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NERC-Oxford DTP Course Handbook 2016

The NERC award/grant number for this DTP is: NE/L002612/1

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available at http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/dtproginmpls. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact Victoria Forth, victoria.forth@env-res.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as at 13th September 2016 however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges webpage. If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

Part I

Introduction

Welcome to the NERC-Oxford Doctoral Training Partnership in Environmental Research.

You are the third cohort of students to be selected for this training programme. The DTP has created the foundations for a new way of training D.Phil students in the environmental sciences. Our programme is student-led, cohort-based and multi-disciplinary. In practice, this means that i) students are able to develop their own research projects in line with the interests of their supervisor(s); ii) students from the full range of NERC science disciplines come together to take part in our core training programme iii) where they will develop a critical understanding of the key concepts and methods used across the breadth of environmental research. (To see the specific research areas that fall within the NERC remit, check out the list of NERC’s Science Topics http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/topics/. Furthermore, the DTP offers hands-on, intensive training courses in research and quantitative skills, and opportunities to work together to solve a range of environmental problems. The programme is particularly dedicated to helping students engage with those who are interested in environmental research, including our partners in industry, government, and the non-profit sector.

The DTP offers a novel training environment across three broad science streams, each of which includes the influence of, and consequences for, human-environment interactions:

a. The ‘Biodiversity, Ecology and Evolutionary Processes’ stream spans research into biological processes, systems and their interactions, at scales ranging from the organism to the population, in spheres ranging from human health to natural ecosystems, over all timescales.

b. The ‘Physical Climate System’ stream spans research across all aspects of the Physical Climate System, present, past and future, with strong links to climate impacts and mitigation.
c. The ‘Dynamic Earth, Surface Processes and Natural Hazards’ stream spans activities from theoretical seismology and isotope geochemistry to the analysis of natural resources, quantification of surface processes over all timescales, and geophysical hazards and risk.

There are six departments involved in the DTP in Environmental Research: Research Lab of Archaeology & the History of Art (RLAHA), Earth Sciences, School of Geography & Environment, Physics, Plant Sciences and Zoology. These departments span two divisions in the University: the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division and the Social Sciences Division. The DTP is hosted by the MPLS Division; therefore all DTP students are members of the MPLS Graduate School (http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/learning/graduate-school).

**Key DTP contacts**

**Academic Director:** Prof. David Pyle (Earth Sciences) is responsible for the development and implementation of the DTP (david.pyle@earth.ox.ac.uk).

**Course Director:** Dr. Elizabeth Jeffers (Zoology) developed the training programme, will oversee the delivery of training courses and monitor student progress through the programme (elizabeth.jeffers@env-res.ox.ac.uk).

**Programme Manager:** Victoria Forth oversees administration of all aspects of the programme, including marketing, admissions, induction, monitoring and record keeping of student progression, course assessments, communicating with applicants and students, timetabling, DTP finance and managing student funding awards (enquiries@env-res.ox.ac.uk, ext. 71193).

**Administrative and Finance Assistant:** Claudia Azevedo assists the Management Committee, the Course Director and the DTP Co-ordinator with administration and finance (claudia.azevedo@admin.ox.ac.uk, ext. 71194).

**Management Committee:** The committee is the decision-making body of the DTP and is generally responsible for overseeing development of the training programme, admitting students and managing DTP finances. The committee is made up of one lead representative and one deputy from each of the six departments involved with the DTP and provides the important links between the DTP and the departments:

- Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art: Greger Larson & Victoria Smith
- School of Geography & the Environment: David Thomas and Marc Macias Fauria
- Plant Sciences: Andy Hector and Lindsey Turnbull
- Zoology: Tim Coulson and EJ Milner-Gulland
- Earth Sciences: Tarje Nissen-Meyer
- Physics: Philip Stier and Andrew Wells
- Student Representatives
  - (2014 Cohort): Amy Creese
  - (2015 Cohort): Brooke Johnson

Each year a student representative will be appointed to the Management Committee from each cohort to represent the interests of their cohort and act an information conduit between the committee and the student body. Student Reps will attend the open session of each MC meeting.
The Role of the DTP

The Oxford DTP in Environmental Research offers a world-class, multidisciplinary training environment for the next generation of researchers working at the frontiers of Environmental Research. Students coming through the DTP have been selected because of their demonstrated potential for becoming scientific and research leaders of the future, able to tackle the leading environmental problems that will confront society over the 21st century. We will provide a unique training environment that supports you in undertaking cutting-edge scientific research whilst understanding its role within the larger realm of environmental science and society.

To this end, we have created a multi-disciplinary training programme that will provide students with the key skills required for environmental scientists in the 21st century (as outlined in NERC’s Most Wanted Report: Postgraduate and Professional Skills Needs in the Environment Sector). The nature of the DTP means that students will be admitted from a wide variety of different disciplines. We have physicists, biologists, archaeologists, earth scientists, geographers and also some who do not fall into any of these categories. Some have just completed undergraduate degrees, others have been researchers in the field for a number of years. It is this diversity of experience that makes the DTP an exciting place to begin a research degree.

It is important that you are introduced to the key questions and research approaches used in the range of scientific disciplines operating within the NERC remit. Most topics you will encounter during the first term will be outside of your field of expertise, and our aim is for you to use this opportunity to consider new areas of research for your DPhil project and/or to enable you to communicate more effectively with researchers in cognate disciplines. You will find that some courses are well within your capability and others are completely new to you. Don’t get frustrated if you feel that a particular course is not necessary because you already know this area. This is a great opportunity for you to support your fellow students through peer to peer learning, and the favour will be returned.

The Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook applies to students starting the course in Michaelmas term 2016. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years. It provides information that is relevant to students joining the DTP in Environmental Research; it is not a handbook of Graduate Study at Oxford. There is an excellent MPLS Graduate Handbook on the MPLS Graduate School website (https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/graduate-school/information-for-postgraduate-research-students) which serves this purpose. The MPLS Handbook describes what you can and can’t do, and how to make adjustments to your progress, for example, suspension of status if you become ill for a long period, or dispensation from statutory residence if you need to carry out research elsewhere in the first two years. You can find a link to all the graduate progression forms you need to make such changes on this page.
Key Divisional Contacts

For complex problems you can contact the MPLS Graduate Studies Officer, or the Social Sciences Graduate Studies contact if the DTP office is unable to resolve the issue.

MPLS Graduate Studies Officer – Mrs Helen Beauchamp, University of Oxford, MPLS Divisional Office, Graduate Office, 9 Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3PD
Tel: 01865 (2)82584 mailto:helen.beauchamp@mpls.ox.ac.uk

MPLS Graduate Studies Assistant – Miss Rebecca Reynolds, University of Oxford, MPLS Divisional Office, Graduate Office, 9 Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3PD, Tel: 01865 (2)82579, rebecca.reynolds@mpls.ox.ac.uk

The Social Sciences Division Senior Graduate Studies Assistant - Ms Mary Smith Hayes House, 75 George St, Oxford OX1 2BQ mary.smith@socsci.ox.ac.uk

MPLS Payments team (in case of problems with stipend or other payments)

Telephone 01865- (6)16016

yvonne.butler@admin.ox.ac.uk manager
cara.pullen@admin.ox.ac.uk stipends
charlotte.eld@admin.ox.ac.uk expenses and payments

In term 3 you will transfer into one of six departments to carry out your D.Phil. research and once this occurs, your progression through the D.Phil. will be mostly governed by the rules set by each department. Therefore, you should read through the handbook(s) for the department(s) you wish to join. You can obtain copies by going to the following links or contacting the relevant graduate administrator.

Archaeology - http://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/current-graduates.html
Graduate Administrator: Ms Barbara Morris, barbara.morris@arch.ox.ac.uk,
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) Dr Rick Schulting

Physics - http://www2.physics.ox.ac.uk/research/atmospheric-oceanic-and-planetary-physics/graduate-handbook
Graduate Administrator: Ms Sarah Harrison, harrington@atm.ox.ac.uk
DGS Dr Patrick Irwin

Geography & the Environment - http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/graduate/ (accessible only via the SoGE intranet)
Graduate Administrator: Mrs Ruth Saxton, ruth.saxton@geog.ox.ac.uk
DGS Professor Craig Jeffrey

Earth Sciences - http://www.earth.ox.ac.uk/graduate_course
Graduate Administrator: Mrs Elaine Sherrott, elaine.sherrott@earth.ox.ac.uk
DGS Professor Chris Ballentine
This table should help you to decide which handbook you need to consult:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handbook</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DTP</td>
<td>Year 1 of the programme, funding, NERC requirements, minimum training requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPLS</td>
<td>University regulations governing the DPhil degree, supervision and assessment, what to do if you encounter problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental</td>
<td>Departmental procedures involving progression through the DPhil degree. E.g Transfer of status.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arriving in Oxford at the start of the course

Registration/Enrolment

Your College will officially enrol you as a student when you collect your University Card. Colleges have their own rules regarding the dates that students can collect University Cards, so contact your College Graduate Administrator to arrange a suitable time to collect your card. A space has been allocated during Induction on 19th September between 11.30 and 1.30pm to attend college for registration.

Payment of Stipends to students and college & tuition fees to the university.

Once you are officially enrolled in the University, we can issue your first stipend payment in the form of a cheque. This payment will be for the first quarter (3 months) of stipend to help you cover the costs of relocation, deposits etc. Subsequent payments will be paid directly into your bank account in monthly instalments (for students who have a full NERC stipend). For students with a major College Funding Award (i.e. one that covers a large proportion of their stipend which is usually EU students), the stipend payments will occur quarterly, in line with established College Finance procedures. It will be assumed that you want monthly payments unless you inform the DTP office otherwise. You have until mid-November to let the office know, at this point they will submit the payment request to central payments and after this it will be complicated to change.

Students should not be billed for their University or College fees. The Colleges are responsible for collecting fees from postgraduate students; however, we have arranged for them to send the invoice for your fees directly to the DTP office so that we can pay these on your behalf. Please ensure that your College has not added your University or College fees to your college battels. If this happens,
contact your College Finance Office immediately and remind them that they need to invoice the DTP office as per your funding letter.

**Inductions**

DTP Induction activities take place on 19th and 20th September 2016 at the DTP Suite, E level, Department of Zoology. In week -1 and 0 you will be participating the training course and will not be available for other induction activities taking place in college. The colleges are aware of this and should be able to provide alternate welcome activities for you.

**Space & Equipment**

During the first year of your D.Phil., you will be undertaking the core training programme and developing your D.Phil. research proposal. You will have a dedicated desk space (with Ethernet access and a lockable set of drawers) in the DTP suite (on E-level in the Department of Zoology) for this purpose. This space remains yours throughout the first year. You can move out to your department as soon as you have submitted your project proposal and can then start working on your project while the Management Committee assesses your proposal. At this point you can start to access your RTSG.

**Zoology Access** - You will need to complete a key fob form in order to be issued with a key fob to let you into your study. You also need to register your card with Zoology reception so that you can swipe into the building.

