

DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY

Postgraduate Studentships

Terms and Conditions

(Academic year 2023/24)

Contents

Introduction	2
Section A: Types of Studentships	4
Section B: General terms and conditions	5
Section C: Research Studentship	19
Section D: CAST studentships	21
Section E: Taught Studentships	22
Rights and Remedies	24
Definition of Terms	25

INTRODUCTION

This booklet sets out the terms and conditions of the Department for the Economy Postgraduate Studentships held at Queen's University Belfast (**QUB**) or Ulster University (**Ulster**) (each a **University**, together the **Universities**). Throughout the booklet, the term **University Authority** is used to denote the office within each university that is responsible for making decisions on certain issues. At QUB, the **University Authority** is the Graduate School; at Ulster the **University Authority** is the Doctoral College, Research and Impact.

Queries on the terms and conditions should be addressed to either: -

The Graduate School
Queen's University Belfast
University Road
BELFAST
BT7 1NN
Tel: (028) 9097 2585
E-mail: pgawards@qub.ac.uk

Ulster University Doctoral College
Ulster University
Cromore Road
BT7 1NN Coleraine
Co. Londonderry
BT52 1SA
Tel: (028) 7012 4729
E-mail: researchstudent@ulster.ac.uk

This booklet is also available on the web at any of the following links:

[Postgraduate Study | Study | Queen's University Belfast \(qub.ac.uk\)](#)
[The Doctoral College at Ulster](#)
[Student finance: Postgraduate Studentships terms and conditions | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Braille and audio-cassette versions of this booklet are available from the Department for the Economy. Contact details for the Department for the Economy are as follows:

Higher Education Research & Knowledge Exchange Branch
Department for the Economy
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FD
Tel: (028) 9025 7584
E-mail: Research.Branch@economy-ni.gov.uk

These Terms and conditions may be varied at any time at the discretion of the Department for the Economy. These Terms and Conditions take effect from 1 October 2023.

For the avoidance of doubt, Section B (rules 1-4) apply to those Postgraduate Students starting a course in the Academic Year 2023/24 and Section A, Section B (rules 5-24) and Section C apply to all Postgraduate Students, being any students with courses starting in the Academic Year 2023/24 and those who are currently 2nd and 3rd year Postgraduate Students, having started their courses in previous academic years.

SECTION A: TYPES OF STUDENTSHIPS

The following types of **full-time** Studentship are available:

- RESEARCH STUDENTSHIPS provide for the payments of approved fees and the maintenance of students whilst being trained in methods of PhD research.
- CAST STUDENTSHIPS (Co-operative Awards in Science and Technology) provide for the payments of approved fees and the maintenance of students on Research Studentships intended to encourage the development of collaboration between universities and industry and, in particular, to provide an opportunity for graduates to undertake PhD research of direct interest to industry.
- TAUGHT STUDENTSHIPS provide for the payment of approved fees and the maintenance of students undertaking approved postgraduate courses of instruction. If available, studentships will be advertised by the University.

NOTES

- i. UK residents MAY receive a Studentship covering fees and maintenance. Additional criteria regarding residency and nationality are applicable as set out in Section B of this document.
- ii. Candidates with pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, who also satisfy a three-year residency requirement in the UK prior to the start of the course for which a Studentship is held MAY receive a Studentship covering fees and maintenance.
- iii. ROI nationals who satisfy three years' residency in the UK prior to the start of the course MAY receive a Studentship covering fees and maintenance (ROI nationals don't need to have pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme to qualify).
- iv. Candidates with pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme MAY qualify for a "Fees only" Studentship if the candidate doesn't have three full years' residency in the UK and Islands but has been ordinarily resident in the area comprising the UK, Gibraltar, EEA and Switzerland for three years before the start of the course.
- v. ROI nationals MAY receive a studentship covering fees only if the candidate doesn't have three full years' residency in the UK and Islands but has been ordinarily resident in the area comprising the UK, Gibraltar, EEA and Switzerland for three years before the start of the course.
- vi. More details regarding nationality and residency eligibility are listed in section 1a-1e.

SECTION B: GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR STUDENTS STARTING COURSES IN AY 2023/24

1. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for consideration for a Department for the Economy Studentship, a candidate must satisfy **ALL** the eligibility criteria based on nationality, residency and academic qualifications. The criteria are as set out below.

