



Placement Scheme Guidelines

Policy

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

1. NINE DTP is committed to providing our award-holders with the widest range of opportunities to:
 - a) Apply their knowledge, skills and research in non-academic, real-world environments;
 - b) Gain new skills and competencies that complement their postgraduate research and training; &
 - c) Generate societal and economic impact from their research and share the knowledge they have developed with non-academic actors and audiences.
2. To help achieve these objectives, NINE DTP runs a Research in Practice (RiP) placement scheme. In addition to facilitating and matching students with established placement and internship opportunities (e.g. [UKRI Policy Internships](#)). The scheme is responsive and supports our award-holders and their supervisors to design their own placements, tailored to specific research, training and career development needs. The Research in Practice lead will support this and will help develop students' transferrable skills and provide practical opportunities in the form of placements.

UKRI AND EXTERNAL INTERNSHIPS SCHEMES

NINE DTP will continue to support external Internship schemes, including the UKRI scheme which coordinates placements at UK Government agencies, on a responsive basis wherever those schemes have specific deadlines.

Award-holders seeking to apply to such a scheme should notify the DTP Manager & Research in Practice Officer as soon as possible. Award-holders are also required to complete the NINE DTP placement application if undertaking a UKRI Internship.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

1a. All students receive up to 3 months funding whilst out on placement, paid at the standard studentship rate, as a supplement to their standard award. Students who are part time are eligible to receive up to 6 months funding whilst out on placement, but please note total funding amount will remain the same in this scenario. Additionally: Awardees who began NINE DTP funding prior to Autumn 2024 receive an additional funding of up to £800 per month to meet the costs of specific expenses arising from placements, including additional travel and accommodation costs, following the guidelines detailed in Annex 1.

b. Awardees who began NINE DTP funding from Autumn 2024 onward receive additional funding of up to £500 per month to meet the costs of specific expenses arising from placements, including travel and accommodation costs, following the guidelines detailed in Annex 1.

2. Please note, that if a placement is not completed before the beginning of the last three months of the studentship, funding will not be extended by three months, e.g. if your funding was to end on 30th of June 2028 you must have completed your full 3-month placement before 31st of March 2028 to qualify for a full 3-month extension. Part time students must complete the placement before the beginning of the last *six months* of the studentship for funding to be extended by *six months*.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. Whilst award-holders are on placements they will remain registered at their host institution and continue to interact and engage with their supervisory team.
2. Award-holders will not be employed or have any form of contract of employment with their host organisation.
3. Award-holders may be required to sign a non-disclosure and/or confidentiality agreement to comply with their host organisation's data protection requirements.
4. A placement agreement between the award-holder's host institution and their host organisation will be entered into for all approved placements. All award holders should note that the preparation of this placement agreement can prove a lengthy process, with support and input necessary from University legal teams. Applicants to the scheme should ensure that they provide *at least* one month to create and sign-off any legal agreement, although we would recommend providing a **3 month** lead-in time to allow for work-load limitations.

ELIGIBILITY

5. To be eligible to apply for a NINE DTP placement award-holders must:
 - a. Be fully registered on their programme of doctoral study (i.e. if one's award from NINE DTP includes study for a research master's degree one cannot undertake a placement until one's master's study has been completed);
 - b. Have completed successfully their year one (1) progression review with their supervisors;
 - c. Schedule their placement so that it concludes at least three months before the end date of the award (as calculated prior to any extension provided by the placement); &
 - d. Be assessed by their Department/School to be on time to submit their thesis.
6. Award-holders on continuation or who have suspended their studies are not eligible to be considered for funding via the placement scheme.
7. Award-holders who hold collaborative studentships, which already involve collaboration with a non-academic organisation(s), remain eligible to apply for funding via this scheme. Collaborating partners can be considered for a placement, however it must be demonstrated how the award holder's research skills are used in different research contexts, with an emphasis on transferable skills.
8. Award holders funded under DTP1 (i.e. those who entered prior to Autumn 2024) must complete their 3-month placement in one block with a single organisation, however those in the DTP2 cohort (i.e. those who commenced in Autumn 2024 or later) can complete multiple placements within a single 3-month period (assuming assessment criteria has been met for each placement – section 11). For part time students this can be across a 6-month period.
9. Award-holders funded under DTP1 (i.e. those who entered prior to Autumn 2024) may not undertake both a placement and an overseas institutional visit (OIV). Those funded under DTP2 (i.e. award-holders who entered in Autumn 2024 or later) may complete both a placement and OIV, potentially in separate 3-month periods. Depending on the purpose and duration of the visit, an OIV may also be considered part of a placement.
10. Any non-academic organisation in the UK or beyond, in either the public, private or third sectors, can host a placement. For all funded award-holders, universities and other organisations designated as a Higher Education Institution are eligible to act as a host organization. Additionally, placements can be with academic organisations/research centres and/or within an institution's

