

**North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership**

**(NWCDTP)**

**Handbook for Postgraduate Researchers**

**2024-2025**

**Welcome!**

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the NWCDTP. As a Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) working with us, we are really excited to meet with you and see how we can support your research and career development over the next years. You will find all kinds of benefits and support outlined in this handbook, and please make sure that you use everything to the maximum. We have a lot of ways that we can help you to augment and expand your research, your career, your thinking. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you need to discuss something, or to find out more about what we offer. Please remember that the DTP is here to help, for something small or something large, and we are so excited to find out more about you and your work!

* Jerome, Carole, Frankie, Beth and Hannah (the DTP team)

What is the Purpose of this Handbook?

This handbook is primarily designed for researchers funded by the NWCDTP (or prospective researchers who are crafting an application and would like to learn more about our work). It will also be a useful reference point for supervisors, Pathway Leads, Academic Leads, and administrative departments within each of our seven institutions. Above all, the handbook provides key information about NWCDTP PhD study, the support that we offer (for example, internal funding schemes, placements and partnerships, student networks, and training and events), and signposting to key contacts, NWCDTP policies, and support services.

Contents of this Handbook

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If there are any changes that you feel this handbook should reflect, please contact [nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk) so we can include these changes in the next version of the handbook.

What is the NWCDTP?

The North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership (NWCDTP) was founded in 2014 and offers PhD funding, student support, and training and skills development for students completing a postgraduate degree in the Arts and Humanities. We are made up of seven partner institutions that form the DTP: University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Salford, Royal Northern College of Music, University of Liverpool, Lancaster University, and Keele University.

In addition to providing PhD fees and stipends, we offer additional support for our students to help them with their professional development during and beyond the PhD journey, embedding the student voice, sustainability, collaboration, and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at the heart of all our work.

The NWCDTP aims to:

* Promote the disciplinary capability and international research excellence necessary to underwrite the regional delivery of world-class PhD supervision and training in the arts and humanities.
* Equip postgraduates in the arts and humanities with subject-specific, interdisciplinary, and transferable knowledge and skills of immediate relevance to their academic studies and future employability. Exploiting the innovative opportunities enabled by its cross-institutional arrangements, the NWCDTP will provide internationally excellent training in both Higher Education (HE) and non-HE contexts at home and abroad.
* Enhance existing Knowledge Exchange (KE) relationships by expanding its use of regional, national, and international cross-sector partnerships. To this end, the NWCDTP will optimise the mutually beneficial exchanges with non-HEI (Higher Education Institution) partners to enhance the academic experience of its students and contribute to the socio-economic activity of private, public, and third-sector organisations.

We fund PhD projects in the following fifteen pathways across Histories, Cultures & Heritage, Creative & Performing Arts, and Languages & Literature:

* Classics
* Creative Writing
* Drama
* English
* Heritage
* History
* Language-Based Area Studies
* Law
* Linguistics
* Media and Cultural Studies
* Modern Languages and Translation Studies
* Music
* Philosophy
* Religions
* Visual Arts and Design

**What is a PhD?**

* A PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) is the highest academic qualification achievable. Unlike undergraduate and taught postgraduate degrees (e.g. an MA), a PhD is independent and research-based.
* You must demonstrate that you have made an **original and meaningful contribution to knowledge in your research area** in order to receive a PhD.
* A PhD usually takes 3-4 years (full-time) or 7 years (part-time) to complete
* The result of the PhD is usually a 70,000-100,000 word thesis (each institution will have different policies on word count).
* The development of your thesis is supported by your supervisors, assessed by internal and external examiners at different stages, and culminates in a ‘viva voce’ exam at the end of the degree (an oral exam where you must defend your work).
* A PhD will open many doors career-wise, from postdoctoral and lecturing opportunities in academia to industry, teaching, business, and more.
* A PhD will allow you to develop and hone key transferable skills, such as critical thinking, project management, excellent written and verbal communication, problem solving, time management, and collaboration with others.

The specific roles and duties of PhD students and supervisors will be specified by each institution, so the researcher is advised to consult their institution’s own policies first. However, the following generic advice and information might be useful:

What is my role as a PhD student?

