Postgraduate Research College Studentships

Terms and Conditions 2018-19

(updated Oct 2018)

1. Scope

This document outlines the terms and conditions of Departmental and College studentships (i.e. studentships funded by Royal Holloway) for postgraduate research students which are referred to in this document as ‘studentships’. Note that students in receipt of externally-funded studentships (RCUK, charitable or commercial) or College studentships originating with gifts or endowments from individuals/trustees, are bound by the specific terms and conditions of those studentships (e.g. in relation to submission dates) in precedence to the general terms and conditions set out here. If a student receives part of their funding from an RCUK or other external source and part from the College, then the conditions of the external funder take precedence over those of the College.

2. Eligibility

A student in receipt of a studentship:

- Must be registered as Royal Holloway PGR student for the whole period in which they are in receipt of the studentship
- May be in receipt of another studentship; however a student with a College studentship should not be in receipt of combined studentship income in excess of the RCUK maintenance grant and the College fee. A College studentship may be used to make up the difference between another award(s) and the level of the RCUK maintenance grant and College fee.
- Must make satisfactory academic progress after the initial academic session, as agreed by the supervisory team at the annual review/upgrade.

Part-time Students

Part-time students are eligible for studentships under the same terms and conditions as full-time students. In most cases the value of the maintenance payment and fee-awards will be halved but paid over six years rather than three.

3. Payments

Maintenance payments are made directly into the student’s UK bank account on a quarterly basis in October, January, April and July as long as they have enrolled and provided UK bank details. The UK bank account must be held either solely or jointly in the name of the registered Royal Holloway student. Payments cannot be made into the account of another person.
It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they have enrolled at Royal Holloway for each academic year and provided UK bank details via Campus Connect in time for the payments to be made. Payments will not be made retrospectively more than 12 months after the payment was due.

The College reserves the right to reclaim any overpayments.

If a student is in debt to the College, the College reserves the right to offset studentship payments against the debt.

4. Tuition Fees

As part of their contract with the College, students are liable for their fees regardless of any studentship awarded.

If a student’s studentship includes an HEU or Overseas fee-award this covers the full cost of the fee. The value of the waiver will increase in line with any increase in the fee. If however a studentship includes only a contribution to the fee rather than a full fee-award, the student will need to fund the difference between fee-contribution and the fee in each year of the studentship.

If a student remains enrolled on the programme after the end of their studentship, they are liable for fees in full. This includes the writing up fee charged in the fourth year of a full-time PhD.

5. Changes in Circumstances

- Students should notify researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk and their Department if there are any changes in their circumstances, for example receipt of another award, change of mode (between part-time and full-time or vice versa), interruption or withdrawal from study. Studentship values may be adjusted in the light of any changes in circumstances. For example, if a student interrupts then payments are stopped.
- Students who withdraw from or interrupt their studies, or whose studies are terminated, will be required to return any outstanding maintenance paid in advance.
- Maintenance payments will cease once the doctoral thesis is submitted. If the student continues work related to their thesis beyond the submission date, it is possible for payments to continue to the end of the quarter in which the thesis is submitted.

Maternity Leave – the College’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Students and Supervisors 17/18 states in para.75:

“Where a student on a College studentship becomes pregnant with an expected date of childbirth that occurs during the period of their research degree, or adopts a child during that time, they are entitled to six months of maternity/adoption leave during which the College will continue to pay their maintenance grant and the studentship will be extended accordingly. Students may also request an interruption of the award for a further six months after this period, during which no maintenance grant or tuition fees are payable. The paid period of absence and the unpaid interruption should be taken consecutively. Students must follow the procedures for requesting an interruption, ensuring that they include a copy of the MATB1 certificate if they are pregnant or other relevant evidence from an adoption or other agency if they are adopting. There is no qualifying period for maternity, paternity or adoption leave. As such, students may take leave regardless of when they commenced their research degree provided they are still receiving a stipend.”
At the end of any period of maternity leave a student will be required to return to study for a period of three months in order to avoid the College re-claiming College maternity maintenance grant, except in exceptional circumstances. This does not affect the student’s entitlement to the element equivalent to Statutory Maternity Pay. The same policy regarding repayment of Maternity Leave will be applied to RCUK and externally funded students.

**Paternity Leave** – Partners are entitled to up to ten days paid Paternity leave on full stipend.

6. **Unpaid Academic Support associated with College Doctoral Studentships**

It is College policy that full-time students in receipt of College Doctoral Studentships (excluding those funded through research grant overheads) with maintenance of £10,000 p.a. or more may be expected to carry out unpaid academic support (as described below) for up to a maximum of six hours per week during term-time. This is specified in the offer letter sent to the student.

Wherever possible Departments are normally expected to offer opportunities for students to gain teaching and research experience through unpaid academic support, but it is not a student entitlement. Furthermore the intention is that such academic support undertaken by students should not replace work that would otherwise be paid for; if Departments prefer, they may of course pay students for their work even if they are in receipt of College stipends of £10k or above which are not specifically advertised as Graduate Teaching Assistantships.

If students in receipt of College studentships are employed by Departments, specifically as Graduate Teaching Assistants (in which case the studentship must be badged as this), then they can do teaching work which would normally paid for, though giving a series of lectures or doing any kind of postgraduate teaching are not allowed.

It should be noted that:

- Examples of unpaid academic support include, but are not restricted to: occasional undergraduate seminar teaching, advising on course materials, assisting students to understand feedback on assessed work or helping to develop a Moodle site
- Students should not: have sole responsibility for teaching a unit or significant elements of a unit; deliver lectures; do low-level clerical tasks such as photocopying; be involved in postgraduate teaching;
- In Year one if teaching support is being undertaken then the six hour per week limit will include INSTIL (INSTIL may be regarded as 7 days’ worth of training or 40 hours);
- All Departments must offer training and support appropriate to the nature and level of work undertaken;
- If a student proves unable to do what is offered, or the Department is unable to provide suitable work, their studentship will still continue subject to satisfactory academic progress;
- Part-time students are not expected to undertake unpaid academic support because of the practical difficulties in finding time in which to do this, though of course they may do so where the student and Department agree.

The following applies to non-EU students. Please consult HR for further information.
• Non-EU students undertaking any work including paid, **unpaid** or voluntary must be made aware that unpaid academic support will count towards the 20 hours per week that they can work under visa regulations. All hours of work must be agreed before they are offered and worked by the nominated Departmental contact (the Accountable Officer) checking on the central spreadsheet that the hours proposed are available. The student can be told that they can undertake the duties only after the hours have been identified as available and added to the spreadsheet. If the student fails to notify their Departmental contact (Accountable Officer) of the proposed hours or the department does not carry out the necessary checks this may result in disciplinary action.

7. **Other**

Students who withdraw from Royal Holloway and complete their doctorates at another institution should acknowledge Royal Holloway’s support in future outputs from their doctoral studies.

*Jane Gawthrope, Doctoral Training Partnerships and Studentships Manager, May 21st 2018*