RESIDENCY AND NATIONALITY

- a. The candidate must be ordinarily resident in the UK or Islands, including the Channel Islands and Isle of Man, for the full three year period before the first day of the first academic year of the course, i.e. normally 1 October (or would have been so resident had the candidate, the spouse or either parent not been employed temporarily outside the UK or the EU).
 - For Non-EU nationals – the main purpose of residence in the UK must NOT have been to receive full time education during any part of that three-year period.
 - Candidates with pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, where the main purpose for residence in the UK was to receive full time education, he/she must have been ordinarily resident in the area comprising the UK, Gibraltar, European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland immediately before that three-year period.
 - However, candidates with pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme may qualify for a “Fees only” Studentship if the candidate doesn’t have three full years’ residency in the UK and Islands but has been ordinarily resident in the area comprising the UK, Gibraltar, EEA and Switzerland for three years before the first day of the first academic year of the course. The main purpose for residence in the area comprising the UK, Gibraltar, EEA and Switzerland must not have been to receive full time education during any part of that three-year period.
 - Under the Common Travel Area arrangements, RoI nationals who have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands or the area comprising the UK, Gibraltar, EEA and Switzerland for the three years prior to the start of the course may be eligible for fee and maintenance support or fee support respectively (they are not required to apply under the EU Settlement Scheme).
- b. The candidate must be ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland on the first day of the first academic year of the course, normally 1 October.
- c. The candidate must be:
 - a UK national;
 - an Irish national; or

- an EU national or relevant family member of an EU national with 'protected rights' under the EU Withdrawal Agreement with pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme.
- The candidate may be eligible for support if they are the child of a Swiss national with protected rights under the Swiss citizens' rights agreement with 3 years in the UK/Gibraltar/EEA/Switzerland though the parent and child should both have 'protected rights'.
 - Children of Turkish workers, where the Turkish worker and the child were living in the UK before the end of the transition period, remain eligible.
 - For Non-EU nationals – The candidate must be “settled” in the UK by the closing date for the application. “Settled” means being both ordinarily resident in the UK and without any immigration restriction on the length of the stay in the UK. To be “settled” the candidate must either have the Right of Abode or Indefinite Leave to Enter or Remain in the UK.
 - Long Residence. Candidates who are aged 18 years old or above and, preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course have lived in the United Kingdom throughout either half their life; or a period of twenty years; are ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland and have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands throughout the three-year period preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course; and, whose residence in the United Kingdom and Islands has not during any part of that period been wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education.
 - Candidates with Refugee Status; Humanitarian Protection; Stateless Leave; Section 67 Leave; Discretionary Leave to Remain; Indefinite Leave to Remain as a victim of domestic violence or abuse; Indefinite Leave to Remain as a bereaved partner or; Calais Leave and those granted leave in line from the UK Government may be eligible to apply, however, they must ordinarily have been resident in the UK and Islands since the status was awarded.
- d. UK nationals and their family members living in the EEA are eligible for fee and maintenance support for a 7-year transition period for PGA courses started before 1/1/2028. They would have to have been living in the EEA/Switzerland immediately before Implementation Period completion day on 31/12/20 (or have moved to the UK after 31/12/17 immediately before having lived in the territory comprising Gibraltar/EEA/Switzerland). They would need to have remained in the territory comprising the UK/Gibraltar/EEA/Switzerland throughout the period from 31/12/20 and ending immediately before the first day of the first academic year of the course.
- Separate provision is made for UK nationals who have been resident in the area comprising the UK/Gibraltar/EEA/Switzerland for the 3 years before their course starts to remain eligible for fee support only. Unlike the previous scenario, there is no time restriction, and it may benefit people who go to live in the EEA after 31/12/20.

- e. Note. To attract world class candidates, up to 15% of fee and maintenance awards will be made available for “Non-Home” candidates for specific PhD projects or Masters courses (where the above-mentioned nationality and residency criteria do not apply).

ACADEMIC CRITERIA

RESEARCH AND CAST STUDENTSHIPS:

The required academic qualification is a first or upper second-class honours degree from a university in the United Kingdom or Ireland, or qualifications and experience considered by the University as equivalent to this standard.

Candidates must have official, final results of all qualifications to be used to meet the academic requirements before the start of the Studentship.

Students must be able to demonstrate a capability to undertake and benefit from research training through to completion to the standard necessary to qualify for a PhD.

Candidates who already hold a doctoral degree or who have been registered on a programme of research leading to the award of a doctoral degree on a full-time basis for more than one year, or part-time equivalent, funded from any source, including self-financing students, are NOT eligible for a Research Studentship.

TAUGHT STUDENTSHIPS:

The desired academic qualification is at least an upper second-class honours degree, from a University in the United Kingdom or Ireland or a non-UK qualification considered by the University as equivalent to this standard.

Candidates must have official, final results of all qualifications to be used to meet the academic requirements before the start of the Studentship.

Candidates who have completed a programme of more than 60 CATS at Master’s level, funded from any source, including self-financing students, are NOT eligible for a Master’s Studentship. This does not include completion of an integrated Master’s degree as part of your undergraduate degree (e.g. MEng, MSci).

Candidates who already hold a doctoral degree or who have been registered on a programme of research leading to the award of a doctoral degree on a full-time basis for more than one year, or part-time equivalent, funded from any source, including self-financing students, are NOT eligible for a Taught Studentship.

