

Guidance notes for Professional Development Bursary Scheme



(PDBS)

What is Professional Development Bursary Scheme?

The Professional Development Bursary Scheme is a limited funding scheme for University of Birmingham doctoral research students who receive Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) funding for their degree. Applicants may apply for up to £500 which can go toward professional development activities or events that will enhance the skills and networks needed to secure employment after graduation.

The quality of your application and the information that you provide will be used to judge your suitability for the bursary.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the bursary scheme, you must be registered as a postgraduate research student with the University of Birmingham, and you must receive a studentship from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

What can be funded with the bursary?

The bursary is for professional development activities such as:

- attending industry conferences
- attending networking events
- membership of professional organisations
- attending accredited and non-accredited training courses
- to purchase equipment for public engagement activity

The bursary can cover costs such as travel to and from the event as well as the cost of accommodation for participating in one's chosen activity, as well as membership costs or training course fees.

Applicants may apply for funding for more than one activity/event in one application form. However, the applicant must specify on their application form how each one will add to their professional development.

What cannot be funded with the bursary?

- Activity which is unrelated to professional development
- Subsistence costs i.e. food and drink.
- Costs for activities which have been covered by another budget, such as a School conference fund

- Costs over the £500 limit

Application process

- Complete your form. Where relevant, provide copies of all quotations and documentation to support your claim, and ensure that travel and accommodation is by the most economic means possible. You should lay out the approximate costs of travel and accommodation in the application form.
- All signatures required on the application form can be done electronically, and the completed form should be sent to epsgraduateschool@contacts.bham.ac.uk. There is no requirement to provide a paper copy of the form and applications may be submitted at any time of the year.
- Please ensure you get supervisor endorsement on your application form as this is a requirement for the bursary. Unfortunately we cannot consider any application that is not supported by your supervisor.
- You should apply in advance wherever possible. Requests for activity which has already taken place will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Approvals process

Applications will be considered four times per year: 30th June 2018, 30th September 2018, 31st December 2018 and 31st March 2019.

Decisions will be made by the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences Graduate School based on the strength of the application. We aim to support as many students as possible, however funding is limited and dependent on the number of applications received, we may not be able to support all applications. Applicants who have not previously received Professional Development Bursary funding will be prioritised.

You will receive notification via your university email if you have been successful.

For successful applicants, it is expected that at the end of your activity you will produce a short report about how the activity allowed you to meet your specified goals and helped your professional development.

All decisions are final.

Support with completing the form

This section outlines some general guidance around what is being looked for in your Professional Development Bursary application form. Questions 1, 2 and 3 are the main areas that will be judged when assessing your application.

Question 1 - What conference/activity/event do you wish to attend/participate in?

Please include a brief description of the activity you want to use the bursary for. This section needs to be as specific as possible, describing the activity (or activities). This could include a roster or agenda of the events that are occurring at a conference or networking event for example, or it could describe what kind of accredited certification you will receive.

Question 2 - Please provide a short statement explaining how this will benefit your professional development.

For this question we want to know how your chosen activity is going to help your professional development. You are encouraged to identify the types of skills you will develop and how the experience will help you achieve your career goals. If you don't have a specific career goal in mind, specify instead how this activity will help develop general skills for employability, such as organisation, writing or research skills.

Remember, the activity needs to help your professional development. Therefore you need to relate what you want to do with how it will positively affect your career trajectory or career skills once you have finished your postgraduate research.

Question 3 - Please itemise how the bursary will be used. Please include supporting evidence of the cost (e.g. link to website detailing cost, receipt, etc.)

This question requires you lay out in as much detail as possible the breakdown of costs for your chosen activity. This means describing what kind of costs will be incurred and approximately how much these will come to. You will need to link to websites or show some kind of receipt information to prove both that your approximate costings are correct and that they are the most economical prices available. For any costs, in particular travel and accommodation, these must be through the most economical means. For example, we would not provide bursary funds to pay for first class rail or plane tickets.