

DAERA Postgraduate Studentships

Academic Year 2017/18

Terms and Conditions

DAERA Postgraduate Student Awards

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**This booklet is available in alternative formats. Copies of this document can be made available, on request, in alternative formats e.g.**

**• Large Print • Audio CD • Braille • Computer Disc**

**To request this document in an alternative format, please contact Supply Chain Development Branch above.**

If you have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via Text Relay.

Making a call from a Textphone dial 18001+ 028 9052 4710

This booklet is also available on the website at;

<http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/postgraduate-study>

Please read these notes before completing the application form.

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

* 1. Each year the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) offers a limited number of Postgraduate Studentships for a three year period of research leading to a PhD qualification at a University in the United Kingdom (UK) or Republic of Ireland (ROI).
  2. The DAERA Postgraduate Studentships competition is aimed at students wishing to undertake Doctoral programmes by research. Numbers are determined by Departmental priorities and budget availability.

1.3 Funding is provided for full-time students only. Support is available to provide approved fees and maintenance grants to students being trained in methods of research. The award is not means tested.

1.4 These terms and conditions may be varied at any time at the discretion of DAERA.

1.5 This booklet is also available on the Department’s website at;

[**https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/postgraduate-study**](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/postgraduate-study)

1.6 PhD Research Studentships may be held in Higher Education Institutes in the UK or ROI. Awards are not tenable abroad but, exceptionally, consideration may be given to a student spending part of his/her research training overseas, if the subject is one which can best be studied abroad. Preferably the request for such training should be included in the application for an award.

1.7 Details of Postgraduate Studentships awarded by other bodies can be obtained from your proposed University or College Authorities.

**2. About DAERA**

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has responsibility for food, farming, environmental, fisheries, forestry and sustainability policy and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland.

Candidates should familiarise themselves with DAERA’s responsibilities at; <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/about-daera>

# DAERA PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS/NEEDS 2017

3.1 DAERA Priority Research Areas and identified Priority Research Needs 2017 are outlined on our website at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/postgraduate-study>

and Annex A of this document. It is very important that candidates read this information before applying for a DAERA Postgraduate Studentship, as research proposals must be aligned to **one** of our Priority Research Areas 2017.

3.2 Depending on the research proposals submitted, the panel reserves the right   
 to restrict the number of studentships awarded in addressing any specific  
 knowledge gap.

**4. ELIGIBILITY**

4.1To be eligible for consideration for a DAERA Studentship, a candidate must satisfy **ALL** the eligibility criteria based on nationality, residency, citizenship, academic qualifications and alignment to one of our Priority Research Areas 2017.

**4.2 Residency and Citizenship - Fees and Maintenance Awards (Section B of the application form)**

4.2.1 The candidate must be ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland for the full three year period before the first day of the first academic year of the course, i.e. normally 1 October (or would have been so resident had the candidate, the spouse or either parent not been employed temporarily outside NI).

* For Non-EU nationals – the main purpose of residence in NI must NOT have been to receive full-time education during any part of that three year period.
* For EU nationals – where the main purpose for residence in NI was to receive full-time education he/she must have been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) and/or Switzerland immediately before that three year period.
* EU nationals may qualify for a “Fees only” Studentship if the candidate has been ordinarily resident in the EEA and/or Switzerland for three years before the first day of the first academic year of the course. The main purpose for residence in the EEA and/or Switzerland must not have been to receive full-time education during any part of that three year period.

4.2.2 The candidate must be a British citizen, EU national or relevant family member of an EU national. The candidate may be eligible for support if they are the child of either a Swiss national or Turkish worker. For Non- EU nationals – the candidate must be **“settled”** in the UK by the closing date for the application. “Settled” means being both ordinarily resident in the UK and without any immigration restriction on the length of stay in the UK. To be “settled” the candidate must either have the Right of Abode or Indefinite Leave to Enter or Remain in the UK, or have the right of permanent residence in the UK under EC law. Candidates with “Refugee Status” from the UK Government may be eligible to apply provided they have been resident in the UK and Islands since the status was awarded.

**4.3 Academic Qualifications (Section C of the application form)**

4.3.1 The minimum degree standards which will be considered for a DAERA Postgraduate Studentship are:

* First or Upper Second Class Honours (2.1) degree from a University in the United Kingdom or Ireland, or qualifications considered by the Department to be equivalent to this standard. e.g. a 2.2 Honours degree plus a Masters degree in a subject of direct relevance to the proposed research topic.

4.3.2 Candidates may apply if they are sitting their final degree examination in June 2017. In this case any award made will be subject to satisfactory examination results. No award will be confirmed until the examination results are known. Results must be communicated immediately on receipt in writing or by email to DAERA at the address on page 1.

**4.4 Alignment to our Priority Research Areas 2017 (Section F of the application form)**

Priority Research **Areas** and **Needs** 2017 are outlined on our website at

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/postgraduate-study> and at Annex A of this document. Research proposals must be aligned to **one** of our Priority Research Areas 2017. The research proposal may also meet one of our identified Priority Research Needs within the selected Area **OR** the candidate may have identified a novel proposal which must be relevant to the selected Priority Research Area 2017.

4.5 Postgraduate study will be considered for support from one source of public funds only.

# 5. HOW TO APPLY FOR A STUDENTSHIP

5.1 Application forms can be downloaded from the Department’s website at

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/postgraduate-study> Forms required in another format are available on request by telephone 028 9052 4710 or by email to [postgraduate@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:postgraduate@daera-ni.gov.uk)

5.2 Completed forms must reach us **by 5pm on Tuesday, 28 February 2017.** Application forms can be submitted electronically by email to [postgraduate@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:postgraduate@daera-ni.gov.uk) or by hard copy to the address on page 1. Only one research proposal will be accepted from each individual.