2. STARTING DATE

All Studentships begin on 1 October and end on 30 September - regardless of the actual dates of the academic year - unless otherwise stated in the letter offering the Studentship.

Approval for a starting date later than 1 October must be sought by the Supervisor from the **University Authority**.

3. OFFER OF STUDENTSHIP

The **University Authority** will send offers of Studentships to successful candidates and notify unsuccessful candidates. Successful candidates should ensure they retain the official funding letter for the duration of the Studentship. A charge may be incurred to issue a duplicate copy.

QUB and Ulster will collect such information as is deemed necessary from all recipients to enable them to provide the Department for the Economy with an appropriate report on Section 75 criteria for monitoring purposes.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF STUDENTSHIP

Candidates who are offered Studentships must either decline or accept the offer within 10 working days of the date of the letter of offer. Failure to do so may result in the Studentship being offered to another candidate.

5. CONDITIONS OF STUDENTSHIP

- a. Each University is required to appoint an appropriate member of staff to act as Supervisor for each Studentship holder. The University will appoint a supervisory team consisting of a minimum of two supervisors. The Supervisor(s) is responsible for academic reports and certain other matters. Supervisors are required to keep the student's progress under review to ensure that the training will be successfully completed within the period of the Department for the Economy Studentship and, where applicable, written up and submitted as a thesis. For TAUGHT STUDENTSHIP holders, the Course Director will be expected to carry out these functions as necessary. Further references to Supervisor's responsibilities in this booklet should be taken to include Course Director if appropriate.
- b. In accepting an offer of a Studentship, the student undertakes to:
 - i abide by the terms and conditions of the Studentship as outlined in this booklet and the letter of offer;
 - ii inform the **University Authority** if offered a UKRI studentship or any other scholarship you have accepted for the same programme of study.
 - iii repay to the University any amount overpaid for any reason whatsoever

- iv provide to the relevant **University Authority** such information as it may require concerning changes in academic circumstances which may affect the progress and payment of the Studentship; and
 - v permit the relevant **University Authority** to use all information held about him/her for any purposes connected with the Studentship, such permission being taken as fulfilling the requirements of the Data Protection Act.
- c. It is a condition of the Studentship that the Department for the Economy accepts no liability for the manner in which the work in connection with the Studentship is undertaken, and the recipient of the Studentship will be responsible in all aspects for the work, including fieldwork, and the consequences of it.
- d. It is a condition of the Studentship that a student remains on the course/ programme of study in respect of which the Studentship was sought and was offered. **Any proposal by a student to change study or registration must be approved in advance by the relevant University Authority for the purpose of the Studentship.** Failure to seek prior approval may necessitate the recovery of sums already paid in relation to the Studentship by the University.

6. PLACE OF TENURE

The Department for the Economy Studentships are tenable only at Queen's University Belfast or Ulster University:

- a. Studentships are tenable only at the home University, being the University which made the offer of the Studentship.
- b. Prior approval must be obtained from the relevant **University Authority** if a Supervisor wishes a student to spend, either at home or abroad, a period of training away from the home University.
- c. The Studentship is non-transferable, except in limited circumstances where prior written approval from the Universities and the Department for the Economy has been obtained.

7. CONTINUATION OF STUDENTSHIPS

Where the course of study lasts for more than one academic year, a progress report must be sent to the relevant **University Authority** at the time designated in the rules and regulations for the specific programme. If the relevant **University Authority** does not receive this report by the end of October, maintenance payments will be suspended until the report is received.

The Studentship is renewed on an annual basis, subject to a satisfactory progress report and recommendations from the Supervisor and the School/Faculty. Renewal for a third year will normally only be considered where the student is registered for a doctorate – i.e a Studentship holder cannot enter the third year of a Studentship registered as an undifferentiated research student or as an MPhil student.

8. PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

The Department for the Economy does not assist with the cost of publication, but its support-must be acknowledged in any publication dealing with the work carried out during the tenure of the Studentship.

9. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

- a. Each University, and all engaged in research supported by a Studentship, should ensure that any intellectual property arising during the course of the Studentship is considered for exploitation. The student must therefore comply with the policies and procedures laid down by QUB or Ulster for the dissemination and exploitation of results.
- b. Each University has issued guidance to academic staff on many aspects of identifying, protecting and exploiting inventions. Further information is available from the Intellectual Property Rights (IP) Manager at QUB or Ulster. Upon request, the IP Manager will provide a brief introduction to intellectual property; this can be arranged individually or with a group of colleagues. Students should particularly bear in mind the following:

- i. **PROTECTION OF POSSIBLE PATENT ACTION**

A patent is an exclusive right to retain a time-limited monopoly on a technical invention in specified sovereign states. Potential patent rights will be prejudiced by publication or non-confidential disclosure of the subject matter prior to filing a patent application.

