



30 November 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2023/00879

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 7 November in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I would like to see the decision-making process behind the London supplement [to the UKRI PhD student stipend], such as minutes from relevant meetings, or policy documents.

Our response:

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold information relevant to your request.

The London weighting for the UKRI PhD student stipend was last reviewed during 2017. Please see attachment "RCN 17-14 London Weighting" for this paper, which was presented to the Research Careers Network (RCN).

The paper was discussed at the RCN meeting on 14 March 2017, relevant minutes from which are attached in "RCN 17-15a Minutes - 14 March 2017_Redacted". As you will note from these minutes, it was agreed that the London weighting was an area that could be revisited and feed into discussions for the next stipend uplift.

Further discussions took place during the RCN meeting of 5 September 2017, for which relevant meeting minutes can be found in attachment "RCN 17-41 Minutes - 5 September 2017_Redacted". This meeting was informed by papers:

- *RCN 17-38 Annual Stipend Uplift; London Weighting and Tuition Fees_Redacted*
- *RCN 17-38a Annual Stipend Uplift Information Paper_Redacted*

At this meeting it was determined that further review of the London weighting would be needed once UKRI was established, and the information paper was to be amended to focus on the stipend uplift only. Please note, the RISAB referenced in these papers is the Research and Innovation Strategy Advisory Board.

In January 2018, the paper "UKRI DD RCN Paper - REVISED 03.01.18_Redacted" was approved by the UKRI Design & Delivery Sub Board, relevant meeting minutes of which can be found in attachment "UKRI DD Minutes 9 January 2018_Redacted".

UKRI is currently working on a [New Deal for Postgraduate Research](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/new-deal-for-postgraduate-research/)¹ and have published [an analysis of the call for input](https://www.ukri.org/publications/analysis-of-the-new-deal-for-postgraduate-research-call-for-input/)². The analysis states "Students note that the cost of living is not equal across the UK, with specific reference to studying in Bristol, Cambridge, London, and Oxford, and feel their current stipend does not sufficiently support higher associated living costs. This raises concerns for the growing proportion of PGR students that may be living below the poverty line."

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/new-deal-for-postgraduate-research/>

² <https://www.ukri.org/publications/analysis-of-the-new-deal-for-postgraduate-research-call-for-input/>

In our [response to the call for input](#)³, published in September 2023, we set out that, alongside the increase of minimum stipend of nearly 20% since the call for input ran, UKRI would “Review how we set the UKRI minimum stipend. If we determine any changes are required, these are likely to be phased in from academic year 2025-26.” We can confirm this review will include consideration of the impact of location on living costs and additional allowances provided to students.

Within the meeting minutes we have removed any information that is not relevant to the London weighting or stipend uplift as it is out of scope of your request. Furthermore, in all documents we are exempting the names, contact details and job titles of individuals under section 40(2) of the FOIA. Disclosing this information would contravene the first Data Protection Principle as defined under Section 86 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 5 of UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact within the next 40 working days:

Head of Information Governance
Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,


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UK Research and Innovation
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³ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/new-deal-for-postgraduate-research-response-to-the-call-for-input/>