**Darwin’s canteen** runs a cashless system where cash is loaded onto your Darwin’s account using a UPayChilli account [https://www.upaychilli.com/](https://www.upaychilli.com/). Students are automatically registered.

**The Zoology Department has pidges** on D-level which are arranged alphabetically. Any mail that comes to the department for you will be put in the pidge for your surname.

**Also on D-Level is a photocopying room** (on the admin corridor opposite the faculty pidges). Here there is a stationery desk where you may help yourself to items that you need. Also, paper for our printer/photocopier can be collected from here.

**The IT office** is also located on D level, but in the first instance you should email them at support@zoo.ox.ac.uk

You will also be issued with a DTP laptop during the induction session on 19th September, so that you can get online immediately and have the tools you need for the training programme. This will be handed back the following August by which time you will have decided what type of computer you need in order to be able to carry out your research project. It will then be refurbished and handed to the next intake, so please take care of it and use the case we provide to protect it. The Zoology IT Support team will provide you with support for your laptop throughout the year. You may be able to use your Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) to purchase your project computer (see RTSG guidelines for details about what is and is not permitted).
Once you are situated in your new department, you will maintain your links to the DTP in a number of ways: ongoing (core and advanced) training, research seminars, and social events. The DTP will continue to manage your funding award from NERC, your RTSG will sit within your department but we will monitor it. As you progress through the programme, you will be able to help with training new DTP students. You will be paid for such teaching.

**Student supervision during year 1**

DTP students have multiple sources of supervision. In term 1 each student is assigned to a relevant Management committee member until their project supervisor is confirmed. Assignments are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Student Number</th>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Term 1 Supervisor</th>
<th>Supervisor’s Department</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Boneham</td>
<td>1041687</td>
<td>Physical Climate</td>
<td>Andrew Wells</td>
<td>AOPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Caton Harrison</td>
<td>599674</td>
<td>Physical Climate</td>
<td>Marc Macias-Fauria</td>
<td>Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Cornish</td>
<td>610481</td>
<td>Dynamic Earth</td>
<td>Tarje Nissen-Meyer</td>
<td>Earth Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Coughlan</td>
<td>1037538</td>
<td>Physical Climate</td>
<td>Philip Stier</td>
<td>AOPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Crowhurst</td>
<td>607891</td>
<td>Physical Climate</td>
<td>David Thomas</td>
<td>Geography</td>
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<td>Antony</td>
<td>Dimopoulos</td>
<td>1056903</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Greger Larson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicholas</td>
<td>Dodds</td>
<td>1043521</td>
<td>Dynamic Earth</td>
<td>Tarje Nissen-Meyer</td>
<td>Earth Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Ekroth</td>
<td>1042463</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Tim Coulson</td>
<td>Zoology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>1040361</td>
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<td>David Pyle</td>
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<td>Elsa</td>
<td>Field</td>
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<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Andy Hector</td>
<td>Plant Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Goddard</td>
<td>1041157</td>
<td>Dynamic Earth</td>
<td>David Pyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ronald</td>
<td>Guthrie</td>
<td>848668</td>
<td>Dynamic Earth</td>
<td>Elizabeth Jeffers</td>
<td>Earth Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina</td>
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<td>Zoology</td>
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<td>Alexandra</td>
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<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Greger Larsen</td>
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<td>Claudia</td>
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<td>James</td>
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<td>David Thomas</td>
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<td>Lucy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amber</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aman</td>
<td>Majid</td>
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<td>Philip Stier</td>
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<td>EJ Milner Gulland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Patterson</td>
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<td>Physical Climate</td>
<td>Philip Stier</td>
<td>AOPP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
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<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>David Thomas</td>
<td>Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tomos</td>
<td>Potter</td>
<td>1054608</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Andy Hector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Searle</td>
<td>835572</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Tim Coulson</td>
<td>Zoology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roxana</td>
<td>Shafiee</td>
<td>1042401</td>
<td>Physical Climate</td>
<td>Andrew Wells</td>
<td>Earth Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Spill</td>
<td>550500</td>
<td>Physical Climate</td>
<td>Andrew Wells</td>
<td>Earth Sciences</td>
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<td>Paolo</td>
<td>Strampelli</td>
<td>677173</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Tim Coulson</td>
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<td>Eoghan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Tyne</td>
<td>1043763</td>
<td>Dynamic Earth</td>
<td>Tarje Nissen-Meyer</td>
<td>Earth Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students can also seek advice and support from the Academic Director, the Course Director, the Programme Manager, their College advisor, the faculty who are leading the graduate research seminars, the MC members representing the department they wish to join, and – most importantly – the research supervisor(s) that they aim to work with. Once students move to their department, the DPhil supervisor will ensure that an appropriate team of advisors are in place to support the student while they undertake their proposed research. The DPhil supervisor will also oversee (and need to approve) your registration for advanced training courses, and approve all spending from your RTSG grant.

Matching students to DPhil supervisors

Students are admitted to one of the three streams of the DTP, and will develop their research project during their second term. Students are expected to develop their own project ideas in conjunction with their intended research supervisor. Term 1 will be given over to hard skills development, in mathematics, statistics, computer programming, and will then move towards areas that will provide you with an excellent opportunity to learn more about potential lines of research and to meet most of the eligible research supervisors. The DTP website provides details about the range of research questions that potential supervisors (both within and beyond Oxford) are keen to work on with DTP students. We recommend that you read through this as you consider which supervisor you might wish to work with. In week 7 of Michaelmas term, there will be a Student Conference where potential supervisors will make a brief (i.e. 2 minute) presentation on the research topics being investigated in their respective laboratories or research groups. Use this opportunity to broaden your ideas about the research project you will undertake during your DPhil. Students who are fully funded by the DTP have the freedom to choose their project supervisors and research direction. Students should be aware that if their proposed supervisor has several interested students, they may need to keep in mind an alternative research supervisor that could oversee their proposed work, whether in the same or a different research group. Again, the Student Conference and the DTP website are important tools for you to use while you navigate this process.

