



**General Terms and Conditions
of
Research Studentships
funded by the
University of Bolton**

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This document relates to the current year. If you become aware of any previous versions that are available online please notify research-admin@bolton.ac.uk so that action can be taken to remove the document(s).

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PREFACE

This document provides information on the terms and conditions of research studentships funded by the University of Bolton. It does not constitute a contract and should be read in conjunction with any other documents provided by the University in relation to specific studentships offered in individual academic departments¹. Aspects of the information such as the appropriate maintenance grant to be paid to students are subject to periodic updating therefore any figures are for guidance purposes only. Confirmation of the precise conditions of appointment and maintenance support offered by the University should be obtained at the time of application and interview.

Where a research student is also subject to separate written terms and conditions (e.g. by virtue of being partly funded by another organisation), then any material incompatibilities between the different sets of terms and conditions must be resolved to the University's satisfaction before registration can be completed.

These terms and conditions generally apply both to full-time and part-time research studentships except where specifically noted. They do not apply to Research Assistant posts, or to other research appointments, for which separate terms and conditions are relevant, these post-holders normally being contracted employees of the University.

In applying these terms and conditions they shall be interpreted flexibly so as not to unfairly disadvantage or constrain one particular category of research student or individual relative to another, always bearing in mind the primary considerations of academic quality and financial regularity.

¹ Depending upon the prevailing organisational structure of the University, the 'academic department' might be an Academic Group, Faculty, Institute, School, Centre, Subject Department, Group, Field, Area or Division, or any other unit which is constitutionally empowered to undertake the relevant activities.

NATURE OF THE AWARD

1. Elements of a Studentship

A studentship may consist of one or more of the following three elements, whether funded wholly by the University, or partly by the University and partly from other sources, e.g. Research Councils, Charitable Trusts, external industrial or commercial sponsors, or other organisations or individuals, including the research student him/herself.

- (a) payment of approved fees;
- (b) a grant for maintenance;
- (c) approved expenses for fieldwork and UK conferences.

2. Approved fees

These consist of University tuition fees, and all registration and examination fees.

3. Maintenance Grant (full-time studentships only)

The current value of the annual grant is published separately. Payments for periods of less than 12 months are reduced pro-rata. There are no additional allowances for dependants, postgraduate experience etc.

4. Fieldwork and Conference expenses

- (i) Fieldwork is defined as extra-mural activity which is an integral part of a research student's training and includes the collection of essential data or information from original sources. It can also include visits to external supervisors or advisers. Claims for travel expenses and subsistence expenses above those normally incurred in Bolton may be made as well as for other incidental costs. Only claims supported by the main supervisor will be considered.
- (ii) Attendance at conferences in the UK will be considered only when it is recommended by the main supervisor. The studentship does not provide for attendance at overseas conferences. However, support for this may be available from other funds.
- (iii) Consideration of fieldwork and conference expenses is at the discretion of the Head of academic department and prior approval for all such expenditure should be obtained from them. Details of how to claim should be sought at the time of approval. Claims should normally be submitted after the expenditure has been incurred, fully supported by appropriate receipts.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Only candidates who satisfy the entry requirements specified in the University's Research Degree Regulations will be considered for University studentships.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Registration

- (i) The holder of a University studentship must enrol for a research degree in the academic department which supported his or her application for the award.
- (ii) The holder of the studentship (with the support of his or her supervisor) must apply to register for a research degree as soon as possible, and seek commencement of registration from the start of the studentship.

2. Appointment of supervisors

- (i) Heads of academic departments must appoint for each research student an appropriate member of staff to act as first supervisor to be responsible for the student. Supervisors should be fully conversant with their responsibilities towards students as laid down in the University's guidelines.
- (ii) Up to two second supervisors may also be appointed if this is appropriate.

3. Length of studentship

- (i) Full-time studentships may be awarded for not more than three years except in a few defined and exceptional circumstances (see below). Part-time studentships may be awarded for an agreed part-time equivalent. Subject to provision being made in the relevant budget, continuation of the award beyond the first year is conditional upon being satisfied (on the basis of information provided by the student and his or her supervisor) that the student has made good progress during his or her first year and is likely to submit a worthwhile thesis within the normal approved period of registration for the award. For a PhD studentship, continuation of the award beyond the second year (third year part-time) will be conditional upon the candidate being registered for a PhD and receiving a positive recommendation from his or her supervisor and head of department. New awards cannot be used to extend research training studentships.
- (ii) When candidates are not recommended for continuation to PhD, applications may be considered for the extension of a research award by up to three months (six months part-time) to enable approved training to be completed. The supervisor should explain the grounds on which the recommendation for an extension is based.