**Late applications will not be accepted.**

5.3 When applying for a research studentship, the candidate must submit a unique research proposal supported by at least one Supervisor from the proposed centre of postgraduate studies. (Section H of the application form).

5.4 The following references must be submitted by **Tuesday, 7 March 2017** (section J of the application form).

(a) An **academic reference** from the institution of the student’s primary degree regarding their academic attributes, performance on their degree course and actual or anticipated academic qualifications;

(b) A **reference from the Head of Department** at the proposed university / centre of postgraduate study, supporting the proposal and confirming the offer of a place if a studentship is awarded.

***And*** in addition if applicable:

(c) A **reference from the Head of Branch** at the study centre if the Studentship is to be carried out at a centre such as the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) or the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI).   
Confirmation of a place and use of available resources must come from **both** the study centre ***and*** the associated university for validation purposes.

5.5 As the number of awards is limited, not all applications will be successful. It may  
 be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview (see 6.1).

5.6 On receipt of all applications, DAERA will issue Equality Monitoring forms and a pre-paid envelope. We ask that candidates complete a form anonymously and return to us in the envelope provided.

# 6. SELECTION PROCESS

**6.1 Shortlisting (section G of the application form)**

If we need to shortlist candidates to go forward for interview, the shortlisting criteria 1 and 2 will be applied in the following order;

**Shortlisting criterion 1:** The candidate must provide the strength of evidence to demonstrate how their research proposal either;

* meets our identified Need for the selected DAERA Priority Research Area 2017 (see 4.4),

**OR**

* is relevant to the candidate’s selected Priority Research Area 2017 (for example, the candidate may have identified a novel proposal which is not directly related to our identified need, but must be relevant to their selected Priority Research Area 2017).

As evidence, the candidate also needs to explain who the target audience is for the research, describe how the results will be used and the potential impact the research will have.

**Shortlisting criterion 2:** The candidate must provide the strength of evidence to demonstrate the quality of the research proposal. As evidence, the candidate needs to explain the scientific merit of the proposal, the innovative approach, the hypothesis and an understanding of proposed statistical analysis.

**6.2 Interview**

6.2.1 Criteria based interviews will be held on **10, 11 & 12 April 2017** in Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Ballymiscaw, Belfast BT4 3SB.

6.2.2 Candidates invited to interview will be informed of the date and time of interview in writing by email. The dates at 6.2.1 will only change in the event of illness or an emergency. No expenses will be payable in connection with attendance at interviews.

6.2.3 Applicants for research Studentships are expected to have considered the project they wish to undertake in detail and to have discussed it and obtained advice from a suitably qualified adviser prior to being interviewed.

6.2.4 Candidates will not be permitted to use notes they may have prepared in responding to panel members’ questions at interview.

**6.2.5 Interview Selection Criteria**

If a candidate is shortlisted for interview, he/she will be assessed by a panel against 3 selection criteria, which have been drawn up and agreed as being appropriate for Postgraduate Research Studentships. The use of Criteria Based Interviews ensures a fair, consistent, structured and systematic approach. It is very important that candidates prepare for interview using the 3 criteria outlined below;

**Criterion 1:** The relevance of the research proposal to the selected DAERA Priority Research Area/Need 2017 (this is also a shortlisting criterion at Section G1 of the application form)

**Marks available: 35**

**Minimum standard: 21**

*The candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate how relevant their proposal is to the selected DAERA Priority Research Area/Need as detailed at sections F and G of the application form. The candidate will also need to explain who the target audience is for the research, describe how the results will be used and the potential impact the research will have.*

**Criterion 2:** The quality of the research proposal (this is also a shortlisting criterion at Section G2 of the application form).

**Marks available: 35**

**Minimum standard: 21**

*The panel will seek to test the candidate’s understanding of the underlying science upon which their proposal is based, the innovative approach, the hypothesis and the candidate’s understanding of proposed statistical analysis*

**Criterion 3:** The candidate’s ability to complete the project within the 3 year timescale and his/her personal contribution to the proposed research (Section G3 of the application form).

**Marks available: 30**

**Minimum standard: 18**

*The candidate will need to demonstrate his/her ability to complete the project within the 3 year timescale and his/her personal contribution to the proposed research. For example, each candidate needs to explain the planning processes, how he/she can manage change, the benefits of team working, communication skills and ability to complete work on time.*

In preparation for interview, the candidate should review his/her relevant experience within the 3 selection criteria and how he/she can demonstrate his/her ability to meet them. To complete this section effectively, he/she needs to understand the relationship between the examples used and the relevant selection criteria. In addition, he/she should bear in mind the following points;

* candidates should use actual examples, rather than hypothetical ones,
* if possible, quantify/qualify personal accomplishments, rather than those of a group,
* examples should be provided to support skills, knowledge, experience and qualities. The candidate should describe his/her contribution, what he/she did, how he/she did it, why he/she did it and the outcome it had.

**7. Offer of Studentship**

The Department will send offers of Studentships to successful candidates and notify unsuccessful candidates.

**8. Acceptance of Studentship**

Candidates who are offered Studentships must either decline or accept the offer within 10 working days of the letter of offer. Failure to do so may result in the Studentship being offered to another candidate.

