

SeNSS OVERSEAS FIELDWORK:

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Summary of SeNSS's OFW policy

- Students must be full-time and in the doctoral element of their award to be eligible for applying for OFW. If students are studying part-time, they will need to transfer to full-time study for the duration of their OFW.
- Students in the +1 of their 1+3 award are not eligible to apply for this funding until they begin the +3 element of their award.
- In order to be considered for OFW funding, students must have indicated when applying for a studentship that they are considering or planning to undertake OFW.
- Normally, students may only make one application (noting that the application can be for more than one trip) during their studentship.
- **OFW applications MUST be made at least three calendar months before the student intends to travel.**
- Students must have discussed their application with their primary supervisor, and have their supervisor's support for the proposed OFW.
- There is a cap of £6,000 on the amount each student can claim.
- All students must make a formal OFW application, including a well thought-out and reasonable budget.
- Students must have complied with their home institution's risk assessment policy (or equivalent) before applying for OFW, and before travelling.
- Normally, OFW may last for up to twelve months.
- The final allocation of OFW funds will be determined by SeNSS, regardless of the amount applied for by the student.
- Under ESRC rules, SeNSS is obliged, in certain circumstances, to recover some or all of the OFW funding if a student abandons their fieldwork, or it is unsuccessful and they return early to the UK.

1. Overseas Fieldwork Policy Framework

The SeNSS Overseas Fieldwork (OFW) policy is based on the rules set down in the ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide, which is available at:

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

OFW, as its name suggests, must take place overseas; fieldwork within the UK does not qualify.¹ OFW should not be confused with Overseas Institutional Visits (OIVs), which are intended to encourage international engagement, by allowing students to spend time in an overseas institution.²

There is an expectation that students will identify and access other sources of funding for OFW, and will not simply rely on this fund to cover all the costs of their fieldwork. It should also be noted that students should streamline their OFW costs as far as possible,

¹ Costs incurred through conducting fieldwork within the UK should be recovered through the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG). (For the SeNSS RTSG policy, please go to:

<http://senss-dtp.ac.uk/senss-student-policies/>)

² Please note that SeNSS will not be offering OIVs during the 2017/18 academic year.

recognising that SeNSS will examine the costings submitted as part of the OFW application process, and may not be able to fund each OFW application in full.

2. OFW Financial Management

- The OFW fund will be held centrally.
- The DTG provides £450 per student for 3.5 years for OFW. To provide some context, this means that, on current student numbers, an amount of £75,600 is available for the 2017/18 cohort to cover OFW.
- There will be a cap of £6,000 on the amount each student can access. Exceptions may be made, where justifiable.
- Normally, students may only make one application (noting that the application can be for more than one trip) during their studentship.
- As part of their application, the student concerned should normally provide at least two quotes for travel costs, as well as evidence of the likely/current cost of any visa and/or vaccines they will require in order to travel to the country in which they will carry out their OFW.
- The final allocation of OFW funds will be determined by SeNSS, regardless of the amount applied for by the student.

- The SeNSS partner institution concerned will, in most circumstances, bear the costs for the OFW in the first instance, following approval of the application by SeNSS. These costs may be claimed from SeNSS provided the student has spent these funds in accordance with the approved application.
 - The SeNSS partner institution may make more than one claim for reimbursement, given that the student will incur expenses throughout the length of the OFW. However, partner institutions are requested to combine claims for reimbursement into less frequent, larger claims, rather than smaller, more frequent claims.

- SeNSS requires that the student's home institution submits a final Statement of Expenditure in respect of their OFW. This statement should confirm that all funds have been spent in accordance with the approved OFW application.
- Once this Statement has been received, SeNSS will transfer the balance of the funds to the relevant partner institution.
 - Any unspent funds must be returned to SeNSS by the partner institution.
- Under ESRC rules, SeNSS is obliged to recover some or all of the OFW funding awarded to a student if they abandon their fieldwork, or it is unsuccessful and they return early to the UK. The amount to be recovered is the total OFW funding granted to the student less any reasonable expenditure they have already incurred.
 - Where the student has abandoned their fieldwork or it has been unsuccessful, SeNSS will enquire as to the reasons for this. Should the student have abandoned their OFW through no fault of their own, SeNSS will not seek to recover any funds from that student as a result, for example, of one or more of the following reasons:
 - Unrest in the country concerned
 - Illness, either on the part of the student concerned, or a close family member, or other family emergency
 - Bereavement

- Any other failure of the fieldwork which is not the responsibility of the student.
 - Any discussion of this issue should be informed by how much of the OFW has already been conducted, and whether that which has been conducted is a total loss, or whether some research/data can be salvaged.
 - Should the student abandon their fieldwork, or should it be unsuccessful, this will be discussed by the SeNSS Director, Deputy Director, and Manager, whose decision on whether costs should be recovered shall be final.
- If a student is awarded OFW funding, they are responsible in the first instance for managing these funds, and for ensuring that they spend these on the items they listed in their application.
 - Students are prohibited from using their OFW funding to pay for any of their family members to travel with them, or to visit them overseas.
 - Where a student may be working with, or based at, a host institution abroad, they should seek accommodation which is consistent with that institution's insurance and health and safety policies.
 - Students are permitted to use RTSG funds towards meeting their OFW costs. For details of how to claim RTSG, please refer to the SeNSS RTSG policy, available at: <http://senss-dtp.ac.uk/senss-student-policies/>