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

11. Applications will be reviewed jointly by NINE DTP Directors, who may seek advice and feedback on an application from other academic or administrative members of staff at our partner universities. The reviewers will decide whether the application should be supported, assessing applications against the following criteria:
 - a. **Contribution towards the award-holder's research and/or training** – How closely does the proposed placement support and complement the award-holder's doctoral research and/or training needs? This should also be aligned and tailored with the students DNA according to their previous experience, goals and development needs.
 - b. **Support and facilities provided by the host organisation** – What support, facilities and resources will the award-holders benefit from whilst on placement, including matched-funding from the host-organisation?
 - c. **Impact and knowledge exchange to be realised** – What impact is the placement anticipated to generate for the host organisation and/or more widely, and how will the award-holder support and effect exchange of knowledge between themselves and the host organization?
 - d. **Ethical and practical considerations** – Are there are any ethical or practical issues affecting the proposed placement?

RESOURCING

12. Host organisations are strongly encouraged to provide matched funding to support proposed placements, for example meeting half of the total cost of the placement or providing funding to meet the costs of additional expenses, such as accommodation. By securing matching fund, the resources available to support this scheme will be used more effectively and allow more award-holders to benefit. This is not an essential part of the placement, and if the only match funding available is time given by the placement host this will not prejudice award of the placement.

Process

DEVELOPING PLACEMENT PROPOSALS

1. Award-holders and their supervisory teams are encouraged to actively explore possible placements with potential host organisations. During these initial discussions NINE DTP can provide award-holders and their supervisory teams with advice where appropriate. In addition, the NINE DTP Research in Practice lead will support sourcing organisations to put forward placements proposals, which, if approved, will be subsequently advertised to our award-holders.

APPLYING FOR FUNDING

Applications from eligible award-holders are allowed via email at any time during the year.

Candidates should allow up to three months between filing their application and the intended start of their placement. Applications should be submitted using the NINE DTP Placement Application form (available via the NINE DTP website) in advance of the deadline.

For those who have secured a UKRI Internship, you must still complete the NINE DTP Placement Application well in advance of your start date.

2. Once a placement proposal has become more developed and there is initial agreement between the award-holder, their supervisory team and the host organisation, the award-holder needs to complete and submit a NINE DTP Placement Scheme Application Form, within which the details and expected

outcomes of their proposed placement will be described. Letters of support for the placement from the host organisation and the award-holder's principal supervisor need to accompany and be attached to all applications. Additionally, relevant risk assessment and health declaration forms will be required for submission to the award-holder's academic department or university.

3. Applications should be submitted to the DTP. NINE DTP will check and confirm the award-holder's eligibility to be considered for a placement and then consider the application against the scheme's key criteria, as outlined in Paragraph 11. The reviewing process will take *at least* three weeks but may take longer.

ESTABLISHING APPROVED PLACEMENTS

1. The NINE DTP Research in Practice lead will notify the award-holder of the reviewers' decision. This notification will detail the terms of the support and funding that has been agreed. This correspondence will be copied to the postgraduate administrator of the award-holder's host department/school and the relevant student finance office to manage the payments of the award holder's monies.
2. Following notification of a successful application, the host University will follow set procedures to gain Health & Safety authorisation, and to extend the period of supervised study for the period approved by NINE DTP to conduct the placement. The request to extend the period of supervised study must be copied to NINE DTP, accompanied by the Health & Safety authorisation documentation. Should Health & Safety authorisation not be granted, the placement application will be cancelled.
3.
 - a. On the raising of award-holder's concession to extend their period of supervised study, NINE DTP and the relevant internal department with responsibility for the payment of maintenance grants and tuition fees will arrange and confirm the disbursement of any additional expenses approved and for any further necessary changes to the award-holder's studentship. Supplementary expenses will usually only be reimbursed following submission of receipts, leases, tenancy agreements or invoices from the award-holder, unless agreed otherwise.
 - b. Award-holders should provide as much detail as possible when filing receipts and ensure that all documentation includes the award-holder's name. If a full summary of expenses is included in a cover note, this will enable NINE DTP to relate receipts to spends approved much more efficiently.
 - c. Please note Student Finance are unable to process multiple expense claims for events unless there are extenuating circumstances. If there are any large purchases that require procurement, or which can be paid in advance by university credit card, please contact the Research in Practice lead.
4. A Placement Agreement between the award-holder's host institution and host organisation will be prepared and entered into prior to the commencement of an approved placement and following Health & Safety authorisation. This legal agreement will detail the roles and responsibilities of each party to the placement, confirm any match-funding and how this will be accounted for and disbursed, and cover issues such as intellectual property, as well as insurance coverage whilst the student is at the host organisation.

