

28th September 2022



To: Newcastle University's Postgraduate
Research Training Partners

Brian R Walker FRCPE FRSE FMedSci
Pro Vice Chancellor Research Strategy & Resources
Chair of Medicine
Executive Office
King's Gate
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU
United Kingdom

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Cost of living support for PGR students

This letter explains the steps that Newcastle University is taking to support our PGR students during the cost of living crisis resulting from rising inflation and energy costs. It is being shared with you because of your generous sponsorship of Newcastle University students and our request that you lend your support to an exceptional uplift to the student stipend costs.

In September 2022, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which supports around a quarter of PGR students in the UK, announced its decision to increase the 2022/23 minimum stipend rate by 10% over and above the previously announced annual index linked increase. The result is an increase in the annual stipend rate to £17,668 per annum from 1st October 2022, an additional uplift in minimum stipend of £1606 per annum.

Most universities, including Newcastle, use the UKRI stipend rates as a guide for stipends that we fund from other sources. In response to the UKRI announcement, the University has decided to match the UKRI stipend uplift for all those students whose stipend we fund. When we part-fund individual students, we will apply the uplift pro rata to our contribution.

For students funded by non-UKRI non-university sources, we are asking the external funders to consider increasing the stipend to at least the minimum UKRI level. Some funders, for example the Leverhulme Trust, have announced that they will meet the uplift costs; others already provide a stipend in excess of the UKRI rate and therefore haven't provided an extra uplift. Please would you consider meeting the uplift of £1606 per annum to the stipend rate that you pay for sponsored students in the University? This will be at a pro rata rate accorded the percentage of the student stipend that you fund.

You may also be interested that the University is making available Doctoral College Cost of Living Impact Fund to which students who don't benefit from the stipend uplift can apply for modest financial support. However, this is intended to meet the very significant needs of around a quarter of our students who are self-funded and don't receive any stipend. Should you wish to donate to this Fund, our Advancement team would be delighted to hear from you and I can put you in touch.

We hope you will join us in our efforts to maintain an adequate living wage equivalent through the PGR student stipend uplift. Many thanks for your consideration and please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like further information or discussion. We very much appreciate your ongoing support for PGR students and their training here at the University.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Walker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Brian Walker

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