



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 and responsively. For more detail on how the fund can be used please refer to the AHRC's Training Grant Funding Guide: The guide includes clarification on RTSG (Research Training Support Grant) and the SDF in respect of fieldwork.

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/phdstudents/fundingandtraining/training-grants-and-training-grant-funding-guides/>

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 and 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 the end date of their award and/or after they have submitted their thesis whichever one happens first.

How can the Student Development Fund 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, 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.

For training or development activities of less than 1 month in duration, it would not normally be expected that this would lead to an extension of the studentship. In such cases, the assumption is that the training or development activity can be incorporated within the original 3 year timeframe of the studentship.

Where can details of the Student Development Funding for an AHRC CDP award be found?

Funding for each AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership project is managed and administered by the university partner. This is detailed in the Grant Offer Letter that is sent by AHRC to the university research office prior to the start of the project.

A table in the Grant Offer Letter indicates how much is awarded to cover the student's Fees, Stipend and Research Training Support Grant. The Student Development Funding is incorporated within the amounts allocated for the Fees and the Stipend: These amounts will work out as equivalent to 3.5 years of Fees and 3.5 years of Stipend respectively. Working out on this basis the equivalents of 0.5 years of Fees and 0.5 years of Stipend, and combining the two, will give a basic indication of the amount of Student Development Funding attached to the grant.

GRANT VALUE			
Funds Awarded			
	RC Contribution (£)		
	net	Indexation	Total
Total - Fees	15,069	0	15,069
Total - Student Stipend	54,200	0	54,200
Total - RTSG	700	0	700
Total Value of Award	69,969	0	69,969

Example: Extract from AHRC CDP Grant Offer Letter for a project starting in October 2017:

In this example, the anticipated SDF amount can be calculated as follows:

- Within the Fees budget: £15,069 in total = £4,305.43 per year = £2,152.71 for SDF
- Within the Stipend budget: £54,200 in total = £15,485.71 per year = £7,742.86 for SDF
- Anticipated Student Development Funding = **£9,989.57**

Although the SDF is detailed within the Fees and Stipend budget lines in the Grant Offer Letter, it can be used flexibly to cover the costs of a wide range of activities, as described above. In practice, SDF may be used to cover stipend or fees payments, but *it does not have to be used in this way* – it should be used as flexibly as possible to support the individual needs of the student, in line with these guidelines and the related sections of the AHRC Training Grant Funding Guide.

In particular, SDF should *not* be approached as being comprised of two distinct ‘pots’, one for Stipend payments and one for Fees payments. As discussed above and detailed in the examples below, it is possible for SDF to be used to cover the direct costs of a student undertaking a development activity, without the student concerned needing to have their studentship extended. And in cases where an allocation of SDF does entail a studentship extension, the university’s research office will need to establish whether this will also generate additional tuition fees, as this may depend on the registration policies of the institution concerned. In such cases, SDF should be used to cover these additional fee payments.

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 takes place then the length of the studentship can be extended by the equivalent length of time. So a three month, 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 Student Development Funding, although the level of SDF available in such cases is limited to the equivalent to 6 months tuition fees. This funding may be used to support both extensions to PhD training & additional costs of training funded from the SDF, e.g. Knowledge Engagement activity, 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 awarded to the university by the AHRC, and the use of the fund will need to be recorded on the Je-S system by the university. Whenever an extension is agreed to a student’s award as a result of a Student Development Fund opportunity, it is important that the university changes the end date of the award 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 be administered differently to the similar funding provided to Doctoral Training Partnerships. For these, the fund is administered as a central pot of money from which all eligible students within a DTP can apply. For Collaborative Doctoral Partnership studentships the Student Development Fund is linked to each individual studentship.

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 CDP studentship will need to have a record of the agreed use of that studentship's Student Development Fund. Students and both of their co-supervisors, at their university and CDP partner institution, will need to agree in writing how the fund will be used: 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 CDP 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 research 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 with the university's finance rules and regulations. Where a CDP partner or other organisation may be responsible for directly paying for materials or other 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 within four years of starting.

