

ORSAS 2005

Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme

Guidelines for Institutions



United Kingdom
Scholarships
for International
Research Students

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Foreword

The role of ORSAS Administrators within institutions

ORSAS Administrators within the academic institutions play an extremely important role in supporting the aims and operation of the Scheme. He/she:

- is the first point of contact at the institution for enquiries about the Scheme;
- helps to advise potential applicants and current awardholders on the conditions of the Scheme;
- oversees the application and award renewal processes;
- acts as a liaison between the institution's Finance Department and the ORSAS team;
- keeps the ORSAS team informed of any matters pertaining to awardholders' progress, such as illness or time spent on fieldwork.

We would ask that your role as the ORSAS Administrator be made known throughout your institution and that there is mutual communication between yourself/your department and your Finance Department regarding the registration/fee status of your ORSAS awardholders.

If you are due to leave your post and/or you are handing over your responsibility to someone else, please advise us of the new ORSAS Administrator's details at your earliest convenience.

How to use these guidelines

These guidelines aim to provide ORSAS Administrators with a full overview of the Scheme and its administrative processes and procedures.

- Section 1 sets out the background, aims, general conditions and regulations of the Scheme.
- Section 2 details the 2005 competition processes and procedures.
- Section 3 outlines the administrative tasks relating to the maintenance of awards.
- Section 4 describes the supporting activities and information provided by ORSAS.

Your questions and feedback

We hope you find these guidelines are helpful to you, and that the various topics are clearly and comprehensively covered. However, please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or require any further information.

We would be very grateful to receive your feedback on any aspect of these guidelines which will be updated annually.

The ORSAS team

Sue Reed, Executive Secretary

Direct line: 020 7419 5498

Email: sue.reed@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

Paula Teo, Executive Assistant

Direct line: 020 7419 5497

Email: paula.teo@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

Bethany Elphick, Executive Assistant

Direct line: 020 7419 5499

Email: bethany.elphick@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

Postal address

Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme

Woburn House

20 Tavistock Square

LONDON

WC1H 9HQ

UNITED KINGDOM

Telephone, fax and email

Telephone: 020 7419 5497 / 5499

Fax: 020 7383 4573

Email: ORS_Scheme@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

Website

Information on eligibility, the application process, the timetable for the 2005 competition and links to other scholarships and hardship funds can be found at www.UniversitiesUK.ac.uk/ors

Section 1: General conditions and regulations of the Scheme

1. About ORSAS awards

1.1 The Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme (ORSAS) was set up by the Secretary of State for Education and Science in 1979 to attract high quality international students to the United Kingdom to undertake research. The Scheme is administered by Universities UK on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and is funded through the four UK higher education funding bodies (for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

1.2 ORSAS awards offer international students the opportunity to carry out a broad range of research at well-established UK academic institutions of worldwide recognition. Our awardholders make a valuable contribution, not only to the British research base, but also to economic, scientific, educational and other aspects of life in their own country. Meanwhile, their involvement in British academic life and the wider cultural experiences offered in the UK contribute to their personal development and can help increase their future opportunities.

1.3 The awards provide funding to pay the difference, in most cases, between the international student tuition fees and the home/EU student tuition fees charged by the academic institution that the student attends/will be attending. ORSAS awards do not cover the home/EU fee element, maintenance or travel expenses.

1.4 New awards are granted annually, on a competitive basis, to international postgraduate students of outstanding academic ability and research potential. The number of new awards made each year is subject to the funding available but we are generally able to grant around 800-850.

1.5 The only two criteria for winning an award are: (1) academic ability, and (2) research potential. Other factors, such as: proposed field or institution of study, financial status, nationality, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, marital status or any other inappropriate distinctions, will not be taken into account.

1.6 A list of the UK higher education institutions currently participating in the Scheme can be found at Appendix 1 to these guidelines.

2. Eligibility

Who can apply?

2.1 International (non-EU) students who have been accepted (conditionally or unconditionally) for admission by a participating UK institution as a full-time, postgraduate research student for the 2005-06 academic session; or international (non-EU) students who are registered at a participating UK institution as a full-time, postgraduate research student at the time of application (subject to the conditions listed in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.11).

2.2 Applicants who have been unsuccessful in previous ORSAS competitions may re-apply.

2.3 Applicants who have been offered an ORSAS award in a previous competition but were unable to take it up may re-apply.

2.4 All applicants must be liable to pay tuition fees at the rate for international students.

Who cannot apply?

2.5 Students from EU member states are not eligible for an award because they are not required to pay tuition fees at the full international rate. The following countries are currently members of the EU: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

2.6 Students undertaking part-time, undergraduate or **taught** postgraduate courses are not eligible.

2.7 Students who have previously held an ORSAS award; hence they have received ORSAS funding in any previous year or years are not eligible to apply for a second (new) award.

