

ESRC Doctoral Training Centre Funding FAQ

Please read this document carefully prior to completing your application form. If you have any questions, please contact, the Research Council Studentship Team (studentships@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

The University of Birmingham Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Centre is one of only 21 ESRC-accredited centres of excellence in the UK. We are able to offer at least 25 full studentships for candidates who will begin their study in October 2015.

How do I apply to the Birmingham ESRC DTC for a studentship?

Birmingham DTC studentships are offered via a competitive process.

Applications are welcome from all potential candidates via the DTC Application Form. Applications are considered by academic panels with nominations being passed to the University DTC Selection Panel who determine the final awarding of the available studentships.

In order to be considered for an award, you must hold an offer of a place to study at the University by the deadline. Applications for a place to study are made via the University's online application system.

When does the competition run?

The 2015 competition opens in October. The deadline for applications is **4pm, 30th January 2015.**

What do I need to apply?

In order to apply applicants need to complete the application form and provide certified copies of degree transcripts. Applicants must also provide two written academic references, which must be sent directly by the referee to the University. References provided by the applicant are not acceptable.

Applicants must also hold a confirmed place to study (PhD or Masters) at the University by 28th February 2015.

Application, documents, and references must all be received by the deadline.

How many studentships are available?

The Birmingham DTC is looking to offer 25 studentships in the 2015 competition.

Which subjects are studentships available in?

For full information on available pathways, please see the ESRC Pathways document.

Are there certain subjects that Birmingham promotes?

The Birmingham DTC has some steer from the ESRC to offer a certain number of studentships in certain subjects. A minimum of two studentships will be offered in Economics and a further two in Language-based Area Studies.

The remaining studentships are offered on an unrestricted basis.

What does an ESRC studentship include?

A full ESRC studentship includes the full cost of tuition fees and bench fees, plus an annual tax free maintenance stipend of £13,863 (2014/15 rate).

The studentship also includes access to a Research Training Support Grant to aid your studies, and funding for overseas studies and difficult language training (NB: if you plan to travel overseas as part of your PhD, you should note this in your application).

Successful applicants in Economics or Advanced Quantitative Methods also receive a stipend enhancement of £3,000 per year.

Am I eligible for an ESRC studentship?

Academic eligibility

ESRC studentships are allocated based on academic excellence. You should have held (or expect to receive) a good honours degree at first or upper second class level. If applying for an award without an undergraduate degree, you may be accepted for doctoral funding if you have achieved a Master's degree.

Membership of professional bodies or learned societies usually requires students to have achieved, through formal training or work experience, a level of experience which can be equated to that achieved by an honours degree student. The ESRC will accept such a professional qualification providing the candidate has also undertaken three years' subsequent full-time relevant professional work experience.

Residential eligibility

Home (UK) students are eligible for a full award from the ESRC.

EU students who have lived in the UK continuously for the three years prior to the start date of the award (ie, 1st October 2015) are eligible for a full award.

EU students who have not lived in the UK for the three years prior to the start date of the award are eligible for fees only funding (ie, no maintenance stipend).

International students and EU students who do not meet the above residency criteria can only be considered for awards in Economics and for projects which include Advanced Quantitative Methods, for which a full award is offered. International students are ineligible for all other ESRC awards.

Will I be disadvantaged applying for a 1+3 award over a +3 award?

No. The ESRC require that both 1+3 awards and +3 awards are offered in broadly equal numbers. Your application will be just on your proposal and suitability for academic research.

What Masters programme should I take as part of a 1+3 award?

Most students on a 1+3 award will complete the MA in Social Research as this provides an excellent methodological grounding for PhD level research. The University offers a number of variants of the MA in Social Research that are tailored to research in particular subject areas.

How are candidates selected for an ESRC award?

Applications will first be considered by the relevant school and a shortlist will be formed. Shortlisted candidates' applications will be forwarded to a central selection panel made up of representatives from across the University of Birmingham. Candidates will be considered based on how well they fit the following criteria:

- Person – why are they the right person to carry out this research?
- Project – why is this project important?
- Preparation – how prepared are they to undertake this project?
- Place – why is the University of Birmingham the best place for them to undertake their doctoral training?

You should therefore ensure that all of these areas are addressed in your supporting statement.

When will I find out the outcome of my application?

Applicants will be informed of the outcomes by 31st March 2015.

How likely am I to be successful in this competition?

The Birmingham ESRC DTC receives a high number of applications for studentships, the standard of which is also very high. Last year, over 150 applications were received for 22 awards.

I'm looking for Masters only funding, can I apply?

The ESRC will only fund a Masters programme where this forms the first year of a four year (1+3) programme that includes a PhD. Funding is not available for standalone Masters programmes.

I'm looking to do a doctorate in Forensic Psychology, can I get funding?

The UK Research Councils only fund research programmes such as the PhD; professional doctorates such as Forensic Psychology Practice Doctorate (ForenPsyD) are not eligible for funding. Similarly, ClinPsyD awards are not eligible for funding.