* Discuss the initial scope and objectives of your research project with your supervisor early on and make a workplan to keep on track.
* Identify any additional training needs from the onset and a take a proactive approach to meeting these via opportunities provided by your institution and the NWCDTP.
* Ensure your supervisor is aware of your own personal requirements (for example, support with a disability) so the appropriate arrangements and support can be put into place.
* Be aware of any ethical considerations of your research, as well as key PhD milestones and how to prepare for them.
* Schedule regular meetings with your supervisor and keep them up to date with your progress.
* Make notes during your supervision meetings (these should take place at least once a month unless you are studying part-time) or, with permission, record the sessions. It is very easy to forget things later on!
* Be clear on what your supervisor expects of you: what tasks have you been given? Do you understand these tasks? Do you know when your deadlines are? If not, ask for clarification straight away.
* Be clear on your working patterns and stick to these. It is a good idea to treat the PhD like a job. Work hard, but look after yourself and make time for your other hobbies and interests, too.
* Make a list of key tasks each day and tick them off as you go along – preparation and organisation is key!
* Have a flexible approach to your research, and do not panic if your work changes direction slightly. Quite often the most interesting ideas come to you when you least expect them.
* Take advantage of your supervisor’s help – both with the PhD and beyond. They can advise you on the best ways to raise your academic profile via conferences, publishing, teaching experience, and more.

What is my PhD supervisor’s role?

* The term ‘supervisor’ refers to the person undertaking the main supervisor’s role in the supervisory team; usually, you will have two supervisors during the PhD (a main supervisor and a co-supervisor). You may also have a non-academic supervisor at a partner institution, for example if you are on a Collaborative Doctoral Award.
* The supervisor will discuss the initial scope and objectives of your research project with you and ensure that you are supported with other aspects (for example, additional training needs, reasonable adjustment plans, and ethical considerations).
* Ensure you can access central departmental activities that will enhance your research project such as seminars, workshops, and other events.
* Set expectations for work (for example, deadlines and monthly writing submissions), as well as setting the agenda for supervision meetings.
* To ensure arrangements are in place to support you if they are absent (for example, during annual leave or sabbatical).
* To provide constructive criticism and feedback (both verbal and written) on your work, and prepare you for internal deadlines, assessments, and upgrade panels.
* To support you with any other administrative tasks relating to your degree, such as filling in progress forms, assisting with funding applications, and providing academic references.

**Our Institutions**

* The [University of Manchester](https://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/)
* [Manchester Metropolitan University](https://www.mmu.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research-study/phd)
* [Royal Northern College of Music](https://www.rncm.ac.uk/research/programme/)
* [University of Salford](https://www.salford.ac.uk/doctoral-school)
* [University of Liverpool](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/)
* [Lancaster University](https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/arts-and-social-sciences/courses/phd/)
* [Keele University](https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/postgraduateresearch/)

Institutional Postgraduate (PGR) Offices and Contact Details

* **The University of Manchester** – key contact:   
  [hums.doctoralacademy@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:hums.doctoralacademy@manchester.ac.uk)
* **Manchester Metropolitan University** – key contact: [pgrfunding@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:pgrfunding@mmu.ac.uk)
* **Royal Northern College of Music** – key contact: [pgr@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:pgr@rncm.ac.uk)
* **University of Salford** – key contact: [pgr-supportsam@salford.ac.uk](mailto:pgr-supportsam@salford.ac.uk)
* **University of Liverpool** – key contact: [uolnwc@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:uolnwc@liverpool.ac.uk)
* **Lancaster University** – key contact: [pgadmissions@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:pgadmissions@lancaster.ac.uk)
* **Keele University** – key contact: [dtp.pgr@keele.ac.uk](mailto:dtp.pgr@keele.ac.uk)

Institutional NWCDTP Academic Leads and Contact Details

* **The University of Manchester** – Dr Admos Chimhowu: [admos.chimhowu@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:admos.chimhowu@manchester.ac.uk)
* **Manchester Metropolitan University** – Dr Anna Bergqvist: [a.bergqvist@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:a.bergqvist@mmu.ac.uk)
* **Royal Northern College of Music** – Professor Jane Ginsborg: [jane.ginsborg@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:jane.ginsborg@rncm.ac.uk)
* **University of Salford** – Professor Seamus Simpson: [s.simpson@salford.ac.uk](mailto:s.simpson@salford.ac.uk)
* **University of Liverpool** – Dr Katia Balabanova: [katiab@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:katiab@liverpool.ac.uk)
* **Lancaster** **University** – Dr Sam Clark: [sam.clark@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:sam.clark@lancaster.ac.uk)
* **Keele University** – Dr Kate Cushing: [k.g.cushing@keele.ac.uk](mailto:k.g.cushing@keele.ac.uk)

