



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Student Funding and Fee Policy Team

03 March 2025

To: External Funders of Postgraduate Research (Doctoral) students at the University of Cambridge
Re: Cambridge Doctoral Scholarship - agreed stipend 2023/4 and wider benefits framework

Dear Funding Partner

The University of Cambridge has recently agreed a minimum standard for fully funded Postgraduate Research¹ Studentships that Cambridge-based funders should aspire to meet to warrant the brand of a 'Cambridge Doctoral Scholarship'. We would also like to share this with our valued external funding organizations, to work towards a comparable financial package for all our students, whether they receive their funding from within, or outside Cambridge.

We believe that it is important for studentships to meet the full costs that students face to avoid financial hardship, which could be to the detriment of a successful outcome to their studies. Therefore, our suggested package to which funders should aim fully covers fees and maintenance costs (see below), as well as meeting Visa and Health Surcharge costs for Overseas students and providing paid leave for illness or parental leave for those students who may need it. Full details are contained in Appendix 1.

The University has agreed to benchmark its maintenance rate (otherwise known as Stipend or living allowance) with the UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) rate of stipend. The UKRI has recently announced an increase to its stipend for 2025/6 to **£20,780**.

Studentship providers within the University of Cambridge have been requested to match this rate and a significant majority of our funders will either meet, or exceed, this rate of stipend. ***We would encourage all funders of Cambridge doctoral students to meet this new level of student maintenance*** (£20,780 for 2025/6).

We appreciate that this change has been announced very close to the start of the academic year but encourage our funding partners to respond as quickly as they can.

We remain grateful for your support of research students at the University of Cambridge.

Best wishes

Sally-Ann Gannon

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Cambridge Admissions Office

¹ Usually this refers to PhD/Doctoral students

Appendix 1 - Minimum standard for 'Cambridge Doctoral Studentship'

Agreed May 2022 (General Board's Education Committee)

Fees	Fully covered (home or overseas)
Maintenance	Living stipend equivalent to the UKRI rate
Duration of maintenance	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. for 1-2 year PGR¹ courses this equals the duration of the course and can be pro-rated for courses less than 12 months2. for doctoral courses, a minimum of 3 years with the option to apply for an extension of a further 0.5 years if required (I.e. 3.5 years).
Non-medical intermission – parental leave	52 weeks of 'maternity' or 'shared parental leave'. The first 26 weeks should be paid at full stipend rate, pro-rated as necessary for part time students. The following 13 weeks should be paid at a level commensurate with statutory maternity pay. The final 13 weeks are not paid.
Medical intermission	13 weeks of stipend within any 12-month period, subject to provision of satisfactory medical evidence.
For international students only	
Visa costs	Fully covered – this should normally be reimbursed on arrival. However, there may need to be provision for students who do not have the funds to cover this upfront.
Health surcharge	Fully covered – this should normally be reimbursed on arrival. However, there may need to be provision for students who do not have the funds to cover this upfront.

Funders are also encouraged to consider offering study grants (up to £1,500 per annum) and covering travel costs for one journey from the student's home, but these are not part of the minimum standard.