

Research Training and Support Grant (RTSG) Guidance Notes

What is the RTSG and what can it be used for?

- The RTSG is an amount of funds allocated by the ESRC to the SCDTP *per student*, rather than an amount *for each student* to spend. You can read more here: <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/esrc/funding-for-postgraduate-training-and-development/>
- The RTSG is intended to be used to pay for expenses which the student and supervisor deem to be in direct support of a student's research. Examples include:
 - UK fieldwork expenses
 - UK, EU and overseas conferences and summer schools
 - language training courses (usually undertaken in the UK prior to an overseas fieldwork trip)
 - reimbursement of interpreters, guides, assistants
 - data collection costs e.g. printing, stationery, telephone calls
 - purchase of small items of equipment e.g. cameras, voice recorders
 - gifts for local informants/thank you vouchers for participants
 - Books cannot be claimed for if they are available through the library (printed or e-book).
 - Software cannot be claimed for if a license is already provided by your university.

What should I consider before making an RTSG funding application?

- Please consider carefully:
 - Is there justification for the expenditure in relation to your research project?
 - Is there a good fit with the Training/Development Needs Analysis?
 - Does the expenditure support the activities in your PhD or your own wider development?
 - If you are attending training – is this the most cost effective and suitable approach?
 - Other possibilities for funding such as from a research group you may be affiliated with, or your supervisor(s)
 - It is important to prioritise funds for anything essential to your PhD. After that it is advisable to save funds for important conferences in your research area, when you have been accepted to present your research findings and you can make the most of networking opportunities.

What is the process for applying for RTSG Funding?

- The SCDTP will consider applications for funding **within the regulations and guidelines specified on the SCDTP website**. All RTSG applications **must** be reviewed and approved by the SCDTP Team to ensure compliance with ESRC and SCDTP regulations before any expense is undertaken.
- 2 members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) will review any funding application exceeding £500 and any application which will take cumulative RTSG funding above your

total notional amount. Occasionally additional funding beyond the notional allowance will be approved, but this will depend on an evaluation of necessity, importance and equity.

- You can find the application form on the [SCDTP website here](#). You will need to send a completed form to scdtp@soton.ac.uk.

What do I need to consider when completing the application form?

- Applications cannot be considered if they do not include a supporting statement from your supervisor plus your supervisor's name and signature.
- Normally, subsistence costs while attending conferences cannot be claimed for through the RTSG, because subsistence is provided by the stipend of your scholarship, and ESRC regulations state that subsistence cannot be claimed twice via different funding streams. However, it may be possible to claim for a conference dinner, for example, to accommodate networking opportunities, or for the difference in cost for countries that are substantially more expensive than the UK. Such requests should be justified in the RTSG application form. [This website might be useful](#) if you think the cost of subsistence will be higher in your destination.
- All quotes for travel and accommodation included in the application form must be obtained from the approved travel provider for your University:
 - University of Brighton – (please contact Selina Avis (s.avis@brighton.ac.uk) for guidance.
 - University of Portsmouth – (please contact Liz Bishop (liz.bishop@port.ac.uk) for guidance.
 - University of Southampton – (please use [Clarity](#))
- In instances where the designated travel provider cannot match a quote from elsewhere, you may apply for approval for accommodation or travel from other sources providing that the application contains an email from your university's approved travel provider explaining that they cannot fulfil your request.
- For reasons of parity across Universities and disciplines, the standard rate for participant payments in the SCDTP is a minimum of £10.00 and maximum of £12.00 per person per hour. Any payments above this amount will need to be funded by your department or institution. This should be clearly detailed on the RTSG application form.
- If you are travelling to a conference, the dates of travel are important. The SCDTP can only fund accommodation for a reasonable duration of time for this purpose. If you intend to arrive earlier than necessary or depart later, this will need to be justified on the RTSG form. For example, if the conference finishes late in the afternoon, it might not be possible to travel the same day, so it would be reasonable to book an additional night of accommodation.

What happens if your RTSG application is approved?

- If your RTSG application is approved, you can proceed to spend as per your university's regulations.

- For transport and accommodation, you can finalise bookings through the approved travel providers.
 - **University of Brighton**
Please liaise with Selina Avis (s.avis@brighton.ac.uk) for guidance.
 - **University of Portsmouth**
Please liaise with Liz Bishop (liz.bishop@port.ac.uk) for guidance.
 - **University of Southampton**
Southampton students can reclaim mileage costs by using Business World ([see link](#)). Expenses claims take around 15 working days to process. **ALL** purchasing should initially be directed to the University procurement team (buy@soton.ac.uk) to complete the purchase on your behalf in the first instance. Payments made to suppliers/participants without first contacting the team are unlikely to be reimbursed by the University expenses team. In instances where upfront payment is not possible, it may be possible to claim back expenses by Business World and include relevant receipts and approved RTSG document. Please contact SCOTP if you need further help in this.
- The SCOTP team maintain a record of your RTSG funding applications. You should also keep track of your applications and actual expenditure throughout your studies, as this is an important part of your research training.
 - If you end up spending less than your approved funding amount, you should contact scotp@soton.ac.uk so that the record of your spending can be amended. You should not spend any surplus on anything that has not already been detailed in an approved RTSG application. Your RTSG approval document will have an approved budget but if the actual cost increased beyond this budget, it would need to be updated and approved by SCOTP.

The SCOTP team are here to help you with the administration of RTSG funds – please do contact us with any questions or for assistance!