Following the Student Conference, students will submit a list of potential research questions and preferred supervisors (due Friday week 1 of HT). These will be submitted direct to Weblearn using the Assignments tool – see the Weblearn section further down. They will get feedback on these from your assigned supervisor for Term 1. Students will then submit an abstract that outlines their intended research project by Friday week 4 of HT (students can submit more than one abstract if they have not yet decided upon their project).

We expect students to use Hilary Term to develop their full research proposals. The proposal should be at most 3 pages, identify the intended supervisory team and must include: Background, Objectives, Methods, Timetable and Budget. A full research proposal must be submitted by 5pm on Friday week 1 in Trinity Term. The Management Committee will evaluate all proposals to ensure that projects are feasible within the given time and budgetary constraints, can be appropriately supervised and implemented in Oxford (in conjunction with external partners where appropriate) before granting permission to start on the DPhil project. Students are able to revise and resubmit proposals up until the end of week 8 Trinity Term.
Process for approving project proposals and transferring to departments.

All students will submit their research proposal consisting of a 2 page proposal with a 1 page budget and proposed time line to the DTP via Weblearn by Friday of week 1 in Trinity Term.

There is a formal process in place for evaluating the proposal before students will be transferred from the DTP to their host Department.

1. Each proposal will be assessed by a management committee member and another academic (but not the supervisor) from the chosen department.
2. A meeting will then be set up between the student, the Management committee member and the second departmental assessor. It is also possible that the Departmental Director of Graduate Studies may attend the meeting if the department wishes it. The aim of these meetings is to provide students with constructive feedback that will help them to improve their research plan. At the meeting, the student will be asked to give a ten minute presentation on their proposed project, and this will be followed by up to 20 minutes of discussion.
3. The student will be advised if any changes or improvements are required and given a time limit to complete them.
4. If no further changes are required for the proposal, then the MC member and the second departmental assessor will sign the formal agreement for transferring students to the department (available on the Weblearn site in Information for Students).
5. The form should be prepared by the student in advance of the meeting and a brought to the meeting as hard copy ready for signature by the MC member. Signatures should then be obtained from the supervisor and departmental DGS by the student. The form should be sent to the DTP office for signing off as this will trigger processes within the office including those that will enable students to access their RTSG.

This formal process will take place up to 2-months after submission; therefore, students are allowed to begin initial work on their project before the formal transfer takes place

RTSG funds will be available from the point of proposal submission. Please see RTSG guidance for details of how to access it.

Graduate Progression - The stages of a D.Phil

1. PRS You will begin as a Probationary Research Student (PRS) and you will retain this status for up to six terms, until you have successfully transferred your status to D.Phil student. You cannot call yourself a D.Phil student while you are a PRS.

2. Transfer of Status Each department has its own rules regarding the transfer of status to DPhil student. This process typically involves the submission of a full thesis proposal (sometimes including completed chapters), a public presentation, and evaluation by faculty not involved in the supervision of the research project. Typically in MPLS, PRS students complete their Transfer of Status by the end of term 4, but departments are aware that DTP students – who join the department one or two terms after non-DTP students – may require more time to achieve this. The absolute latest point at which DTPs student can complete the Transfer is by the end of term 6. If transfer is failed the
opportunity to re-attempt is allowed and 1 further term is permitted. If students do not transfer status within the approved time-frame then they are unable to complete their degree.

3. Confirmation of Status During your 9th term you will go through another process called Confirmation of Status. This confirms that you are on track to submit your thesis within the maximum of 48 months required by NERC. Again, each Department has their own procedures which are described in their handbook, but all are governed by the university’s over-arching regulations and you can find these in the MPLS Graduate Handbook.

We expect you to submit your thesis by the end of your 11th term. If you need more time then you can apply for an extension for a further term (Trinity term is a 6 month term). At 12 terms you must submit. Failure to do so will jeopardise future funding for this programme and may cost future students the opportunity to carry out a D.Phil.

Once you have submitted you will undergo examination by viva, and you must tell us your viva date once this is arranged, as NERC will want to know this, and the outcome.

Research Partners

The DTP has a number of exciting research partnerships with research organisations, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and industry. These Partners bring important perspectives to the DTP, in helping to define the problems that will need to be addressed by Environmental Researchers of the future, and by offering insights into the world beyond the laboratory. Student engagement with our Partners will help students to maximise the societal and scientific impact of their D.Phil. research and will provide excellent opportunities for students during and beyond their degree. There are a number of ways that our partners wish to engage with DTP students and these are laid out in the table on the next page.

Each partner has a page on the DTP website which gives a little information about their research areas and the ways in which they have asked to be involved. It is worth looking at these pages to see which partners might be a good match for your proposed project, and would be able to support it. Partners will also be attending the student conference and this is a great opportunity to meet their representatives, to discuss project ideas, and partner involvement. Partners may be able to feed into the project development process, and in some cases may even wish to “CASE” projects that are of direct benefit to them. A CASE award will involve additional funds to the student stipend as well as spending some time with the CASE partner either as part of the project, or as an internship. The DTP has a target of 30% for converting studentships to CASE, but all collaborations are very valuable.

Students will have the opportunity to visit partners in Hilary Term, details will be confirmed during Michaelmas Term.

