



Graduate School

DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP SCHEME Guidance Notes for October 2009 Entry

Introduction

1. The Durham University Doctoral Fellowship Scheme was established in 2003/04. The Scheme is linked to the University Strategy and its key objectives are to:
 - attract outstanding research students to the University
 - enhance research in academic departments.

The Scheme is administered by the Student Financial Support Office. The Postgraduate Awards Advisory Group, composed of senior members of academic staff of the institution, has responsibility for the final selection of award holders and the management of the Scheme. The Postgraduate Awards Advisory Group is chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School and serviced by the Head of Student Financial Support.

Nature of Fellowships

2. Durham University Doctoral Fellowships will include:
 - full payment of tuition fees;
 - a maintenance award at the nationally agreed rate (to the value of £13,290 in 2009/10);
 - a research training support grant of £1000 provided to the academic department for use by the Fellowship holder;
 - an allowance to permit the award holder to attend the North East local UK-Grad School in their second or third year.
3. Fellows would also be permitted to undertake teaching duties in line with University Regulations. In this case, they would be paid, by their academic department, at the standard part-time rate for any duties.
4. Each Fellowship will be awarded for one year in the first instance but, subject to progress being deemed satisfactory by the academic department and the Postgraduate Awards Advisory Group, may be extended up to the total length stated in the original offer of funding. If extended, the Fellowship would continue to provide a full waiver of fees, a maintenance award at the nationally agreed rate and a research training support grant.

Eligibility

5. Applicants must meet the standard University and Department admissions criteria and have applied to the University for admission in the session 2009-2010, as a registered research student, to a programme of full-time study for a PhD. Students

who are already registered for a PhD are not eligible to apply for an award. Applicants may be of any nationality, and intending to study in any subject area offered by the University.

Candidate Application Procedure

6. Applicants should submit an application for postgraduate study using the standard on-line application procedure. Applicants should indicate that they wish to be considered for a Durham University Doctoral Fellowship.
7. The deadline for applications to be received from candidates through the on-line application form is **Monday 16 February 2009 03:00 GMT**.
8. The deadline for receipt of all additional documentation from candidates by the University (references, transcripts etc) is **Friday 27 February 2009**. Please submit applications and additional documents directly to academic departments. Any applications received by the Student Financial Support Office will be forwarded to the relevant academic department for consideration.

Departmental Nomination Procedure

9. Academic departments are responsible for completing nominations for applicants they wish to nominate for an award.
10. Academic departments may consider applications from those applicants who require only partial funding to 'top-up' to a full Durham University Doctoral Fellowship. In these cases, academic departments must demonstrate that the 'other funding' is guaranteed.
11. Durham University Doctoral Fellowships will be offered in two ways in 2009 to postgraduate students who, in the session 2009-2010, are commencing as full-time research students for a PhD:
 - i. Departments may now submit at any time "fast-track" nominations for Fellowships for outstanding research students, where there are exceptional circumstances for considering an applicant outside of the normal competition timetable. Departments must submit a case which highlights the outstanding nature of the candidate, and also provide evidence of the circumstances which justify a "fast-track" award. This will normally consist of evidence of a formal comparable offer from another institution. These individual nominations will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as they are received, by the relevant Faculty staff (Head of the Faculty or a Deputy) and the Dean of the Graduate School. Provided that the application fulfils the above criteria demonstrating academic excellence and an immediate need for funding, a Fellowship will be confirmed immediately. If the applicant does not meet the criteria further consideration of their nomination will be deferred to the annual meeting. Departments will have the opportunity to withdraw an unsuccessful "fast-track" nomination before the annual meeting.

Departments should send fast-track nominations to the Head of Student Financial Support, who will log them and forward them to the relevant Faculty staff.

- ii. All “non fast-track” Durham University Doctoral Fellowships will be offered on a competitive basis following the procedure described below.
12. Departments should put forward “non fast-track” Fellowship nominations made up of:
 - The initial application as completed by the applicant;
 - The PhD research proposal;
 - A description of how the proposed research project would benefit the department. This may include reference to departmental research priorities and any other relevant considerations.

