



## Research in Practice Placement Scheme Guidance

Please read this guidance document in full before submitting any queries or requests regarding placements to the NWSSDTP Office.

### Introduction

All NWSSDTP students whose funding commenced after September 2024 are expected to complete a three-month (13 week) placement during their PhD. This is an integral part of the NWSSDTP Studentship. The guidance below outlines the opportunities available, the regulations governing the RiPPS scheme, and the process for applying for a placement.

NWSSDTP students whose funding commenced before August 2024 are not eligible for this scheme, but can apply for funding to undertake an internship which they have organised themselves – see <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/internships/>

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## What is 'Research in Practice'?

'Research in Practice' is the ESRC's approach to developing students' core employability skills including:

- Ability to apply research skills in different research contexts
- Ability to collaborate across sectoral and disciplinary boundaries
- Communication with impact, developing networks, entrepreneurship and leadership skills
- Ability to proactively engage in their own personal development and career direction, while increasing awareness of the breadth of career opportunities available

The type of 'Research in Practice' placement a student undertakes will depend on a self-assessment - through completion of their annual [Development Needs Analysis](#) - of their previous experience and future aspirations, to ensure that any potential placement recognises where the value would be added to the student's skill development.

## What counts as a 'Research in Practice' Placement?

Placements will generally take the form of either:

- a) A non-academic internship with a non-HEI (i.e. a non-university) partner.

OR

- b) An academic placement – either a research assistantship or a professional services project – within a university.

Normally students will be expected to complete one 13-week placement **or** two shorter placements which total 13 weeks. Placements can be undertaken on a part-time or full-time basis and can be physical, virtual or hybrid.

Ideally, students should undertake any academic placements outside of their own university. Academic placements may not be undertaken with students' own supervisory team, research team or home department.

## How do I arrange a 'Research in Practice' Placement?

NWSSDTP students may choose to:

- a) develop their own placement opportunity, with the support of their supervisor.

Students who wish to organise their own placement should complete the RiPPS Proposal Form and send it, with a Letter of Support from the host organisation, to [ripps@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ripps@liverpool.ac.uk) by one of the following deadlines each year: 15<sup>th</sup> January, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 15<sup>th</sup> May, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 15<sup>th</sup> November. Outcomes of all applications will be announced within three weeks. Students should plan accordingly in advance of their chosen activity. All applications will be reviewed by the NWSSDTP Placement Coordinator.

- b) apply to one of a suite of opportunities the NWSSDTP organises and publicises.

Students who wish to apply to one of the placement opportunities developed by the NWSSDTP should review the list of possibilities that will be announced every three months here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/ripps/ripps-vacancies/>. Once a placement opportunity is listed (at the beginning of November, February, May and August), students will have one month to complete and submit a RiPPS Expression of Interest Form (by the beginning of December, March, June or September respectively), outlining their interest in the placement. Outcomes of all applications will be announced within three weeks. The NWSSDTP Placement Coordinator and the individual placement provider will review the applications.

- c) apply for an internship from one of the following approved external schemes:

- [UKRI Policy Internships Scheme](#)
- [Open Innovation Team](#)
- [British Library PhD Placement Scheme](#)

In such cases, students should follow the process and deadlines outlined in the specific scheme. Any students who are successfully selected to undertake one of these placements should notify the NWSSDTP at [ripps@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ripps@liverpool.ac.uk) as soon as possible.

## Development Needs Analysis and the 'Research in Practice' Placement

Each year of your studentship, you will be asked to complete – in consultation with your supervisor – a Development Needs Analysis (DNA) form, reflecting on your individual training and development needs. More information about the DNA can be found here:

<https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/current-students-2024-2029/>.

The DNA includes a section where students are asked to reflect on their individual needs and priorities with regards to their Research in Practice placement. Students should discuss with their supervisors:

- the kind of placement they think will most benefit them – an internship with a non-HEI partner or an academic placement within a university
- what kind of organisation or university would be most appropriate for their purpose
- what training they feel they may need in order to be prepared for the placement and make the most of the opportunity
- whether they will seek to design their own placement, apply to one of the suite of opportunities developed by the NWSSDTP, or apply to one of the approved external schemes

This discussion will help students prepare for their own placement and the content of this section of the DNA will be collated across the cohort to inform the suite of placement opportunities the NWSSDTP develops.

## Payment for Research in Practice Placements

All NWSSDTP studentships already include three months' worth of funding (stipend and payment of tuition fees) intended to support the student throughout the placement period. Students will not be paid an additional salary for completing the placements.

Any student who does not complete a three-month placement by the end of the third year of their PhD will have their studentships shortened by three months accordingly. For example, if a student started a +3.5 studentship on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, their original funding end date will be 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028. If they do not complete a three-month placement

by the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2027, their funding end date will be brought forward to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2027.

Students will remain registered throughout the period of the placement. This will mean that you will be expected to maintain contact with your supervisor while undertaking the placement, although it will be understood that progress on your PhD will have slowed or paused while working on the placement project.