Publication is interpreted very broadly and covers anything made available publicly in writing, orally, by use, or in any other way before protection is sought. Students should avoid disclosing novel learnings from their work in the public domain without prior consultation with the relevant technology transfer authority in the University.

It is imperative that you keep Laboratory Notebooks, especially if the project could lead to a patentable invention. Specifically, the Laboratory Notebook should contain the dates and location of when novel ideas were conceived, who was present and who contributed to their conception; what research actions were undertaken, where the research actions were undertaken who was involved/ contributed/ consulted; what data was captured and where was this data captured.

Details of the contributions of other researchers, including the Supervisor should also be recorded at every stage of the project as well as the date and location of every disclosure, confidential and non-confidential. Confidential disclosures may not affect the patentability of inventions, but these must be done under the provision of a Non-Disclosure Agreement between the university and the third party, and the IP Manger must be consulted prior to any disclosure.

The IP Manager can provide guidance as required. Exceptions for learned society publications are more restricted than previously.

ii. PROTECTION OF NON-PATENTABLE MATERIAL

Intellectual Property (IP) refers generally to commercial value derived from the creations of mind. Therein there is often commercial value derived from research which cannot be patented; these include know-how, computer software or other results which can be of commercial value. These types of IP are automatically protected via copyright or design rights, or via non-disclosure and retention. It is important to discuss these options with your IP Manager.

iii. EXPLOITATION COSTS AND RESOURCES

- a. The Department for the Economy will not meet any charges incurred in respect of patenting and exploitation, nor will they expect to receive any of the income thus obtained.
- b. When making nominations for CAST STUDENTSHIPS and in other situations where third parties are involved, prior to the commencement of the project, applicants are required to show that a reasonable arrangement has been made to ensure that any results will be exploited, and that a suitable return is secured for the home University, the student and/or the Supervisor as appropriate.
- c. It is expected that parties in collaborative research will negotiate the terms of their own collaboration between themselves. The **University Authority** is free to use its own agreements but should seek expert advice, where appropriate, from suitable agencies such as the Intellectual Property Office.
- d. Studentship holders must assign their IP Rights to the home University at the commencement of their studentship and receive benefits in accordance with the home University's policies.
- e. The Department for the Economy excludes all liability, to the fullest extent permissible by law, which may arise in relation to the patented and non-patentable IP that arises out of this Studentship.

10. VALUE OF STUDENTSHIP

Studentships consist of:

- a. a stipend paid to the student to cover personal maintenance or living costs (where the candidate meets the residency requirement). The rates below are the minimum payable to Department for the Economy (DFE) Studentship holders. Each university reserves the right to pay more than the minimum rate to Studentship holders. If applicable, rates above the minimum will be specified in the letter of offer.

Research Studentships

2023-24 £18,622

Taught Studentships

2023-24 £9,311

- c. payment of approved fees (Rule 11);

- d. extra payments relating to RESEARCH STUDENTSHIPS (Rule 27) and CAST STUDENTSHIPS (Rule 31);
- e. the University may pay other allowances in appropriate cases (Rule 12).

11. APPROVED FEES

- a. Approved fees will comprise:
 - i. sessional fees, full or partial tuition, supervision, registration and bench fees and student union subscriptions but excluding any element of maintenance; and
 - ii. fees charged by external examining or validating bodies or fees charged by any other external body whose requirements must be satisfied in order to complete the course.
- b. Fees will be paid direct by the relevant **University Authority** to the Finance Department at QUB or Ulster. Only fees incurred during, and with relation to, the period of the Studentship will be paid. **Any additional fees payable after termination of the Studentship are the student's responsibility.**
- c. Charges for accommodation and/or boarding of a student resident in an institution must be paid to the institution by the student.
- d. Charges for typing and binding a thesis or dissertation are not included in the approved fees, an allowance having been made for such expenses in fixing the rate of maintenance grant.
- e. Fees for any examination which is taken a second time, or a deposit which is ultimately repayable to the student, are not regarded as approved fees.

12. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG-TERM CONDITIONS

Students with disabilities and long-term medical conditions are encouraged to access support through the University's Disability Services to ensure that their individual needs are assessed for their studies and that appropriate reasonable adjustments and supports are put in place.

For students attending Ulster University who have not registered with the University's Disability Services, please contact: studentwellbeing@ulster.ac.uk for further information including eligibility for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and to schedule an appointment.

For students attending Queen's University Belfast who have not registered with the University's Disability Service, please contact: disability.office@qub.ac.uk for further information, including eligibility for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and to schedule an appointment.

13. FINANCIAL UNDERTAKINGS

The Department for the Economy relies on the academic authorities to ensure that full use is made of all other sources of financial assistance open to students and that the institutions' expenditure on postgraduate awards in their own gift is not reduced on account of Studentships awarded by the Department for the Economy.