**A person smiling at the camera

Description automatically generated**A person wearing glasses and a red shirt

Description automatically generated**Meet the NWCDTP Team**

A person smiling at the camera

Description automatically generated**A person sitting in a chair

Description automatically generated**

Beth Taylor

Carole Arrowsmith

Francesca Roncoli

Hannah Helm

Jerome de Groot

## **Professor Jerome de Groot (he/him)**

**Role:** NWCDTP Director  
**Email:**Jerome.degroot@manchester.ac.uk

Jerome joined the NWCDTP as Director in 2020, having previously been Deputy Director in 2016-17. As Director he coordinates the DTP’s institutions, working closely with each of the member organisations to ensure that the partnership maximises the potential of the region. He leads the DTP’s development and in particular engages with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC): our key funder. He has particular oversight on finance, recruitment, EDI, training, collaboration, and partnerships. Jerome teaches in the English Literature, American Studies, and Creative Writing Department at the University of Manchester, where he’s been a Professor since 2019. If you are interested in new funding ideas, EDI, thinking about different types of training, or simply sharing your work, please get in touch with Jerome!

~

## **Dr Hannah Helm (she/her)**

**Role:** EDI Advocate  
**Email:** h.j.helm@edu.salford.ac.uk

Hannah is passionate about developing a positive research culture and community that values and supports everybody from all backgrounds and experiences, working to challenge inequalities, increase representation, and improve access for our postgraduate researchers. Hannah joined the NWCDTP as EDI Advocate in October 2023 following the completion of her own PhD studies. She works with the NWCDTP to address EDI issues and improve inclusivity and accessibility, enhancing the student experience for current and future PhD researchers. Hannah is enthusiastic about taking a student-centred approach to her work within the NWCDTP, ensuring that the student voice is heard across the NWCDTP more broadly. Please get in contact with Hannah if you are interested in EDI and have any ideas for future events, training, or other initiatives that would benefit NWCDTP researchers.

~

## **Beth Taylor (she/her)**

**Role:** NWCDTP Knowledge Exchange Placements and Partnerships Officer  
**Email:**beth.taylor@manchester.ac.uk

Beth joined the NWCDTP in September 2023 to support DTP PGRs undertaking career and skills development placements, internships, overseas research visits, and academic exchanges. Beth provides information and guidance throughout the placement process, including supporting PGRs to identify a potential placement and develop a project with a partner. She also works with DTP partners and coordinates the researcher development training programme. Beth has experience across UKRI-funded DTPs having previously worked on the University of Manchester’s BBSRC and MRC DTPs. Prior to working on doctoral programmes, Beth worked in communications, grant writing, and project roles in Higher Education and the third sector. If you are a PGR interested in undertaking a placement or would like to chat about other knowledge exchange activities and how they would benefit your PhD experience, please email Beth.

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**Carole Arrowsmith**

**Role**: NWCDTP Manager

**Email**: carole.arrowsmith@manchester.ac.uk

Carole joined the DTP in September 2014, during its inaugural year, to provide support in the management and administration of the partnership. She works closely with Jerome and the rest of the team to ensure that the DTP adheres to the regulations set by our funding body. Carole's responsibilities include oversight of recruitment, funding, training, and the management of relationships with partner institutions. Additionally, she plays a key role in financial management within the DTP. Drawing on her extensive experience with the DTP, Carole is also available to support students addressing their needs and providing guidance as and when needed. Any questions please contact Carole.

~

**Francesca Roncoli (she/her)**

**Role**: NWCDTP Postgraduate Administrator

**Email**: [francesca.roncoli@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:francesca.roncoli@manchester.ac.uk)

Francesca joined the DTP in May 2021 and works closely with the DTP’s funding manager to support researchers. Francesca is the first point of contact for our researchers and will be able to provide support and advice for anything DTP related, from funding and recruitment to student welfare. Please get in touch with Francesca if you have any questions about DTP operations.

**Key Contacts and Support Services**

NWCDTP PGR Office

**Address**: Faculty of Humanities Doctoral Academy, Ground Floor, Ellen Wilkinson Building, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

**Email**: nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk

**Phone Number**: +44 (0)161 275 1200

**Website**: <https://www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/>

Institutional Wellbeing Services

Your emotional wellbeing is just as important as your physical wellbeing, and it is essential that you take the time to look after yourself during your PhD studies. Below, you can find links to each of our seven institutions’ counselling, mental health, and student support services:

* The [University of Manchester](https://www.counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk/)
* [Manchester Metropolitan University](https://www.mmu.ac.uk/student-life/wellbeing/counselling-and-mental-health#ai-54910-3)
* [Royal Northern College of Music](https://www.rncm.ac.uk/about/college-information/student-support-wellbeing/)
* [University of Salford](https://www.salford.ac.uk/askus/topics/wellbeing-and-counselling)
* [University of Liverpool](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/studentsupport/mental-wellbeing/)
* [Lancaster University](https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/study/why-lancaster/wellbeing-and-support/)
* [Keele University](https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/lifeoutsideofstudy/welfareandwellbeing/)

NWCDTP Support

* [Welfare Support and Sickness Leave](https://www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/home/current-students/student-support/welfare-support/)
* [Carer and Parents Policy](https://www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/home/current-students/student-support/carer-policy/)

PGR Representation

PGRs are central to the NWCDTP, and we have developed a new system of representation to ensure that our students’ voices are heard in all our decision making and planning.