MONITORING & REPORTING

4. The award-holder will be required to write a brief (maximum two sides of A4) report on their activities and the learning outcomes of their visit within one month of the end of the placement. The content should be suitable for presentation on the NINE DTP website, including appropriate images or visual media.

If an award-holder does not wish their report to be made public, they may choose to provide a written report for the attention of the DTP Directors only. Failure to report on the outcomes of a placement in either of the above formats will result in the withholding of reimbursement unless

suitable justification is provided.

PLACEMENT TERMINATIONS

21. Should an award-holder be required to terminate their placement earlier than planned for any reason then they must notify the NINE DTP Administrator of their host institution, as well as the NINE DTP Research in Practice lead, immediately, detailing the reason for the termination. Following notification of termination NINE DTP will liaise with the award-holder to complete the termination and ensure successful resumption of their doctoral studies. In these circumstances the DTP will seek to return any unused funds that may have been disbursed to the award-holder.

Version Control

Date:	24/05/2024
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Authorised by:	NINE DTP Director – Philip Steinberg

Further Information

Contact	NINE DTP Team
Email	contact.nine@durham.ac.uk

Annex 1: ESRC FAQs

For any further queries, please contact your local administrative contact in the first instance.

Do I have to be within a certain distance of my placement to be able to secure a tenancy and claim relocation rental expenses?

Yes, you should be within 50 miles of your placement host organisation in order to claim for accommodation. In order to claim for relocation accommodation expenses you would be expected to be more than 50 miles from your university (home) accommodation.

What is the maximum amount I can claim for relocation accommodation costs?

When undertaking a placement, a student who began studies prior to Autumn 2024 can claim up to a maximum of £2,400 based on a three month internship award to cover **reasonable** travel and accommodation for the period of their internship. Students are expected to use the **most economical method** of travel and ensure that **rental amounts are not excessive** for one person. For students entering in Autumn 2024 or later, the maximum for a three-month internship is £1,500.

In addition, the size of accommodation rented should be reasonable for one person. Ideally, students should be looking to rent one room in a shared house, a studio or a one bedroom flat.

Can I claim for relocation accommodation if the tenancy starts before my placement?

You can claim for up to one week before the start of your placement, to allow for moving in.

Will you reimburse the deposit or admin fee charged by my landlord?

The DTP will reimburse administration fees, as long as they are detailed on the tenancy agreement, and as long as the total for the administration fees and rent does not exceed the allowance provided for the internship awarded.

The DTP will **not** reimburse your deposit. The responsibility for the deposit lies with the student.

Can I claim relocation rental expenses for living with relatives whilst at my placement?

No, you cannot claim rental expenses for living with relatives.

Can I claim relocation rental expenses if I am subletting and I do not have a tenancy agreement?

You can claim rental expenses if you are subletting. However, the DTP does discourage this, and advises you to seek a commercial rental agreement wherever possible. If you have to sublet, you will still need to provide signed confirmation (by you and the person you are subletting from) of the cost of the rent and the length of the sublet.

If you sublet, you will need to include the cost of utilities bills (gas, water, electric) in the sublet agreement if you wish them to be covered by the DTP. The DTP will only pay utilities bills (gas, water, electric) if they are in the name of the student holding the internship. The total cost of the sublet (including bills) must not exceed the allowance provided for the internship awarded.

How do you establish whether relocation rental amounts are not reasonable?

Rental amounts for the 3 month placement should not exceed the funding that has been allocated detailed in section 3b

Will you reimburse my utilities bills if they are included in my rent?

