Doctoral Training Partnerships: Background and evaluation

Katie Tearall
Head of Research Careers

DTP2 – Town Hall Meeting
30 January 2018
NERC’s training portfolio

Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs)
‘Responsive’ (i.e. discovery science)
240 new studentships per year

Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs)
‘Directed’ (i.e. strategic)
24 new studentships per year

Advanced Training
Short Courses, Policy Internships, Research Experience Placements (REPs)

Other
Strategic investments to address emerging skills needs
What is a DTP?

“DTPs provide excellent postgraduate research opportunities across the NERC science remit, as well as varied professional and technical skills and personal development training.”

Key aspects of DTP training

• Research topics chosen by students and supervisors
• Students trained in cohorts
• Training provided in a multidisciplinary environment
• Collaboration between organisations and departments, and between academia and end-users
• Students develop skills and experience to equip them for their future careers (both inside and outside academia)
DTP1 – investment

- DTP1 = 15 DTPs funded for 5 annual intakes. Total of 240 four-year studentships awarded per year
- Limited specification from NERC – encouraged innovative approaches
- Wide variety of DTP training models in place
- Increased student starts due to matched funding from DTP partners

October 2014
- First intake

October 2017
- Earliest graduates

October 2018
- Final intake
DTP1 – mid-term evaluation 2016/17

Objectives
- Monitor individual DTP performance
- Assess success of DTP scheme and inform future commissioning

Methodology
- Surveys & Interviews

Outputs
- Independent report on success of scheme (Has informed DTP2)
- NERC Management response to report & recommendations
- Individual DTP feedback on performance

Full details online
DTP1 evaluation outcome

• Good practice identified
• No one model more successful or preferred
• Lessons learned – opportunity to address through DTP2

Conclusion:
DTPs are an effective training mechanism

DTP2 should enable change and innovation
DTP2 call

Vicki Durbridge
Senior Programme Manager, Doctoral Training

DTP2 – Town Hall Meeting
30 January 2018
DTPs phase 2 – Announcement of Opportunity

Key dates:

8 Jan – Launch
7 Mar – Notification of Intent
16 May – Proposals
Mid-Jul – PI response
End Sep – Awards announced
What’s the same?

Funding available:

• Min. 240 notional studentships per year, all with 4 years’ worth of funding

• Five annual student intakes (2019–2023)

• Expect to fund 10–20 DTPs, each with between 12 and 24 notional studentships per year

• NERC contribution to management costs (£1500 per notional studentship)

• Flexibility to support individual students for 3–4 years
What’s the same?

‘Notional studentships’ vs. actual studentships (i.e. funded period of study):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notional studentship</th>
<th>Individual/actual studentship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Method of calculating amount of funding awarded through a Doctoral Training Grant (DTG)</td>
<td>Expected funded period of study, agreed between Research Organisation (RO) and student at outset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always 4 years’ duration – in line with NERC’s thesis submission window</td>
<td>Can be between 3 years (min.) and 4 years (max.) duration (submission window still 4 years for all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprises stipend, fees, RTSG* + management cost contribution</td>
<td>Comprises stipend, fees + RTSG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed amount each year (based on RCUK minima)</td>
<td>Stipend and RTSG amounts may vary depending on project and training requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determines the duration of the DTG (i.e. the award given by NERC to the DTP)</td>
<td>Determines the duration of an individual student’s award (i.e. the award given by the RO to the student to complete a PhD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Research Training Support Grant – contribution towards costs of research (e.g. consumables, specialist equipment, fieldwork etc.) and training (e.g. conference attendance, training course costs, etc.).
What’s the same?

Requirements:

• Any area of NERC remit
• No min./max. consortium size
• No geographical stipulations
• No research income threshold
• No formal matched funding requirements
• Basic training requirements (i.e. NERC remit + transferrable skills)
• Flexibility regarding design of training programme
What’s new – Eligibility

- Organisations can only act as the Administrative Lead on one DTP proposal
  - OK to act as partner in multiple bids (feasibility will be considered by panel; must be genuine partnership)
- Harmonisation of CASE partner eligibility criteria with other CASE schemes:
  - Those eligible for research funding will **not** be eligible to act as a CASE partner in DTPs
  - Includes Research Centres and [Independent Research Organisations](#) (IROs)
What is a CASE studentship?

- CASE partner must be involved in project formulation and bring added value to the studentship.
- CASE partner must provide supervision.
- CASE partner must contribute at least £1000 per year to the studentship (payment via Research Organisation towards RTSG) for the duration of the studentship.
- CASE partner must meet additional expenses (e.g. T&S) incurred by students visiting and working at their organisation and contributes in cash or in kind towards necessary materials whilst students are based at their organisation.
- The student must spend part of their training period with the CASE partner over the course of their studentship – minimum of 3 months and not normally more than 18 months.

Objectives of CASE: “to provide doctoral students with a first-rate, challenging research training experience, within the context of a mutually beneficial collaboration between academic research organisations and non-academic partner organisations in the private, public and civil society sectors”
What’s new – Collaborative training

NERC response to DTP evaluation:
“CASE studentships present a recognised (and successful) mechanism for supporting collaborative training. NERC will continue to encourage conversion to CASE studentships.”;

“NERC actively encourages all types of non-CASE collaboration within DTPs, which are also highly valued.”

Changes for DTP2

- CASE conversion requirement now **25%** of notional studentship allocation (previously 30%)
  - Applied over duration of DTP award
  - Compliance to be monitored and progress/predicted trajectory reviewed after 2 student intakes

- Collaborative (non-CASE) studentships to be formally recognised and monitored as success measure
What’s new – Training requirements

**Mandatory training elements:**

- Access to internships/placements/work experience opportunities for all DTP students
- Explicit careers and CPD training at suitably early stage of PhD
- Strong end-user engagement with all levels of training (i.e. projects, cohort training, training programme design)
- Dedicated professional skills & innovation/translation training available to all DTP students
- Access to appropriate data skills training for all DTP students
- TNA (or equivalent) at outset of training – programmes to allow tailoring to individual needs
- Opportunities to network across disciplines and across DTP/CDT/Research Council cohorts
What’s new – Operational Management

Central DTP management structure:
Relevant end-users to be represented within DTP management structures

Training costs:
All training activities must be supported using money from DTP grant. This includes:
• All mandatory training outlined in AO
• RCUK Policy Internship scheme

Resource:
Adequate support to be committed by DTP for administrative and strategic management resource
Assessment process

- Right to reply (written comments)
- All proposals treated equally (individual DTP evaluation feedback not provided to panel)
- Panel representation:
  - Research expertise
  - Training expertise
  - End-user expertise
  - Doctoral training management expertise

Timeline:

- Proposals submitted: May 2018
- Panel provides written comments: June 2018
- PI response: July 2018
- Assessment panel: August 2018
- September 2018
Thank you