3. OFW: SeNSS partner institution responsibility

- SeNSS partner institutions will be responsible for ensuring that applications for OFW adhere to the policy as set out in this document.
- In particular, SeNSS partner institutions are responsible for:
 - Ensuring that their students seeking OFW funding are eligible for making an application for these funds, in accordance with point 5., below.
 - Ensuring, both at the point at which the student makes an OFW application, but also before the student travels, that their institution's risk assessment policies and procedures have been followed with respect to the country that the student is intending to conduct their fieldwork in.³
 - That the student concerned has purchased appropriate travel insurance.
 - Recovering any unspent OFW funds from the student concerned, and returning these funds to SeNSS.
 - Recovering some or all of the OFW funding awarded to a student if they abandon their fieldwork, or it is unsuccessful and they return early to the UK, and returning these funds to SeNSS, in accordance with section 2, above.

4. OFW: Student eligibility

SeNSS ESRC-funded students are only eligible to apply for OFW in the following circumstances:

³ Please note that the ESRC requires that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website be checked to ensure that the country in which the student plans to conduct OFW is safe to travel to. The website is available at: www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/. ESRC policy states that applications for conducting OFW in countries to which the FCO has advised against all travel will be rejected.

- Students must be full-time and in the doctoral element of their award. It does not matter whether they hold a full or a fees-only award.
- If students are studying part-time, they will need to transfer to full-time study for the duration of their OFW.⁴
- Students in the +1 of their 1+3 award are not eligible to apply for this funding until they begin the +3 element of their award.
- In order to be considered for OFW funding, students must have stated on their SeNSS studentship application form that they are planning to undertake OFW, or have indicated that they were not sure about whether or not they would need to undertake OFW. If a student indicated that on their form that they were not applying for OFW, they are not permitted to apply for these funds once they have started their studentship.
 - Where a student has indicated they will /may conduct OFW, they may change their plans from those they set out in their application. However, any change must be fully justified, and must be agreed with their primary supervisor.
- If a student has any eligibility concerns, they should discuss these with their home institution's designated administrative contact person before making an application.

5. OFW: Duration of funding

- Normally, OFW is expected to last for up to twelve months. However, if a student is able to provide a strong case for a longer visit, they may be permitted to spend up to a maximum of 18 months overseas.
 - If a student remains overseas longer than has been agreed with their supervisor and SeNSS, they will not be permitted to make any retrospective reimbursement claims, or be permitted to apply for an extension to their award period or their thesis submission date.
- If a student is going to be based overseas for more than nine months, it is advisable that they hold at least one in-person meeting with their supervisor halfway through their OFW.
 - Either the student should travel back to the UK to see their supervisor, or their supervisor could travel to see the student where that student is based. The cost of this trip must be met from the OFW funds the student has been awarded; no additional funding will be granted.
 - If the student travels back to the UK to meet with their supervisor, it is recommended that the student remains in the UK for a maximum of ten days. However, please note that the student will not be granted an extension to their fieldwork period as compensation for making this visit.

6. OFW: Speaking the locally-spoken language

There is an expectation on the part of SeNSS that a student conducting OFW will acquire or develop a working ability to speak the language of the people residing in the country or area in which the student will be working. Funding for what the ESRC terms "difficult language training" is available through the RTSG, and the student should have either

⁴ SeNSS students may transfer from part-time to full-time study for a period of between three months and one year in order to undertake OFW.

undertaken this training prior to making an OFW, or have in place a planned timetable for doing so. SeNSS difficult language training policy and procedure is available at: <http://senss-dtp.ac.uk/senss-student-policies/>, as is the SeNSS RTSG policy.

7. OFW application procedure

- All students wishing to undertake OFW must make a formal application, including a well thought-out and reasonable budget, which comes within the £6,000 limit.
- **OFW applications MUST be made at least three calendar months before the student intends to travel.**
- In drafting their application, they must discuss it with their primary supervisor.
- Once the student has completed their section of the application form, they must email it to their primary supervisor.
- The primary supervisor, where they support the application, must complete their section of the form, and forward it to the person designated by their home institution to deal with OFW applications.
- The designated person will review the application and, if it is in line with the SeNSS policy, will forward it to the SeNSS Manager for consideration.
- The SeNSS Manager will approve all well-reasoned and fully-justified applications up to £6,000. Should an application exceed £6,000, or raise complex issues or questions, the Manager will confer with either the Director or the Deputy Director in deciding the application.
- SeNSS aims to make a decision on OFW applications within two weeks of having received the application.

8. SeNSS OFW application form template



SeNSS OVERSEAS FIELDWORK POLICY:

APPLICATION FORM

Before completing this application form, please read the SeNSS Overseas Fieldwork Policy, which is available at <http://senss-dtp.ac.uk/senss-student-policies/>

If you are eligible to apply for OFW funding, please discuss your planned application with your supervisor before completing this form. If your supervisor is supportive of

your application, complete this form and submit it to your supervisor, so that they can complete their section of this form.

