



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Student Funding and Fee Policy Team

14 May 2026

To: External Funders of Postgraduate Research (Doctoral) students at the University of Cambridge

Re: Cambridge Doctoral Scholarship - agreed stipend 2026/27 and wider benefits framework

Dear Funding Partner

The University of Cambridge has agreed a minimum standard for fully funded Postgraduate Research 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. We are aware of rising costs which are faced by funders and have therefore proposed two packages the minimum support for a student at Cambridge. The first is the Cambridge Doctoral Studentship that provides full maintenance at the UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) rate and covers fees. It also includes paid leave for illness or parental leave for those students who may need it. The second is the Cambridge Doctoral Enhanced Studentship which covers all costs a student may need at Cambridge, including the costs of research allowance and Visa and Health Surcharge costs for Overseas students as well as those outlined above. Full details are contained in Appendix 1.

The University has agreed to benchmark the maintenance rate (otherwise known as Stipend or living allowance) with the UKRI rate of stipend. The UKRI has announced an increase to its stipend for 2026/7 to **£21,805**. The University also agreed in 2025 that it is good practice to match the UKRI levels of benefits in terms of paid leave etc, which are reflected in the table in Appendix 1.

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 of £21,805 for 2026/27.***

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 September 2025 (Postgraduate Admissions Committee)

Cambridge Doctoral Studentships	
Fees	Fully covered (home or overseas)
Maintenance	Living stipend equivalent to the UKRI rate
Duration of maintenance	- for 1–2 year postgraduate research courses this equals the duration of the course and can be pro-rated for courses less than 12 months - for doctoral courses, a minimum of 3.5 years with the option to apply for an extension of a further 0.5 years if required (i.e. 4 years)
Medical Intermission	28 weeks of stipend within any 12-month period, subject to provision of satisfactory medical evidence. Up to a maximum of 52 weeks over the duration of the studentship.
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.

In addition to the requirements above, Cambridge Enhanced Doctoral Studentships should provide

Cambridge Enhanced Doctoral Studentships	
Maintenance Rate	Maintenance should be provided at a higher rate than UKRI, based on the upper quartile as calculated by Cambridge's cost of living survey annually.
Research Allowance	A research allowance or RTSG for students at a minimum of £1,000 per annum.
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.