

### Overseas Institutional Visits Competition 2020

The ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership at Cambridge invites applications to the Discretionary Fund from students wishing to undertake an Overseas Institutional Visit [OIV] as part of their PhD programme.

#### What is the purpose of an OIV?

OIVs support and encourage the international engagement of ESRC DTP students; this may be through a period of specific study, or a period of research exchange, at a Higher Education institution outside the UK. Organisations with substantive research offices may be considered.

An OIV can help you to acquire language skills; develop research links beneficial to your current or future academic plans; undertake specialist research training not available in the UK; or boost your opportunities for engagement, by participating in seminars or other dissemination activities directly relevant to your PhD project. It is therefore an important opportunity.

The precise activities of an OIV will vary from student to student and should be based on individual needs, not a formulaic model. In the first instance, you should discuss this with your supervisor who may be able to recommend appropriate opportunities or contacts; you should also discuss how an OIV would boost your opportunities for a successful PhD and how it would fit into your overall research programme.

#### How does this fit with Covid restrictions?

We realise that the individual circumstances for each student, and the uncertainty over travel restrictions, make it difficult to plan an OIV. Nevertheless we do not want students to lose the opportunity, **if it can be done safely**, to develop international networks or engage with leading academics in their field.

Any student approved for an OIV will need to complete a risk assessment through their Degree Committee, and leave to work away will only be given if it is safe and legal to travel. Students should not undertake an OIV if they have any concerns about their own health, or the health of others involved in their visit.

If a student is required to return abruptly from an OIV due to lockdown in the overseas country, the DTP will cover reasonable costs incurred.

#### What period of time does the 2020 OIV competition cover?

The 2020 competition covers visits commencing at any time between 1 December 2020 - 30 September 2021. If a visit cannot be completed in that time for reasons of pandemic, it may be possible to carry it over to the 2021 competition (subject of course to studentship end dates).

Please note that you must complete an OIV at least three months before the end date of your ESRC studentship award. Students currently in their third doctoral year are eligible to apply if the visit can be completed in time.

Students undertaking a Masters year in 2020-21 are not eligible to apply in this round but may apply in future rounds.

#### How many OIVs are supported each year?

The ESRC DTP Management Executive Group will support **up to five visits in 2020**, to be awarded competitively. If students are able to contribute towards the costs of an OIV, for example by seeking a College bursary, this will enable the Management Executive Group to fund more visits. Visits must be undertaken at the most economical costs in the interests of maximising opportunities for all students, and with due regard to environmental issues associated with international travel.

## How do I apply for support from the Discretionary Fund for an OIV?

Please complete the Overseas Institutional Visit application form available at:

<https://webservices.admin.cam.ac.uk/ncbk/gaee/fp.cgi>

The deadline for applications is **18 November 2020**.

**Please check the following notes and criteria below carefully before preparing your application:**

- This competition is open to doctoral students only – Masters students are not eligible to apply.
- Support is available only for visits to be conducted in the three year doctoral study period, to be completed no later than three months before the end of your ESRC award.
- Visits may be for a maximum of 13 weeks – shorter visits are more usual.
- The OIV is an integral element of your research training and must be clearly justified. Students will not receive support for more than one OIV during the course of their studentship.
- The receiving organisation must be a Higher Education institution or other non-commercial research organisation.
- OIVs cannot be combined with overseas fieldwork. Separate but concurrent periods of an OIV and overseas fieldwork may be considered.
- Visits will not be supported to countries for which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against travel. <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
- Applicants should clearly indicate the purpose of the visit/s, outline their intended work plan and how it relates to their doctoral research. Please detail what has been achieved to date and how the proposed visit will extend/enhance this. Applicants are asked to demonstrate the potential benefits of the proposed visit to their current or future academic career and, in particular, to demonstrate how the visit/s will offer ‘added value’ to their PhD experience.
- If the OIV is to be undertaken for research training purposes, the applicant must demonstrate why the training is integral to their research, and also why this training cannot be undertaken within the UK.
- You will need to provide written support from the main academic contact at the host university or research institution. This should include confirmation of the work plan for the proposed visit/s, details of the academic facilities to which the student will have access, as well as the student’s registration status at the host university or research institution during the visit period.
- Repeat visits to institutions will not normally be supported. If applicants are proposing to undertake more than one visit to the same overseas university or research institution they should provide clear justification as to why more than one visit is required.
- Funding for an OIV will not count towards the £3500 lifetime limit available from the DTP Discretionary Fund.

### Who will decide?

The ESRC DTP Management Executive Group will assess all applications according to the following criteria:

- clearly articulated purpose of the visit
- clear integration into a student’s overall programme of study
- defined ‘added value’ for the student
- detailed work plan in place that builds upon the applicant’s previous research and training, and demonstrates how the activities undertaken during the OIV relate to the students’ future research plans
- strong recommendation from the supervisor that the proposed visit is both highly appropriate and well-timed within the overall programme of study
- confirmation of clear commitment to continued supervision during the visit period and that arrangements are in place to facilitate this
- strong recommendation from the proposed host organisation
- reasonable and justified costings

The successful applications will be those presenting the strongest match against all of these criteria. Applications from students able to raise partial contributions towards costs will be particularly welcome, although it is recognised that this is not always possible.