



**Research Careers and
Diversity Unit**

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Dear Colleague,

ROBERTS SKILLS TRAINING FUNDS - PAYMENTS AND MONITORING DURING ACADEMIC YEAR 2007/08

I am writing to set out the plans for the career development and transferable skills training (Roberts) payments and monitoring of their use for research students and grant-funded research-only staff. Previous letters and other information about the implementation of the Roberts' recommendations can be found at:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/training.htm>

This letter and attachment advises you, as the contact for your organisation, of:

- the level and dates of payments to be made by each Council (see notes regarding AHRC arrangements) for the academic year 2007/08.
- the arrangements for monitoring the use of the career development and transferable skills training funds.

For payments from AHRC, information is provided for current students where records show continuation into the 2007/08 academic year. Please see the notes at Annex 1 for further information.

Career Development and Transferable Skills Training Payments

Each Council has made a separate calculation of the allocation to your organisation in respect of 1) postgraduate students and 2) research-only staff. In general terms each Council has a fixed budget to distribute between the organisations it supports and this has been apportioned between organisations based on the estimated number of doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers at each. The average amount cross-council is over £800 for each researcher each year. The "Frequently Asked Questions" available at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/training.htm> provide further information.

The payments due to be made are in respect of the two halves of academic year 2007/08 (01/10/07-31/03/08 and 01/04/08-30/09/08). The values of the payments from each Council are listed in the annex to this letter.

The Councils have agreed to co-ordinate the dates of their payments and you should expect payments for S8 and P8 to be made in October 2007. A second payment covering reference S9 and P9 will follow during May 2008. Payments will be by the normal BACS transfer to

your organisation and will refer to 'Career Development and Transferable Skills Training Payments'.

A copy of this letter and the annex listing the payments will also be sent to your Finance office for their information.

AHRC Payments and Processes

Information is included at Annex 1 for the students who started prior to the 2007/08 year and where records show continuation into 2007/08. Information is not yet available for the students who will start in 2007/08.

The AHRC will make a single payment, with the December fees, for all doctoral students registered and started by 15 December. If a student starts between December and 15 May, AHRC will make a payment in May for their first year. The payment is made in respect of all registered doctoral award holders, including part-time and fees-only award holders (up to a maximum of four payments in respect of any one student). The payment is made to the institution and is listed alongside the fees payment. Prior to that, the institution will be aware of the payment because it is included in the student's assessment (award) letter, which is copied to the institution's postgraduate contact. It is important that, although the AHRC includes reference to the payments in the assessment letter, the payment is not to the individual but is for the institution, to help develop and enhance the training provision for all AHRC funded doctoral students.

For postdoctoral research staff funded through AHRC research grants, payments have been made in the first quarters of both 2006 and 2007, based on the numbers current on 1 January each year. The payment for 2006/07 is appended to the table at Annex 1. **Please note this payment has already been made.** The payment for 2007/08 will not be known until after 1 January 2008.

Monitoring 2007

The organisations in receipt of Roberts Skills funding will be asked to provide monitoring information, as detailed at Annex 2. Future payments may be affected if reports are not received by 30 November 2007.

The report will have three components:

- Summary of funds spent in the period 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007
- Innovative or exemplary practices should be entered in the Database of Practice at www.grad.ac.uk/practice
- Brief (two page) report about the processes followed and their impact on the training of researchers

Please note that additional information will be required for monitoring AHRC research training payments as the funding for this period has covered both transferable and subject-specific skills.

Outline financial report

RCUK will be seeking a report giving a broad breakdown of the use of funds provided in payments for the period from 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007, as detailed at Annex 2.

Database of Practice

The UK GRAD Programme has developed a searchable online database in which institutions can record and share practices in skills development for researchers. It covers all aspects of skills development: eg developing and delivering courses, tools for skills assessment, support for supervisors, evaluation mechanisms, feedback surveys, etc.

The database is available to institutions to post or update existing entries of successful or innovative practice that they want to share with the sector.

Summary Report

The focus of reporting in 2007 is very similar to that in 2006 and will be about the processes followed and their impact on the training of researchers. RCUK will therefore be seeking, by 30 November 2007, a description of the processes in place to maximise the use and impact of the career development and transferable skills training (Roberts) funding.