Please note that you will need to ensure that this form is submitted to SeNSS at least THREE CALENDAR MONTHS before you intend to travel.

If you have any queries, please contact your home institution's SeNSS administrative lead in the first instance. Their contact details are provided at the end of this form.

1. Student's application

Personal details

Surname	
First Name	
Pathway	
University	
Primary supervisor's name	

Please confirm the following:

SeNSS will only consider applications for OFW if you stated in your SeNSS studentship application that you either: 1) planned to undertake OFW; or 2) were uncertain about whether or not you would need to undertake OFW. Please confirm that you noted this in your SeNSS studentship application	YES / NO (delete as appropriate)
SeNSS will only consider applications for OFW which must be undertaken in order to successfully complete the research project.	YES / NO (delete as appropriate)

<p>Please confirm that the OFW you intend to conduct is essential to successfully completing your research project</p>	
<p>OFW applications may only be made by students who are full-time and in the doctoral element of their award. If you are currently studying part-time and are in the doctoral element of your award, you will need to transfer to full-time study for the duration of your OFW.</p> <p>Please confirm that either: a) you are in full-time study and in the doctoral element of your award; or b) you are in part-time study and in the doctoral element of your award, but plan to apply to transfer to full-time study for the duration of your OFW</p>	<p>a) YES / NO (delete as appropriate)</p> <p>b) YES / NO (delete as appropriate)</p>
<p>It is expected that you will have a working knowledge of the locally-spoken language where you are undertaking OFW.</p> <p>Please name the language spoken in that country or area, and confirm that you are able to speak this language to the level necessary to conduct OFW, or that there is a plan in place for you to develop a working knowledge of this language</p>	<p>Name of language spoken: _____</p> <p>YES / NO (delete as appropriate)</p>
<p>You must apply for OFW funding at least three months before the date on which you propose to travel to the country concerned</p> <p>Have you allowed three months between submitting this application and when you plan to travel?</p>	<p>Yes / No (delete as appropriate)</p> <p>Date on which you propose to travel: _____</p>
<p>You are expected to have complied with your home institution's risk assessment (or equivalent) policy in undertaking OFW.</p>	

Please confirm that you have complied with this policy	YES / NO (delete as appropriate)
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Details of proposed OFW

Please note that, if you are planning more than one OFW trip, each of these must be itemised individually in the table below.

OFW duration		Country/ies to be visited	Duration of visit (in weeks)
Start date	End date		

If you are planning to spend longer than 12 months conducting OFW, please note that you will need to justify this in the text box below.

Funding applied for

Please note that there is a **£6,000 limit** for OFW applications. If you will be spending more than 9 months overseas, please ensure that you include in your budget the cost of either you travelling to the UK to meet with your supervisor, or your supervisor travelling to meet with you in the field.

DESCRIPTION OF EXPENDITURE	JUSTIFICATION	AMOUNT REQUESTED

Student's signature: _____

Date: _____

2. Supervisor’s supporting statement

This section must be completed by your primary supervisor.

In drafting your brief supporting statement (maximum 250 words), please confirm the purpose of the OFW, and why it is essential to the student’s research project. Please confirm that the student’s planned itinerary, the duration of the OFW, and the funds requested are appropriate. Please also confirm that the student either has a working knowledge of the locally-spoken language, or that there are plans in place for the student to develop this knowledge.

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Supervisor’s name	
Supervisor’s signature	
Date	

Supervisors: once you have completed your section of the form, please email it to your institution’s SeNSS administrative lead, whose contact details are included at the end of this form.

3. Administrative lead (or designated person) at SeNSS partner institution to complete

Please confirm that the responses given to the questions in section 2 of this form are correct	Yes / No (Delete as appropriate)
Administrative lead /	

alternate's name	
Administrative lead / alternate's signature	
Date	

4. SeNSS Manager to complete

Date form received	
Application approved, and brief justification	Yes / No
Director / Deputy Director's decision sought, and brief justification	Yes / No
Director / Deputy Director's decision, and brief justification	
Amount approved, and brief justification	
If advance to be paid, how much	
Any other comments	
Date decision conveyed to applicant (cc: supervisor and admin lead)	

SeNSS Administrative Leads: who to contact

If you have any queries about this policy, or about applying for OFW funding, please contact the administrator at your chosen SeNSS university in the first instance:

- **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

Document history

Date	Action
	Drafted by Manager
	Circulated to OG for comment; OG feedback incorporated into document
31.10.17	Discussed at OG meeting
01.11.17	Manager updated document in accordance with OG discussion
01.11.17	Manager updated document in accordance with OG discussion, and circulated to OG for final comment
03.11.17	Manager circulated document to Director and Deputy Director for comment
06.11.17	Comments from OG, Director and Deputy Director incorporated into revised document (version 6Nov17)
15.11.17	Discussed and approved by the SeNSS core team
24.11.17	Approved by MB