Open Day: On Wednesday of 8th week in Michaelmas Term there will be an Open Day for potential applicants to come and see what the DTP has to offer. Year 1 students will be in training that day but in later years DTP students are an essential ingredient in the Open Day to help host the day and answer questions from candidates. It is a great opportunity for networking with partners and academics.
### List of DTP Partners

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BGS = British Geological Survey; ECMWF = European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting; ESA = European Space Agency; NCAS = National Centre for Atmospheric Science; NCEO = National Centre for Earth Observation; NOO = National Oceanography Centre; NHM = Natural History Museum.
Part II

Key Dates

Student Conference 21 & 22 November, 7th week

Submission of Research Questions & potential supervisors Friday 20th Jan week 1 of HT

Submission of Abstract - Friday 10th Feb week 4 of HT

Submission of Research Proposal Friday 28th April week 1 Trinity Term

DTP Training Progression
DTP Training Programme

The Training programme is regularly updated and is available to view on the DTP weblearn site. 
https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/mpls/dtpenv

The Core Training Programme is compulsory and attendance is monitored for the purposes of NERC reporting, and also to provide students with a record of their full training programme.

ADVANCED TRAINING

Advanced Methods in Environmental Research  DTP-EnvRes students will be required to complete a minimum of three advanced courses in environmental research methodologies over the course of the programme. These will be chosen by the student (with guidance and approval from their research supervisor) from a selection of advanced course options listed on the website and Weblearn or created in response to student need. Courses offered by the DTP will run during HT-1 and thereafter. These can include courses offered externally, especially NERC advanced courses. Please check with the DTP office if uncertain whether a course qualifies.

A list of NERC-funded advanced training courses in research methodologies available (for free) to DTP students is available on the NERC website: 
http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/advanced/atsc/course-list2016-17/

Advanced Data Analysis and Modelling  DTP-EnvRes students will be required to complete a minimum of three advanced data analysis and modelling modules throughout the course of the programme. These will be chosen by the student (with guidance and approval from their research supervisor) from a selection of advanced course options listed on the website and weblearn. These will be offered during HT-1 and thereafter. These can include courses offered externally, especially NERC advanced courses. Please check with the DTP office if uncertain whether a course qualifies.

A list of NERC-funded advanced training courses in data analysis and computing available (for free) to DTP students is available on the NERC website: 
http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/advanced/atsc/course-list2016-17/

The Department of Continuing Education offers Professional Development courses (primarily taught online) that may be of interest to DTP students, including:

- Ecological Survey Techniques
- International Wildlife Conservation Practice
- Environmental Management

The full list of courses can be found here:
https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/continuing-professional-development  Registration is via the Department of Continuing Education and – in most cases – will require a fee to be paid (either from your RTSG account or from College funds).
Bespoke training courses can also be developed with instructors according to student interests and demand. To propose a course, students should provide a description of their proposed course, including the course objectives, duration and proposed course leader to Elizabeth Jeffers, the DTP Course Director.

DTP Students are also able to enrol in courses being offered by our Research Partners:

National Centre for Atmospheric Science: [https://www.ncas.ac.uk/index.php/en/](https://www.ncas.ac.uk/index.php/en/)

British Geological Survey: [http://www.bgs.ac.uk/](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/)


European Space Agency: [http://www.esa.int/Education/Courses](http://www.esa.int/Education/Courses)

**Check the Researcher Training Tool regularly** as it is will be continuously updated with new advanced research methods courses offered by the DTP and other Departments in the University as they become available.

**Minimum Training Requirements**

The minimum requirement for DTP students, is that they must attend all Core courses. In addition to this they must attend six Advanced courses during the course of their degree, three in advanced methods and three in advanced modelling/statistics. These can include external training such as NERC Advanced Courses, or University of Leeds Climate Summer School for example. In summary:

- All core training
- Three advanced methods courses
- Three advanced stats/modelling courses

**PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES**

The MPLS Course Programme for Graduate Students offers a wide range of short, intensive training courses for professional and personal development. Further details for the courses are available on the MPLS Training webpage ([https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/course-programme-for-graduate-students](https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training/course-programme-for-graduate-students)) and registration is conducted via the Researcher Training Tool. Some courses that may be of particular interest to DTP students include the following:

**Teacher Training:** The MPLS Division the following courses aimed at developing best practices in higher education teaching:

- Preparing for Learning & Teaching at Oxford;
• Developing Learning & Teaching at Oxford;
• Teaching & Learning: Science, not Magic

Get That Job: Get that Job provides information about a variety of career options, preparing your CV, interview requirements, and aims to deliver information, tips and examples of successful approaches to posts within and outside academia.

Work Placement with Research Partners: DTP students can arrange a work placement programme with a variety of DTP partners (anytime after the first year). This can range from a week-long job shadowing to a 3-month internship (e.g. British Ecological Society Policy Internship or an industry placement). See the partner pages on the DTP website for more information about what is on offer from each partner and for contact details www.environmental-research.ox.ac.uk/partners. You can either contact partners yourself directly, or contact the Programme Manager to initiate contact. If you do establish a partner relationship, please make the Programme Manager aware of it.
Weblearn is the University’s online e-learning site at this url.

https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal

You log in by selecting “Oxford Account Login” and using your SSO. This will take you to a page where you can select “My Sites” and you will find the DTP in Environmental Research is one of them.

The new DTP weblearn site will be available from 12th September 2016.

We have created an Arrivals Lounge discussion forum where you can drop in to ask questions. To access this click on the Arrivals Lounge link under “Forums”

On this site you will find information to help you navigate through your D.Phil whether it be during DTP training or during your research project.
Schedule - There is a schedule which gives the timetable for training.

