

PHD APPLICATION SERVICE

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FUNDING SUPPORT REPORT

The issue of finding sufficient funding is one of the most significant issues of getting a successful PhD application into the competitive economic environment. This report entails an elaborate discussion on funding prospects among the top five UK universities for the proposed doctoral research on the economic inequality of regions proposed by Thomas Radcliffe. It focuses on institution-specific funding, national funding schemes, and other forms of financial support, putting some emphasis on whether these funding schemes are applicable to spatial economic and economic geographic research. The funding situation in each university has been analysed in terms of the number of awards funded, who is qualified to apply, the application procedure, and success rates to come up with a strategic plan on funding the doctoral studies of Thomas.

University of Cambridge

The University of Cambridge has some of the most competitive and generous funding schemes for doctoral researchers in economics. The most important funding routes are the Cambridge Economic and Social Research Council Doctoral Training Partnership (ESRC DTP), which covers the full tuition fees and offers an annual stipend (currently 18,622/23 for 2023/24) to students during the 3.5 years of the course. This is a very competitive program, and applicants must exhibit exceptional academic potential and the quality of their research proposal; the number of such awards each year should not be more than 10-12 in all disciplines in the social sciences.

The Gates Cambridge Scholarship is one of the most prestigious scholarships in the world and, for international candidates, covers full university fee payments, a maintenance allowance, and a discretionary fund available to be used as a grant-in-aid towards academic development. The recruitment criterion focuses more on thinking capacity, the quality of leadership, and the dedication of the applicants to transform the lives of other people. Supplementary funding may be available in the form of college-specific scholarships, such as the Keynes Fund (to a maximum of 15,000) available at King's College, Studentships (10,000-12,000) at Trinity College, and the Churchill College scholarships, which prefer policy-relevant

work. The Cambridge Trust runs many other minor awards that may be used in combination with other sources of finance.

University of Manchester

The funding landscape in Manchester unites institutional PhD funding, to which ESRC contributes jointly in the form of the North West Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (NWSSDTP). It is a +3 (doctoral only) and 1+3 award (with MSc) by the consortium with the universities of Liverpool, Lancaster, and Keele, with full fees and stipend. The NWSSDTP is especially interdisciplinary, which further qualifies it to be relevant to Thomas in terms of his mixed method of studying inequality in the regions. The President's Doctoral Scholar Awards are Manchester schemes, being flagship funding opportunities, with a higher stipend (an additional 3000/annum) and additional opportunities for development. The School of Social Sciences offers partial bursaries (usually having reduced fees of 50 percent) to eligible applicants who come just short of receiving complete scholarships.

University of Sheffield

The University of Sheffield, as a member of the White Rose Social Sciences Doctoral Training Partnership (with Leeds and York), is fully funding ESRC studentships under three pathways: Standard, Collaborative, and CASE awards. The economics and geography degree also best fits within Thomas's research interests since it offers special training in spatial analysis techniques. The departmental scholarships awarded by Sheffield tend to be so-called top-up scholarships (usually between 2000 and 4000 pounds per year), given to individuals who have received some partial funding. The university has close and regionally based partnerships that can access special funding opportunities through the Social Sciences Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange Fund in funding policy-relevant doctoral work with local governments. Sheffield is also much cheaper to live in than the southern universities, so full awards are not necessary to support, partially providing subsistence about 30 per cent lower than in Cambridge.

University of Leeds

Leeds and Sheffield hold Leeds's access to the White Rose DTP but with institution-specific funding to its own students via the Leeds University Business School (LUBS) scholarships. These awards are normally a full fee plus a stipend of 15,000 pounds per year and are competitive and awarded on academic excellence and research potential. Another useful avenue is the ESRC CASE Studentships, which unite with such organisations as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to conduct policy-oriented research studies. The location of Leeds in West Yorkshire gives the same cost benefits as Sheffield, and the dedicated Business School PhD support fund (as much as 1,500 per annum) contributes towards conference attendance and research costs. The collaboration with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority has established certain funding channels for research into regional development challenges provided by the university.

University of Birmingham

Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP, a partnership between Birmingham and six other universities, provides thematic pathways, such as one dedicated to City-REDI (City Region Economic Development Institute) researchers. This route is fully funded, as well as offering access to professional education in the subject of regional economic analysis. There are lots of 10,000-15,000-pound bursaries in applied economics research provided in the College of Social Sciences at Birmingham. University Global Challenges Doctoral Awards, supported by the university's Institute of Global Innovation, might fund part of the work by Thomas on regional inequality as a component of development issues. The geographical position of Birmingham enables easy access to many policy bodies sponsoring collaborative PhDs, such as the Midlands Engine and several local enterprise partnerships.

National and Alternative Sources of Funding

In addition to institutional grants, a number of national funding agencies assist doctoral research on regional economics. The Leverhulme Trust invites Doctoral Scholarship (105 000 over 3 years) applications for any interdisciplinary research project, especially those for which the subject of spatial inequality may be of interest. Collaborative Awards with policy partners are managed by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and normally include full funding as well

as placement opportunities. Completing a PhD may be funded by British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships, although the fellowships favour early-career researchers. Other specific subjects, such as the Regional Studies Association, have small grants (2,000-5,000) available to undertake fieldwork or attend conferences. There is other funding in the form of grants to professional organisations, for example, the Royal Economic Society, to run training in methodology.

Strategic Funding Application Approach

Implementing a multi-level approach to funding will help Thomas succeed most of the time. The main uses need to be with ESRC DTP paths at all five universities, inasmuch as they are the most comprehensive. Applications to highly competitive fellowships, such as Gates Cambridge or President's Doctoral Scholarships, should feature the hybrid profile of academic-policy that Thomas has acquired. Supplementary grants to tertiary applications, to college-specific and departmental awards, can be helpful. The timetable to be followed in applying should start 12-15 months before the planned start date; the main funding deadlines lie in January through March. The applications will be made more compelling by creating customised proposals to each funding resource by focusing on policy impact in collaborative grants and innovative methodology in research council grants. The existence of alternative combinations, such as partial funding combinations, guarantees their chances of survival in case they do not get full awards.