14. NATIONAL INSURANCE

The home University will not make any payment for student's National Insurance contributions. Students may become liable for contributions in connection with any paid teaching or demonstrating which they undertake.

15. INCOME TAX

The Board of Inland Revenue authorises the statement that payment under a Department for the Economy Studentship is not regarded as income for income tax purposes. It should, however, be noted that earnings from sources such as teaching and demonstrating received during the final year of the Studentship will be aggregated with income from post-award employment, when income tax liability is assessed for the fiscal year in which the Studentship terminates.

16. PAYMENT OF MAINTENANCE GRANT

The **University Authority** will request bank details from students for payments of maintenance grants. Students must inform the relevant **University Authority** of any change of bank details. Each **University Authority** will decide the arrangements for payment of maintenance grant and notify Studentship holders accordingly.

The initial maintenance payment will be withheld until the student has fully registered for the programme of study for which the studentship has been awarded. The student may be required to provide proof of registration. For Studentships continuing into a second or third year, maintenance payments will be suspended if the relevant **University Authority** does not receive, at the designated time, the progress report detailed in Rule 7. Continued payment is subject to registration and satisfactory progress.

Supervisors/Course Directors must inform the relevant University Authority immediately when a student has withdrawn. The appropriate university budget holder will normally be required to reimburse the relevant University Authority for any avoidable overpayments not recovered from the student arising from a delay in notification of a student's withdrawal. All payments are subject to the terms of Rule 22.

17. ATTENDANCE

It is expected that full-time students will be in attendance on campus on a daily basis except by mutual agreement with their supervisor and Postgraduate Tutor, or for time spent on field work, industrial placement, internship or other work directly related to the

project for which prior written agreement has been obtained from the relevant **University Authority**.

18. HOLIDAYS

Within the period of the Studentship, all the student's time should be devoted to his/her studies, except as provided in Rule 21a. Holidays, as approved by the Supervisor/ course director, are allowed within the period of the Studentship, provided they do not exceed a total of eight weeks including public holidays (40 days) per year. Holidays for incomplete years may be allowed pro rata. Holidays must be in accordance with the University's relevant Study Regulations.

Where holidays in excess of those permitted are taken, the maintenance grant will be reduced accordingly. Not more than four weeks may be taken on completion of the period of training/study (see also Rule 22). Where a student withdraws from studies, no holidays will be allowed after the date of withdrawal. Holidays must not be used for the purpose of undertaking paid employment except as approved by the relevant **University Authority** under Rule 21.

19. ABSENCE DUE TO ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS

- a. If a student is absent through accident or illness for more than two weeks, the student must notify the Supervisor/course director, who will notify the relevant **University Authority** immediately in writing of the dates of absence, accompanied by a medical certificate. Return from such absence must also be reported. Frequent short absences for medical or other reasons must also be reported to the relevant **University Authority** where they are likely to lead to a delay in the programme of research. Absences due to illness/exceptional circumstances must be in accordance with the University's relevant Study/Attendance Regulations.
- b. Payment of a Studentship will continue for absences covered by a medical certificate for up to thirteen weeks within a rolling 12-month period. If the illness lasts for more than thirteen weeks, the University will suspend the Studentship for the period beyond the thirteen weeks.
- c. Students who are absent for more than thirteen weeks are advised to seek financial support from the University Support Funds in the first instance as all Department for the Economy support will cease until study is resumed.
- d. The studentship will be extended by the same amount of time (up to 13 weeks). After this time, a phased return to study over a four-week maximum may be permitted.
- e. Holiday entitlement may not be set against periods of illness.

Periods of certified sickness must be approved by the relevant University Authority and should be recorded on the University systems.

20. MATERNITY, MATERNITY SUPPORT, ADOPTION AND PARENTAL LEAVE

Maternity and Adoption Leave

Students are entitled to 52 weeks' maternity leave if the expected week of childbirth will occur during the period of their award. The earliest Maternity leave can commence is 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. The first 26 weeks should be paid at full stipend rate. The following 13 weeks should be paid at a level commensurate with statutory maternity pay. The final 13 weeks are not paid.

Adoption leave should be granted on the same basis as maternity leave to one adopting parent only.

Periods of paid and unpaid maternity/adoption leave must be taken consecutively. If a student chooses not to take the full twelve months at the time of pregnancy/adoption, then the student will not be able to take the remaining period at a later date.

Financial support for any time beyond nine months should be sought from the University Support Funds in the first instance.

The total period of Department for the Economy support will not be extended beyond the original duration of the Studentship plus the period of up to twelve months' maternity/adoption leave, except where more than one maternity/adoption leave occurs during the period of the Studentship.

