

NEWTON FUND – PhD PLACEMENTS FOR SCHOLARS

Guidelines for applications

June 2017/18 Version 1.0

Call opens: 5 June 2017

Call closes: 15 September 2017, 16.00 hrs (Thailand time)

Background

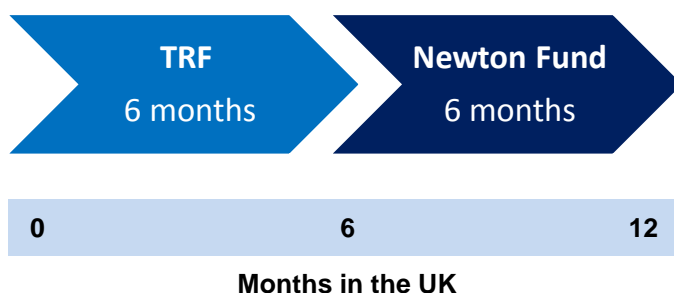
The Newton Fund aims to promote the economic development and social welfare of either the partner countries or, through working with the partner country, to address the well-being of communities. It will do so through strengthening partner country science and innovation capacity and unlocking further funding to support this work. It is part of the UK's official development assistance (ODA).

The Fund was launched in 2014 and originally consisted of £75 million each year for 5 years. In the 2015 UK Spending Review it was agreed to extend and expand the Fund. The Newton Fund was extended from 2019 to 2021 and expanded by doubling the £75 million investment to £150 million by 2021, leading to a £735 million UK investment to 2021, with partner countries providing matched resources within the Fund.

About the PhD Placements

Newton-TRF PhD Scholarship has been initiated and designed by the British Council and the Thailand Research Fund (TRF) to enhance international collaborative skills for Thai researchers enabling a pool of researchers with international perspectives and experience to work and produce research (and other work) to promote Thailand's social and economic development. The additional support available from the Newton Fund to TRF programmes will enable scholars to study for longer periods in UK higher education institutions, resulting in more opportunities to learn from the UK's research excellence and create collaborative links.

British Council and TRF are inviting applications for funding to support short-term PhD placements in UK higher education institutions. The Programme will sponsor Thai PhD students to spend a period of their study (12 months) in the UK higher education institutions **starting no later than October 2018**.



About the Thailand Research Fund

The Thailand Research Fund focuses on building up professional researchers, strengthening the research community, and supporting research that is significant to national development. The 3 scholarship programmes under TRF include:



1. ROYAL GOLDEN JUBILEE (RGJ) PHD PROGRAMME

The Royal Golden Jubilee PhD programme is a prestigious scholarship scheme funded by the Royal Thai government. The scheme was initiated in 1996 to increase the number of PhD holders and enhance the quality and quantity of research for the sustainable development of the nation. The scholarships fund PhD study in Thailand and provide scholars with an opportunity for short-term placements with higher education institutions overseas.



2. RESEARCH AND RESEARCHERS FOR INDUSTRIES (RRI)

To strengthen the collaboration with industries, TRF launched the Researchers and Research Funds for Industries programme in 2012. The programme provides scholarships for both PhD and Master students whose work deals with current industrial issues. The programme also includes collaborative industry-university research funding in which industry takes an active role in posing the questions as academic research projects.



3. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK (IRN)

The International Research Network (IRN) has been initiated based on the successful achievements of the Royal Golden Jubilee PhD Program in continuing research collaborations among Thai and overseas scientists by using the mobility of the PhD students as a link. The IRN facilitates a coordinated approach among scientists and international development agencies, to share knowledge and identify opportunities for collaborations.

Eligibility criteria

Applications will be open to the PhD students who hold Thailand Research Fund scholarships and meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be under the following programmes:

**The Royal Golden
Jubilee Programme
(RGJ)**

**Research and
Researchers for
Industries (RRI)**

**International Research
Network Programme
(IRN)**

- Have passed a qualifying examination (QE) or proposal. Evidence of the result must be provided.
- Have planned to conduct research at Higher Education Institutions or research organisations in the UK for a minimum period of 12 months. A variation in the travel plan (change of institutions, visit period etc.) will be approved case-by-case.
- Following selection process, applicants must be able to attend the interview in person (travel expenditure cannot be claimed for interview)