Yes, the DTP will reimburse utilities bills where included in your rent, and we recommend that where possible you do get a tenancy agreement which includes bills.

Will you reimburse my utilities bills if they are not included in my rent?

We will reimburse utilities bills for gas, electricity and water only, again, as long as your accommodation costs do not exceed the allowance provided for the internship awarded.

The DTP will only pay utilities bills (gas, water, electric) if they are in the name of the student holding the internship.

The DTP will not reimburse you for phone, internet or TV license if these are separate from your rental agreement.

Can I claim for furniture hire if my accommodation is unfurnished?

No, the DTP advises students to get furnished accommodation, and will not pay for furniture hire.

Can I claim for local travel (e.g. underground travel) as well as accommodation expenses?

Reasonable travel to and from work and accommodation for the period of their placement can be included in the expenses for which one seeks reimbursement.

Students are expected to use the **most economical method** of travel and ensure that **rental amounts are not excessive** for one person.

Can I claim for travel home during the placement period?

You can claim for one journey to the placement region prior to the placement commencing, and one journey back to your home at the end of the placement. This must fall within the total allowance provided by the placement awarded.

Can I claim for car parking expenses?

No, you cannot claim for car parking expenses.

Can I claim for meal expenses?

No, you cannot claim for meal expenses. Your standard stipend will continue during your placement and it is assumed that you will be staying in accommodation with kitchen facilities and will be able to provide for subsistence with your standard stipend funds.

Will you reimburse me for budget air fares?

The DTP will only reimburse airfare where it takes place as part of either the initial move to the region of the internship, or the move home from the internship. This will only be covered if you can provide evidence that the airfare (including all taxes and additional costs) will be the least expensive means of travel (e.g. less expensive than an off-peak, standard train ticket if that would be an option)

Will you reimburse my postage costs?

No, we will not reimburse postage costs.

What is the benefit of doing a placement?

The aim of the placement is to help develop students' transferrable skills and provide practical opportunities to apply your theoretical knowledge and methodological skills. We want to ensure students are prepared to engage in collaborative and challenge led research across sectoral and disciplinary boundaries, both within and beyond the social sciences, and that they have the wider core skills which are essential for academic and non-academic careers alike. It will also help develop your awareness of the breadth of careers open to you as social science graduates.

If I undertake a placement, can I also apply and be awarded a UKRI internship?

Generally, no. If you are successful in securing a UKRI internship we would class this as a placement under the Research in Practice element of your studentship. From Autumn 2024 onward award-holders are permitted to undertake multiple placements in a single 3-month period, so if the UKRI internship is for fewer than 3 months you could potentially undertake a second placement to cover the remainder of the 3-month period. However, in most cases, a UKRI internship will be for a full 3 months and will therefore count as your only placement. It also a requirement for all students to notify the DTP manager they are looking to apply for the UKRI Internship scheme and if successful must complete the NINE DTP Placement Application Form to claim for placement funding.

None of the placement projects advertised are connected to my academic research, should I apply?

We strongly encourage students to choose opportunities to work outside the area of their PhD topic in order to gain wider experience. Placements are meant to *complement* your thesis research, not to *contribute* to it. In fact, it is important to note that PhD placements cannot contribute directly to your PhD study – the intellectual property from a placement will belong to your host organisation, and no data or resources that are developed through the placement can be utilised for your PhD. In any case, students are encouraged to carefully consider the information requested in the application form and pay particular attention to setting out their expertise in particular research methods to address the desired skills listed. Applicants are usually not required to have academic experience in the policy area of the placement unless specified in the project description.

What happens if I am unwell during the placement?

If you are unwell during the placement and are not able to work, you need to inform the host organisation and NINE DTP before the start of work that day. You will then need to inform the host organisation and NINE DTP when you are able to start working again. You can contact NINE DTP by emailing: contact.nine@durham.ac.uk.

I have personal circumstances that make me unsure if a placement is possible, is there someone I can speak to?

Yes, please contact the NINE DTP team at contact.nine@durham.ac.uk if you would like to discuss a specific circumstance that may be making you feel unsure whether an placement is possible. This may include (but is not limited to) caring responsibilities, disability and/or need for flexible/remote working patterns. Many of our partners can offer flexibility, and we encourage you to reach out to us to discuss this further prior to making an application.