Student Information – click on Student Information to find a list of information documents, guidance and forms relating to many different aspects of your studentships. This includes RTSG guidance, information about transferring to departments, expenses and advances claim forms, engaging with partners and much more. There is also a link direct to this Handbook.

Lesson Pages - Each module has a lesson page giving information about the instructor(s) course description/learning objectives, a lesson plan and learning materials some of which you will need to access prior to the module especially if the module is in an area that is not within your area.

Access the lesson pages by clicking on “Core Training” or “Advanced Training” on the welcome page, or use the buttons on the left under “Sub-sites” to get to the same areas. Once there you will see all the different core courses on offer and you can click on the one that interests you to get to the lesson pages.

Some lesson pages will contain a link called “student pages” where you can create your own page, and here you can upload some assignments, such as blogs and other pieces of work for peer review, and comments from the whole cohort.

Assignments – Some assignments will be set on the lesson pages, or in the Assignments area, and these should be submitted by clicking on the Assignments button, on the left of the page, and selecting the assignment you wish to submit. Then follow the instructions to upload the file. This way all assignments are gathered in one place and the responsible tutor doesn’t have 30 different email threads with attachments clogging up their inbox. In addition, some assignments, such as blogs, will have a peer-review process whereby you can read each others work, comment, and make constructive suggestions before the final submission.

The Core Training Welcome page

When navigating back, use the breadcrumb trail, as weblearn will remember which lesson page you were on, and this can sometimes lead to it returning to a lesson page instead of a course area.

You can go to the course and lesson pages either by clicking on the links, or on the buttons on the far left. You can also access lesson pages from the calendar where each module links through directly to the
You can give feedback direct via weblearn and each module has a feedback form at the bottom of
the lesson page for this purpose. We encourage you to give full and honest feedback about the
programme so we can build on what we have achieved so far.

Weblearn also hosts the Researcher Training tool which will enable you to sign up for advanced
courses.

**Signing up for courses using the Researcher Training Tool on weblearn.**

There is no sign up for core training courses, you are expected to attend them all and attendance will
be monitored using sign in sheets so that we can provide you with a record of your training
programme and also use this information in our annual report to NERC.

You will sign up for the advanced training courses through the Researcher Training Tool:

https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/grad/.

Go to the link above to browse courses until you find the correct one, and then sign up for it. It is
essential for monitoring purposes that you sign up for courses and do not just turn up on the day.
You may not be credited for a course that you have not signed up for.
Email List for Communicating about Training

We have created a mail list of all DTP student addresses that will be shared with training course instructors. This will be used to communicate directly with you about the courses and to highlight other courses that might be of interest. This mail list is not to be used for communicating about social events, etc. We are happy to help students to create a similar list for this purpose that each person can choose whether or not to be included. Some students prefer the enhanced functionality of Facebook.
Part III

NERC & Your DTP Studentship

The NERC award/grant number for this DTP is:

NE/L002612/1

What is a DTP?

The DTP represents a new way of funding studentships. Research Councils previously used to give awards direct to individual departments to fund studentships, but this meant that RCUK funded students sometimes existed in isolation from one another and could receive varying support and training which was dependant on their supervisor alone. All Research councils in the UK have stressed the need to ensure that students across the board receive comparable support and training, and that it is very important to build a strong sense of cohort. These are the connections that you will forge now and maintain throughout your professional life and they start here, with us.

The DTP is here to ensure that a comprehensive training package is available not only to all NERC-funded students, but also to the wider student body. The partnerships are between us and the departments, between us and our external partners, between you and your fellow students.

NERC and Our responsibilities to them

NERC has invested a significant amount of public money in the Oxford DTP for Environmental Research, providing for 24 full studentships per year over a five year span. This amounts to about £10 million. Unsurprisingly they require that we report back to them on various aspects of the programme and this means that we must monitor the progress and activities of our students very closely. You received a memo about this with your contract documents as we are obliged to let you know, and obtain your consent, to share this information with NERC in order for you to be able to take up your funding.

Monitoring Training

We must be able to tell NERC exactly how many students have attended each one of our courses, and what training each of our students has received over the course of their studentship. We therefore ask students to sign an attendance sheet so that we can keep track of attendance. This has two added benefits. One is that we can provide you with full record of your tailored training plan. The other is a health and safety benefit, and ensures that in the event of e.g. a fire any building where you are receiving training is aware that you are there.

Monitoring Outputs

Following a successful trial of capturing Medical Research Council (MRC)-funded studentship outcomes via Researchfish in 2014, NERC now intends to invite all Research Council funded students to inform them of outcomes arising from their studentship.
They plan to include all current students in this exercise as well as those who completed their PhD in the last year. This activity forms part of an annual exercise.

An email will be sent to all students and their primary supervisors, explaining data collection via Researchfish. In September, students from year 2 onwards will be sent links to register an account with Researchfish. Students will be able to add / edit their information all year round, but will need to log on and submit a return during the annual data submission period to confirm that the information is accurate and complete. **The next submission period is 1st February until 10th March 2017** and all students will receive reminder emails closer to the time reminding them of this.

NERC will request details of every **publication** made by a DTP student that is related to their NERC-funded research, both during the course of the D.Phil itself and up to five years after completion.

We have also been asked to keep a record of **impact activities**, such as **schools outreach, speaking or presenting at conferences, developing new technologies** etc and also attendance and participation at conferences. Please let us know of any such activities you are involved with as and when they happen. It can be difficult to know exactly what constitutes an impact activity, but the research councils created the diagram on the following page as guidance.

