

General co-funded competition queries

How does the co-funded and collaborative scheme work?

The UCL, Bloomsbury and East London DTP Co-funded and Collaborative Studentship Competition is a two stage process.

At the **first stage**, one or more academics working in the area of an identified DTP Pathway co-operate with a non-academic partner to put together a proposal for a co-funded or collaborative studentship project. This project should address a research topic which is of both theoretical and practical significance, and provide opportunities for a funded PhD student to gain first-hand experience of work outside an academic environment. Successful projects are selected and advertised on the UBEL website.

At the **second stage**, prospective students apply to the project they are interested in, via the DTP.

How much funding is the co-funder expected to provide?

UBEL requires match funding for the co-funded and collaborative scheme, calculated as 50% of the total fees and subsistence (before any 'AQM' supplement – see below), calculated using the most recent rates publicized on the UBEL website.

Does UBEL accept in-kind contributions?

All co-funding must have a direct cash value. Contributions other than to fees and maintenance might include UK or international travel and subsistence. In such instances the target 50% co-funding will be calculated as half of home fees and subsistence (before AQM supplement – see below). Office space or consultancy services (including supervision costs) will not be accepted as a form of in-kind contribution.

What is the total cost of an UBEL studentship?

The total cost of 3-year studentship = £83,858; total cost of 4-year studentship = £113,299. These figures are based at the 2023/24 URKI rates with inflation (the rates usually increase annually) and include the notional amount for fieldwork and research training support costs.

Does a studentship involve fieldwork costs?

UBEL students have access to apply for funding stream designed for [overseas fieldwork costs](#). External organisations can also contribute a designated amount for fieldwork, if desired.

Would UBEL accept a contribution to funding from an international organisation?

UBEL will consider a non-UK based partner but would expect the application to be very explicit about the support the organisation would be able to offer the student from a distance.

Is a letter of support required from the co-funder?

It is essential that a letter of support from the co-funding organisation is submitted as part of the application. The letter must be on headed paper and explicitly confirm the organisation's financial commitment.

When does the co-funder need to pay their contribution?

There is no prescriptive timeline however, it can be helpful to split the payments across the duration of the length of the studentship (i.e. equal payments across 3 years).

Can the contribution from the co-funder be used to solely pay for tuition fees?

Yes – if the co-funder prefers. The application must outline in the initial contract form where the co-funding will be allocated; whether this is solely against tuition fees or split between stipend and fee costs.

Does a co-funder need to be based in a particular sector?

No – a co-funder or collaborative partner can be from a private sector company, public sector bodies or voluntary/ third sector organisations.

Is a collaborative contract required?

Yes, a collaborative contract will need to be put in place if the application is successful. At application stage, there will be an "initial contract form" that needs to be completed. If successful, institutional research operations teams will need to organise for a contract between the institution/department and the external co-funder to set up a contract and organise for payments. UBEL will help facilitate this but the contracts will need to be set up departmentally.

Can applications to the co-funded and collaborative studentship be led by a student proposal?

No – all applications at the initial stage must be supervisor-led. Students will apply for funding for the proposal they are interested in, at the second stage of the competition. Recruitment for the co-funded and collaborative scheme must be strictly in open competition and projects cannot be designed with a particular student in mind.

Are there quotas for certain disciplines?

There are no quotas at the UBEL DTP for applications to any route or pathway.

General UBEL studentship queries

What is on offer?

UBEL DTP studentships cover tuition fees at the **UKRI rate** and an annual maintenance stipend. For 2023/24 an UBEL studentship will cover tuition fees of £4,712 and a stipend of £20,622. Please note this figure is likely to increase annually. The stipend figure includes the London Weighting Allowance.

What else does an UBEL award cover?

Students in receipt of ESRC funding can apply for other funding streams such as the **Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)** and if relevant, contributions towards fieldwork funding, difficult language training and international institutional visits.

UBEL also supports placements or internships.

What structure of the studentships are available?

ESRC studentships at the UBEL DTP are structured around the following routes: 1+3, +3, 2+3 and +4 funding. Please note that not all routes are available in all institutions or pathways; this information will be made available on dedicated pathway pages (when available). For more information on the route structure, see webpage: <https://ubel-dtp.ac.uk/awardstructure/>

The ESRC is introducing a new PhD model from 2024/25. Instead of the traditional three years of funding for a full-time PhD they are adding an extra three months of time (and stipend) to allow extra time for training throughout the PhD. In addition, they will be introducing a placement scheme where students who participate in a placement will receive an extra three months of time (and stipend). This extra funded time would be **in addition** to the time periods indicated below and apply to all routes (i.e. 1+3, +3, 2+3 and +4, 3.5 and 3.25).

These changes are subject to confirmation of ESRC funding for the UBEL ESRC DTP.

Can a student study part time?

Yes, UBEL welcome's part time studentships. Part-time ESRC students undertake their studentships at 50% of the full-time rate (although PT students in some faculties may study at a 60% rate). Therefore a +3 routes at a 50% rate would be six years long for part-time students. The stipend and tuition fee rate would also be at 50%.

Are remote studentships available?

UBEL cannot support distance learning and remote studentships are not available. If successful, students must live in the UK and be based within easy travelling distance of their university.

Does my research need to be based in the UK?

No – UBEL welcomes global research.

When will the studentship start?

Studentships start on 1st October. UBEL cannot guarantee that a deferred start date will be possible, and any deferrals will need to be considered by colleagues at ESRC, after an award is made.

Does the proposal need to fit within the UBEL DTP pathway structure?

Yes – UBEL can only accept proposals that fit within the DTP remit and any students recruited must belong to an UBEL pathway.

What is AQM?

