



Joint Bursary Award Scheme

Guidance for applicants

This guidance note is additional to the [general applicant guidance](#) issued on The Scottish Forestry Trust website and is specifically related to the Joint Bursary Award Scheme (“the scheme”) between the Trust and Scottish Forestry (SF), Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Forestry Commission (FC).

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of the scheme is to support postgraduate forestry research studentships relevant to UK forestry and carried out in the UK. Studentships will be related to the practice and application of forestry (including forest products) and will comply with the objectives and priorities of the Trust. Studentships can be Masters or Doctorate level research, and students will be registered at UK Universities.
- 1.2. The scheme will be open for studentships until further notice and is co-funded by the partners.
- 1.3. The funds will support a rolling programme of PhD and Masters (MPhil/ MRes) qualifications that will cover the following forestry related subject areas:
 - Earth and environmental sciences
 - Downstream manufacturing/ product development/ marketing or innovation
 - Social/ politics/ policy
 - Or a combination of the above

2. Assistance Levels

- 2.1. There is a presumption that the proposals will be co-funded with a third party, for example a combination of industrial sponsorship, Research Council/CASE funding, charitable support or personal funds. Leverage including additional funds or in-kind contributions will be a factor in project selection.
- 2.2. Subject to approval by the Trust, and to the provisions of sections 2 & 3 of the Trust’s general applicant guidance, assistance levels will not normally exceed 30% of eligible costs for doctoral research degrees and a maximum of £7,000 for Masters research degrees. Eligible costs can include student stipend, fees, fieldwork costs, doctoral training and attendance at conferences. Ineligible costs include research supervision or overheads.
- 2.3. It will be unacceptable for students to rely on the scheme as their sole source of funds. Bursaries will only be available to fund new research and not research which is already in progress at the time of application.
- 2.4. Institutions must be cognisant that PhD studentships extend over a number of years and therefore any cost estimates must take into account inflationary uplifts and possible changes in fee and stipend rates. These uplifts must be budgeted in as any cost changes within a project cannot be applied for once the project has started.

2.5. The fund will typically fund 30% of home-level tuition fees and associated stipend as set by the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Council. As international postgraduate research fees can vary significantly based on the university and the specific research project, the Bursary Fund does not cover them, or the difference between home-level and international fees, or provide international students with a top-up of the stipend above the minimum level.

3. Selection Process and Academic Support

- 3.1. Applications will be considered three times a year by the Trust's Projects and Research Committee. [Dates for submission and decision](#), following normal procedures, are published on the Trust's website.
- 3.2. Periodic progress reports and final reports will be required according to an agreed project schedule and these must subsequently be approved by the Trust prior to the release of any staged payments due. Note that the final £2,000 of any award will be retained until the student has submitted their final corrected thesis.
- 3.3. The Trust or partners, reserve the right to nominate a non-academic supervisor for each student receiving a studentship if appropriate. Such matters will be considered at approval stage and on a case-by-case basis to ensure that supervision arrangements comply with universities' internal policies and procedures.
- 3.4. All Trust joint bursary award students are expected to join the Institute of Chartered Foresters as a student member. This incurs a nominal annual fee, which the student should bear, but provides access to a wide range of resources, events and networks.
- 3.5. Bursary Award Students will be given the opportunity to participate in occasional Bursary Student Seminars co-ordinated by the Trust. These are opportunities to share their research with others in a supportive environment. Out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed for participation in these events.

4. Outputs

- 4.1. Dissemination is a key part of the requirements of the scheme, and it is expected that the research will be published in appropriate journals. Copies of all articles should be shared with the Trust.
- 4.2. The funders of the scheme will expect that in addition to the publication of the academic findings of the work, researchers will submit a report for publication suitable for an informed lay audience [this may be an article for the forestry press which the Trust Executive Director will assist with securing]. The funders reserve the right to publish such reports.
- 4.3. All completed dissertations will be eligible for consideration for the Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence Award. This Award is presented every two years to the best dissertation published in the previous two-year period.

5. Intellectual Property

- 5.1. The Trust reserves the right, if appropriate, to make, have made, use and market products derived from inventions and other forms of intellectual property which arise from the studentship and which are in the ownership or under the control of a participating university or research institution, subject to entering into a royalty-sharing agreement with the university or institution.

6. Liabilities

- 6.1. All research undertaken during the studentships will comply with an appropriate ethical code to be specified in the research proposal.
- 6.2. Research institutions participating in the scheme will be required to indemnify the partnership from claims arising from the activities of the student.

7. Appeals

- 7.1. The Trust has an appeals process which is available [here](#).