**If in doubt, report it.**

**How to report?**

You should email the DTP office whenever you have a paper published, giving us the full citation including d.o.i so that we can keep a record.

You should email the DTP office each time you carry out an impact activity and describe it to us in full, date, location, what the activity involved, why it is classed as an impact activity.

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**Pathways to Impact**

- **Academic Impacts**
  - Enhancing the knowledge economy
  - Training highly skilled researchers
  - Improving teaching and learning
  - Improving health and well-being
  - Wealth creation, economic prosperity and regeneration
  - Enhancing the research capacity, knowledge and skills of public, private and third sector organisations
  - Changing organisational culture and practices

- **Environmental sustainability, protection and impact**
  - Evidence based policy-making and influencing public policies
  - Increasing public engagement with research and related societal issues

- **Economic and Societal Impacts**
  - Attracting R&D investment
  - Improving social welfare, social cohesion and/or national security
  - Commercialisation and exploitation
  - Enhancing cultural enrichment and quality of life
Your responsibilities to NERC

As a full studentship holder, you are being supported with a grant of around £100,000. For a full award that means £85,000 of this is from NERC and is therefore public i.e. taxpayers’ money.

You therefore have a contractual obligation to do the following, and in particular whenever requested to do so by NERC or by the DTP

- **Keep us informed** about your outputs, activities, and progression (including viva dates and onward destinations after completion of your degree).
- **Archive** of your research findings
- **Secure additional funding** wherever possible to supplement your RTSG
- **Submit** your thesis within 48 months.
- **Open Access** to ensure that your research can reach the maximum number of readers online and in print you can apply to the open access block grant here when you are about to publish [http://openaccess.ox.ac.uk/applying-for-funding-from-oxfords-rcuk-open-access-block-grant/](http://openaccess.ox.ac.uk/applying-for-funding-from-oxfords-rcuk-open-access-block-grant/)

Your Studentship

The DTP is responsible for managing your funding award from NERC throughout the duration of your programme. A full NERC studentship comprises the university tuition fee, a stipend of £14,296 in 2016-17 and an RTSG (Research Training Support Grant) allowance of £8000. If you have any questions regarding your award, or if any problems arise, please contact Victoria Forth, the Programme Manager.

**Fees:** NERC does not pay for college fees, and for the most part the college fee will be paid for by the DTPs own departmental funds. NERC covers the University fees in full for Home and EU students.

**Stipend** is a grant for living expenses and for Home students this is funded by NERC. EU students are only entitled to have their university fees paid for by NERC.

**NOTE:** If you have a problem with a stipend payment being late, and you cannot get in touch with the DTP office, you can contact the payments team directly

By telephoning 01865- (6)16016

Or by emailing one of the MPLS Payments team

yvonne.butler@admin.ox.ac.uk

cara.pullen@admin.ox.ac.uk

[http://openaccess.ox.ac.uk/applying-for-funding-from-oxfords-rcuk-open-access-block-grant/](http://openaccess.ox.ac.uk/applying-for-funding-from-oxfords-rcuk-open-access-block-grant/)

**RTSG (Research & Training Support Grant):** Each student will receive RTSG allowance of £8000 towards research and training costs.
In addition to this, there will be additional calls for bids if additional funding is needed for particularly high-cost projects. These will be available in years 2 & 3 of the project when additional funding becomes available. Funding for these is made possible by co-funding secured for studentships by the DTP, which allows excess funds from other areas of the grant to be vired across to the RTSG. There will be approximately £10,000 available in each call, spread across the cohort.

**Supervisors’ travel expenses will not be met by the RTSG** and supervisors should secure funding from other sources.

**An RTSG Approval form must be submitted** if computer hardware, or large items of lab equipment are needed, this is explained in more detail in the RTSG guidance appendix.

**Conferences:** If you require funding to attend conferences you should consider applying to your college first as most colleges do have money available to support conference attendance and travel. You should also apply to external bodies, perhaps your project partner, or companies. Your department may publicise funding opportunities and your supervisor may also have some ideas about where to look for additional funding, and should be able to help you put together an application. If no other sources are available, you are able to use some of your RTSG allowance to meet these costs.

Once you have spent your RTSG budget you will have no safety net, so try everything to avoid spending it unless you have to.
Appendix A

RTSG Guidance 2015-16

Each student has an Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) of £8000.

Once students have handed in their research proposals and started on their projects they can access their RTSG budgets. Students are required to monitor their own spending closely and to be able to provide a running total of expenditure if requested, as well as evidence of supervisor approval. A simple access database or excel template are available from the DTP office, and on weblearn.

It is advised that students get an email from their supervisor approving each spending request, and keep this in a file, as well as keeping a spreadsheet to track spending. A photocopy of a signed expenses/advances/requisition form would also count as a supervisor approval.

Control of the Budget

You and your supervisor have overall control of this budget with two notable exceptions, where you must seek Management Committee approval prior to making a purchase.

1) Computer Equipment

NERC does not support the purchase or computer equipment on a routine basis, from the RTSG. This is because it expects that departments will provide computing equipment to students. However, they have said to us in an email that “RTSG can be used to buy a computer where this directly relates to the studentship project. For example, a MacBook for a student that will be undertaking a large amount of atmospheric modelling and will need to travel a lot. Funding should not be used to, say, provide every DTP student with a laptop as, in essence, a perk. ... it should be for when students need a specific computer to carry out their research.” We therefore need to be able to justify to NERC auditors when we allow purchases of computer equipment from the RTSG.