The purpose of this approach is twofold. It will provide RCUK with evidence of processes and practices enabled by the funding. It will also provide the basis of a summary of 2007 reporting intended to inform and promote the sharing of innovative practices.

Future reporting

During 2005 a group came together to propose a meaningful and workable way of evaluating the effectiveness of skills development in early career researchers (i.e postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers in the first ten years of their research career), based on consultation across the sector, including universities, researcher organisations, QAA, Funding Councils, Research Councils and other relevant organisations. This group (The Rugby Team) produced a Strategy Paper for the 2006 Roberts Policy Forum and this provided the basis for monitoring arrangements.

The group has been reconstituted in 2007 to '*propose a meaningful and workable way of evaluating the effectiveness of skills development in early career researchers*'. More information is available via www.grad.ac.uk/rugbyteam.

Contact details

If your contact details have changed or if you wish to update or provide the contact details for your organisation please email annabel.clifton@rcuk.ac.uk

I will be in touch again during the autumn in the meantime please contact me if you have any queries regarding this letter.

Yours sincerely



Kate Reading (Mrs)

RCUK Research Careers and Diversity Unit

Enc:

Annex 1: Schedule for Career Development and Transferable Skills Training Payments 2007/08 from the Research Councils

Annex 2: Career Development and Skills Training Payments: Reporting 2007

Please note the following are available from the RCUK website at:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/training.htm>

Summary of 2006 Reporting

Career Development and Transferable Skills Training (Roberts) Payments: Frequently Asked Questions

Research Careers and Diversity Unit

Career Development and Skills Training (Roberts) Payments 2007/08



Career Development and Transferable Skills Training Payments 2007/08 for [university name]

[table]

[table 2 – Payments made in 2006/07 for postdoctoral research assistants funded on AHRC grants]

Notes regarding AHRC payments:

- Information is provided for current students where records show continuation into the 2007/08 academic year
- The payments will be affected if any of the students included on the list have a change of status for the 2007/08 academic year, e.g. their award is terminated or suspended.
- Information on payments to be made to students who take up their award in October 2007 will not be available until September 2007.
- AHRC will make a single payment in respect of research students (December) and a single payment in respect of research staff (March).

1 Summary Table

For funds spent in the period 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007

| | Main Audience | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|
| | Research students | Research staff |
| Employment of co-ordination staff: costs and numbers | £ | £ |
| Co-ordination costs (infrastructure) eg website, database, training portal | £ | £ |
| Training development and delivery costs | £ | £ |
| Employment of training staff: costs and numbers | £ | £ |
| Approximate proportion of funding spent on central or devolved activity (as %) | | |
| a) centrally organised activity | | |
| b) devolved activity | | |

2 Practices

Innovative or exemplary practices should be entered in the Database of Practice at www.grad.ac.uk including indicators of which aspects of the Joint Skills Statement are covered, whether the practice is relevant to the implementation of the recommendations from the Roberts Review (http://www.ost.gov.uk/research/update_roberts_review.htm) and whether it is aimed at research students, research-only employees or both.

3 Summary Report

Please provide a summary about the processes followed and their impact on the training of researchers (**up to two pages**):

1. Process for reviewing strategy and building the skills development programme. This should include reference to:
 - i. the management framework
 - ii. the involvement of employers and other stakeholders
 - iii. how researcher feedback is used
2. Commentary on the range of career development and training opportunities and approximate proportion of research students and research-only employees participating.
3. How researchers are encouraged to consider their career development and training needs and reflect on their skills.
4. Innovations in the last year and any areas for future development.
5. Any examples of sharing processes or practices with other organisations.

4 Additional Information - Use of AHRC Payments

As AHRC payments for 2006/07 have included support for subject-specific research skills as well as transferable skills (ie sections A and B of the joint skills statement as well as C-G), there will need to be specific reference to these in the report. Universities in receipt of AHRC payments should append a short summary (up to 1 page) to outline any practices or programmes specifically for subject-specific skills for Arts and Humanities researchers.

Future payments may be affected if your report is not received by 30 November 2007.