Departments should send “non fast-track” nominations to the Head of Student Financial Support, who will log them and submit them to the relevant Faculty Review Panel.

13. In view of the limited number of Fellowships available, academic departments will normally only be allowed to submit 2 nominations (including “fast-track” nominations). However where a department has sufficient excellent candidates, and a particularly strong strategic case, up to 4 nominations (including “fast-track” nominations may be submitted. Departments should provide a ranked list of nominations with a rationale for the rank order.
14. The latest date for the receipt of departmental nominations by the Student Financial Support Office is **Tuesday 24 March 2009.**
15. Applications from each Faculty will be ranked by one of three Faculty Review Panels consisting of the Head of the Faculty and a Deputy, who may consult other staff as appropriate. The Faculty Panel will assess departmental nominations on the following basis:
 - The applicant’s previous performance
 - The applicant’s research potential
 - The research project
 - Departmental priorities
 - Relevant strategic factors

Selection of Fellows

16. The Postgraduate Awards Advisory Group will be responsible for the final selection of award holders, taking into account the Faculty rankings. Funds available to each Faculty will depend on the number Fellowships that have been awarded through the fast-track scheme. All available funds remaining for the year will be allocated at this meeting.
17. The Postgraduate Awards Advisory Group will meet on **Friday 3 April 2009 (am).**

Announcement of Fellowships

18. It is the intention of the Postgraduate Awards Advisory Group that the results of the 2009 competition will be announced on **Friday 3 April 2009 (pm),** when each academic department will be notified of the result of applications nominated and each

nominated applicant will be informed whether or not their application has been successful.

Feedback to Departments

19. Departments will receive feedback on their submissions to the scheme from the Head of their Faculty, or Deputy, as soon as possible after the results have been announced.

Conditions of Acceptance of Fellowships

20. Each Fellowship will be offered subject to the applicant meeting in full any acceptance conditions.
21. Fellowships are valid only for the year 2009-2010. Deferment to a later session is not permitted.

Payment of Tuition Fees, Maintenance Awards and Other Allowances

22. Fellows' tuition fees will automatically be paid by the University following registration. Fellows will not need to make any payment directly to the University and will not be invoiced for tuition fees.
23. Fellows will receive their maintenance award on a quarterly basis, paid in October, December, March and June. Maintenance awards will be paid into fellows' bank accounts by direct debit where bank details have been provided. Where bank details have not been provided cheques will be raised.
24. Research Training Support Grants will be paid to the appropriate academic departments following registration.
25. Allowances permitting Fellows to attend the North East GRADSchool will automatically be paid by the University following registration. Fellows will not need to make any payment directly to the University and will not be invoiced for payment.

Absence

26. If a Fellow is prevented from following his or her approved programme because of illness, accident or other cause, which seriously interrupts the programme, the academic department should make a report to the Graduate School Committee, copied to the Student Financial Support Office.

Termination of Fellowships

27. A Fellowship may be terminated at any time when an unsatisfactory progress report on the Fellow is received from the academic department, or when the Fellow ceases to be a full-time research student. Fellowships will automatically cease at the end of the quarter in which the thesis is submitted, providing that this is within the time period specified by the University.

Renewal of Fellowships

28. Subject to a satisfactory progress report from the academic department, Durham University Doctoral Fellowships are renewable each year, up to a maximum tenure as specified in the original offer letter. The Fellow is not required to apply for renewal, but is informed by letter when the Fellowship has been renewed, usually in April.

Contact Details

29. Durham University Doctoral Fellowships are administered by the Student Financial Support Office. Please address any queries to Mrs Elizabeth Lovett, Head of Student Financial Support, University Office, Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HP. E-mail: E.L.Lovett@durham.ac.uk, telephone: 0191 334 6116.