### Placement Expenses

In addition to receiving your studentship during your placement, you are eligible for additional funding to cover necessary expenses incurred while on placement. All students can apply for retrospective reimbursement of **up to** £1,000, typically for travel or occasional accommodation costs related to the placement.

Once your placement has been approved, expenses can be reimbursed in two ways:

- Monthly Reimbursement – Submit a monthly expenditure form detailing your placement-related expenses, along with supporting documentation to verify your expenses.
- Lump-Sum Reimbursement – Apply for a single reimbursement of all placement-related costs at the end of your placement, along with supporting documentation to verify your expenses.

The claim form for expenses can be found here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/ripps/>. Proof of purchase is needed to support all reimbursement requests.

In certain cases, funding may be available in advance of your placement. If you wish to be considered for advanced funding, please contact [ripps@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ripps@liverpool.ac.uk) to discuss further.

Please note that it is only in extraordinary circumstances that the NWSSDTP will be able to reimburse more than £1,000 in placement expenses. Students proposing their own placement opportunities should carefully consider the funding limits to ensure feasibility of their project.

## Proposing your own 'Research in Practice' placement opportunity

To propose your own placement, you must complete the RiPPS Proposal Form and submit it by one of the bi-monthly deadlines: 15<sup>th</sup> January, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 15<sup>th</sup> May, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 15<sup>th</sup> November. The RiPPS Proposal Form requires candidates to provide a case for support, a costing for the placement, a statement of approval from your supervisor and a letter of support from the proposed host organisation (be it a non-HEI organisation or a university host).

In the case for support, applicants should provide as much information as possible about the work they intend to undertake during the placement, why this is the most appropriate host for such a placement, and what they hope to gain from the experience in terms of relevance to their doctoral research, research training, or career development.

Placements should be distinct, independent projects from the student's PhD research, although it may well be within a complementary area. For students on a CASE Studentship, the CASE partner can also be the placement host but there must be a separate placement project outlined which is distinct from the PhD project. Placements are not designed to cover fieldwork or data collection expenses – there is a separate process for this (<https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/osfw/>).

It is permissible for placements to be overseas. However, due to the limited funding available to support each placement this will typically only be feasible when undertaken as an 'add on' activity before, during or after Overseas Fieldwork (<https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/osfw/>) or an Overseas Institutional Visit (<https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/current-students/oiv/>). In such circumstances, students will need to submit an application for the overseas activity and a separate Student-led Placement Proposal.

Please ask your supervisor to provide a supporting statement for the proposed placement.

Please ask your proposed host partner to provide a letter of support which:

- includes the name of the key contact at the host partner who will support the proposed placement project
- confirms the details of the proposed placement project that will be undertaken

- confirms, where relevant, that any necessary ethics approvals have been secured
- clearly outlines the student's status within the organisation and details the support they will receive - this should include their induction process covering essential topics such as health and safety protocols, any risk assessments or security checks that will need to take place, and any additional resources or points of contact to support their integration and well-being during the placement.
- confirms their alignment to the NWSSDTP's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion commitments (<https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/about/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/>) and details any reasonable adjustments that will be made if you are a disabled student or a student who faces barriers to inclusion for other reasons.

### Applying for a NWSSDTP organised 'Research in Practice' placement

Every three months the NWSSDTP will announce a series of placements – both internships with non-HEI Partners and academic placements – to which students can apply by submitting a RiPPS Expression of Interest Form.

Deadlines for the RiPPS Expression of Interest Forms will be the beginning of December, March, June and September - with the current suite of opportunities announced one month before each deadline.

Prior to promotion, the NWSSDTP will have risk assessed each project and established if the placement provider aligns with the NWSSDTP's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion commitments <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/about/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/>.

The RiPPS Expression of Interest Form requires students to:

- confirm which project they wish to be considered for
- provide details of why they are interested in a specific project
- the skills/experience they would bring to the placement
- include a supporting statement from their supervisor

These opportunities may be competitive if multiple students wish to undertake the same placement, and a selection process – led by the placement provider – will take place in such cases. This will primarily involve review of the content of the RiPPS Expression of Interest

Forms submitted, but in some cases placement providers may also request a short interview.

### **'Research in Practice' Training**

As noted above, as part of the Development Needs Analysis process you will be asked to reflect on your placement plans and what training you may require to make your placement experience a success.

All NWSSDTP students are strongly encouraged to take part in the How2Glu Placement Training Programme, which will equip students to maximise the benefits of their placement experiences.

Further details including workshop dates and how to register will be publicised in early 2026.

### **Reporting**

Within one month of returning from your placement, you will be expected to complete an End of Placement Report (found here: <https://nwssdtp.ac.uk/ripps>) and submit this to the NWSSDTP Placement Coordinator at [ripps@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ripps@liverpool.ac.uk). Your RiPPS placement will not be considered complete until this report is submitted.

### **Further Guidance**

If NWSSDTP Students or their supervisors have any queries relating to the above guidance or would like advice about placements more generally, please email the NWSSDTP Placement Coordinator, Amy Connolly at [ripps@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ripps@liverpool.ac.uk)