Please get in touch with your PGR Reps (see details below) directly with any concerns, issues, worries, or praise that you have.

If you are interested in becoming a NWCDTP PGR Rep, please get in touch with us ([nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk) ). In particular, we are keen to recruit a Rep from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2024-2025.

* **The University of Manchester**: Adam North ([adam.north@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:adam.north@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk) ) and Marta Zingale ([marta.zingale@student.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:marta.zingale@student.manchester.ac.uk) )
* **Manchester Metropolitan University**: Darryl Peers ([darryl.peers@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:darryl.peers@stu.mmu.ac.uk) )
* **University of Salford**: Timur Slavgorodskii-Kazanets ([t.slavgorodskii-kazanets@edu.salford.ac.uk](mailto:t.slavgorodskii-kazanets@edu.salford.ac.uk) )
* **University of Liverpool**: Richie Snowden-Leak ([r.snowden-leak@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:r.snowden-leak@liverpool.ac.uk) ), Ethan Coulson-Haggins ([e.coulson-haggins@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:e.coulson-haggins@liverpool.ac.uk) ), and Coen Schuurmans-Stekhoven ([coen.schuurmans-stekhoven@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:coen.schuurmans-stekhoven@liverpool.ac.uk) )
* **Lancaster University**: Pamela Forster ([p.forster@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:p.forster@lancaster.ac.uk) )
* **Keele University**: Jo Yates ([j.c.l.yates@keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.c.l.yates@keele.ac.uk) )

Our Student Reps are also foundational in organising the NWCDTP Annual PGR Conference, which takes place in July each year. If you would like to listen to some of the panels and discussions from our last conference in July 2024, then you can access the recording [**here**](https://keeleacuk-my.sharepoint.com/personal/m_boulton_keele_ac_uk/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fm%5Fboulton%5Fkeele%5Fac%5Fuk%2FDocuments%2FNECDTP%20Student%20Conference&ga=1&LOF=1). If you have any issues accessing the file, please email Matt Boulton ([m.boulton@keele.ac.uk](mailto:m.boulton@keele.ac.uk) ), who owns the recording.

If you would like to be part of the Student Conference Committee and volunteer your services for the next conference in July 2025, please email [nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk) . We would love to have you involved!

And finally: if you would like to learn more about our current Student Reps, you can do so [**here**](https://www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/home/current-students/stud-rep/).

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

NWCDTP EDI Statement

At the NWCDTP, we are passionate about creating a positive research culture and promoting sense of belonging so that every PGR feels valued and supported. Issues relating to EDI are foundational in everything that we do. The NWCDTP is committed to embedding awareness of EDI issues at every level of the organisation by undertaking a thorough review of the DTP in terms of governance, application support, student engagement, experience and professional development, training and resources, and widening participation and alumni activities.

In addition, our EDI agenda has been highly prioritised in 2023-2024, with activities including application support and internal reviews in order to diversify our applicant pool; ringfenced studentships for researchers from underrepresented backgrounds; a more robust governance structure via regular EDI Committee meetings; widening participation, outreach, and mentoring work via the recruitment of five EDI Fellows; a comprehensive and engaging EDI training schedule, with sessions themed around understanding the importance of EDI in research, decolonising research methods, conducting ethical research with marginalised communities, mental health coaching, looking after your wellbeing during the PhD, PhD parenting and caregiving, and neurodiversity. In addition, we have co-created new platforms for students to ensure their voices are heard via an EDI Questionnaire and three student-led, EDI-themed support networks.

If you would like to get involved with our EDI work, please email Jerome or Hannah. You can learn more about our ongoing work in EDI [**here**](https://www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/home/about/equality-diversity-inclusion/), and our EDI Action Plan can be viewed [**here**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qzWTuCYcQCzvQmwuMWVmFo_d4RY2LmH6kfb0HcdzM-U/edit?usp=sharing).

EDI Committee

The NWCDTP EDI Committee meets three times a year to discuss and address current EDI issues within the NWCDTP, as well as future plans and strategies for improvement in line with our EDI Action Plan.

If you are interested in EDI and feel passionate about involving student voices in our governance and decision making, then please email Hannah to join the EDI Group and for a link to the next EDI Committee meeting.