**9. Starting date of Studentship**

9.1 All Studentships start on 1 October and end on 30 September – regardless of the actual dates of the academic year, unless otherwise stated in the letter offering the Studentship.

9.2 Normally, awards must be taken up in the academic year in which they are allocated. Funding can only be provided from the academic year following the date of interview and cannot be retrospective. Exceptional delays of a few months may be allowed in approved circumstances, for example, if research facilities are not available in October of the starting year. Students may not defer an award to a subsequent academic year. Approval for a starting date later than 1 October must be sought by the Supervisor from DAERA.

# 10. VALUE OF STUDENTSHIP

**10.1 Personal Maintenance Grant**

10.1.1The personal maintenance grant payable to students in the 2017/18  
 Academic Year is £14,539 (tbc).

10.1.2 DAERA does not provide additional funds for meeting the cost of typing or binding a thesis, an allowance having been made for such expenses in fixing the rate of maintenance grant.

10.1.3 A higher award may be payable for students studying in London. Payments for periods of less than 12 months will be reduced pro rata. All payments are tax-free.

**10.2 Tuition Fees**

10.2.1 DAERA will pay fees directly to the relevant University. Only fees incurred during and related to the period of the studentship will be paid. Any additional fees payable after termination of the Studentship are the student’s responsibility.

10.2.3 A student who is resident in an institution must pay charges for accommodation and/or boarding directly to that institution.

**10.3 Disabled Students’ Allowances**

10.3.1Disabled students can apply for Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA) to the Education Authority. Further information can be provided by the Disability Adviser at your proposed University. You can also visit the website [**www.studentfinanceni.co.uk**](http://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk)

**10.4 Conference expenses**

10.4.1 DAERA expects that within the period of the award each research student should have the opportunity to attend at least one conference at which they can present the findings of their research.

10.4.2 DAERA will contribute £665 per student per academic year towards attendance at conferences. Research students are expected to make a presentation at such conferences by way of either a poster or talk. Unspent conference budget from any one academic year cannot be transferred over into another academic year.

10.4.3 If a student wishes to attend a conference where expenses will be incurred they must complete an **Application Form** which must be sent to and **approved by DAERA before payment for expenses up to the £665 maximum is considered.** (NB Approval is sent by email). Payment is not made until after the event when a claim form should be submitted. Application forms are available by contacting us on 028 9052 4710 or by emailing us at the following address [postgraduate@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:postgraduate@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Important points:

* Applications must be submitted through the student’s supervisor to DAERA for approval before the date of the event (preferably one month in advance).
* Details of actual or estimated expenses must be included in the application form.
* As DAERA cannot reimburse expenses without proof of purchase all receipts, invoices, statements etc should be retained to be sent with your claim **after** the event.
* Travel should be by the cheapest and most direct route possible
* Bed and breakfast accommodation will be reimbursed
* The cost of meals will not be reimbursed (exceptions are where a conference fee is inclusive of dinner and the event would be recognised as a networking opportunity)
* Taxis will not normally be reimbursed unless it is the cheapest method of travel or no alternative means of transport is available at the time of travel.
* DAERA does not offer funding for membership fees.

10.4.4 A **Conference Expenses Claim Form** for re-imbursement of costs will be issued with the approval email.

10.4.5 A conference **Evaluation form** to explain how attendance at an event has been of benefit will be issued to the student and should be completed and returned with the expenses claim form.

**10.5 Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)**

10.5.1 Each year of the studentship a RTSG will be paid to the main Study Centre for all research students (excluding fees only awards) as a contribution towards incidental costs incurred in the training of research students, e.g. the provision of equipment or consumables and any fieldwork, study visits or travel costs incurred by the research student. The **Study Centre** will allocate this money.

10.5.2 Students who encounter additional costs in relation to RTSG, for example, as a result of extensive fieldwork studies, may make an application through their supervisor for additional grant. This additional funding is discretionary and additional costs must be fully justified.

**10.6 Overseas fieldwork**

10.6.1 Where it is essential to a student’s research programme that a period should be spent outside the United Kingdom, a contribution towards the cost of an overseas fieldwork trip will be considered. Proposals for overseas fieldwork and visits to foreign organisations must be justified and costs provided when the student is nominated. Overseas fieldwork and visits will not be considered in the last three months of the studentship.

10.6.2 There are banded allowances for overseas fieldwork related to the country in which the fieldwork is to be carried out. If approval for the fieldwork is given DAERA will inform the student of the amount it will contribute, based on the travel and subsistence banding for that country and period to be undertaken. Further details are provided in Annex B. Allowances for visits of less than one year will be calculated pro rata.

10.6.3 DAERA cannot make advance payments for fieldwork expenses. However by prior agreement DAERA will be willing to accept either a travel company’s invoice for an air or sea fare or a receipt attached to a completed claim form prior to the start of the fieldwork.

10.6.4 Requests for approval must be supported by and submitted to DAERA through the student’s supervisor at least two months before the student is committed to any payment. DAERA will inform the student in writing if approval has been given and confirm the level of its contribution.

**No claim will be considered unless prior written approval has been given.**

10.6.5 Supervisors are required to check and authorise all claims for travel expenses.

# 11. CONDITIONS OF THE STUDENTSHIP

**11.1 General conditions**

11.1.1 In accepting an offer of a Studentship each candidate will undertake to:

* Abide by the terms and conditions of the Studentship as outlined in this booklet and the letter of offer;
* Repay to DAERA any amount overpaid (for whatever reason);
* Remain on the programme of study in respect of which the award was sought and made;
* Seek approval for any change of study or registration in advance from DAERA. Failure to seek prior approval (through the Supervisor) may necessitate the recovery of grant already paid;
* Permit DAERA to use all information held about them for any purpose connected with the studentship, such permission being taken as fulfilling the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998;
* Inform DAERA of any change in circumstances that would affect the amount payable under the studentship; and
* Complete an exit survey at the end of the studentship.