Maternity Support Leave

Partners of those taking maternity or adoption leave are entitled to up to two weeks paid Maternity Support Leave on full stipend. This leave must be taken in one go. Maternity Support Leave cannot start before the birth and must end within 56 days of the birth. This period is regarded as additional leave of absence from studies and the award will not be extended. If the student needs to take any further time, this must be taken as a suspension to the award.

Parental Leave

Partners of those taking maternity or adoption leave are also entitled to an extended period of unpaid parental leave, up to a maximum of 50 weeks. Unpaid parental leave must be completed within 12 months of the birth or adoption of the child. This leave may be taken in up to three blocks of leave or all at once.

Applications

There is no qualifying period for maternity, adoption, maternity support or parental leave. Additionally, the student's Studentship end date should be updated to reflect the period of leave.

Students should apply directly to the **University Authority** for a period of any of these types of leave. The application must be supported by official documentation as below:

Maternity leave

The student is required to provide a maternity certificate, form MATB1, obtained from a doctor or midwife, which includes the estimated due date (EDD). These are normally available 20 weeks before EDD.

Adoption leave

The student is required to provide a letter from the agency with the date of placement and matching certificate.

Maternity Support leave and Parental leave

The student should provide evidence of the birth including birth certificates.

21. DEMONSTRATING, TEACHING AND OTHER PAID WORK

- a. No paid work may be undertaken by students during term-time or vacations, except as provided by sub-paragraphs i., ii. and iii.
 - i. It is generally considered desirable that, subject to the approval of the Supervisor/Course Director, a student should undertake a certain amount of demonstrating or teaching work if the type of postgraduate training is compatible with such work. This work is permitted during the tenure of a Studentship, provided the total demand made on a student's time, including any preparation work, does not exceed 6 hours in any one week or up to one day a week if the teaching is carried out in a school or institution of further education.
 - ii. Other forms of work (e.g. university examination invigilating or marking of university examination scripts) directly related to a student's training will be allowed, on the same conditions as demonstrating, during the hours normally devoted to the student's training.
 - iii. Students must inform their Supervisor/Course Director in advance if they plan to undertake a small amount of paid work, other than that specified in i. and ii. above, provided their Supervisor/Course Director certifies that they have consented to this and that the work, whether in term-time or vacation, will not in any way whatsoever impede or interfere with their progress, research or other training. Part-time work during normal working hours is expected to be the exception rather than the norm and should not exceed 6 hours or up to one day in any one week.
- b. Students must be paid for any demonstrating or teaching work at the usual QUB or Ulster rate. Prior to undertaking such duties, students will receive appropriate training. Refer to Rule 15 for further details regarding income tax.
- c. A Department for the Economy Studentship cannot be held at the same time as any other award which provides maintenance and fees for postgraduate training. Department for the Economy support will cease from the date on which such an award becomes payable. Students and/or the University must inform the Department for the Economy of such support as soon as reasonably practicable.

22. PROGRESS/TERMINATION OF STUDENTSHIP

- a. Supervisors/Course Directors must inform the relevant **University Authority** immediately if at any time they consider a student's attendance, progress or conduct to be unsatisfactory.
- b. Students whose attendance, progress or conduct is not satisfactory may have their Studentships terminated or payments in respect of Studentships withheld or reduced.
- c. If the relevant **University Authority** is satisfied that a student has wilfully failed to provide information which it requires or has provided information which is known to be false, it may terminate the Studentship or withhold any payments due under the Studentship as it deems appropriate.
- d. If the holder of a Studentship ceases training or studies before the due termination date, the Supervisor/Course Director must inform the relevant **University Authority** immediately.
- f. A Studentship will terminate on the date when a student ceases training or studies (except as provided in Rule 18) and the student will be required to refund any Studentship overpaid to the University. Note: if a student submits the thesis before the official funding period ends, the Studentship will normally be terminated. Where the Student continues to undertake work that is directly linked to their thesis, it is permissible to continue their funding until the end of the quarter in which the thesis is first submitted.
- g. Consideration on a case-by-case basis will be given to making reasonable adjustments to support students' progress. Students can apply to the relevant **University Authority** for reasonable adjustments to be made to support their progress. Applications may be directed to the Department for the Economy for further consideration.

23. EMPLOYMENT OR OTHER POSTGRADUATE STUDY

If a student takes up paid employment before the normal expiry date of the Studentship, or commences other postgraduate study in respect of which another Studentship has been made, the Studentship cannot be continued on or after the date of appointment or the date from which the other Studentship commences. The Student must inform the University and the Department for the Economy when taking up paid employment or commencing other postgraduate study as soon as reasonably practicable. This paragraph overrides the provision in Rule 18 for holidays after the completion of the period of training/study.

