

IFS Enrichment scheme 2024-25

Summary

The Enrichment scheme offers students currently enrolled on a doctoral programme within the ESRC DTP network the opportunity to join us for up to 12 months at the ESRC Institute for the Microeconomic Analysis of Public Policy at the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). Students continue their PhD in conjunction with their current supervisor, while enriching their research and making new collaborations during their time at the Institute.

The aim of the scheme is to enhance the work of doctoral students by providing collaboration and learning opportunities, and to enhance our research community and networks with the inclusion of outstanding students from across the UK. It is our goal to build capacity in the social sciences in the UK more widely, and support and promote research that has a positive impact on society.

This document provides guidance for applicants and details of how to apply.

About the Enrichment scheme

The Enrichment scheme offers placements of up to 12 months at the Institute for Fiscal Studies in London to students undertaking a PhD.

The Enrichment scheme has been designed to give students the opportunity to enhance, refresh, and broaden their research by accessing the opportunities available at IFS. The placement should support and enhance the current work towards the PhD thesis and be supported by the student's supervisor. Students will usually join us in their second or third years to further the work they are undertaking for their research project. There is no 'typical' Enrichment student and we welcome students from a broad range of disciplines.

While on placement students are expected to work out of the IFS offices in central London.

Collaborate

Enrichment students have the opportunity to find new collaborators for their research project, or to start a collaboration on something related to their field. Collaboration is encouraged at the Institute through seminars, research group meetings, events and workshops. Students will be placed in a team whose research is aligned with their own interests, with the opportunity to get involved in a relevant project. The Associate Director leading the team will take responsibility for ensuring that the student is integrated into the team and has the chance to work with others. Students will also be assigned an academic mentor at IFS, who will meet with them to discuss their work and suggest ideas for collaboration.

Develop research independence

The Enrichment placement is also an opportunity for doctoral candidates to develop some research independence as they progress in their studies. The inspiration from learning and collaboration may prompt new ideas that can be further developed in the future.

Access to data and data analysis expertise

IFS researchers use a range of large datasets and have HPC computing to facilitate data analysis. Students can apply to use these data in their research. Formal and informal training opportunities and support from colleagues are available for programming, including in particular in Stata and R.

Build new skills and networks

IFS researchers not only carry out rigorous research, but also pride themselves on their ability to communicate complex findings to a wide audience. Whilst based at IFS, students will be in an environment where researchers are interacting with national, regional and international policymakers, journalists, NGOs and business people. Students will have the opportunity to attend training in communication skills and to attend events where researchers present to and meet a policy audience.

Award

The award is based on the student spending five days a week at IFS. A contribution to relocation or other expenses may be available for students that require additional support.

IFS will pay the university funds to cover the stipend at the UKRI level, and fees at the UKRI level, pro rata to the funded period. The funds will be paid to the university.

Annual leave, sickness and other allowances will be handled in accordance with the ESRC rules.

Students will be expected to abide by IFS policies: for example, regarding data access and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Eligibility criteria

Students must meet all the following eligibility criteria to be considered for the scheme.

- Students must be registered on a doctoral programme within the ESRC DTP network, and have the support of their university to study away for the duration of the placement.
- Students must be in the “active research phase” which is defined as their second or third year of research (not including training years) and complete their placement at least 3 months before their submission date.
- The student’s supervisor (or equivalent) must support their application and be willing to continue supervising them while they are at IFS.
- Students must hold a valid Right to Study in the UK.
- Students must satisfactorily pass the Institute’s security screening process which includes a basic Disclosure check.

Assessment criteria

IFS will use the following criteria to assess applications. When preparing their application, students should demonstrate how they meet the following criteria.

Applicant

- Demonstrates research excellence suitable to their PhD progression in a field related to economics or related social science discipline.
- Supported by strong references from the student’s supervisor or equivalent and another referee who can speak to their suitability for the scheme including how the scheme will support completion.
- Demonstrates communication skills and the ability to collaborate with others, ideally in a research setting.

Research proposal

- The research proposal is clear and demonstrates a good understanding of the topic and the potential for an original contribution to the field.

- Candidate demonstrates how they would benefit from their time at IFS including how a placement would contribute to the completion of their PhD and would enhance and support their thesis.

Relevance to the IFS

- The applicant's research project strongly engages with the research programme at IFS.
- The applicant has identified the areas of their research that they could meaningfully develop and collaborate on at IFS and has considered how this could be achieved.

Application process

Timeline

Application stage	Key Dates
Applications open	December 2023
Application deadline	22 January 2024
Outcomes communicated by	4 March 2024

How to apply

Candidates should discuss the scheme with their supervisor and university department to gain their approval to participate. We recommend sharing the guidance note for universities with your department.

Candidates apply directly to IFS including the following information.

- An indication of why you are interested in applying to IFS and what you hope to get out of your time here; please refer to the assessment criteria outlined above. Please also let us know if there are any individual circumstances you would like us to take into account, such as a disability.
- An indication of whether you are looking for a 6-, 9- or 12-month placement.
- An outline of your research.
- Copy of your award letter if in receipt of a funded studentship.
- Your supervisors' details and the details of another referee (who will be invited to submit a reference).
- Information about:
 - Which university and department you are registered with or have been accepted to for your PhD;
 - Which DTP you are or will be registered with;
 - Details of any other funding you are receiving or expect to receive during the course of your PhD.

The deadline for applications is 22 January 2024.

Assessment process

All applicants are assessed on their application and references. Short-listed applicants will be invited to interviews for the Enrichment scheme. These may be held remotely.

Applications will first be checked for eligibility. All eligible applications will then be reviewed by the IFS Research Directors.

IFS reserves the right to reject applicants who do not meet the criteria at any stage.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We hope that the Enrichment scheme will attract a diverse pool of applicants. All applications will be considered on their merits. Applicants can be of any nationality and applicants from under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. We welcome applicants from across the ESRC DTP network.

We recognise that there may be individual circumstances that we need to be aware of. We aim to accommodate specific needs and personal circumstances, but are reliant on applicants sharing this information with us.

To discuss an adjustment to the application process please contact our team directly at jobs@ifs.org.uk.

We will treat any information you disclose to us as sensitive and will handle it in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. You find out more information about how handle your personal data in our privacy notice.

Guidance note for universities

The IFS enrichment scheme offers students currently enrolled on a doctoral programme within the ESRC DTP network the opportunity to join us for up to 12 months at IFS. Students continue their PhD in conjunction with their current supervisor, while enriching their research and making new collaborations during their time at the Institute.

We have funding from ESRC which will cover the student's fees and stipend, pro rata to the funded period.

If the student is successful, IFS will ask the University to:

- Grant the student permission to study away for the duration of the Enrichment placement.
- Administer any financial award to the student on behalf of IFS and sign a funding agreement regarding this.
- Invoice IFS for the financial award and pay the stipend to the student.

Students will be asked to sign the Enrichment Terms and Conditions.

Expectations for supervisors

Supervisors must commit to continuing to supervise their student while they participate in the enrichment scheme. We ask that supervisors commit to a minimum of a monthly face to face or remote meeting.

Throughout the student's placement the supervisor is welcome and encouraged to visit IFS and engage with events and activities happening at the Institute. Students and supervisors are also encouraged to explore potential collaborations with IFS researchers and Research Fellows and Associates. Collaborations can provide additional informal support for students as well as new avenues for research and connection.