11.1.2 DAERA accepts no liability for the manner in which the work in connection with the Studentship is undertaken and each student will be responsible for all aspects of their work, including fieldwork and any consequences of it.

11.1.3 Students must report the results of their higher degree, if not already known, to us before any payments will be made either to the student or the university on their behalf.

**11.2 Attendance**

11.2.1 Students are expected to be in attendance at their study centre on a daily basis except for absences approved by their Supervisor, for example, holidays, field work or training.

**11.3 Holidays**

11.3.1 Within the period of the Studentship, all the student’s time should be devoted to his/her studies, except as provided at 11.7. Holidays as approved by their Supervisor are allowed within the period of the Studentship, provided they do not exceed a total of eight weeks including public holidays (40 days) per year. Holidays for incomplete years may be taken pro rata. Where holidays in excess of those permitted are taken, the grant for maintenance may be reduced accordingly.

11.3.2 Where a student withdraws from studies, no holidays will be allowed after the date of withdrawal.

11.3.3 Students must keep a record of all holidays taken. Details should be included on the quarterly response to us and we will email each student and Supervisor prior to each quarter (see 17.2).

11.3.4 Holidays must not be used for the purpose of undertaking paid employment, except as approved by the Supervisor/DAERA at rule 11.7.

**11.4 Absence due to accident or illness**

11.4.1 Students absent through accident or illness must notify their Supervisor immediately. If a student is absent through accident or illness for more than 2 weeks,the student must notify their Supervisor, who will notify DAERA immediately in writing of the dates of absence, accompanied by a medical certificate. Return from such absence must also be reported. Frequent short absences for medical or other reasons must also be reported where they are likely to lead to a delay in the schedule of work.

11.4.2 For periods of sick absence, students will normally be paid as follows in any 12 month period: First 28 cumulative days – payment at full rate then NIL until resumption of studies.

11.4.3 It should be noted that in instances where students receive payment of maintenance grant for periods of illness and/or accident this period will not be deemed to form part of an approved period of suspension.

11.4.4 Periods of certified illness in excess of 4 weeks will be specially considered and normally the Studentship will be suspended (see Section 18). Only in exceptional circumstances will a suspension due to illness exceed 12 months. If a student is absent for more than 4 weeks, he/she is advised to seek financial support from the University Support Funds in the first instance as all DAERA support will cease until study is resumed.

11.4.5 In all cases of student absence (including unauthorised absences) the Supervisor must inform the relevant DAERA staff as early as possible giving details of the reason for absence and plans for resumption of study.

11.4.6 Any overpayment of maintenance grant will be recovered.

11.4.7 Holiday entitlement may not be set against periods of illness.

**11.5 Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave**

11.5.1 A student may take a temporary withdrawal of up to a maximum of 12 months for maternity or adoption leave. Students will continue to be paid their full monthly studentship stipend for up to 6 months and may be able to apply for up to a further 6 months suspension of their award (unpaid) because of the pregnancy/adoption, providing a total period of paid and unpaid maternity/adoption leave up to 12 months. The estimated due date (maternity) and official adoption date must occur during the period of the award.

Periods of paid and unpaid maternity/adoption leave within the studentship stipend must be taken consecutively. If a student chooses not to take the full 12 months at the time of her pregnancy/adoption, then the student will not be able to take the remaining period at a later date.

Support for any time beyond 6 months (paid leave) should be sought from the University Support Funds in the first instance. Should the circumstances of an award be changed following the period of maternity/adoption leave, the student should notify his/her supervisor immediately.

The total period of DAERA support will not be extended beyond the original duration of the Studentship plus the period of 6 months maternity/adoption leave, except where more than one maternity/adoption leave occurs during the period of the studentship.

Students should apply to the Department, through their supervisor, for a period of maternity/adoption leave. The application must be supported by official documentation.

Supporting documentation:

11.5.2 **Maternity leave**

The student is required to provide a maternity certificate, form MATB1, obtained from a doctor or midwife, which should include the estimated due date (EDD). These are normally available 20 weeks before the EDD.

11.5.3 **Adoption leave**

Adoption leave - the student is required to provide a letter from the Adoption Agency with the date of placement and matching certificate.

11.5.4 **Paternity Leave**

A total of 10 days paternity leave may be taken at any time during a partner’s pregnancy or within 3 months following the birth. This period is regarded as additional leave of absence from studies and the award will not be extended. If the student needs to take any further time, this must be taken as a suspension to the award.

The student should apply to the Department, through their Supervisor,for leave and provide evidence of the birth including the birth certificate(s).

**11.6** **Postgraduate Training**

11.6.1 DAERA strongly recommends that you register for any **Postgraduate training courses** offered by your **University**. These are designed to assist you not only throughout your PhD but when you are writing up and then seeking employment. Please contact your University’s Postgraduate office for information.

**11.7 Demonstrating, Teaching and Other Paid Work**

11.7.1 No paid work may be undertaken by students during term-time or vacations, except for a certain amount of teaching or demonstrating work approved by the Supervisor. These duties, including any preparation work, must not take up more than six hours in any one week.

11.7.2 Students may apply to undertake a small amount of paid work, other than that specified at 11.7.1, provided the Supervisor consents and that the work will not in any way impede or interfere with the research or other training. Applications under this condition are expected to be the exception rather than the norm.