AQM = Advanced Quantitative Methods. The AQM enhancement is an additional stipend of £2,000 (per annum) intended to encourage students to undertake training in advanced quantitative methods

and to apply this in their PhD research and beyond. This is expected to be at a level over and above the basic generic and subject-specific methods requirements and does not **include qualitative methods**. The enhanced AQM stipend is only available during the doctoral (+3) programme.

Contents of the application

What is required for the staff application?

At the first stage of the competition, academic teams are due to submit:

- a project proposal
- letter of support from the external collaborator
- an initial contract form (available on the UBEL website)
- a draft of the studentship advertisement (a template available on the UBEL website).

What should be included in a Project Proposal?

- The rationale for the project and the research questions being asked
- An account of the methodologies and techniques that might be employed
- The timetable for conducting the research
- The anticipated outcomes from the project, in terms of its contribution to knowledge and understanding, new methodologies and techniques, data etc
- Plans for the dissemination of outcomes and, where relevant, achieving non-academic impact

Does the proposed supervisor need extensive doctoral supervision experience?

It is important that the supervisory team is the right fit for the project. UBEL will accept less experienced supervisors or Early Career researchers to be part of a supervisory team, however the supervisory team should also include a supervisor that also has substantial doctoral supervision experience too.

Supervisors must also meet institutional supervisory conditions.

Why is a draft advert required?

There is a quick administrative turn around between the assessment of staff applications and when the opening date for student applications. It is therefore important that UBEL has access to advertisements so that they can be made available on the website in a timely manner.

What should the advertisement include?

- The nature of the research project, why a collaborative studentship is appropriate, and what structure the studentship should take (e.g. +3, 1+3)
- How the work is to be conducted, how the academic and non-academic elements relate to each other, and how the academic standards of the work will be ensured
- The arrangements for joint supervision with the partner, and, where appropriate, between academic supervisors
- The arrangements for seeking ethical approval, for agreeing on intellectual property arising from the research, and recognising the student's contribution to this.

What is the schedule for submission?

Timelines will be published on the website in due course.

Assessment

How are the staff applications assessed?

Applications are assessed on the strength of the project, the supervisory team, partner arrangements and on the level of co-funding/collaborative support proposed.

Who will assess the application?

The applications are assessed by a sub-panel of DTP Board members, led by Prof. Paul Longley. Please assume the panel will not be discipline specific.

How many studentship awards are available?

The number of awards is yet to be determined.

Advertising and Recruitment

If the application is successful, when can I advertise the proposal?

UBEL will advertise the studentships as soon as possible, once successful academic/co-funding teams have been informed of the outcome of the panel. The advertisements will be added to the UBEL website and students will be expected to apply via the Survey Monkey Apply portal.

Supervisory teams can also apply through their own channels once they have been informed of a successful outcome.

Can I advertise on Find a PhD?

Yes – supervisory teams can publish their adverts on Find a PhD. However, UBEL does not have the funds to pay for an advert.

Where and when can students apply?

The student application will open in the Survey Monkey Apply portal in the spring term. Prospective students need to apply via the DTP for funding. Timelines will be published on the website in due course.

Why do prospective students need to apply via the DTP?

It is important that prospective students apply via the DTP for several reasons:

- The DTP can apply its widening participation strategy to co-funded and collaborative applicants, as well as collecting accurate Equal Opportunities data.
- Allows DTP to ensure candidate they meet ESRC training requirements
- The DTP can have accurate figures on the number of applications received for ESRC reporting purposes.
- Transparency and equity in the recruitment process.

How will the supervisory team access the applications?

When an application is made, supervisory teams (as well as external collaborators if required) will have access to applications in the Survey Monkey Apply portal. UBEL will provide regular updates on the number of applications in progress and the number submitted. In the portal, submissions can be viewed or downloaded.

Can I select a student that is employed by the co-funder?

While a candidate may work for the co-funding/partnered organisation at the time of application, a student in receipt of an UBEL studentship cannot be in receipt of alternative funding or hold any additional employment outside of the studentship award. It is an ESRC regulation that students should not be overcommitted during the period of their award.

Furthermore, it is essential that recruitment should be open and projects should not be written with a candidate in mind. Award offers may be rescinded if this condition is not adhered to.

International Students

Are UBEL studentships open to international students?

All UKRI studentships are open to both home and international students.

To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have settled status, or
- Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have indefinite leave to remain or enter

If a candidate does not meet the criteria above, they would be classified as an International student.

What are the eligibility requirements for international students?

Students classified as international students are eligible to apply for a full award - both the stipend to support living costs, and tuition fees at the UKRI rate. The studentships are open to international students in all disciplines.

The DTP is allowed to make no more than 30% of the total number of studentships (across competitions) to international students – this is an ESRC condition and cannot be waived.

Will the studentship cover the full tuition fee for international students?

For international fee-paying candidates, please note that the ESRC studentship only covers home fees at the UKRI rate and not the full international tuition fee set by universities.

The fee difference will be covered either by the department/university or an alternative source, (e.g. an overseas scholarship, overseas government funding or supervisor's project grant which must be stated.) and cannot be funded from the stipend or family/personal funds. UKRI guidance specifies that UKRI funding cannot be used to cover the fees difference.

UCL will offer an “International Scholars Award for Doctoral Training” (ISAD) to cover the fee difference for successful overseas candidates for 2024 entry.

Birkbeck, University of East London and University of Greenwich will offer fee waivers for successful overseas candidates for 2024 entry.

LSHTM candidates may be eligible for a fee bursaries to UBEL awardees who are nationals of low income and lower middle income countries (LLMICs), as set out by the World Bank [here](#). Please email the scholarships team at LSHTM to confirm your eligibility.

Does UBEL cover visa costs for international applicants?

UBEL cannot cover visa costs for international students.