

UBEL DTP – Applicant Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Eligibility

Who can apply?

You can apply if you will have completed no more than one year full-time or two years part-time of doctoral study by 1 October 2026.

Are EdD students eligible?

No. The EdD (Doctor of Education) is not eligible for UBEL DTP funding.

Can I study part-time?

Yes. Both part-time and full-time study options are accepted and equally competitive. You may switch mode later if required.

Can international students apply?

Yes. UBEL DTP studentships are open to applicants of all nationalities. However, the difference between the UKRI “home” fee and the international fee must be covered by the host institution and the number of international studentships is capped by the ESRC.

Do I need to live in the UK?

All activity undertaken as part of an ESRC award must be carried out within the UK, except as part of overseas fieldwork. For further guidance, please refer to the [ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide](#).

Can I study online?

No it is not possible to complete the doctorate online.

2. Supervision

Do I need a supervisor before applying?

Yes. You must name at least one potential supervisor in your preliminary application. You will need to have discussed your proposal with them and gained approval from them to submit.

Can I have more than one supervisor?

Yes. Two supervisors are required at the full application stage. Only one is needed at the preliminary stage.

Can my supervisor be one of my referees?

Yes. Supervisors can act as referees.

Can I have a supervisor from outside the UBEL DTP partner universities?

Your *main* supervisor must be from a UBEL DTP partner institution. A co-supervisor from another university or organisation can be included if appropriate.

Can an emeritus or honorary staff member supervise me?

Yes, if your department confirms that they are permitted to supervise doctoral students.

3. Placements

Do I need to have a placement arranged before applying?

No. You do not need to have a placement in place at the preliminary or full stage.

Should I mention possible placements in my application?

You may briefly outline ideas for a potential placement if relevant, but this is optional.

Can placements take place overseas or at my current workplace?

Yes. Both options can be considered.

Are placements paid?

They can be, depending on the arrangement with the host organisation.

Will placements be accessible?

Yes. Accessibility requirements will be supported by the DTP and the host institution.

4. Application Process

What are the application stages?

1. **Preliminary Application** – a short form reviewed by pathway panels.
2. **Full Application** – invited applicants submit detailed proposals and references.

What should I include in the preliminary application?

A 300-word summary of your proposed research, your chosen pathway, and your potential supervisor(s). Please review the Preliminary Guidance on the UBEL Webpages.

Are references needed at the preliminary stage?

No. References are only required at the full application stage.

What does the “motivation” question refer to?

It refers to your motivation for pursuing a PhD, not specifically for applying to UBEL DTP.

How do I choose a pathway?

Select the one that best fits your research topic thematically, not by institution.

Do I also need to apply separately to my university's PhD programme?

Yes. You **must** apply for admission to the university where you plan to study, in addition to the UBEL DTP process.

5. Funding and Fees

What does the UBEL DTP studentship cover?

- Full UKRI-rate tuition fees (Home fee level)
- Annual stipend (living allowance)
- Research training support funds

How is the international fee difference handled?

The host institution must cover the difference between the Home and International fee. Check with your prospective university and supervisor.

When does the funding start?

All UBEL DTP studentships begin on **1 October 2026**. Earlier start dates are not possible.

6. Research Proposal

How long should the preliminary proposal be?

300 words.

What level of detail is expected?

Keep it concise and high-level. Focus on your main research question, rationale, and relevance. Detailed methodology and timelines are not needed at this stage.

Where can I find templates or guidance?

Proposal guidance is available on the UBEL DTP website.

7. Methodology

Do I need to use quantitative methods?

No. Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods are all acceptable. Quantitative methods are required only when applying for **Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM)**.

8. International Applicants

Are international students eligible?

Yes. All nationalities can apply.

Do I need an English-language qualification (e.g. IELTS)?

Each university sets its own language requirements during the PhD admission process, not through the UBEL DTP. Please consult local regulations before putting in an application.

How can I confirm if the fee difference is covered?

Check directly with your chosen UBEL partner institution.

9. Training and Development**What do “prior” and “future” training sections refer to?**

These are included only in the full application. You can list training from your undergraduate, master’s, or professional experience.

10. Programme Routes and Timing**What are the study routes?**

- **1+3.5 years** – one-year Master’s plus 3.5-year PhD
- **+3.5 or +4.5 years** – PhD only, depending on prior training

Can I apply if I already hold a PhD offer or a deferred place?

Yes. Deferred offers are eligible for UBEL funding consideration.

11. Other Common Questions**How competitive is the scheme?**

Typically around 600 applications are received, with approximately 37 awards made each year.

Where can I find the “Is a PhD right for me?” course?

Available via **FutureLearn** (link on the UBEL website).