11.7.3 Students may become liable for National Insurance contributions in connection with any paid work undertaken.

**11.8 Careers**

In addition to reporting the results of examinations for higher degrees, students are requested to send brief details of the posts taken up after completion of postgraduate training. This information is required for assessment of the studentship scheme.

**11.9 Progress Reports**

11.9.1 Students will be asked to provide a concise summary (no more than two A4 size pages) of their research project each year along with copies of any publications (including abstracts and posters). Reports should be submitted through Supervisors, who should provide comment on it and indicate the student’s contribution to originality and initiative. The report should also highlight any difficulties encountered and details of training completed. If DAERA does not receive the report by the date specified, maintenance payments may be suspended until the report is received.

11.9.2 Confirmation of a second year student’s intention to continue into third year should be submitted along with the progress report. **Renewal for a third year will only be considered where the student is registered for a doctorate – i.e. a studentship holder cannot enter the third year of a studentship registered as an undifferentiated research student or as an MPhil student.**

11.9.3 Towards the end of the Studentship a **final report** will be requested through Supervisors. £125 will be withheld from the final maintenance award until this report has been received.

11.9.4 If an award terminates for any reason before completion of the full period of the award, the student should submit a concise report of the work undertaken during the period of the award. This report must be submitted through the Supervisor who should comment on it and indicate the student’s share of originality and initiative.

11.9.5 It is expected that an acknowledgement of the Department’s support will be made in presentations/publications relating to the research supported through the studentship.

11.9.6 Where intellectual property rights have not been assigned to the institute concerned DAERA reserves the right to require the holder of the Studentship to take out, in conjunction with other such persons or bodies as they may designate, a patent in respect of any invention or discovery made during the tenure of, and as a result of holding the Studentship and to assign the patent in such a manner as DAERA may direct. The holder of the Studentship shall not take out any such patent without the prior approval of DAERA.

# 12. DURATION OF STUDENTSHIP

12.1 Studentships are normally for a maximum period of 3 years, subject to annual renewal on the satisfactory recommendation of the student’s Supervisor. DAERA Scientific staff normally meet with students and supervisors on an annual basis to discuss progress.

12.2 Any problems encountered which will have a significant impact on the progress of the Studentship must be reported to us immediately. Extensions beyond the normal 3 year funding period will only be considered inexceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Department. This will require submission of a formal request to DAERA, which should be supported by the Supervisor.

12.3 The maximum duration of a research studentship will be reduced by a period equal to any previous period of postgraduate training (other than postgraduate teacher training) or of activity equivalent to postgraduate training undertaken by the student, except where the training was directly relevant to the attainment of a Masters degree (whatever the source of funding).

**13. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER**

Students will be required to give presentations to DAERA officials and stakeholders to explain the practical relevance of any research findings. Students will also be required to write a short paper highlighting findings to policy makers and industry. This will be published on the DAERA website.

**14. THESIS SUBMISSION**

Students should aim to submit their thesis by the end of their funded period and normally no later than one year after their funding end date. For further information refer to your University’s relevant Study Regulations.

**15. PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

The results of a student’s work may be published in accordance with normal academic practice at the discretion of the Supervisor or Head of Department but an acknowledgement of the Department’s support is expected. One reprint of any paper published during the studentship should be sent to us.

**The student should provide one hard bound copy of his/her thesis to us for inclusion in the DAERA library. We reserve the right to make further copies for our own use.**

**£200, withheld from the final bursary payment, will be paid when we receive the hard bound thesis.**

# 16. ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

16.1 An appropriate member of staff is required to act as Supervisor for each studentship holder.

16.2 The Supervisor is asked to monitor, on behalf of DAERA, the following range of activities relating to the studentship supported at their institution:

* Monitor and comment on student progress, including reports and final reports.
* Agree to meet with DAERA Scientific staff (Science, Evidence and Innovation Policy Branch) to review student progress once a year.
* Notify DAERA of any proposed deviance from the normal duration of the scholarship.
* Consider any changes to the study programme proposed by the student and discuss with DAERA Science staff.
* Monitor and approve attendance, holidays, absences, demonstrating and other paid work.
* Immediately notify DAERA of any unexplained absence.
* Inform DAERA of any difficulties that might result in the student having difficulty completing the course or withdrawing from the course.
* Confirm and approve all conference and travel expense claims.
* Confirm and approve any overseas fieldwork.

16.3 Supervisors must inform DAERA immediately if they consider a student’s  
 progress or conduct to be unsatisfactory or if he/she ceases training or  
 studies before the due termination date.

# 17. PAYMENT OF THE AWARD

17.1 Compulsory fees, including tuition and RTSG will be paid direct to the University or Institution to which they are due. The institution is asked to accept responsibility for the statement of approved fees.

17.2 Maintenance grants will be paid monthly, directly into the student’s nominated bank account through the Bankers Automated Clearing System (BACS). Payments are calculated at a daily rate, so will vary from month to month. Prior to the start of each quarter, we will request an email from both the student and supervisor confirming attendance and satisfactory progression. Students should note that it may take 3-5 working days for banks to process bursary payments into individual bank accounts.

17.3 Supervisors/Course Directors must inform DAERA **immediately** when a student has withdrawn from a course or is having difficulty completing the course.

17.4 Students are required to repay to DAERA any overpayments which may occur.

# 18. TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION OF THE AWARD

18.1 Students whose attendance, progress or conduct is not satisfactory may have their Studentships terminated or payments in respect of Studentships withheld or reduced.