2.8 Applications from students who fall into one of the following categories will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances: *[See paragraph 6.9 for the procedure re exceptional cases]:*

- those entering their final year of postgraduate research study in 2005-06
- those who already have a PhD or equivalent, or who already have an established research career.

New-route PhDs

2.9 Students undertaking 'New-route' PhDs will not be eligible to apply for their first (taught) year of study. They will, however, be eligible to apply for an award to support the following three years of their PhD, providing their study is research-based.

Necessary qualifications

2.10 The level of competition for ORSAS scholarships is very high and only those students who, by the time they take up their award, hold an undergraduate degree with either first class or very good upper second class honours (or the equivalent) will be considered.

2.11 Applicants must normally be graduates of one of the institutions listed in Appendix 1, or of a recognised higher education institution outside the UK; or, if currently studying, they should be expecting to graduate at any one of these **by 30 September 2005**.

Research subject area

2.12 There are no restrictions on the research subject area. ORSAS awards are valid for arts/humanities and science-based subjects.

2.13 However, a candidate's proposed research project should offer good scope for intellectual training and the acquisition of manipulative technique and skills relevant to his/her subject area. It should also, where possible, provide him/her during the first year with the necessary skills to become a successful research worker in his/her field.

3. Conditions and regulations of awards

3.1 Candidates may only submit one application through one academic institution per competition. **Candidates who apply for an ORSAS award through more than one institution in the 2005 competition will be disqualified.** Applicants who have been accepted for admission by more than one institution must decide before submitting their ORSAS application through which of those institutions they wish to apply for an award. As indicated in paragraph 3.7, ORSAS awards can only be transferred to another institution in the most exceptional circumstances.

3.2 Awards are offered on the condition that the candidate has met/will meet all the conditions required for acceptance by his/her institution.

3.3 Each award will be made on the assumption that there are adequate resources for the research project at the chosen academic institution, and that the candidate's proposed course of study is acceptable to the department, school or faculty in which they wish to study.

3.4 New awards offered in 2005 are valid only for the 2005-06 academic session; **deferral of the award to a later academic session is not permitted** except under very exceptional circumstances. [*See paragraphs 14.1 to 14.2 for the procedure re exceptional cases*].

3.5 Awards granted for the 2005–06 session cannot be used retrospectively for whole or part of any earlier session.

3.6 To qualify for the award, students must register at the institution concerned **by 31 July 2006**. Any student unable to register by the stipulated date will forfeit his/her entitlement to the award.

Transfer of award to another institution

3.7 Awards **can only** be taken up at the institution that originally supported the candidate's application. Only in the most exceptional circumstances can an award be transferred to another institution. *[See paragraphs 14.5 to 14.7 for the procedure re exceptional cases]*.

Changes to the proposed research project

3.8 If an awardholder wishes to make a change to: (a) the research project, or (b) the supervisor or department specified on their application form, the request must firstly be approved by ORSAS. Failure to inform ORSAS may make it necessary to recover the amount of an award already paid to an institution. *[See paragraph 14.4 for the procedure]*.

Leave of absence/suspension of award

3.9 If an awardholder needs to take time out from their studies because of illness, accident, fieldwork or for any other serious cause, the request must firstly be approved by ORSAS. If ORSAS is not informed and continues to pay for a student who is absent from their studies, thus using up their 3-year entitlement, then funding for future terms upon the student's return will be difficult to negotiate. If it emerges that the amount of time out a particular student is taking is so considerable as to be verging on part-time study, then ORSAS will review the situation and, if appropriate, terminate the award. *[See paragraph 14.3 for the procedure re suspension and leave of absence]*.

Holding other scholarships with an ORSAS award

3.10 ORSAS awards cannot be held concurrently with fully-funded scholarships such as a Dorothy Hodgkins Postgraduate Award, a Marshall Scholarship or one held under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. Apart from these restrictions, other scholarships/awards may be held concurrently with an ORSAS award **providing they do not cover the same area of funding** (i.e. the difference between international and home/EU fees).

Financial Liability

3.11 Applicants must be aware of all the additional financial commitments involved when attending their chosen course of study and their chosen institution. Awards are granted on the understanding that the awardholder will take responsibility for any additional expenses incurred for the duration of study.

Termination of Award

3.12 An award may be terminated by ORSAS at any time under the following circumstances:

- if an unsatisfactory progress report on the awardholder is received from the student's institution;
- if an awardholder ceases to be a full-time research student;
- if an awardholder is no longer required to pay fees at the full-time international research student rate;
- See also paragraph 3.9 re leave of absence/suspension;

ORSAS awards may not be used to cover part-time study or "writing-up" fees.

