

MAPS Impact Studentship Guidance

Recruitment round 2023/24

This guidance is intended for academics who would like to set up an Impact Studentship. Research support staff may also refer to it.

Impact Studentships support collaborative partnerships between UCL and external organizations. These projects can contribute to research outputs and impact. Departments can also benefit from quality-related (QR) funding, for instance, research degree programme (RDP) supervision funding.

Costs for such studentships are usually shared 50:50 between the department and external partner.

Please note that impact studentships are separate from other doctoral studentships supported by research councils, such as Centres of Doctoral Training (CDTs), Doctoral Training Programmes (DTP) studentships that are often funded by the EPSRC or SFTC) and iCASE Studentships. All of these involve funding from research councils and have their own terms and conditions that may be stricter than the impact studentship scheme.

You are encouraged to contact your research support colleagues for a rough idea of commitments required from your department for a potential impact studentship, and to discuss this as early as possible with your head of department (HoD) to ensure that your application is supported.

You can set up an impact studentship by following the steps below:

Step 1: Inform your HoD and research support colleagues that you plan to set up an impact studentship, so that you have the support from your HoD and your research support colleagues can produce the Worktribe costings for you.

Step2: Create the impact studentship project on Worktribe. This can be done by you or your research support colleagues (check with your departmental manager). You will need the details of the PI, external partner, project, budget and so on.

For impact studentship budget, please refer to [UCL Studentships Budget](#). Please note that this budget sets the minimum and maximum stipend UCL will pay to a research student. The exact amount of yearly stipend and research costs should be decided on a case-by-case basis for each Impact Studentship through discussions and negotiations between you and the external organisation because the total costs will be shared. It is worth considering the stipends of other members of your group and that stipend supplements can help recruit the highest quality students.

Based on the current UCL Studentship Budget, MAPS requires a **minimum** funding of £50,000 from an external partner for a 3-year studentship starting in academic year 2023/24 and the amount increases accordingly for a 3.5 or 4-year studentship.

As mentioned above, departments can be allocated some RDP supervision funding for providing impact studentships and the allocation is based on a maximum of three years' full-time programme. Consequently, it is recommended that impact studentships are for 3 years. Separate to this funded period, students can then apply for [Completing Research Status](#) (CRS) at the end of year 3 to write up their dissertation. The CRS period is typically one calendar year (full time) or

two calendar years (part time). However, each project is different, so length of the studentship should also be adjusted to suit the project and to cover all fees and costs. Many departments in fact set up a 4-year studentship contract which gives the student time to write up their dissertation, reduces the work of extending the contract, and the need to apply for CRS. In this case, departments usually pay stipend only in the final year. Your HoD and research support colleagues would be able to advise.

Please refer to MAPS Impact Studentship Budget Guidance (Appendix A) and the [UCL Academic Manual](#) (Chapter 5) for further details.

Step 3: Obtain approval from HoD, Partner and Vice Dean for Innovation and Enterprise. Please obtain written confirmation of support or commitments from your HoD, written confirmation of sponsorship from your external partner and approval from the Faculty Vice Dean (**VD**) for Innovation and Enterprise (I&E). Fill in the MAPS Impact Studentship Application Form (Appendix B) to obtain approval from the VD I&E, currently Prof Nguyễn T. K. Thanh. You can send the completed form to ntk.thanh@ucl.ac.uk. *Please allow one week for the VD I&E to return the signed approved copy.*

Step 4: Obtain Worktribe Approval. Upload all the relevant confirmation, approval and other documents onto Worktribe and submit the project for approval. This needs to be approved by your HoD and then UCL Research Services (RS). Use the Comments function to communicate with UCL RS to resolve queries from them as early as possible to avoid delay in approving.

Step 5: Set up Contract. Once UCL RS approves, you or your research support colleagues can submit request on Worktribe for UCL Research Contracts team to set up the studentship contract. This may take 2-3 months or even longer. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you submit contract setup request immediately after you create the Impact Studentship project on Worktribe. This way, the project approval and contract setup can progress concurrently. As both processes may take longer than expected, so please bear this in mind when you set the start date of the studentship. We recommend that the progress of the contract be regularly checked as delays in providing information can go unnoticed.

Step 6: Recruit students. Advertising for recruitment should begin once the contract is in place. Do keep in mind that getting the project approved and contract set up may take 2-3 months, so it is recommended that you start preparing the job advertisement early so it can be put up for recruitment as soon as the contract is ready. It is typically required that students Do Not start until the contract is in place.

However, in reality, many departments start recruiting as soon as the studentship is confirmed with the HoD, supervisor and external partner in order to recruit the best candidate. One flexibility of impact studentships is that the costs can be backdated and recovered. This is different from the other studentships mentioned earlier (EPSRC-DTP, iCASE, etc).

