**Guidance on Applying for a Difficult Language Training Allowance**

These guidance notes supersede any previous versions.

The **Difficult Language Training (DLT)** allowance is designed to provide extra support if a student needs to develop a working ability with a difficult language in order to carry out fieldwork (including UK fieldwork) or other parts of their research; this is over and above the funded length of the studentship. **Applications will only be considered if the requirement for such training was clearly stated in the original studentship application**. It is expected that some progress with language acquisition has been made prior to applying for Difficult Language Training funds.

Successful candidates will receive the following:

* a funded extension at the end of their ESRC award, to be discussed during the application process;
* cost of the training provision;
* Home or overseas travel and subsistence to support costs, on top of still receiving their full ESRC award.

Key ESRC Post graduate Funding Guide reference Annex 2 at [ESRC postgraduate funding guide – UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/publications/esrc-postgraduate-funding-guide/)

**Who can apply?**

Subject to agreement on a case-by-case basis by the SWDTP:

* Full-time ESRC funded students in the +3 (or doctoral) stage of their award.
* ESRC funded students who are in the Masters stage of a 1+3 award may apply but the DLT can only take place during the +3 stage of their studies (see specific durations below).
* ESRC funded part-time students can become eligible if they transfer status to full-time students for the duration of the difficult language training visit.

**Factors to consider**

The DLT can be used for language training that is specifically needed for your project, however, please note that the fund is limited and therefore large scale, accredited training courses both here and overseas cannot be supported as the cost is too high.  Please do contact us before starting an application to discuss this.

**Funding cannot be awarded retrospectively**, and you must get full agreement before incurring any costs or undertaking any activity as monies will not be forthcoming if approval has not been given beforehand.

Each student can only submit **one** claim for a difficult language training allowance in the life of their award. The proposed language training **must** have been outlined in the original application form as being an intrinsic requirement to complete the PhD, no additional funds are allocated to the SWDTP for this training and so funding requests are strictly assessed. Students must have discussed the requirement for difficult language training with their supervisor.

Students who wish to undertake a DLT must discuss their application with the SWDTP Coordinator, [Joanna.Williams@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Joanna.Williams@bristol.ac.uk) and complete an application form. (<http://www.swdtp.ac.uk/information-for-current-students/>). All applications are considered by the SWDTP Coordinator and where appropriate, the Manager, and are subject to approval.

Funding is limited and so agreement is not automatic. It is therefore essential that applications are as complete as possible before submission to ensure they can be properly judged on its merits. Applicants must be supported by the supervisor and should demonstrate a clear rationale as to the need for the language training.

**NOTE:** Extensions for difficult language training do not automatically attract overseas fieldwork costs. Overseas fieldwork costs should only be considered alongside an extension where it is not possible to learn the language outside of the fieldwork site.

**If the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against visiting the country concerned, the SWDTP will not authorise payment of any contribution towards the difficult language training costs. All students are responsible for ensuring they have the necessary visa arrangements in place for international travel. Advice should be sought from the University’s International Office or equivalent. Students studying under a Tier 4 visa may have further restrictions on their travel and should seek advice.**

Prior to funding being awarded by the SWDTP, you will be asked to confirm that you have been through your School / College / Departmental ethics approval and are following any local Health & Safety procedures. You will also be asked to confirm that you are physically and emotionally able to travel and to undertake the work for which funds have been provided.

**If you are an international student, ensure that you are in touch with your institutional visa team regarding change of location study requirements.**

**How is the allowance determined?**

The DLT comprises two components:

1. Costs of the training, with associated funded extension to the students grant;
2. Travel & subsistence support costs (UK or Overseas).

**Duration of Difficult Language Training**

An allowance of up to a maximum of one extra year's extra support may be granted if a student needs to acquire or develop a working ability with a difficult language in order to carry out fieldwork (including UK fieldwork) or other parts of their research; this is over and above the funded length of the studentship. It is expected that some progress with language acquisition will have already been made, and therefore it is not expected that DLT extensions beyond six months would be approved.

ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide, specifically “Annex 2: Difficult Language Training” at [ESRC postgraduate funding guide – UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/publications/esrc-postgraduate-funding-guide/) provides guidelines on how extensions for difficult language training are interpreted. The distinctions made are not to be read as hard and fast rules, but rather as general guidelines. In practice, each case is considered on its merits.

Difficult language training allowances and extensions beyond six months will only be granted if the student needs to spend an extended period of time overseas in order to obtain these language skills. Funded extensions are not automatically linked to time spent abroad. Funded extension time will be calculated on actual study time, this can include for example, formal course training, language tutor training or organised conversational training. This will be discussed with the Coordinator as part of the application process.

**How are costs determined?**

You are asked to estimate or provide quotes for actual costs, using travel sites or [numbeo.com](http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/). All costings should be discussed with the SWDTP Coordinator as part of the initial conversation leading up to writing your application. Guidelines for acceptable costs are noted below. It is vital that value for money is taken into account when applying and all detail is in the application, as the SWDTP Coordinator reserves the right to cut some costs or to instruct some costs be covered by your RTSG. If any co-funding for travel or accommodation can be obtained from the institution(s) that you are visiting, this will significantly improve your application and can increase your chance of being funded. Once your application has been approved, no further monies can be awarded, and you are expected to manage your costs within the award envelope.