24. SUSPENSION OF STUDENTSHIP

In general, Studentships are intended to be held on a continuous basis and the relevant **University Authority** will consider suspending a Studentship only in exceptional circumstances. If you are considering a request for suspension, you should contact your

Supervisor/Course Director as soon as possible. All requests for suspension must take the form of a joint request signed by the student and the Supervisor/Course Director and be accompanied by any supporting evidence, e.g. medical certificates. The request and supporting evidence must be submitted to the Faculty/School for approval. If approved by the Faculty/School, the request will be forwarded to the relevant **University Authority** for decision.

Please note the following with regard to suspensions:

- a. suspensions are not normally available for TAUGHT STUDENTSHIPS under any circumstances - see Rule 34 relating to withdrawing from Taught Studentships
- b. requests for suspension must be received **in advance** of the period of suspension requested
- c. Supervisors must inform the relevant **University Authority** of the exact date when a student resumes studies after an approved period of suspension
and
- d. the total period of suspension during the tenure of an award should not normally exceed **12 months**.

Acceptable reasons for suspension of a Studentship:

- e. **illness** (see Rule 19c.)
- f. **compelling personal reasons** that require the student to be absent from the University; and
- g. for the purposes of taking-up an internship at a centre of excellence or an industrial placement. Only one such visit may be considered during the tenure of the Studentship and must not exceed 12 months' duration.

Suspensions **will not** be granted for the following reasons:

- h. employment, temporary lectureships, exchanges, voluntary service overseas or expeditions/sport; and
- i. Suspensions will not normally be granted on the grounds of financial hardship.

SECTION C: RESEARCH STUDENTSHIP

25. SUBJECT FOR INVESTIGATION

The subject for investigation selected by the Supervisor should afford adequate opportunities for intellectual training and, where appropriate, the acquisition of manipulative technique and skill. It should also give the student, if possible, during the first year of training, an opportunity to show that he/she possesses the qualities necessary to become a successful research worker. Students should expect the standard of Research Training provided by the universities to meet current National Standards.

26. DURATION OF A RESEARCH STUDENTSHIP

- a. Research Studentships are normally for a maximum period of three years subject to annual renewal on the satisfactory recommendation of the student's Supervisor.
- b. Students must be formally registered for a PhD before the start of the third year of the Studentship. Studentships are not offered to students whose original intention is to submit for an MPhil. Where it is clear before the start of the third year that a student will be submitting for an MPhil, the Studentship will not be continued into the third year. When a student transfers to an MPhil in their third year, their studentship will be terminated immediately.
- c. The maximum duration of a RESEARCH STUDENTSHIP will be reduced by a period equal to any previous period of postgraduate training (other than postgraduate teacher training) or of activity equivalent to postgraduate training undertaken by the student, except where the training was directly relevant to the attainment of a Master's degree (whatever the source of funding).
- d. The **University Authority** will consider a request to extend an award to compensate for time lost because of factors outside the control of **both** the student and the host institution but cannot consider extensions where the nature of the project, or the way it has developed, is such that completion would be difficult within the period of the Studentship or where time has been lost by the student transferring between institutions. It should be noted by both the student and the Supervisor that the RESEARCH STUDENTSHIP is awarded to enable the student to be trained in research methods and not necessarily to obtain the higher degree within the period of the award.

27. RESEARCH TRAINING SUPPORT GRANT (RTSG)

- a. A RTSG will be paid to the University Authority for research students as a contribution towards incidental costs incurred in the training of research students, e.g. the provision of equipment or consumables **and** any fieldwork, conference, study visits or travel costs incurred by the research student. The **University Authority** will allocate this money.
- b. Apart from the RTSG, there are no additional conference, travel or fieldwork funds available to research students as part of their Department for the Economy Studentships, although they can apply for university funds available to all students.

28. WORK EXPERIENCE

Up to three months can be spent working in industry in paid employment, so long as the following conditions are met:

- a. The faculty/school certifies that the work is directly related to the research project.
- b. The work must not be supported by public funds. The stipend payments made by the University will be suspended during the work experience and the employer/company will be required to remunerate the student during this period. Payment should be commensurate with the student's graduate status. The Studentship end date will NOT be extended by three months.
- c. The student is not required to withdraw temporarily from research. BEFORE students undertake work experience, Supervisors must provide brief details of the industrial placement and include the endorsement of the Faculty/School. Details must be sent in advance of the work experience placement to the relevant **University Authority** to enable University stipend payments to be suspended.

29. THESIS SUBMISSION

Students should aim to submit their thesis by the end of their funded period and normally no later than one year after their funding end date. For further details regarding thesis submission refer to the University's relevant Study Regulations. Refer to condition 22 (f) above which relates to early thesis submission and implications for stipend payment.

SECTION D: CAST STUDENTSHIPS

30. INTRODUCTION

Studentships for PhD study may be available under the CAST scheme to encourage collaboration between academic institutions and private sector industry. This also provides an opportunity for able graduates to gain first-hand experience outside the academic environment as well as higher degrees.