18.2 If DAERA is satisfied that a student has wilfully failed to provide information which it requires or has provided information which is known to be false, it may terminate the Studentship or withhold any payments due under the Studentship as it sees appropriate.

18.3 A Studentship will terminate on the date when a student gives up or completes the course of training and the student will be required to refund any maintenance grant overpaid. If a student submits the thesis before the official funding period ends, the Studentship will terminate on the date the student completes and is awarded the qualification (this will be prior to graduation).

18.4 If a student takes up employment before the normal expiry date of the Studentship, or commences other postgraduate study in respect of which another Studentship has been made, the Studentship cannot be continued on or after the date of appointment or the date from which the other Studentship commences. This paragraph overrides the provision in rule 11.3 for holidays after the completion of the period of training.

18.5 In general, Studentships are intended to be held on a continuous basis and DAERA will consider suspension only in exceptional circumstances.

18.6 Acceptable reasons for suspension include:

* A period of illness which is likely to last for more than four weeks;
* Compelling personal reasons that require a student to be absent from the University;
* Taking up an internship at a centre of excellence or an industrial placement. Only one such visit may be considered during the tenure of the Studentship and must not exceed 12 months’ duration.

18.7 Suspensions will not be granted to enable a student to undertake employment, temporary lectureships, exchanges, voluntary service overseas or expeditions/sport.

18.8 Under no circumstances will suspensions be granted on the grounds of financial  
 hardship.

18.9 If a student wishes to apply for a suspension he/she must contact his/her Supervisor as soon as possible. A request must be submitted to DAERA jointly by a student and the Supervisor in advance of the proposed period of suspension. This must be accompanied by any supporting evidence e.g. medical certificates.

18.10 The Supervisor must inform DAERA of the exact date when the student resumes studies after an approved period of suspension.

# 19. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**19.1 National Insurance**

Holders of postgraduate agricultural studentships are normally regarded as receiving full-time education and are therefore exempt from the payment of National Insurance if they so wish. Those who wish to obtain the advantages under the National Insurance Scheme are advised to contact their local social security office to find out what contributions they should pay. DAERA will not make any payment of student’s National Insurance contributions. Students may become liable for contributions in connection with any paid work which they undertake.

**19.2 Income Tax**

Payment under a DAERA studentship is not normally regarded as income for tax purposes. However other earnings received during the final year of the studentship will be aggregated with income from post-award employment, when income tax liability is assessed for the fiscal year in which the studentship terminates.

**20. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

20.1 If you are not satisfied with the student award process and you feel that you want to complain, as a first step you should contact the officer with whom you were dealing or the officer’s line manager. If you are not happy with the response you may write to the Head of Supply Chain Development Branch within DAERA at the address on page 1.

20.2 Before making a complaint or appeal, please ensure you have done what you are required to do, for example, provide information or documents requested or submitted information on time.

20.3 If you wish to contest the decision to omit you from the shortlist for interview, you may do so in writing within 10 days of the date of the Department’s letter, setting out your reasons for contesting the decision. You may highlight information contained in your original application but cannot include information that is new or was not previously mentioned. The Postgraduate panel will review the case and you will be informed of their decision within 15 working days of receipt of your letter.

20.4 There is no right of appeal on the outcome of the initial interview for a Studentship. Appeals by their nature tend to involve a review of processes or decisions by a person or body different from that which took the decision complained of and this is not possible in relation to decisions taken by selection panels. You may, however, request feedback on your performance. This will be provided in writing within 10 working days.

20.5 If you wish to appeal any other decisions about your Studentship, you must do so in writing and we will respond to you within 15 working days of receipt of your letter.

**Annex A**

**DAERA POSTGRADUATE STUDENTSHIP PRIORITY AREAS 2017**

For 2017 we have specified 19 Priority Research Areas for postgraduate research. Applicants for our 2017 postgraduate competition must select **one** Priority Research Area (PRA) and submit a research proposal which **either** addresses our need, in italics below each PRA, **or** the candidate may have identified a novel proposal which is not directly related to our identified need, but must be relevant to their selected Priority Research Area 2017.

The 27 Priority Research Areas for 2017 are set out below, in the context of DAERA’s four strategic goals and twelve research themes.Our needs are in italics below each Priority Research Area.

**DAERA Goal 1: To help the agri-food industry prepare for future market opportunities and economic challenges**

Theme: Sustainable and Competitive Production

**Priority Research Area 1: Increased competitiveness and efficiency in production systems**

* *Research to consider measures to increase competitiveness and efficiency of production systems of all sectors – through:*
  + - *use of genetic improvement including genomic techniques ;*
    - *use of innovative approaches to housing systems;*
    - *precision in nutrient or feed input requirements and nutrient management;*
    - *carbon, energy and water efficiency;*
    - *increasing the use of forage in ruminant livestock systems;*
    - *dry matter yield effects; or*
    - *optimum utilisation of crop rotation/break crops.*
* *Research to consider the potential for use of remote sensing technologies in agricultural schemes.*
* *Research to identify opportunities for “big data” to assist agri-food businesses to innovate.*

**Priority Research Area 2: Northern Ireland** **Supply Chain**

* *Research to consider the unique selling points of distinctive NI branded produce highlighting any significant welfare, quality, health or environmental benefits.*
* *Research to evaluate consumer perceptions of NI food/ food attributes.*
* *An international study of agri-food supply chain integration and application for local systems.*
* *Evaluation of agrifood support mechanisms in other jurisdictions to inform future local approaches.*