- (iii) On the recommendation of the supervisor the student may spend part of the first year (first two years part-time) on a taught course. The supervisor and student should give early notice if this is proposed, if possible on initial application.
- (iv) A full-time studentship is not normally awarded or continued for a student who has had three years full-time postgraduate training in a higher education institution or has been engaged on work which is equivalent to such training. Time spent on postgraduate training is included for this purpose except in the following circumstances:
 - (a) Where the study was part-time.
 - (b) Masters degree - up to one year may be disregarded or up to one year of additional support may be considered in respect of any previous postgraduate training which was directly relevant to the attainment of a Masters degree. All other periods of postgraduate training will continue to be deducted.
 - (c) Language training - where a research student is required to learn a difficult or unusual language in order successfully to complete a doctorate, up to one year's study of that language may be disregarded.

In all cases students should seek confirmation in writing in advance that support will be forthcoming in their particular circumstances.
 - (d) Privately financed study - where a student has undertaken full-time postgraduate study at his or her own expense or by support from other than UK Central Government funds, up to one year of such study may be disregarded.

Where a student has had less than three years' postgraduate training, the maximum length of support available will be reduced by one month for every month spent on such training unless paragraphs 3(iv) (a), (b), or (c) apply².

- (v) Research studentship holders who wish to transfer from a full-time to part-time studentship or vice-versa must seek prior approval via the Head of academic department and be supported by his/her supervisor. In all such cases of approved transfer, the maximum length of support will be reduced or increased appropriately depending on the funding already given, and submission rate timescales will be adjusted accordingly.

4. Starting date

- (i) A studentship normally begins on defined dates in September, January or May and payment will be made to the student from that date. In

² For all purposes of the above, postgraduate certificates in education and certificates of qualification in social work are regarded as undergraduate.

special circumstances, for example, where a person to whom a research studentship has been awarded cannot take up that award on the defined starting date because of the need to give notice to their current employer, the University will consider allowing a later starting date and the payment of grant will be adjusted accordingly.

- (ii) In other special circumstances the award may also start earlier than the defined starting date; for example, when a student has been carrying out research at postgraduate level in the session before taking up the award, a research studentship may begin before the normal date. A request for an early start, explaining the circumstances and giving the termination date of any previous award held by the student, must be received from the supervisor well before the proposed start date.

5. Financial Understanding

Studentships may be awarded to cover the cost of maintenance and/or approved tuition fees and/or approved conference and fieldwork expenses either wholly or by supplementing a student's own income or grants from other sources when such other income is clearly inadequate for the purpose. A student will not be eligible for an award if he or she already holds an award from another organisation and the University feels that this award is sufficient to cover adequately maintenance and/or fees and/or expenses. A student holding a University award who **subsequently** gains such an additional award will not be entitled to the original level of support from the University from the date on which the new award is payable.

6. Teaching and other paid work (full-time studentships only)

Teaching is encouraged subject to conditions and safeguards laid down in section 16.5 of the Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors. Students should consult this document before they make any teaching commitment.

The Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations specify the number of hours each week that a full-time research student is required to spend on research as detailed in paragraph 2.4 (iii). As such, any work must not affect the student's ability to fulfil the requirement in the aforementioned regulation. It must be noted that the studentship is designed to avoid the need for the student to undertake other work.

7. Holidays (full-time studentships only)

The numbers of days' holiday and conditions attached to them are detailed in section 16.8 of the Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors. Where a studentship is awarded for a period of less than 12 months then the holiday allowance defined in the aforementioned document is applied pro rata.

8. Illness

- (i) If a student is prevented from working by illness for more than a fortnight, the University must be informed immediately and sent a

medical certificate. Periods of illness notified in this way will be taken into account when calculating research students' submission times.

- (ii) During certificated illness full-time students will normally be paid in any period of twelve months at the full rate for the first four weeks and at half rate for the next four weeks. Beyond that, payments will be specially considered but normally the award will be held in suspension.

9. Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave and Pay

The University allows students to take maternity, paternity and adoption leave and makes provision for additional bursary to be paid where appropriate. Full-time students are also allowed to study on a part-time basis.

- Students are entitled to 26 weeks of maternity leave on full stipend and a further 26 weeks of unpaid maternity leave.
- Fathers are entitled to up to 10 days paid Ordinary Paternity Leave on full stipend.
- Fathers may be entitled to up to 26 weeks of Additional Paternity Leave; this may include paid and unpaid leave, depending on the individual circumstances, any paid leave should be at full stipend.
- There is no qualifying period for maternity, paternity or adoption leave e.g. a student can take leave regardless of when they commenced their studies.
- Students may opt to study part-time (at least 50%) following a change in their personal circumstances.
- The period of support may be extended to cover the period of absence.
- Submission dates can be amended for periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave and if the student changes to part-time study.
- There is no limit to the number of periods of Maternity, Ordinary Paternity, Additional Paternity or Adoption Leave that can be taken during a studentship.
- A part-time bursary should not be less than 50% of full-time.
- The University may approve a change in the mode of study from part-time to full-time or *vice-versa*, e.g. for changes in personal circumstances.