Studentships of three years' duration are available to enable students to submit for a higher degree such as a doctorate. They are available to applicants for research projects in science and technology which are of specific industrial value.

It is essential that projects should provide good training for the student in methods of research, as well as a stimulating challenge. They should also provide a worthwhile opportunity to spend at least three months of the period of the Studentship in industry. Projects should be product and/or process orientated.

31. ELIGIBILITY

Each university may create CAST STUDENTSHIPS where the university can find an outside body willing to act as a collaborating body for a particular research project. Apart from the collaborating body's contributions (Rule 32), in all other respects CAST STUDENTSHIPS follow the terms and conditions applicable to RESEARCH STUDENTSHIPS.

32. COLLABORATING BODY CONTRIBUTIONS

As a confirmation of its interest, involvement and commitment the collaborating body must:

- a. Make an annual contribution in cash to the institution towards the cost of the project, being a minimum of 60% of the minimum maintenance grant per annum for the duration of the CAST STUDENTSHIP. The institution is entitled, at its discretion, to use a proportion of this contribution to increase the payment to the student.
- b. Meet the extra expenses (e.g. travel and accommodation costs) incurred by the student as a result of visits to, or time spent with, the collaborating body;
- c. Provide any necessary special materials or facilities which the institutions do not possess.

The **University Authority** is expected to encourage expenditure by the Collaborating Body in excess of the sums quoted above.

SECTION E: TAUGHT STUDENTSHIPS

33. TYPE OF COURSE

The **University Authority** will decide which courses will be allocated Studentships in a particular year and a list of these specified courses is available from the relevant **University Authority**.

34. DURATION OF A TAUGHT STUDENTSHIP

- a. The duration of the Taught Studentship, exclusive of initial or terminal leave, must be more than six months. The total period, including holidays, will not normally be more than 12 months.
- b. A Taught Studentship will not be available to applicants who do not satisfy the academic regulations of the home University in relation to previous postgraduate study.

35. WITHDRAWAL FROM A TAUGHT STUDENTSHIP

Students who withdraw from study for reasons acceptable to the **University Authority** will be eligible to re-apply in the next available competition for TAUGHT STUDENTSHIPS, subject to exclusions set out in the Academic Criteria section of Section B of this document, but there is no guarantee they will be successful in the competition.

36. SUPPORT OF MASTERS' COURSES

The **University Authority** will ensure that the necessary facilities are available for master's courses and associated projects. Repayment of expenses for training or attendance at short courses will not be considered by the Department for the Economy. TAUGHT STUDENTSHIPS do not include any provision for costs for attending conferences, fieldwork, travel, etc.

37. RESEARCH MASTERS COURSES (MRES)

A limited number of awards may be available for Research Masters Courses (MRes) which provide a structured and progressive research training and which meet the following criteria:

- i. The research project must form a minimum of one third of the course.
- ii. The taught material must contain modules on research techniques, advanced knowledge, advanced skills and transferable skills.
- iii. The course should equally well provide training for a course, or for further research training.
- iv. The course should normally involve real and significant industrial collaboration in course design, presentation and project supervision.

Holders of TAUGHT STUDENTSHIPS for MRes study will subsequently be eligible to apply for a RESEARCH STUDENTSHIP and, if successful, to hold such a Studentship for the full three years.

RIGHTS AND REMEDIES

If, at any stage during the delivery of this scheme, it is deemed that the planned outcomes are unlikely to be achieved, the Department has the right to reconsider the level of grant against the scheme costs in line with the revised outcomes (e.g. on an apportionment basis). In this event, the Department will consult the University prior to finalising any amendments.

If the Department finds, after inspection of monitoring reports, that an overpayment has occurred, or that funding has been claimed for expenditure not incurred in line with the objectives stated above, these monies will be recovered from the University.

The Department reserves the right to recoup funding at the end of the funding period, where it cannot be demonstrated that the terms and conditions of funding were met.

In the event that the Universities fail to comply with the obligations placed upon them under these terms and conditions, the Department for the Economy reserves the right to bring an action against the defaulting University for all loss it has suffered as a result of the breach.

Without prejudice to any other rights or remedies the Department for the Economy may have, the parties acknowledge and agree that damages alone would not be an adequate remedy for any breach of these terms and conditions. Accordingly, the Department for the Economy shall be entitled to remedies of injunctions, specific performance or other equitable relief for any threatened or actual breach of these terms and conditions.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

An EU national is someone who is a national or citizen of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, or Sweden.

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (EEA)

The European Economic Area includes all the countries in the EU plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

For categories where the residence area is the EEA and Switzerland, the residence area is made up of all 30 countries in the EEA including the whole of the Island of Cyprus (that is, including northern Cyprus), and Switzerland.