

Finding Funding for Postgraduate Study (UK, EU and International Students)

Securing funding for postgraduate study can be difficult. There is no way of guaranteeing that an application will be successful. There are, however, a number of things you can do to improve your chances. Here are some points to bear in mind.

Quick tips

- Start early. Most funding bodies adhere to deadlines very strictly and will not accept late applications. You should allow plenty of time to obtain referees' reports or confirmation of an offer of a place. This may take several weeks or more if your referees are outside the UK.
- **Make sure you are eligible (e.g. residence or type of study)**
- Put time and thought into your application. Most funding bodies receive a large number of requests. Always type or write legibly.
- Give full and relevant answers.
- Make sure your referees understand what you want to do, where and why.
- **Make contingency plans. Be realistic about your chances of success and be ready to look for alternative sources of funding.**

Useful links/addresses

1. www.uel.ac.uk/ssmcs

Information on postgraduate scholarships and bursaries offered by the School of Social Sciences, Media and Cultural Studies can be found by visiting the School's web pages.

2. www.prospects.ac.uk

The prospects website provides general information about postgraduate funding

3. www.researchresearch.com

4. www.support4learning.com/money/funds_postgrad.

This site has a number of links to websites where you can find out about the grants and scholarships available for UK/EU and international students.

Public funding bodies (for UK/EU residents)

1. www.esrc.ac.uk

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

2. www.ahrc.ac.uk

The Arts & Humanities Research Council

The ESRC and the AHRC are the most important sources of funding for (social science) postgraduate students *in the UK*. It must be pointed out, however, that **competition for ESRC and AHRC studentships is intense: only a very small percentage of candidates make a successful application.** **To be eligible** for a Research Council award you must be what is called **‘ordinarily resident’ in the UK** throughout the three years preceding your application. (This does not include living here while being a student.) You should also normally possess a first-class or upper second-class honours degree from a UK higher education institution.

Students from outside the UK but within the EU are eligible for Research Council awards that cover tuition fees but *do not* provide a maintenance grant.

Funding for international students

3. www.chevening.com

The British Chevening Scholarships, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and administered by the British Council, are prestigious awards which enable overseas students to study in the United Kingdom.

Scholarships are offered in over 150 countries and enable talented graduates and young professionals to become familiar with the UK and gain skills which will benefit their countries. The Chevening programme currently provides around 2,300 new scholarships each year for postgraduate studies or research at UK Institutions of Higher Education.

4. Commonwealth Scholarships

These are for postgraduate students from the Commonwealth and are normally tenable for two academic years. Applications should be made, through the Commonwealth Scholarships Agency (normally the Ministry of Education) in the *student's* country of permanent residence, to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF.

5. Overseas Research Students Awards (ORSAS)

A British Government scheme that provides a limited number of awards to overseas students. ORSAS helps outstanding full-time postgraduate research students from outside the United Kingdom and European Community to study in the UK by providing for some of the costs of their training and supervision.

ORSAS awards provide funding to pay the difference, in most cases, between the international student tuition fees and the home /EU student tuition fees charged by the academic institution that the student is or will be attending. **ORSAS awards do not cover the home/EU fee element, maintenance or travel expenses.** For further information please see: www.orsas.ac.uk

Other useful links for international students

6. www.uel.ac.uk/int-office

This is the **University of East London's International Office web address**. Information about visas, tuition fees, accommodation and other practical aspects of living and studying in the UK is available at this site.

7. www.ukcosa.org.uk

This website provides useful advice for international students wishing to undertake postgraduate study in the UK.

8. www.educationuk.org

This website provides education information for international students wishing to undertake postgraduate study in the UK

Alternative sources of funding

There are numerous **trusts, charities and foundations** that award partial funding for postgraduate study (they rarely award total funding), although with record numbers of applications for these small pools of money, **you will need a strong case to make a successful application**.

Such funding bodies range in size and type of scheme available (studentships, scholarships, grants, bursaries, competitions and prizes). There are bodies which make several hundred awards a year and those that make just one. Some awards are dedicated to a particular purpose while others have very general eligibility criteria. **Most awards from these sources won't cover both tuition fees and a cost of living**. The majority of the awards made by the smaller bodies amount to a few hundred pounds a year and are provided to cover expenses such as travel and fieldwork. Sometimes awards are made solely for the relief of financial hardship.