10. Suspensions

Only in exceptional circumstances will the University be prepared to consider suspending an award. Each case will be considered on its individual merit and, if agreed, the period of suspension is unlikely to exceed one year. Students who wish to seek a suspension should contact their director of studies as soon as possible.

11. Termination of award

- (i) A studentship may be terminated, or its conditions varied, at any time at the absolute discretion of the University.
- (ii) In the event of the performance of a studentship holder being such that continuation of the award is not justified, the supervisor **must** notify the University **immediately**. Supervisors should also note that they should advise the University **without delay** of situations where performance is giving cause for concern even if immediate termination of the award is

not justified.

- (iii) Supervisors must inform the University immediately if a student ceases training before expiry of the studentship. In this event, the award will terminate on the date on which the student ceases training. In particular, if a full-time student takes up paid employment before the expiry date, the award cannot be continued on or after the date of appointment unless the University has previously approved transfer to a part-time award. In the event of the award being prematurely terminated for any reason the student must repay to the University the whole or such proportion as the University shall determine of any monies overpaid to him or her or on his or her behalf by reason of such.

12. First-year reports

At the end of the first year of training (or before if requested) students are required to provide the University with a statement of progress. Supervisors are asked to report to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees on their assessment of the student's performance and to say if they consider the award should not be continued. Continuation of the award beyond the first year is conditional upon the University being satisfied with the student's progress. No award will be paid to the student for a second year until the first year report has been received and assessed. Decisions on continuation will be made as soon as possible, but decisions on some cases may be prolonged if interviews and/or further information are required.

13. Continuation of awards beyond the second year

Students will be required to submit annual reports as specified in the relevant University procedures. In order to qualify for further support, a research student must be recommended for continuation by his or her Director of Studies and Head of academic department. The University reserves the right to summon students for interview and to refuse further support at its discretion.

14. End-of-Award reports

- (i) At the end of their period of support students are required to provide a report on the research which they have undertaken. Supervisors are also asked for their comments. The University attaches great importance to these reports in its evaluation of the output of research students supported by it, the effectiveness of their training, the problems encountered by them and their future plans. It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that these reports are submitted.
- (ii) Report forms will be sent to students as necessary at the appropriate time of year.

15. Payment of grants

Arrangements for the method and instalment interval for payment of any agreed maintenance grant will be determined at the time of appointment.

16. Intellectual Property Rights and Publication of Results

- (i) Research students and supervisors are subject to the *Procedures for the Protection and Exploitation of Intellectual Property at the University of Bolton*.
- (ii) Students are obliged to inform their supervisors forthwith of anything that is made, developed, discovered or otherwise produced during the course of their research that is capable of being patented. University supervisors must then act in accordance with their contract of employment by disclosing such information to the University. Any prior or subsequent agreement relating to the sharing of intellectual property rights arising from the research findings and of potential returns from their exploitation must be approved by the University, whether or not such an agreement includes a third party, e.g. an external sponsor.
- (iii) Students are encouraged to publish the results of their research but must obtain the prior permission of their supervisors before making any written, oral, or other disclosure which might prejudice intellectual property rights and any potential patent arising from the results. Any agreement relating to ownership of copyright and authorship of publications should be made in writing as early as possible in the life of the research project and, if possible, should be included in the research student - supervisor agreement. All publications arising from research carried out wholly or partly by a University research student must acknowledge the University as a host institution and, where relevant, refer to the financial support provided by the University. A copy of all publications arising from the research should be lodged in the University's Institutional Repository and a list of such publications included in the end-of-award report.

17. Student Careers

The University conducts annual surveys of the first career destination of students whose awards terminated during the previous year. From time to time, the University may also conduct surveys of past students at later stages in their careers. This information is essential for evaluation purposes and the cooperation of supervisors and ex-students in providing it is appreciated.

18. Thesis Submission and Completion

The University regards the writing up of the results of postgraduate work in the form of a PhD or MPhil thesis within a reasonable time as an effective

measure of whether the student's research training has been satisfactorily completed. Information about theses submitted and research degrees awarded is collected annually and the rate of theses submission is an important factor in deciding whether or not Departments or Centres will continue to receive University research studentship support. (Students whose awards terminate within one year of commencement are excluded from the statistics and allowances are made for suspensions, difficult language extensions, illness, accident, maternity leave and exceptional personal circumstances).

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