The next meetings in 2025 are as follows:

* Tuesday 13th May 2025 @ 10-11:30am (GMT)
* Tuesday 16th September 2025 @ 10-11:30am (GMT)
* December 2025 (date and time to be confirmed)

EDI Fellows

In 2024, the NWCDTP recruited five EDI Fellows to support the EDI Advocate and develop additional projects in relation to widening participation and application support.

The five EDI Fellows are currently working on the following projects until April 2025:

* **Widening Participation (1)**: Recording podcasts with PhD students (both NWCDTP and non-NWCDTP-funded) to raise awareness of the barriers to PhD study, culminating in a student-led publication that includes creative writing and poetry in line with this theme.
* **Widening Participation (2)**: Designing outreach workshops for thirty 16-to-18-year-old learners, inspiring students to consider undergraduate and postgraduate study by delivering sessions on crafting research questions, conducting ethical research, and improving presentation and interview skills.
* **Application Support (1)**: Recording a promotional video to highlight the benefits of being a NWCDTP-funded student (with an emphasis on our funding opportunities, placements, careers, and events), alongside application support workshops and the implementation of a ‘buddy scheme’.
* **Application Support (2)**: Comprehensive analysis of our EDI data to identify gaps, as well as outreach work with current students and alumni via Focus Groups
* **Application Support (3)**: Piloting a 1-2-1 mentoring programme with up to 20 prospective PhD students, as well as quantitative and qualitative data collection via EDI Questionnaires for both students and alumni.

In 2025-2026, we will continue to invest in the EDI Fellowship scheme by offering four new Fellowships that focus on the following areas:

* **Widening Participation in Research**
* **Improving International PhD Student Experiences**
* **Investigating Neurodivergent and Disabled PhD Student Experiences**
* **Supporting PhD Parents and Caregivers**

These Fellowships will be advertised in April 2025.

**NWCDTP Additional Funding Schemes**

In 2024-2025, the NWCDTP will offer the following funding schemes:

1. **Conferences**

NWCDTP researchers are entitled to apply for additional funds to assist them with expenditure directly relating to attendance at conferences. This can include the conference registration fee, travel costs, and accommodation costs.

1. **Fieldwork**

NWCDTP researchers are entitled to apply for additional funds to assist them with expenditure directly relating to fieldwork. This can include research/training costs, travel costs, and accommodation costs.

1. **Specialist Training**

We support training in specialist skills that cannot be offered by any of the seven institutions that form the NWCDTP. Costs might include fees to complete a training course, travel costs, and personalised support in the acquisition of skills and for the translation of research findings to a wider audience.

1. **Research Networks**

This funding scheme aims to promote closer integration of our student cohort by means of the creation of research groups working across pathway boundaries; develop students’ skills in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary working; and develop students’ capacity to become research leaders. Costs might include travel costs for members of the network, catering costs, and external speaker fees.

1. **Collaborative Skills Development (Cohort)**

The point of this scheme is to bring the different DTP partners together in developing the research skills and professional aptitudes of our students. These activities might include training on public engagement and research impact; the development of research skills in digital humanities; the development of skills in public policy engagement; the creation of student-led conferences; career development initiatives; and/or the integration of PhD students into interdisciplinary research activities. Costs might include travel costs, catering costs, and external speaker fees.

1. **Targeted Funding (Cohort)**

In 2024-2025, the DTP will devote specific targeted funding to the following research themes: Artificial Intelligence, Collaboration, and Community. Potential activities might focus on the creation and delivery of workshops, outreach activities, exhibitions/performances, residencies, and careers/postdoctoral opportunities. We are particularly interested in applications that have the potential to develop into future funding applications with the DTP or other outside funding bodies, embed research methods, and/or engage with non-academic partners. Costs might include travel costs, equipment costs, or external speaker fees.

Detailed guidance and specific details about each funding pot can be viewed on our [**website**](https://www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/home/current-students/funding-for-current-students/). Please consult these guidelines for your chosen funding scheme before making an application.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

* **What kind of funding is there?**

We have funding available for a range of activities. These generally divide into two types: *Discovery* (funding you to go and do research activities, like fieldwork or conference presentation, exhibitions, performances) and *Collaboration* (funding for outreach work, event organisation, networking, knowledge exchange).

* **How do I design a project?**

The most straightforward funding doesn’t need much working on – conference attendance, for instance, will only need the detail of the conference, your attendance, and a travel budget. However, more complex applications take some time to think about. You should spend some time talking with the DTP team, your supervisors, and your peers to think about how this work will expand your doctoral project, what it will contribute, and how it will help you either in your career or your research. For bigger applications or more complex ideas the best idea is to contact Jerome, who will be able to help you expand your project.