Theme: Efficient Use of Resources

**Priority Research Area 3: Soil health including fertility, structure and drainage**

* *Assessment of measures to improve the sustainability of soil and growth media management for sustainable grass, arable and horticulture production.*

Theme: Novel and Innovative Food Products and Processes

**Priority Research Area 4: Novel and innovative food products and processes**

* *Development of novel and innovative food products and processes, including packaging and shelf life extension techniques to meet existing or anticipated market needs related to health/nutrition, food quality, safety and/or efficiency.*
* *Development of healthy eating alternatives to processed food ingredients.*

**DAERA Goal 2: To improve the lives of farmers and other rural dwellers, targeting resources where they are most needed**

Theme: Understanding and Evaluating Socio-economic Challenges, Needs and Potential of Traditional Land and Marine-based Industries and Appropriate Policy Responses

**Priority Research Area 5: Socioeconomic contribution of the equine industry**

* *An analysis of the economic contribution of the equine industry within the context of the wider rural economy.*

**Priority Research Area 6: Social farming and its impact in changing individuals and communities**

* *Evaluation of the benefits of social farming projects on participants and the wider farming community*

Theme: Identifying the particular Challenges, Needs and Potential of Rural and Fishing Communities and Appropriate Policy responses.

**Priority Research Area 7: Factors which can lead to low income or low uptake of services within agriculture and farming families**

* *Research to consider the nature and range of disabilities / health conditions within agriculture and farming families and links to low income.*
* *Research to consider age and disability related factors within agriculture and farming families which impact on access to, and take-up rate of services.*

**Priority Research Area 8: Rural Development Policy**

* *With regards to Rural Development Policy, DAERA welcomes research to complement ongoing AFBI evaluative projects within the Farm Business Improvement Scheme.*

**Priority Research Area 9: Evaluate the impact of agri-food policy on the sector**

* *Economic modelling of the agri-food sector to enable assessment of major policy options and international trade agreements.*
* *Assessing the economic impact and non monetary benefits of DAERA research and development in the agri-food sector in NI.*

**Priority Research Area 10: Supporting land use change to forestry**

* *Extensions to Northern Ireland of the research undertaken by Professors Bateman and Day from the University of East Anglia, funded under the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UKNES). Proposed research in this area should evaluate the cost and benefits of forest planting across Northern Ireland under a range of variable assumptions. Research in this area could also examine a range of forest policy delivery tools, and make recommendations about the tools most suited to deliver individual policy goals in Northern Ireland.*

**DAERA Goal 3 To enhance animal, fish and plant health and animal welfare on an all Ireland basis**

Theme: Animal Disease Horizon Scanning- Emerging Risks

**Priority Research Area 11: Animal disease - horizon scanning – emerging risks**

* *Research to investigate vector borne diseases – epidemiology of disease (animal and plant) carried by insect vectors (to include surveillance).*
* *Research to evaluate the knowledge and attitudes of local Private Veterinary Practices and livestock farmers to antimicrobial resistance, including a study of prescribing pressures and practices.*
* *Research to consider on-farm management practices to reduce antimicrobial use in livestock production.*
* *Research to economically evaluate bio-security practices for the livestock sector.*

Theme: Improving Diagnosis and Surveillance of Plant Pests and Disease

**Priority Research Area 12: Forest Disease Epidemiology/Plant disease diagnosis**

* *Research to investigate the epidemiology and pathology of* ***Phytophthora species in Northern Ireland and its potential spread across this island.***
* *Evaluation of biostimulants for improving grass growth in the presence of abiotic (e.g. cold, drought) and biotic (e.g. fungi, nematodes) stress;*
* *Research to consider Hymenoscyphus fraxineus (ash dieback) epidemiology and ecology* ***in on a local basis and potential all-island impacts.***
* *Research to consider the contribution of ash to the NI economy – to include provision of social, cultural and ecosystem services and cost benefit analysis of plant health control measures and its implications for the whole island.*
* *Research to identify herbicides, insecticides, biological control measures and optimal storage systems for arable and horticulture sectors.*

Theme: Improving Detection and Control of Endemic Animal Diseases

**Priority Research Area 13: Bovine TB**

* *Research to consider the prevalence and significance of NVL tuberculin reactors especially in Northern Ireland and their role in the epidemiology of bovine TB.*
* *Modelling bovine TB disease and epidemiology.*
* *Research to evaluate the survivability of pathogens, particularly TB, in faecal matter and subsequent processing, including spreading, and use in anaerobic digestion plants.*
* *Research to consider NI deer demographics and the epidemiology of bTB in deer populations especially in Northern Ireland.*
* *Research to consider the ecology of badgers in high, medium and low density areas especially in Northern Ireland.*
* *Research to consider the modelling of the economic impact of bTB on the agri-food sector and wider implications for the NI economy.*

**Priority Research Area 14:Pestiviruses in NI, tools to support BVD eradication programme**

* *Research to consider the level of exposure of ruminants, including deer, to Pestivirus, and genetic typing of viral strains to support the management of the BVD.*

**Priority Research Area 15: Improved Diagnostics and control of Johnes’ Disease in the NI cattle population**

* *Research is required to develop an understanding of its complex interaction with bovine TB pathogenesis and diagnosis developing. Such research may include:*
  + - *Risk factors and infection outcomes*
    - *Investigating disease transmission dynamics*
    - *Independent evaluation of novel diagnostics*
    - *Evaluation of on-farm interventions*

