ACCE+ DLA Placement Guide

Guidance for students applying for ACCE+ DLA placements support

For current ACCE+ DLA students starting October 2025 onwards

About ACCE+ DLA placements

ACCE+ offers students the opportunity to undertake placements. Placements undertaken should not involve working on the PhD project. The placements may of course be related to the project in theme, and the outputs of the placements may be informed by the PhD project work, but work conducted during the placement itself should not feature in the final PhD thesis.

There are two types of placements in ACCE+:

- **Bridge placement**. This is a compulsory placement for all students (minimum one month) that creates bridges between academic research and public engagement. These placements should produce a tangible outcome, e.g. large-scale outreach events; policy briefing note; or a commercialisation plan. The CASE placement can count as a student's bridge placement if undertaking a CASE studentship.

- **Skills placement***. This is an optional placement for students (one to two months) and can follow one of two pathways:
    - o CV enhancement: students gain skills beyond their PhD area, enhancing interdisciplinarity and employability. Placements generate a discrete outcome of strategic relevance to the placement host partner;
    - o PhD skills placement: this is training within another research group, developing skills required to pursue exciting novel research directions arising as studentships progress.

The total placement time for students is a maximum of three months.

**For international students, there may be some restrictions on completing optional skills placements. Please contact your local ACCE+ lead (see the ACCE+ partner universities and contacts section) for further information.*

Students undertaking any placement will receive additional stipend and tuition fee support up to the three-month maximum. Students may also apply for additional funds, for example for travel and accommodation costs whilst on placement; where possible ACCE+ encourages placement hosts to contribute to these incidental costs.

Students will need to complete a placement application form before they undertake a placement (the form is available on the ACCE+ placements webpage) in order to gain approval to complete the placement/s from the ACCE+ Management Board. Students will normally complete their placement/s in year two or three of their studentship. ACCE+ will advertise placement opportunities it is made aware of, at the ACCE placement opportunities webpages.

Who can students do placements with?

Placements can be undertaken with a range of public research organisations (non-academic), NGOs, small-medium enterprises and other private organisations, charities, trusts, local councils, etc. When thinking about which organisations to approach, students should consider:

For bridge placements:

- The requirements of a bridge placement (see page 1 for details);
- Opportunities to translate the learning from their studies into the wider world;
- Practicalities such as the location of the organisation and the feasibility of completing the work within the time requested.

For skills placements:

- Their career aspirations;
- The skills they want to develop;
- Opportunities to translate the learning from their studies into the wider world;
- Practicalities such as the location of the organisation and the feasibility of completing the work within the time requested.

For skills placements, Universities can be eligible as placement providers, as long as the project undertaken does not contribute directly to PhD work. Students should evidence that the placement work is different to PhD work, in their placement application form.

Placement ideas

The placement should be a well-justified enhancement to the PhD training. It should provide relevant training on subject-specific or generic transferable skills identified in a student's training need analysis or the UK Researcher development framework: https://vitae.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Vitae-RDF-Final-Version.pdf, or to fit the requirements of the bridge placement. At the same time, it should incentivise genuine engagement with non-academic end users of research. Placements should help students to understand how their research and professional skills can be used in a broad but relevant context.

Placements should ideally be discrete projects, and they must be well planned and managed. They should provide experience at a level appropriate for a postgraduate student. Examples of different types of placements include:

- Conducting surveys, analysing data and producing reports;
- Investigating efficiency and cost-saving activity;
- Managing, delivering a particular service for a certain period;
- Joining specific teams to assist in the delivery of their activities and projects.

Non-research roles such as:

- Teaching – in schools, using a relevant Government scheme, or through other mechanisms;
- Policy – developing policy or working in a related setting, such as a government department, local authority, non-departmental public body, professional association, charity, research funder or medical organisation;
- Media – a wide variety of roles are possible here that help students understand the wider societal context of their research. Such placements could include working in science communication roles or other roles in a press office, science publishing company, zoo, museum or botanic garden, etc.

If developing their own placement, students should liaise with the placement provider to write a placement proposal, before completing a placement application form for the DLA. Students are responsible for negotiating the placement project proposal, timeline, and submission of the application form for all placements.

Support

The ACCE+ DLA team will support ACCE+ DLA students through the process of applying for, securing and completing a bridge and/or skills placement. Students should keep their supervisors informed at each step of the process; primary supervisors are required to sign off their student's placement application forms and are encouraged to maintain contact with, and where possible, visit their students whilst on placement.

Timeframe

Students should discuss placement timing with their supervisors. There is some flexibility to accommodate the requirements of the host organisation and to avoid disruption to the student's PhD project. We recommend that both types of placements are undertaken between months 12 and 36 of the PhD studentship. Undertaking a placement means that a

student's PhD stipend will be extended for the duration of the placement beyond the 3.5 years of their PhD studentship. Student and supervisor need to be aware that this **WILL NOT** extend submission time, the student will still need to submit their PhD at the end of year 4 at the latest.

It is possible to undertake placements on a part-time basis or in separate blocks of time as long as the overall placement time limit is not exceeded, and this is approved by the primary supervisor and the placement provider.

What financial support can ACCE+ provide?

1. Additional placement funding – stipend and tuition fees (max of three months across a bridge and/or skills placement);
2. Travel support – covers travel to/from the location of the placement/s. See details in the table below;
3. Accommodation – covers accommodation if you undertake relocation to the location of the placement/s. See details in the table below;
4. Other occasional expenses, limited to local travel and travel insurance (only in cases where University Insurance cover needs to be extended). See details in the table below.