- Applicants must secure a Tier 4 or Tier 5 (Government exchange) UK visa for the placement. General and Student Visitor visa is not allowed. Failure to obtain an appropriate visa will result in grant cancellation.
- Upon agreement with the UK institutions, applicants must be able to fulfil the English proficiency requirements and undertake the placements with appropriate level of English.
- Applicants who previously visit the UK with the supervisor under the Newton PhD Travel grants for Supervisors are eligible to apply for this programme.
- Scholars may apply both for Newton Fund – TRF PhD Placements for Scholars programme and as an accompanying student for Travel Grants for Supervisors programme. However, **in case of successful application for the placements programme**, the scholars will become ineligible for the Travel Grants for Supervisors programme.
- Applicants' supervisor / department / faculty / institution must have the capacity to administer the grant on behalf of the applicant.
- Applicant must start their placement no later than **31 October 2018**.

Eligibility checks will be applied upon the receipt of the proposals. Proposals which do not meet the criteria will be rejected during these checks. If you are unsure with your eligibility, please contact the British Council or the Thailand Research Fund.

Finding host institutions in the UK

The British Council is working with UUKi to help students who would like to apply for the Newton Fund PhD Placement Programmes find host institutions in the UK.

About UUKi

UUKi helps to shape the higher education policy agenda, engaging directly with policy makers and other stakeholders. UUKi maintains strong and proactive relationships with government, the private sector, the professions and sector agencies.

If you would like UUKi's assistance to find a host UK university, please complete the Student Support Form in this link:

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/International/funding-and-opportunities/Pages/newton-fund.aspx>

Relevance to economic development and social welfare (Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligibility)

The PhD placements are intended to support research areas relevant to the development of Thailand. We define research with development relevance as research (applied or fundamental) that has the potential to contribute to the economic development and social welfare of low- and middle-income countries, benefitting poor and vulnerable populations in these countries.

Under this programme, research relevant to economic development and social welfare of the partner country can fall in one or more of the following research challenge areas:

- Agriculture (e.g. irrigation, crop yields)
- Climate and environment (e.g. climate change, green technology, sustainable development, ecosystem services, resource scarcity)
- Sustainable energy for all
- Education research and innovation for development
- Economic growth (e.g. equitable growth, financial sector development, private sector development)
- Health (e.g. HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, neglected tropical diseases, child mortality, maternal health)
- Water and sanitation
- Food and nutrition (including food security)
- Demographic change and migration
- Rural and urban development

- Infrastructure (including civil engineering, information and communication technologies, big data for social and economic development)
- Humanitarian disasters and emergencies, disaster risk reduction
- Resilient and connected communities
- Governance, society and conflict (e.g. transparency, accountability, effective institutions, land and natural resource rights, poverty alleviation, social development, structural inequalities, violence and security, peace building, civil society)
- Development-relevant data collection, quality and access (including administrative data and macroeconomic statistics).

Priority areas

The call is open for all areas of research.

Contracting and financial arrangements

The grant agreement for placements in the UK will be signed between the British Council (Thailand), the Thailand Research Fund, the successful candidate's home department / faculty / institution.

Throughout the one year visit, the payment will be **divided into two parts**. The Thailand Research Fund will provide **maximum funding of 900,000 Baht** and the Newton Fund, through the British Council UK, will provide **up to £13,500** per scholar. The size of funding and number of scholars may vary depending on candidate's qualification and the availability of the funding available.

Grant from Newton Fund will be disbursed directly to the assigned delegate account (**not** individual account). An advance payment of 90% of the Newton Fund grant will be made on signature of the grant agreement, followed by a payment of 10% dependent on approval of reports by the British Council.

The following section details the costs that are covered by the programme:

Thailand Research Fund will cover:		Newton Fund will cover:	
Tuition and bench fee	As per receipt	Tuition and bench fee	£5,000
Living expenses (6 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,120 per month (within London) • £1,000 per month (outside London) 	Living expenses (6 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,120 per month (within London) • £1,000 per month (outside London)
Preparation (e.g. UK visa fee and overseas travel insurance).	30,000 THB	Insurance fee (6 months)	£185
Return international airfare (economy class) to the UK.	As per receipt	English courses and examination in Thailand and the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,595 (within London) • £2,315 (outside London)
Thai research supervisors' short-term visit to the UK and vice versa to follow up the scholar.	RGJ 100,000 THB RRi 120,000 – 150,000 THB	International conference participation or trainings	
		Other related costs	

Note:

- Costs beyond the above arrangements will be borne by the students themselves.
- Successful applicants will accept full responsibility for all aspects of the visit and take out adequate insurance for any risks associated with taking part in travelling abroad, including all unexpected and uncontrollable events. The British Council and TRF will not be liable for the consequences of any such risks or any costs incurred during the visit.