**DAERA Goal 4: To help deliver improved sustainable environmental outcomes**

Theme: Sustainable Manure and Nutrient Management

# Priority Research Area 16: Ammonia and odour abatement

# *Research to consider potential opportunities to reduce ammonia emissions from the NI livestock sector through improved management practices and manure storage.*

**Priority Research Area 17: Rivers, lakes and coastal areas**

* *Research to consider factors influencing the recovery of Water Framework Directive (WFD) quality elements in NI rivers and lakes.*

* *Research to consider the social, economic, environmental or ecosystem factors which could impact upon the future productivity and sustainability of the NI fishing industry.*

# Theme: Understanding and Improving the Environmental Footprint of the Agri-food Industry

# Priority Research Area 18: Soil and Nutrient management practices

# *Research to consider the environmental and economic impacts of applying organic nutrients to grassland, taking into account soil moisture, soil and air temperature, and plant requirements during, and outside of, the Nitrates Action Plan closed period.*

# *Research to consider the environmental and economic benefits of slurry transfer between farms.*

Theme: Responding to Climate Change: Adaptation and Mitigation

**Priority Research Area 19:** **Responding to climate change**

* *Research to consider adaptation to and mitigation of climate change*

ANNEX B

OVERSEAS FIELDWORK BANDS

Four bands exist as follow:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **ANNUAL RATE** |
| BAND A | £11,300 |
| BAND B | £7,800 |
| BAND C | £5,400 |
| BAND D | £3,000 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **COUNTRY** | **BAND** | **COUNTRY** | **BAND** |
| Afghanistan | B | Laos | C |
| Albania | C | Latvia | C |
| Algeria | C | Lebanon | C |
| American Samoa | C | Liberia | A |
| Angola | B | Libya | B |
| Anguilla | C | Lithuania | D |
| Antigua and Barbuda | B | Luxembourg | B |
| Argentina | B | Madagascar | C |
| Armenia | D | Malawi | D |
| Ascension Islands | B | Malaysia | D |
| Australia | B | Maldives | C |
| Austria | B | Mali Republic | C |
| Azerbaijan | D | Malta | D |
| Bahamas | B | Martinique | A |
| Bahrain | C | Mauritius | C |
| Bangladesh | C | Mexico | C |
| Barbados | B | Mongolia | C |
| Belgium | C | Montserrat | B |
| Belize | C | Morocco | C |
| Benin | C | Mozambique | C |
| Bermuda | A | Namibia | C |
| Bhutan | B | Nepal | D |
| Bolivia | C | Netherlands | C |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | C | New Zealand | C |
| Botswana | C | Nicaragua | B |
| Brazil | B | Niger | B |
| Brunei | B | Nigeria | B |
| Bulgaria | C | Norway | A |
| Burma (Myanmar) | B | Oman | B |
| Cambodia | D | Pakistan | D |
| Cameroon | C | Panama | B |
| Canada | A | Papua New Guinea | C |
| Cayman Islands | B | Paraguay | C |
| Chad | C | Peru | B |
| Chile | B | Philippines | C |
| China | B | Poland | C |
| Columbia | B | Portugal | C |
| Congo Republic | A | Puerto Rico | D |
| Costa Rica | C | Qatar | C |
| Croatia | C | Romania | C |
| Cuba | B | Russia | B |
| Cyprus | C | Rwanda | B |
| Czech Republic | C | Saudi Arabia | B |
| Denmark | B | Senegal | C |
| Dominica | C | Serbia & Montenegro | C |
| Dominican Republic | D | Seychelles | B |
| Ecuador | C | Sierra Leone | B |
| Egypt | C | Singapore | B |
| El Salvador | C | Slovak Republic | C |
| Equatorial Guinea | B | Slovenia | C |
| Eritrea | C | Solomon Islands | A |
| Estonia | D | Somalia | B |
| Ethiopia | C | South Africa | B |
| Falkland Islands | B | Spain | C |
| Fiji and West Pacific | C | Spain (Las Palmas) | B |
| Finland | A | Sri Lanka | C |
| France | B | St Christopher (St Kitts) & Nevis | C |
| French Polynesia | C | St Lucia | B |
| Gabon | B | St Vincent and The Grenadines | C |
| Gambia | B | Sudan | B |
| Georgia | C | Swaziland | C |
| Germany | B | Sweden | A |
| Ghana | C | Switzerland | B |
| Gibraltar | C | Syria | C |
| Greece | C | Taiwan | C |
| Greenland | B | Tanzania | C |
| Grenada | B | Thailand | C |
| Guam | C | Tibet | A |
| Guatemala | C | Togo | C |
| Guinea | D | Tonga | C |
| Guyana | C | Trinidad and Tobago | C |
| Haiti | C | Tunisia | C |
| Honduras | D | Turkey | C |
| Hungary | D | Turks and Caicos Islands | B |
| Iceland | B | Uganda | B |
| India | D | Ukraine | B |
| Indonesia | C | United Arab  Emirates | B |
| Iran | D | Uruguay | B |
| Iraq | A | USA (incl Hawaii and Alaska) | A |
| Irish Republic | C | Uzbekistan | B |
| Israel | C | Vanuatu | C |
| Italy | B | Venezuela | C |
| Ivory Coast | B | Vietnam | C |
| Jamaica | C | Virgin Islands | B |
| Japan | A | Yemen | B |
| Jordan | C | Yugoslavia | C |
| Kazakhstan | B | Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) | A |
| Kenya | C | Zambia | D |
| Korea | B | Zimbabwe | D |
| Kuwait | C |  |  |
| Kyrgyzstan | B |  |  |