Students will continue to receive their stipend payment from the DLA as normal during a placement; a suspension or interruption of studies is not normally required. Upon returning to their studies after placement completion, the funding end date for the studentship will extend by a commensurate amount to the placement time taken.

Students should identify travel/accommodation costs associated with a placement. Wherever possible, an agreement should be made that the placement provider will make a reasonable contribution to any travel & accommodation expenses. Agreement on placement costs must be reached between the student and the placement provider prior to applying to the DLA for any placement funds.

Details of the maximum eligible cost are available in the table below. The maximum claimable budget for travel, accommodation, and other occasional expenses should not exceed **£2,000** for UK based placements (an additional **£500** is available for placements in London) and **£4,000** for Overseas placements.

Eligible cost	Details	Max. Claimable amount (3 months) for placements in the UK	Max. Claimable amount (3 months) for Overseas placements
Stipend and fees during placement	Max of 3 months of stipend and fees beyond your original funded period (3.5 years) to cover the period of placement (bridge and skills placement should not exceed 3 months total);	£6,760.75 in 2026/27	£6,760.75 in 2026/27
Travel Standard class rail travel; Mileage claimed at local institution rate, Economy air travel, Bus fares, Taxi **(only where another form of transport is not available).**	Travel costs can be claimed to (i) get you to your placement location in the first instance (if you are away from your host location) and home again at the end; (ii) cover commuting costs if you chose to stay in your current accommodation, but commute to a different location for the placement. If you move to a new location (and so require accommodation costs), then you would not usually be expected to claim commuting costs since your accommodation should be close enough to your placement.	£2,000 (£2,500 in London)	£4,000
Accommodation	Accommodation at local rates (if moving away from the usual accommodation is required, and in which case daily commute cannot be claimed for).		
Other incurring expenses limited to local travel and travel insurance (only in cases where the University Insurance cover needs to be extended).	Other occasional expenses e.g. travel insurance if you are undertaking an overseas placement.		
	Total max claimable amount per placement	**£8,760.75 (outside London). £9,260.75 in London**	**£10,760.75**

Payments and claims

ACCE+ DLA will contact the student's home institution on confirmation of placement approval, to confirm the additional funding available for a placement. Payments for accommodation and initial travel costs can be arranged in advance of a placement. Students will need to provide appropriate original invoices for costs to be paid by their home University.

All other costs during the period of placement will need to be reimbursed via the student's local reimbursement system (for example a University of Liverpool payment request form, or equivalent at a partner institution), and students need to provide copies of all expense receipts/invoices during the period of placement. Please contact the ACCE+ DLA team for more details (acce.dtp@liverpool.ac.uk), or your local ACCE+ DLA administration team.

International placements

Some students may consider undertaking a placement overseas. Where reasonably practicable, the procedures outlined in this document should be followed. It should be noted that work overseas will be subject to the health and safety regulations of the country in question.

Travel advice

Students should seek appropriate travel advice from the DLA partner university they are registered. The DLA partner university is responsible for ensuring students have the appropriate travel documents, for example travel insurance.

Health advice

Students should seek advice regarding necessary vaccinations, anti-malaria medication, first aid kits, etc for where they are travelling. UK Government advice is available per country, online.

Each ACCE+ partner university will check the placement provider's details given in the application form and following placement approval will provide the relevant H&S forms to complete, where appropriate**.** Each placement provider is responsible for undertaking the necessary risk assessments and health and safety checks, and for providing the necessary insurance cover or arranging for the student concerned to do so.

Insurance

Each DLA partner university is responsible for ensuring students are provided with copies of relevant insurance information and policies.

Placement approval

The ACCE+ DLA Management Board will review and, where relevant, approve the placement application (normally two members of the Management Board will undertake the review of your application). The Management Board will evaluate applications based on criteria

reflecting the benefit/impact, added value to the student's programme of study, and value for money.

IP and confidentiality

Each DLA partner institution is responsible for issuing Non-Disclosure Agreements, where required, for their registered students. Normally a tripartite agreement (TPA) is made between the student, home University and the placement provider, following placement approval; the tripartite agreement will agree details of the individual project.

Professional practise

While on placement, students must conduct themselves professionally at all times with an understanding of the standards and expectations of the placement provider.

Once students have agreed to undertake a placement with a defined placement proposal and start and finish dates, they are expected to undertake that placement. It will not be seen as an acceptable professional practice to withdraw from either preliminary or advanced negotiations with an employer for anything other than genuinely unforeseen circumstances.

Reporting

Once the student has completed their placement, they need to provide a detailed placement report about the project and their achievements. This should be submitted within three months of completing the placement. Please see our placement report form template at our website.

Placement providers will be contacted separately to provide a short summary of the placement, as part of ACCE+ monitoring and evaluation of the wider scheme.

Following the placement, the ACCE+ Management Board may contact students to invite them to contribute a short blog post for the ACCE+ webpages.

Summary of application process and post-approval considerations

- Once a placement opportunity has been identified (either a placement advertised by ACCE+ or a placement the student has developed with a provider), the student must complete and submit the **ACCE Placement support application form.**
- Once the form is received, the ACCE+ DLA Management Board will review and approve the placement as appropriate. If the Management Board members require further information before a placement can be approved, they will ask for further detail.
- Once the placement proposal has been approved students need to inform their hosting University and Department and at this stage, the student's host institution will issue a Tripartite Agreement (this document will be signed by you, your placement provider, and by an authorised signatory at your host University).