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All ESRC PhD studentship holders are eligible to apply for financial support for Overseas Institutional Visits (OIVs) within their studentship period. This additional funding is intended to provide applicants with the opportunity to establish research networks, to disseminate early research findings, to participate in seminars and other academic activities that are directly relevant to their research, or to undertake specialist research training that is not available within the UK.

**Scheme Regulations**

As OIVs are intended to be an integral part of the student’s research training, visits may not take place in the first year of the CDAS. Additionally, visits taking place in the final year of the studentship must be completed at least three months before the original end date of the award (prior to OIV extension being implemented).

Applicants should consult the Foreign and Commonwealth Office guidance relating to their intended destination. Visits must not be undertaken if the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against visiting the country concerned.

Only one application can be made during period of the studentship. Applications can be for up to three separate OIVs to the same host university or esteemed research institution during the course of the studentship as long as the total period of the visits does not exceed three months.

Applications should usually be for visits to a University but in exceptional circumstances applications for visits to other esteemed research organisations will be considered. Applicants will need to demonstrate within their application justification for visiting the research organisation.

OIV’s are not designed to cover fieldwork expenses which should be covered by the OSFW. It is recognised that under certain circumstances an element of fieldwork might be undertaken in what is principally an OIV. These circumstances should be clearly justified in the application.

Successful applicants in receipt of a full studentship award will receive a paid extension equal to the period of time spent overseas. Fees only students will receive an extension to their fees and thesis submission date only.

Confirmation of approval and the level of support will be sent to you by the CDAS manager. You must not commence any visit until you have received formal written approval. Retrospective claims will not be considered.

**How to apply**

Applicants are required to complete the Overseas Institutional Visits Application Form and send the completed to DataCDT@leeds.ac.uk. The application form requires supervisors to confirm that the OIV will form an important part of the student’s research development. Applications may be approved or returned to the applicant with a request for further information.

**How to complete the application form**

**Student details:**

**P**lease ensure that you complete all information in full

**Details of the visit(s)**

Applications can be made for up to three separate OIVs to the same host university or research institution during the course of the studentship as long as the total period of the visits does not exceed three months.

Please ensure you provide:

* The start and end dates for each visit.
* The full address of the host university or research institution
* The total number of weeks for each visit

**Case for support**

Applicants should indicate the purpose of the visit and how it relates to their doctoral research. Please describe what has been achieved to date and how the proposed visit will extend/enhance this. Reasons for such a visit might include establishing research networks, disseminating early research findings, participating in seminars and other academic activities that are directly relevant to the student's research, or undertaking specialist research training that is not available within the UK.

If applicants are proposing to undertake more than one visit to the same university or research institution they should provide clear justification as to why more than one visit is required.

Applicants are asked to demonstrate the potential benefits of the proposed visit/s to their current or future academic career and, in particular, to demonstrate how the visit/s will offer ‘added value’ to their PhD experience. If the OIV is to be undertaken for research training purposes, the applicant must demonstrate why the training is integral to their research, and also why this training cannot be undertaken within the UK.

Please note that the OIV scheme is not to be used for undertaking fieldwork; however in exceptional circumstances there may be a requirement to carry out some fieldwork as part of an OIV. In these cases the applications must be of high quality and be integral to the work of the PhD and the fieldwork component is not being covered from the Overseas Fieldwork Fund. The case for support should not exceed two sides of A4.

**Detailing visit costs and justifications**

Applicants should clearly break-down the proposed costs of the visit with notes detailing the justification for each cost. Information on flights and accommodation should be provided, in addition to costs for general living expenses. The costs of the visit should be reasonable and dependent on the country, time period and activity proposed. There is a cap on the total costs of the visit of £2000, though applicants should note that the value of financial investment will be taken into consideration when assessing applications so should not automatically apply for the maximum amount.

Applicants may wish to liaise with their School administrative office to complete this section.

**Confirmation of support from the supervisor**

Supervisors are asked to comment on the quality of the student's research to date and how the proposed visit will extend/enhance this. If the OIV is to be undertaken for research training purposes, please explain why the training is integral to their research, and also why this training cannot be undertaken within the UK. Students are expected to continue their PhD research and training throughout the course of the visit(s) and maintain regular contact with their supervisor. Supervisors are asked to demonstrate what arrangements are in place to meet this requirement.

**What are the basic funding criteria?**

The content and quality of the proposal you submit to the ESRC for your Overseas Institutional Visit will determine whether or not you are successful. Funding decisions for visits are based on the quality of four key assessment criteria:

* The purpose of the visit provided by the applicant
* The intended work plan provided by the applicant
* Arrangements for continued supervision provided by the supervisor
* The confirmation of support provided by the proposed host university.

Interesting proposals can be unsuccessful because they fail to communicate adequately how the visit will integrate into the overall PhD programme or provide “added value” to the student, such as how the visit will contribute to their current or future career or academic endeavours. This should be explored and translated into an achievable plan of action.

**“Added value”**

Consider ways that you can get the most from your visit.

* Are there any conferences or seminars that you could attend while you’re there? (Remember conference costs can be covered by your RTSG).
* Speak to your University International Office; does your University have any links with Universities or Research Organisations in the area that could provide you with opportunities?
* Does the British Council have a presence in the country or region that you are hoping to visit? Are there any events that you could attend or is there someone you could contact to help plan relevant activities?
* Has RCUK got any initiatives or collaborations that you could look into in the country? This is especially relevant if you are hoping to visit the US, China or India.

**Reporting**

When you return from your Overseas Institutional Visit you will be expected to complete an OIV End of Award Report, no more than a month after you return from the OIV.

**Don’t forget to…**

* Leave plenty of time to sort out your visa if you need one.
* Make sure you sort out your travel insurance.
* Contact your Doctor if you are travelling somewhere where you might need vaccinations or medication.
* If you are hoping to develop your language skills on the OIV, speak to your University about whether there are any opportunities available before you go