



SeNSS RESEARCH TRAINING SUPPORT GRANT (RTSG) POLICY: GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

Contents

Summary of SeNSS's RTSG Policy	2
1. What is the Research Support Training Grant?	2
2. How does RTSG work, and how much can I apply for?	2
3. What can I use RTSG for?	3
4. What can't RTSG be used for?.....	4
5. How do I apply for RTSG funding?.....	4
6. SeNSS Administrative Leads: who to contact.....	4
7. FAQs.....	5

Summary of SeNSS's RTSG Policy

- **You are encouraged to apply for RTSG funding if you need to pay for training or resources which are necessary to support your research (subject to certain exceptions set out in this policy).**
- **Each year, you will be required to complete a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) form. You must complete your annual TNA if you wish to make an RTSG application.**
 - **Please note that this requirement is being waived for the first term of the 2017/18 academic year.**
- **Please ensure you discuss your RTSG application with your supervisor. If they are supportive of your application, please follow your university's application procedure.**
- **Once your application has been approved, please pay for the training or resource, keep the receipt, and claim your money back from your home institution within three months of spending this money.**
- **If you have any queries, please talk to your home institution's SeNSS administrative lead before making an application. Their details are included in section 7 of this policy document.**

1. What is the Research Support Training Grant?

As a SeNSS ESRC-funded student, you are entitled to apply for funding from the Research Training Support Grant Fund (RTSG) during your studies. RTSG is intended to be used to pay for expenses which are deemed to be in direct support of your research.

The ESRC's rules regarding RTSG funding is contained in the ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide, which is available at:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/files/skills-and-careers/studentships/postgraduate-funding-guide/>

2. How does RTSG work, and how much can I apply for?

SeNSS receives £750 per student per year as RTSG funding. However, please note that this amount is not personal to you, that is, you will not simply be paid £750 per year. Rather, the ESRC requires that SeNSS pools these funds and uses them flexibly across the whole student cohort, in order to ensure that everyone receives the training they need in order to complete their research successfully.

Because these funds are not personal to you, you will need to apply for funds from this grant. Ordinarily, you may apply for up to £750 per year from these pooled funds. For how to make an application, please see point 5 below.

RTSG works on a **reimbursement** basis:

- you must apply for funding before you incur the expenditure;
- if your application is successful, you should buy the item or pay for the training;
- you must keep the receipt and submit it to your home institution for reimbursement, in line with that institution's reimbursement claim procedure.
- **All reimbursement claims must be made within three months of having spent your RTSG funding, or you will not be reimbursed.**

3. What can I use RTSG for?

As noted, RTSG is intended to be used to pay for expenses which directly support your research. Examples provided by the ESRC of such expenses are:

- UK fieldwork costs
- UK, EU and overseas conferences and summer schools; this includes paying for your travel costs to the SeNSS Summer Conference
- language training courses usually undertaken in the UK prior to an overseas fieldwork trip
- reimbursement of interpreters, guides, assistants
- survey costs, e.g. printing, stationery, telephone calls
- purchase of small items of equipment of research purposes, e.g. cameras, tape recorders, films, cassettes
- gifts for local informants
- books and other reading material not available through libraries.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able consider requests to purchase a laptop or other computer equipment, including software, from this allowance. Ordinarily, your home institution is expected to provide you with access to computer and other standard facilities, so a claim for computer equipment would only arise if it is so specialised that your home institution cannot be expected to provide this. Any such exceptional request must be clearly and strongly justified based on the nature of your research, and must be essential for the successful completion of this research. In these instances, any equipment purchased in excess of £200 must be returned to SeNSS at the end of your studentship.

If you are applying for **travel costs**, please note read the SeNSS Travel Reimbursement policy, as it sets out what you can and cannot claim for in relation to travelling. It is available on the SeNSS website, at <http://senss-dtp.ac.uk/senss-student-policies/>

Overseas fieldwork is not primarily funded through RTSG; rather, it is funded separately. However, please note that you are permitted to combine RTSG funds with any funds you are awarded for overseas fieldwork. For details of how to apply for overseas fieldwork funding, please see the SeNSS Overseas Fieldwork Policy, available on the SeNSS website, at <http://senss-dtp.ac.uk/senss-student-policies/>

If you are not sure whether you can apply for RTSG for an event or resource, please discuss this with your supervisor in the first instance. If they cannot assist you, please contact your institution's SeNSS Administrative lead for their advice. Their contact details are available in section 6 of this policy.

4. What can't RTSG be used for?

You cannot apply for RTSG funding:

- prior to the start date of your studentship;
- in advance, when the training or event takes place after the end date of your studentship award;
- to purchase capital equipment or facilities which your university would normally be expected to provide;
- to buy equipment which is viewed as being "standard", or that is generally available, through a department or institution, for example, stationery;
- to buy stationery for home use, if this would normally be made available to you whilst you are on university premises;
- to purchase of books and journals that would normally be provided through your university's library, or through inter-library loans;
- to cover expenses relating to supervisor visits, to or from you, during fieldwork, or off-site placements of less than nine months;
- to pay for training that *all* postgraduate students are required to attend, e.g. Health and Safety courses at your home institution. RTSG cannot be used to fund these courses where non-RCUK students are not expected to pay.

5. How do I apply for RTSG funding?

- In order to make it quicker and easier for you to apply for RTSG funding, and for your application to be approved, SeNSS has de-centralised its RTSG application procedures. This means that you will need to apply for RTSG using the procedure and forms set down by your home institution. However, please note that **your application will not be considered unless you have completed your annual TNA** for that year. In addition, if your primary supervisor does not support your application, it will not be approved.
- If you have already been awarded RTSG funding, and you wish to apply for further funding, you will need to check how much you have spent, and therefore how much you are still eligible to apply for. To find out this out, please contact your SeNSS administrative lead, or the person designated by your home institution to deal with RTSG matters.

6. SeNSS Administrative Leads: who to contact

If you have any queries about applying for RTSG, please contact the SeNSS administrative lead, or their designated contact person at your home institution:

- **City, University London:** Dr Claudia Kalay: researchsupport@city.ac.uk

- **University of East Anglia:** Mel Steele: senss.dtp@uea.ac.uk
- **University of Essex:** Laura Ruddick: laura@essex.ac.uk
- **Goldsmiths, University of London:** Chris Robson: graduateschool@gold.ac.uk
- **University of Kent:** Rosalind Beeching: graduateschool@kent.ac.uk
- **Reading University:** Joanna John: esrcdtp@reading.ac.uk
- **Roehampton University:** Fiona Eddleston: SeNSS@roehampton.ac.uk
- **Royal Holloway, University of London:** Jane Gawthrope: esrcdtp@rhul.ac.uk
- **University of Surrey:** Shane Dowle: phdstudentships@surrey.ac.uk
- **University of Sussex:** Shelley Jenkins: esrcdt@sussex.ac.uk

7. FAQs

We plan to build up this FAQ section based on the queries you share with us throughout your studentships about whether you can apply for RTSG for certain events or resources.