Other points to consider

Start date: Although Impact Studentships can be set up any time during the year, the start date of such studentships is usually set in September or October to align with the start of the academic year for ease of management. In some cases, this might be delayed due to contract not in place

or recruitment challenges and this delay will affect the start date as well as costs. If the delay is significant, *e.g.*, more than 6 months, you may need an amendment to the budget and contract. Please contact the Research Contracts Team for advice and their contact details can be found on <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-services/rs-contacts/>.

Eligibility: Currently, impact studentships are only available to UK or EU students with settled status. This is mainly due to the quality-related research funding we could receive from Research England for our PhD programmes. For academics who wish to recruit international students, the other studentships mentioned earlier such as CDT, DTP and iCASE, might be possible options. [Please see UKRI Studentships](#) offered through research councils.

If you have any queries, please contact your research support colleagues or MAPS Faculty Innovation and Enterprise Coordinator Maria Mediero-Munoyerro at m.mediero-munoyerro@ucl.ac.uk.

Appendix A

MAPS Impact Studentship Budget Guidance

Recruitment round 2023/24

Impact Studentships are usually shared 50:50 between the department and the external partner. It is required that a **minimum** funding of £50,000 is requested from the external partner for a 3-year studentship. Departments can discuss with external partners for more than the minimum contribution as well as for longer term studentships such as 3.5 or 4 years.

The UCL Research and Innovation Services sets the [studentship budget guidance](#) and we base our minimum calculation on this guidance. The current UCL studentship budget for a student starting in Sept 2023 is as below. Please note that these rates are forecasted and are subject to change. UKRI are reviewing stipend rates with an outcome to be confirmed in Spring 2023. We believe the rates below to be the likely minimum rates, but these may change significantly when UKRI's review is completed.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Minimum Student Stipend	£20,198	£20,744	£21,306	£62,248
Home Fees	£5,860	£6,040	£6,220	£18,120
Other Costs	£1,200	£1,200	£1,200	£3,600
Total	£27,258	£27,984	£28,726	£83,968

NB: see some notes on these costs below.

Minimum Stipend: Figures are estimates as shown on their website at the time of writing. The department will usually contribute 50% of stipend. Please note that this is the minimum stipend for a studentship. The external partner can choose or be required by the department to increase the limit and the extra funds can be used to enhance the stipend or for the project. The maximum stipend to be paid to research students at UCL is normally considered to be the Wellcome Trust stipend levels, (which are a set rate for each year of the student's training). Their current rates are as below (for students based in London):

- Year 1: £22,278
- Year 2: £24,093
- Year 3: £26,057
- Year 4: £26,839

The department and the external partner can discuss and negotiate on the yearly stipend which can be between the UCL minimum rate and the Wellcome Trust rate.

Home Fees: The department will usually contribute 50% of the home fees.

Other costs: The department will usually contribute 50% of the other costs. The above UCL's studentship budget of £1200 is only a guidance. Research expenses for different projects vary greatly. A more realistic estimate or forecast needs to be made for each individual project. The department can decide if they need to match funding or require external partner to contribute more. The total

funding should be sufficient to support the student for the whole project period, including research costs, travel, subsistence and so on.

Minimum amount requested from external sponsor: A minimum of £50,000 is required from external sponsors and as you can see, this figure is not half of the total costs (£83,968) shown in the table. This is because the table only shows the minimum stipend UCL requires and many other research councils and funders, such as Wellcome Trust as mentioned above, offers higher stipends; the research costs of £1200 a year is a minimum estimate and far from sufficient for most projects. Therefore, to make sure there is enough financial support for the whole duration of the studentship, £50,000 is the least we recommend from your external sponsor for an impact studentship.

Appendix B

MAPS Impact Studentship Application

Within the MAPS faculty impact studentships require:

- Funding approval from the Head of Department.
- Approval from the Vice Dean for Innovation and Enterprise to confirm that they meet the Impact Studentship criteria in terms of ‘Impact’ – the purpose of this form. *Please allow one week for the VD I&E to return the signed approved copy.*

Please complete the sections below and send to Prof Nguyen T. K. Thanh (ntk.thanh@ucl.ac.uk) and Maria Mediero-Munoyerro at m.mediero-munoyerro@ucl.ac.uk	
Title of Impact Studentship project	
Name of supervisor	Hosting department
Estimated start date	Duration of the project
A short description of the proposed research (guideline 200-400 words).	
A short description of the possible impact of the research.	
Name of external sponsoring organization	
Amount of sponsorship from the external sponsoring organization	
Have you obtained written confirmation from the external sponsoring organization? Yes _____ No _____	
Have you obtained the approval from the Head of the hosting department? Yes _____ No _____	
Please make sure that you discuss about IP and if possible, to have an agreement in place before start of the project with a prospective student.	
Name of Applicant _____	

Signature _____

Date of Submission of this application _____

Disposition and comments: (to be completed by MAPS Vice Dean for Innovation and Enterprise)

Print name _____

Signature _____

Date of approval _____