Worked examples

Example 1

A student wants to undertake a work based placement with their CDP partner organisation for 6 months. The student does not require funding for additional travel expenses etc. Extending the studentship for 6 months in this way will incur an additional 6 months of tuition fees.

6 months stipend payments	£7,742.86
6 months tuition fees	£2,152.71
TOTAL SDF USED	£9,895.57

OUTCOME: In this case, the full amount of SDF available to the student will be utilised. The studentship end date is extended by 6 months on the Je-S system by the university research office.

Example 2

A student wants to undertake a work based placement for 6 months in another part of the country. They will need additional living expenses to cover accommodation whilst there, plus some funding to cover travel expenses to get there. However, in this case, the university's regulations state that the studentship extension will not incur additional tuition fees.

Short term room rental (£500 pcm) X 6 months	£3000
Travel costs to location	£200
6 months stipend payments	£7742.86
Tuition Fees?	£0
TOTAL SDF USED	£10,942.86

OUTCOME: As it stands, this development activity will cost more than the maximum amount of SDF available. It may be necessary to reduce the duration of the placement, or to find additional sources of funding to cover some of the direct costs that will be incurred by the student.

Example 3

A student wants to undertake a project based placement with another organisation in another country for 2 months. They require funding for additional travel and living costs during this time. The university has confirmed that extending the studentship by 2 months will not incur additional tuition fees.

Short term room rental (£500 pcm) X 2 months	£1000
Travel costs to location	£500
2 months stipend payments	£2580.95
TOTAL SDF USED	£4080.95

OUTCOME: In this case, there is sufficient SDF available to cover the costs of the development activity. This would leave around £3600 for any further development activities that may be agreed over the remaining period of the project. The studentship end date is extended by 2 months on the Je-S system by the university research office.

Example 4

A student wants to undertake a short residential training course. The course lasts 3 days and is residential so accommodation is required; plus some travel expenses. For short-term development

activities such as this, there would not usually be any extension to the studentship. The student would be expected to fit the additional activity within the original timeframe of their PhD project.

Cost of course	£665
Accommodation	£171
Travel costs	£200
TOTAL SDF USED	£1036

OUTCOME: In this case, there is sufficient SDF available to cover the costs of the development activity. This would leave around £8950 for any further development activities that may be agreed over the remaining period of the project. The studentship end date on the Je-S system remains the same.

Example 5

A student wants to undertake a professional qualification alongside their PhD Research. To do this, the student would need to take a series of 10 residential training courses, each lasting 3 days. They would also need to submit a final 3,000 word written assessment. The cumulative total duration of the 10 training courses will be 1 month – hence, an extension of the studentship is also requested. The university has confirmed that extending the studentship by 1 month will not incur additional tuition fees.

£5,939 for 10 courses, plus admin fee £260 payable on submission of final assessment	£6199
Accommodation @ £171 per course	£1710
Stipend payments for attending each master class (approx. 1 month in total)	£1290
Travel costs @£200 per course	£2000
TOTAL SDF USED	£11,199

OUTCOME: As it stands, this development activity will cost more than the maximum amount of SDF available. Therefore it may be necessary to find additional sources of funding to cover some of the direct costs that will be incurred by the student.

Example 6

A 'fees only' student wants to undertake a short residential training course. The course lasts for one week and will incur a course fee as well as related travel and accommodation expenses.

Course fee: £1,200	£1200
Accommodation @ £70 per night for 5 nights	£350
Travel costs @ £200	£200
TOTAL SDF USED	£1750

OUTCOME: In this case, there is sufficient SDF available to cover the costs of the development activity. As all the expenses relate to directly-incurred costs, it is permissible to use SDF to cover these. However, were the student to request SDF that would, in effect, take the form of a 'stipend' for the period of the training course, this would not be permitted. There would remain around £400 for any further development activities that may be agreed over the remaining period of the project.

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 Je-S 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>)	