words)	
12. Please outline how this activity will develop your future career development, or is otherwise justified (see notes about the use of the SDF)	
13. Please list any specific costs you are requesting from the Student Development Fund for this activity	
14. Your signature	
15. Your University supervisor's name	
16. University Supervisor's signature ( <i>by signing you are confirming that you are in support of this application</i> )	
17. Your Partner supervisor's name	
18. Partner Supervisor's signature ( <i>by signing you are confirming that you are in support of this application</i> )	
19. Partner Organisation Student Coordinator signature ( <i>by signing you are confirming that you are in support of this application</i> )	