

EPSRC

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**Engineering and Physical Sciences
Research Council**

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Dear Colleague

Improvements to the EPSRC Doctoral Training Partnership process

We wrote to you in November 2014 to outline planned improvements to the Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) process and we are now in a position to update you on the key changes.

DTPs are an important and significant part of EPSRC's total investment in postgraduate training. We invest approximately £83M a year in DTPs and the scheme remains our single largest investment in doctoral training. The mechanism offers institutions flexible support for students and complements EPSRC's additional training support routes (Centres for Doctoral Training and Industrial CASE awards).

We are making improvements to the DTP process to give institutions greater certainty and increased time with which to plan their DTP allocation. The changes will also help EPSRC increase visibility of the DTP and promote the importance of this vital investment in UK skills. An overview of the DTP changes is set out below.

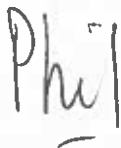
The changes do not affect the one-year 2015 allocations for students starting in October 2015. Information regarding these allocations has been provided in a separate letter.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the DTP process please contact Kate Reading, kate.reading@epsrc.ac.uk



EPSRC's updated Strategic Plan sets out our commitment to building leadership and to supporting the highly talented postgraduate students vital to national success. Our commitment to skills is fundamental to our vision for the UK to be the best place in the world to research, discover and innovate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Philip Nelson



Improvements to EPSRC Doctoral Training Partnerships

Following a review of the DTP process, EPSRC has made changes to the timetable for DTP allocation, the way the DTP is calculated, and to the supporting documentation required by EPSRC. The review of the DTP process was, in part, a response to feedback from the community and a desire for the allocation announcement to be made earlier in the academic year.

Two year DTP allocation and early notification

To give institutions greater certainty and increased time with which to plan the use of DTP funding, DTP allocations will be made for two years. An institution will also receive information on its DTP allocation more than 12 months before the first student is due to start.

For example, the process for the 2016 Doctoral Training Partnerships began with a data snapshot on the 1st April 2015. Indicative DTP values will be issued to institutions in June 2015 for students starting in both 2016 and 2017.

We hope the two-year allocation will also reduce the administrative burden on both the institution and EPSRC.

Streamlined calculation

The DTP algorithm will be based on a comprehensive research grant and fellowship funding profile. All EPSRC research grant and fellowship investment, from challenge as well as capability themes, will be included in the algorithm. This calculation and allocation will include Mathematical Sciences.

The algorithm will be based on the balance of the grant, at the date the snapshot data is captured. For example, a £5M investment that is half way through at the snapshot point will count as £2.5M in the DTP calculation.

As previously, other training grants (CDTs, DTPs and Industrial CASE) remain outside the calculation. Large capital and institutional awards (e.g. Impact Acceleration Accounts) are also excluded from the calculation.

The DTP continues to be flexible and universities are not expected to replicate the pattern of grant funding in their studentship allocations (also see the plans for the statement of intent below).

Statement of Intent

A Statement of Intent will be requested from all institutions in receipt of a DTP from 2016. Further details and the September submission deadline will be detailed in the June 2015 letters outlining each institution's DTP allocation for 2016 and 2017.

DTPs provide flexible funding to universities so that they can:

- Respond to the needs of individual students;
- React quickly to the evolving research landscape;
- Take advantage of opportunities to leverage funding, whether from EPSRC funding (non-training), other funders, industry or other bodies;
- Support the career development of academic staff, for example new appointments or early career researchers;
- Use the DTP to meet their own strategy where this contributes to meeting needs at the national level.

We expect the DTP Statement of Intent to outline an institution's planned use of the DTP, particularly its strategy for distribution, and to give an indication of the levels of doctoral students across all engineering and physical sciences subjects. Given the changes to the process and recognising the importance of the DTP for Mathematical Sciences, we will ask institutions to make particular reference to this subject in the Statement of Intent.

At approximately £83M a year, the DTPs represent significant investments in doctoral training. The Statements of Intent will provide EPSRC with a national overview of how DTPs are being used and help us ensure we are effectively supporting postdoctoral training across our entire skills portfolio (DTPs, CDTs and Industrial CASE).

The statements will also help EPSRC increase visibility of DTP and promote the importance of this vital investment in UK skills.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the DTP process please contact Kate Reading, kate.reading@epsrc.ac.uk