**IMPORTANT: If you are planning other trips (e.g. overseas fieldwork) then you are asked to consider cost savings by combining trips, where possible.** If the DLT will take place alongside or immediately before Overseas Fieldwork Allowance visit (OFA) visit, then we would expect to see the costs adjusted to reflect saving in travel. These cases can be discussed with the SWDTP Coordinator for detailed advice on what should be included.

**IMPORTANT: It may not be possible for the SWDTP to fully fund a student’s DLT in all cases.** Where only partial funding is available, the student will have the discretion to use their RTSG to supplement the amount available. There may be additional funds available at the student’s home institution. Students should consult their supervisor or relevant PGR Office for further information about these opportunities.

Once the allowance has been allocated, it is the student’s responsibility to manage the funds within the award envelope. The allocation is for the student only and will not be increased to cover other expenses incurred whilst the student is abroad. Stipend will continue for the duration of the DLT.

Should the DLT be abandoned, reduced or unsuccessful, resulting in the student returning to the UK early, the SWDTP may recover the allowance less any reasonable expenditure already incurred. The overseas allowance does not cover the expenses of any family member accompanying the student.

**Ensure that you engage with and follow your local institutional processes for booking and managing travel and insurance arrangements.**

**Guidelines for Costings / things to consider**

* Ideally the visit would involve one return flight from a sustainability perspective and to keep costs down. Multiple flights need to be vigorously justified from an economic and environmental perspective, and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances
* Consider, for example, whether it is cheaper to fly mid-week than at the weekend. Always do a flight cost check before submitting the final application for approval
* If travelling to a European destination, investigate travelling by train
* Provide a link to the accommodation identified on the application form. A reasonable threshold that we would consider funding is £80-90 per night for a hotel. Review accommodation details for a good rating, insurance, indication of fire / smoke alarms and refund policy (refer to any institutional accommodation booking policy)
* Ensure you have fully checked cost comparison sites for other forms of transport that may be required e.g. car hire
* Consider if you can undertake the DLT in a blended capacity e.g., 6 weeks online and country and 2 weeks remotely.
* Check the travel insurance coverage and policies your home institution offers.

**When to apply**

Applications can be submitted at any time, as per the process outlined. Applications be will considered within one month of receipt. **Retrospective applications for overseas visit expenses will not be considered**. The process can take up to three months from discussion to funding approval, so you must leave enough time for this or risk not being able to submit an application that matches your travel dates.

**NOTE:** If your studentship is match funded, the approval process may take an additional week.

**How payments are made**

Once an application has been approved by the SWDTP Coordinator, the student’s home institution will make arrangements to pay the student. Approved funds will be transferred by the SWDTP to the institution in accordance with the financial regulations set out in the SWDTP ‘Partnership Agreement’.

Local finance contacts will advise on claiming awarded monies in line with institutional finance processes.

Once the allowance has been allocated, it is the student’s responsibility to manage the funds within the award envelope on activities approved on the application.

**What to do on return from the visit/fieldwork?**

Students should contact their relevant PGR office on return from their training. This allows the PGR office to update the University record system and apply the agreed extension.

An End of Visit report must also be completed and sent to the SWDTP Coordinator within two weeks of your return. The form will be sent to you with your approval notification. It is a condition of the additional funding that you complete and return the report.

If you have any queries please contact: Joanna Williams, [Joanna.Williams@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Joanna.Williams@bristol.ac.uk).

**Follow the travel and insurance booking procedures of your home institution.**

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| Bath | [Making bookings for business travel (bath.ac.uk)](https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/making-bookings-for-business-travel/) |
| Bristol | [Travel and working off-site | Safety and Health Services | University of Bristol](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/staff/travel/) |
|  | [Travel | Compliance and Risk | University of Exeter](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/departments/cgr/insuranceauditandrisk/insurancepolicies/travel/)  See link to Travel Policy under the International heading, this also include a link to Key Travel booking |
| Plymouth | [Stay safe overseas - University of Plymouth](https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/university-structure/service-areas/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/safe-travels-guide) |
| UWE | [Study and work abroad guide - Global experiences | UWE Bristol](https://www.uwe.ac.uk/life/global-experiences/study-and-work-abroad-guide) |
| Bath Spa | Contact the Graduate College for information on the process [pgrcurrentstudents@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:pgrcurrentstudents@bathspa.ac.uk) |
| Bournemouth | Faculty of Media & Communication: <https://brightspace.bournemouth.ac.uk/d2l/le/lessons/53622/units/1644400>  Faculty of Science & Technology: <https://brightspace.bournemouth.ac.uk/d2l/le/lessons/80396/units/627850>  Bournemouth University Business School: <https://brightspace.bournemouth.ac.uk/d2l/le/lessons/266719/topics/1887466>  Faculty of Health & Social Sciences: <https://brightspace.bournemouth.ac.uk/d2l/le/lessons/63649/topics/2038494> |
| Plymouth Marjon | TBC |