* **How do I apply?**

Our online form is easy to use. You should consult the supporting documentation for each application type.

* **What are the deadlines?**

We do not have deadlines. You can send in your applications at any time.

* **Should I tell my supervisor?**

Yes, you should develop your funding bid in collaboration with your supervisor. Your supervisor will be able to advise you on logistics and how to develop projects. They also need to sign off on the application so should be aware that you are asking for funding well in advance. They may also need to provide a statement of support in the application form before you submit it.

* **Can I apply for a conference that I’m not speaking at?**

Generally, no. We mainly only fund conference attendance when you are presenting. However, if you feel that you have a strong and fully justified case for attending a conference that you are *not* presenting at (for example, if the conference in question is focused on your niche research area or will lead to key networking/professional development opportunities), then you may get in touch with us to discuss this.

* **How many conferences can I go to?**

We generally fund one conference per year per PGR.

* **Can I go overseas?**

Yes, conferences and fieldwork can be undertaken overseas. You need to think carefully about logistics including accommodation, travel, and visas.

* **What about sustainable travel?**

The DTP has a [Sustainability Toolkit](https://www.nwcdtp.ac.uk/home/about/the-sustainable-dtp/), which outlines way that you might mitigate the impact of your travel. We will also happily talk about higher budgets to match more sustainable types of travel (such as taking trains rather than flying).

* **How do I develop a budget?**

In discussion with your supervisor and possibly your local PGR office you can develop a budget. We are looking to fund reasonable costs, that is, a sense that you have considered how to undertake your project in the most efficient way. This does not necessarily mean the cheapest, although we would hope that you would be as careful as possible of the overall cost of the application. If you have a large cost, you should explain how and why this will be incurred.

* **What is Knowledge Exchange?**

This is a type of activity that works directly with non-University audiences and communities to facilitate the two-way flow of ideas, insights, evidence and expertise between academic and external contexts. For example, with arts, cultural, public, business and third sector organisations.

* **Can I apply repeatedly?**

Some of our grants are designed for you to build on, so you can apply for a small project early in your time with us and gradually build up your experience, network, and skills.

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When you are ready to make an application for funding, please [**click this link**](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=B8tSwU5hu0qBivA1z6kad7CgA23nhT9Mi-8GjIGAUVZUN0FCSTZSVFZEQ0QzRTQ5Q1RZUUwyMzE0OC4u) to access the central funding application form. If you have any further questions or need assistance, please email [nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:nwcdtp@manchester.ac.uk) .

**Knowledge Exchange, PGR Placements and Overseas Institutional Visits (OIVs)**

**Knowledge exchange** is as a collaborative, creative activity that translates research and academic knowledge into impact in society and business. It is where research practices can have real world impact.

Knowledge exchange between arts and humanities research and non-University sectors (such as arts, cultural, business, third sector and heritage) is an important part of what it means to do world-leading research today and is a central part of our doctoral training programme.

PGR placement scheme

Doctoral-level placements provide opportunities for PGRs to develop and enhance their skills, capabilities, experiences and career aspirations above and beyond those acquired through the academic PhD programme. PGRs bring their research skills, creativity and expertise, and grow their networks and professional profile, while making a difference to the organisation by contributing to their mission and goals.

PGRs can apply to undertake a collaborative project placement with a non-HEI organisation for up to three months (or part time equivalent). **Placement projects must be unrelated to the PGR’s PhD project to be eligible for this scheme.**

Projects must have defined, clear benefits to all parties involved and an agreed output that is realistically achievable in the timeframe of the placement.

There are three types of placements a PGR can apply to undertake:

* **Researcher-led –** A PGR identifies an organisation to work with and together they co-develop a placement project in an area of mutual interest.
* **Partner-led –** An organisation proposes a placement project or thematic challenge specifically for NWCDTP PGRs to apply to.
* **National scheme –** An organisation advertises a placement which is open to PGRs from universities across the country. Applicants are selection through a competitive process.

Projects can be full time, part time or in blocks. PGRs receive the equivalent of the UKRI stipend rate for the duration of the placement and support for travel and accommodation costs if these aren’t funded by the organisation. Some project costs can also be applied for.

We encourage PGRs to speak to their supervisory teams early in the PhD programme if they are interested in undertaking a placement to discuss their PhD timelines and when a placement might best take place. PGRs will need to the support of their supervisory team during the application process.

Overseas Institutional Visits (OIVs)

PGRs can apply to make an Overseas Institutional Visit (OIV) to an institution that would benefit their PhD and where it is necessary for the development of specialist skills or will add specific academic value to the thesis.