2) Large pieces of Lab equipment

There have been occasions in the past where RTSG has been used to purchase large items of laboratory equipment for whole research groups. In order to protect students against this, we do as you to seek approval in these cases, so we can ensure it is directly relevant to your research project.

RTSG Approval form - This should now only be used for computer equipment and large pieces of laboratory equipment. The form is available on Weblearn here https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/mpls/dtpenv

Accessing the RTSG

Your department has access to your RTSG budget so you should liaise with your departmental finance office for purchasing requests.

You can access the RTSG in 3 ways

1) Expenses Forms: Make a purchase and claim back on a university expenses claim form. This is approved by your supervisor in the first instance and authorized by the
department’s finance office where you hand it in. You will need to present original receipts alongside the claim. Info on how to complete the form is at this link

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/forms/expensesandrelocation/

2) **Purchase Orders**: Ask your department to order the equipment for you. You should follow internal procedures in this case. This should always be done with computer equipment, so your IT office can support you.

3) **Advances**: Apply for an advance on a university cash advances form – mostly used for fieldwork. Hand this in to your department finance office once you have completed it. You will also have to send in a reconciliation form when you return, so keep all your receipts.

University forms are available on the DTP website here or at this link

http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/forms/

**Extraordinary Funding Calls**: In addition, *in years 2 & 3*, there will be additional funding calls where the finances allow with deadlines in early January and/or August, for unforeseen project costs, or for particularly high-cost projects that need additional funding. Clarendon award holders unfortunately do not have access to this call as they are not NERC-funded students. Their RTSG awards are funded from non-NERC sources.

**Please note**: The RTSG should not be used for the cost of supervisor travel or fieldwork costs. Supervisors should find alternative sources of funding.

**NERC’s guidance states**

“The RTSG is not intended to relieve an RO of any part of its normal expenditure.” In other words RTSG cannot be used, under NERC rules, for anything which the research organisation normally provides to its graduate students. This means that whatever guidance your department usually applies to standard D.Phil students also applies to DTP students. If your department has any kind of understanding in place that supervisors should provide or contribute towards computers for students from their grants, then that should extend to DTP students as NERC expects the same rules to apply to students across the board. They will not support the blanket provision of computers to all DTP students from the RTSG.

RTSG Approval forms should be submitted to the DTP office once completed. Items up to £500 can be approved immediately by the DTP Manager, over and above that the relevant MC member must approve.

The Research Council guidelines on how RTSG should be used are as follows
11.1. The TG includes a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) component. This is a contribution towards costs incurred in training research students e.g. the provision of consumables, equipment, travel, etc. The RTSG is not intended to relieve an RO of any part of its normal expenditure.

11.2. Additional funding can be drawn from the TG to fund activities to support student training such as student attendance at conferences, internships, workshops and short course attendance and internships. Support might also be provided for, local, cohort specific activities, for example, to develop opportunities which arise from being part of a peer group or to raise awareness amongst the cohort of the wider context in which their doctoral research sits doctorate was funded. Some RCs may also provide additional funding for activities eg overseas fieldwork; information is available on the individual RC websites.

Full document available here:

http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-
prod/assets/documents/publications/TrainingGrantGuidance.pdf

List of commonly bought items and the most convenient way to buy.

(please let us know if you think any other items should be added to the list)

Purchase Orders should preferably be raised before an invoice is received. They are an instruction to the supplier to provide the goods or services. The purchase order number should be included on the invoice.

Train tickets                  buy yourself and claim back on R12 expenses form
Air tickets                   as above or use university travel agent if you wish to pay directly from your RTSG.
Accommodation & subsistence   pay and claim back
Conference registration       pay and claim back
Attendance at courses         pay and claim back / Department raises PO
IT equipment                  Department raises PO
Lab consumables               Department raises PO
Lab analysis work             Department raises PO
Cash for fieldwork            cash advances can be obtained using the R12 advances form.

In the case of both expenses claims and cash advances please note the following

- Receipts must be kept and a reckoning form completed after spending has occurred.
- Each receipt should be given a line on the claim, do not total up types of expenditure.
- Put the currency of expenditure on the form, and provide an exchange rate with the evidence for that exchange rate.
- Do not part with cash for “bribes”, always get a receipt that can be attached to a claim.
- Take a receipt book with you on fieldwork if necessary so they can be handwritten.
- Claims for staying with a friend or colleague overseas will not be paid, only hotels, hostels etc.
- Read the university’s policy on bribery and fraud.
  [http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/briberyfraud/briberyfraudpolicy/]
Graduate Research Training and Support Grant

RTSGs aim to contribute to support research and conference attendance of DPhil students, with direct relevance to their DPhil project and training.

RTSG Approval Form 2016-17

Use this form if you are purchasing:

1) **Computer Equipment** – we must be able to justify this to NERC who do not support blanket provision of computer equipment to students from the RTSG.

2) **large items of lab equipment** – you must be able to demonstrate that this equipment is directly relevant to your project.

This form must be submitted to the DTP office before the spending occurs, not alongside the claim. Please email it to dtp-admin@ox.ac.uk.

Once we have obtained Management Committee approval (usually within 24 hours) we will forward this to you and you can go ahead with the purchase. You can present the email to your finance office as evidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Supervisors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student funding source.</td>
<td>NERC/RS/College/EU/Clarendon/other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please give total amount of RTSG support awarded to date.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification of resources sought – please explain why this equipment is necessary to your project and why the department is unable to provide it. Please provide as much detail as possible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget breakdown (GBP) with total amount to be set against the RTSG.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Have you obtained any additional funding towards this proposal? |

| Please list alternative pending applications to fund this proposal. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Applicant</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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</table>

| Signature of Supervisor | Date |