- Multiple visits will be approved on a case by case basis.
- The amount of budget in this guideline may change depending on the availability of funding.
- The terms and conditions in this guideline are subject to change without prior notice.

Key timeline

Date	Details
5 June – 15 September 2017	Open for applications
8 November 2017	Announcement of short-listed candidates
13 – 17 November 2017	Interviews
22 November 2017	Announcement of successful candidates and signature of grant agreements
January 2018	Pre-departure briefing in Bangkok
Before October 2018	Travel to the UK for one-year PhD placement

Application process

Submissions by email or letter will not be accepted. Applicants must submit a completed online application form with an upload of all supporting documents. This can be found at www.britishcouncil.or.th. Deadline for submission is **15 September 2017 (16.00 hrs, Thailand time)**.

Each application must be accompanied with:

- Endorsement letter from the UK institution to confirm that they will host the PhD student for 12 months and will provide support with both the research and pastoral matters such as accommodation. The letter must also include
 - amount of bench fee / tuition fee required for the placement;
 - period of placement covered;
 - type of visa needed. Kindly note that the eligible visas are Tier 4 and Tier 5 visa;
 - English requirement for the placement
- Confirmation letter from the Thai institution to confirm the applicant studentship and the applicant's capacity to fully complete the placement in the UK.
- Transcript of PhD degree.
- Evidence of English proficiency examination, such as IELTS (optional).

Any issues with the online submission system should be sent to newtonfund@britishcouncil.or.th **prior** to the deadline.

Selection criteria

Proposal initially undergoes an eligibility check by the British Council against the given criteria in these guidelines. Eligible proposals then are reviewed by the British Council and the Thailand Research Fund against the following criteria:

- The proposal outlines clear, feasible and realistic objectives and outputs, specifically, the pathway to which the applicant will utilise the knowledge and experience obtained from the placement to promote the economic development and social welfare of Thailand.
- The extent to which the applicant will contribute towards developing a long term sustainable research and education partnerships between Thailand and the UK.
- How the placement adds value to the current PhD research, and the benefits to both parties.
- Evidence of national or international publication records (if any)
- Students with IELTS score above 5.5 (with no band score less than 5.5) will be specially considered.
- Proposal with evidence of plagiarism will be automatically rejected.

Due to the number of applications, the reviewers may not be able to provide individual feedbacks.

Interview

Short-listed candidates may be invited to attend an interview session (in English) at the British Council before a panel of 3 interviewers. The interview will focus on:

- Proposal content
- Evidence to support that the research is ODA eligible
- English language skills (only if the candidate does not have an IELTS score or if the IELTS score is lower than 5.5)

Reporting and monitoring

In addition the Thailand Research Fund guideline for reporting, each PhD student must submit an interim report to the British Council at three months after the placement, detailing their progress. A final report and a financial report must be submitted within 30 days of the placement completion. The student's supervisors (**both** Thai and UK) will add some comments on the report.

Scholars will also be required to complete a baseline survey before their PhD placement and an impact survey 6 months after their return.

Data protection

The British Council will use the information provided in the application for processing the application, making any consequential award, for the award payment, monitoring, maintenance and review of the award.

We shall share any necessary data on your application with the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and with our national programme partners in order to assist with management of the application process; any selection and monitoring processes on grants will be made in collaboration with them.

Organisation details, where collected, are used for monitoring and evaluation and statistical purposes. Gender information, where collected, is used solely in preparing statistical reports.

We will also ask permissions from the applicants to 1) make information on the successful applications available to the public on their website and other publicity, and in reports and documents, 2) contact applicants in the future to inform them about future British Council opportunities.

Under UK Data Protection law you have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you, and the right to ask us to correct any inaccuracies in that information. If you want more information about this please contact your local British Council office or the Data Protection Team infogovernance@britishcouncil.org, or see our website: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/privacy-cookies/data-protection>

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We know that societies and working environments grow and thrive when there is understanding, trust and respect between people. That's the reason why we aim to ensure that issues of equality and diversity are a part of all that we do. Find out more about our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy here: <https://www.britishcouncil.or.th/en/about/equality-diversity-inclusion>

Contact details

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