Students can apply for travel and accommodation expenses for these visits and, in some circumstances, may also be awarded a funded extension to their stipend; each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Support for knowledge exchange, placements and OIVs

We offer guidance and support for PGRs interested in applying to undertake a knowledge exchange placement or OIV, including:

* Group information sessions and workshops.
* Tailored placement discussions to identify an area of interest or potential.
* Support to develop a viable project with a partner.
* 1-2-1 conversations on eligibility and practicalities of placements, including support to complete the application and project development forms.
* Application review and interview preparation support for PGRs applying to competitive schemes (national/international).

Please contact Beth Taylor, Knowledge Exchange Placements and Partnerships Officer, [beth.taylor@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:beth.taylor@manchester.ac.uk) with any questions or to chat about your ideas for a placement or OIV.

**PhD Student Networks**

As a NWCDTP-funded PhD student, you can get involved with one of our PGR-led student support networks. Further details about each network can be found below.

If you would like to make suggestions about the future operation of these networks, or have ideas about additional networks, [**please fill out this form**](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=QCm1Zbb0vUGDPTAz7Lz24QFrBUCNQrNLgpdyw_CgG5ZUOVRLUEJCV1pQSE05ODZVQzFUNlNDMjRYQi4u).

**1. PhD Support Forum**  
  
The PhD Support Forum is here to raise any issues you have that the NWCDTP may be able to help you with. This could include things like:  
  
- Negotiating for more notice of NWCDTP events so you can plan your time accordingly (especially for mandatory events).  
- Requesting that there is a choice of dates for NWCDTP events since not everyone will be able to make the same day.  
- Highlighting the need for alternative delivery of NWCDTP events/information (such as live online streams, recordings, different formats for documents).  
- Any ideas for events/support that you may have! All ideas are welcome.  
  
**2. Neurodiversity Forum**  
  
This forum is a supportive community space for PGRs to meet, connect, and network with fellow neurodivergent students who have an understanding and lived experience of navigating academia. This forum allows you to support and seek help, guidance, and strategies from fellow community members and raise questions. It is also a place to recognise, empower, and celebrate members’ achievements: including your own. This forum will also celebrate everything neurodivergent, including the joys and successes that it creates.    
  
**3. First-Generation PGR Network**  
  
The First-Generation PGR Network is a new group for PGRs that are the first in their family to go to university. This experience can be daunting and isolating, and often intersects with other characteristics such as gender, migrancy, and/or class. This group has been set up by a PGR from a working-class background who is the first in her family to attend university. The aim of the network is firstly, to socialise and provide solidarity with other First-Generation PGRs, and the facilitator is also keen for a tangible outcome of the skills, experience, and knowledge within the group.

Networks and Support Beyond the NWCDTP

The NWCDTP also collaborates with external institutions and other DTPs to provide additional opportunities:

**Parents, Carers, and Guardians Network**

Dr Perpetual Idehen is founder of the Parents, Carers, and Guardians Network. The network is primarily based at The University of Manchester, but all NWCDTP researchers are welcome. Perpetual runs a network of support and activities for those juggling academia and parenting and/or caregiving responsibilities.

If you would like to get involved and learn more, please email Perpetual (perpetual.idehen@manchester.ac.uk), who can connect you with other researchers and tell you more about the community activities that are going on.

**BBSRC DTP LGBTQIA+ Network**

The BBSRC DTP LGBTQIA+ Network is a friendly, fun, and informative network that is designed to support and connect LGBTQIA+ people and their allies across the UK. The BBSRC DTP (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council Doctoral Training Partnership) has very kindly opened up their events to NWCDTP researchers; events in 2024 included virtual sessions in support of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, as well as a Queer Nature Walk to celebrate Pride Month.

If you would like to learn more about the network and future events, please email Sandra Rose, who is Postgraduate Welfare and EDI Officer for the BBSRC ([sandra.rose@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:sandra.rose@nottingham.ac.uk) ).

**PhD Survival Guide**

Advice from those who have been in your shoes:

* ‘Get to grips with RefWorks (or another reputable reference management software package) as soon as possible so you can keep track of your reading. It will save you days of time overall, and you won’t lose useful bits and pieces along the way.’
* ‘Join or make a WhatsApp group of other PGRs in your faculty; it will be a useful resource for sharing non-academic information and will help combat those times when you feel a bit wobbly!’
* ‘See all challenges as learning opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge.’
* ‘Celebrate all your achievements: no matter how big or small!’
* ‘I have dyslexia, and it took me far too long to embrace my own unique learning style. So be proud of your differences in academia and celebrate how they enhance and shape your research, as they give your work a distinctive voice, style, and vision.’
* ‘It was a real “lightbulb moment” for me when I realised that my methods section was essentially just me explaining all the choices I made with my research.’
* ‘Be realistic with your daily work goals. Having smaller targets in timed blocks enables you to feel that you are making small steps forward and not feeling too overwhelmed. The Pomodoro technique is quite good, where you work in 25-minute blocks. I find I prefer to work in 45-minute blocks, so you need to find what works for you.’
* ‘Understanding your work biorhythm is helpful, especially if you have other commitments such as childcare, for example. I spent my first two years feeling like I was falling further behind everyone because I couldn't work 9-5 hours due to having to take my child to school and parental duties. Finding a work pattern that suits my lifestyle took trial and error, and I had to accept that my PhD journey wouldn't be following the typical path because I’m not a typical student. Switching to a part-time study mode has helped immensely, and I’m grateful that the NWCDTP allows that flexibility.’
* ‘Don’t feel guilty for resting: your mind needs it, and you will feel much more energised and refreshed for allowing yourself. I personally now plan in micro rests in my day to give myself a ‘thinking break’ and have time for thoughts to go on a wander and to wonder.’
* ‘Treat it like a job with flexible hours. Some days you’ll achieve more than others, and that’s normal. It should fit in with your life: not take over your entire existence!’
* ‘I think I would suggest starting writing as soon as you can, and to establish a balance of reading and writing which works for you. I have found too much reading in one go can be overwhelming, so I try to write up the relevant points of reading in my own words as soon as possible – and this has naturally led me to thinking about the structure of the thesis and where critical sources could fit into my own arguments.’
* ‘Try to take as many opportunities as possible to present your research – having a deadline is a great focus for getting your ideas onto paper.’
* ‘Finding a regular routine that works for you and setting your own goals and deadlines. It’s really hard to keep yourself motivated and working consistently for three years, especially as you’re on your own for most of the time, so I found that having lots of smaller goals to work towards was really useful.’

**What Do Our Students Say?**

* ‘I am still amazed and delighted that I am being financially supported to do work that I enjoy. In addition, all the people I have met through the NWCDTP have been warm, welcoming, and supportive, making for an exceptional and productive environment to do that work.’
* ‘I’d like to thank the NWCDTP for all its wonderful work and the support it has given me over the years. It has been life-changing and is much appreciated.’
* ‘Every time I have participated in a NWCDTP event I have felt heard and seen.’
* ‘There are opportunities to engage for all kinds of people. The events/programmes are always inclusive, and it feels as though every effort is made to be as inclusive as possible.’
* ‘The DTP has provided crucial financial support: not only the stipend but also conference and training funding, without which my PhD would not have been possible, along with vital pastoral support in the form of mentoring, training, and creating a community.’
* ‘I am in the DTP EDI working group, and I see how the DTP listens and makes positive changes for students.’
* ‘The NWCDTP offers lots of events and training opportunities, which encourage participation and inclusion. Without exception, at all of the events I have attended over the past two years, I have felt valued and welcomed.’
* ‘I believe that inclusion and belonging are at the heart of the NWCDTP because all the activities and training are designed to be as inclusive as possible to everyone.’
* ‘I feel that my voice is respected. When I think of some new ideas, the EDI Advocate and the DTP are very patient and always try to help and support in many ways.’
* ‘EDI has had a high profile in 2023-2024, and organised events have reiterated the importance of a collaborative research community that has emphasised “belonging” in the NWCDTP. I have also had personal involvement with the Neurodiversity Forum, which has added to my positive views about the NWCDTP and inclusion.’
* ‘The best part of being an NWCDTP PhD researcher is knowing that you and your fellow NWCDTP peers support each other.’
* ‘The best part of being an NWCDTP PhD researcher is knowing that you are part of a cohort that is always working on EDI issues to make academia a better place to study and work.’
* ‘For me, getting funded by the NWCDTP reassured me that other people thought that my research was worthwhile and not just a vanity project.’
* ‘Having access to all of the support available and not feeling isolated and disconnected. Also being part of a network of researchers who are all so inspiring.’
* ‘The opportunities for training and to be part of a cohort of researchers all doing different things. Doing a PhD can be lonely, so it’s nice to know you’re not alone.’
* ‘Aside from having an existing cohort of researchers going through the same experience as you and able to offer support, I think that the opportunity to apply for additional funds for training and development related to your thesis is fantastic.  It opens up so many more possibilities – not only to learn more about your area of expertise, but to make unexpected connections in your thesis and to develop your own skills and experience.’
* ‘The opportunities that the various funding schemes provide throughout your PhD. The conference and fieldwork fund allowed me to attend several conferences and spend 6 months overseas to collect data. I also received funding to organise a conference with a fellow PhD researcher, which was a lot of fun and also allowed us to gain valuable experience.’