Conditions of acceptance of award

3.13 Applications are accepted and awards are granted on the understanding that academic institutions and awardholders agree to observe the conditions and regulations set out in these guidelines (ORS/5) and the Guidelines for Students (ORS/4), and any amendments thereto which may be issued during the period of the award.

Payment of awards

3.14 Payment of ORSAS awards is made directly to the institution; no money will be paid to the student. Awardholders have been advised to produce the official ORSAS award offer letter when registering at their institution, as proof of his/her award.

3.15 Awards made for the 2005-06 academic session will, in most cases, cover the full difference between the 2005-06 home/EU and international student fee rate for the awardholder's course. However, in cases where the amount awarded is less than the difference between the home/EU and international fees for 2005-06 (because of the flat-rate limits imposed by the Scheme), the institution will confirm to the awardholder whether he/she is responsible for paying the remainder of the fee differential and, if so, the amount they will be charged. *[See paragraphs 6.11 to 6.16 for detailed information about the flat-rate fees].*

3.16 ORSAS awards do not provide for maintenance expenses or bench fees. For further information about supporting scholarships and hardship funds, please refer to the ORSAS website.

3.17 ORSAS awards will not be subject to any deductions for outside earnings such as fees from teaching or demonstrating.

Renewal of awards

3.18 Awards are granted for one year in the first instance but will be renewed, subject to the awardholder's satisfactory progress, for a second and/or third year – up to a maximum

tenure of 9 terms or 3 years, providing the awardholder is still engaged in full-time research (and excepting the circumstances stated in paragraph 3.12).

3.19 Awardholders are not required to apply for renewal of their award; the institution will do so on their behalf providing he/she is making satisfactory progress. If renewal is recommended by the institution, most awardholders will be notified in writing each May. However, awardholders who register later in the academic session may not receive confirmation of renewal of their award until later in the year. Renewal letters will be posted to the ORSAS Administrator at the institution who is asked to forward a copy to the awardholder. *[See paragraphs 13.1 to 13.10 for detailed information about the renewals process].*

Results of the research project

3.20 ORSAS/Universities UK accepts no liability for the manner in which the work in connection with the award is undertaken, and the awardholder will be responsible in all respects for his/her work and for the consequences of it.

3.21 Should any potentially valuable results, whether patentable or not, arise from the research undertaken by the awardholder, the regulations of the academic institution on patents and inventions will apply.

3.22 Subject to paragraph 3.21, publication of the results of the awardholder's research is left to the discretion of the awardholder and his/her supervisor. It is expected, however, that the support received from ORSAS will be suitably acknowledged.

Section 2: The 2005 competition process and procedures

4. General enquiries from students about the competition

4.1 Please refer prospective candidates making general enquiries about the competition to the ORSAS website at www.UniversitiesUK.ac.uk/ors. For more specific enquiries, we would prefer students to email us at ORS_Scheme@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk. Students who do not have internet access can either telephone or write to us, and we can post hard copy information packs to them.

4.2 Instructions on completing the application are provided in the 'Guidelines for Students' booklet which forms part of the 2005 application pack for students. Preliminary instructions are also provided on the ORSAS website under the section 'How to Apply'.

5. Competition literature and publicity for the Scheme

5.1 Electronic (pdf) versions of the application and reference forms, 'Guidelines for Students' booklet, leaflet and poster will be emailed to institutions by ORSAS on Friday, 29 October 2004. Hard copies of the competition literature are scheduled to arrive at institutions by Monday, 15 November 2004.

5.2 The ORSAS Committee would be very pleased if ORSAS Administrators could arrange to give the Scheme the widest possible publicity within their institutions. In addition, it would be particularly helpful if the Scheme could be drawn to the attention of international applicants for research places in the 2005-06 session, including those who have already been (conditionally) accepted for admission as registered research students in that session.

5.3 ORSAS welcomes institutions publicising the Scheme through their websites, postgraduate prospectuses and information packs. We believe this type of publicity has been instrumental in developing the interest of international students in the Scheme, to the extent that the total number of applications received by institutions for the 2004 competition rose to its second highest ever figure of 6,400.

5.4 In order to ensure that institutions maintain control of the distribution of applications to students, ORSAS has instructed prospective candidates to obtain their application packs from the Registry or ORSAS Administrator at the institution where they intend to study/are currently studying. The ORSAS office at Universities UK will not supply application packs directly to students.

6. Competition parameters

Funding of the Scheme for 2005-06

6.1 The UK funding bodies have approved the 2005-06 ORSAS budget of £15M. Funding levels beyond 2005-06 are currently subject to further consideration.

Number of new awards for 2005-06

6.2 The number of new awards that can be offered each year is strictly limited by the constraints of the cash-limit system to which ORSAS is subject. It is hoped that in 2005-06, it will be possible to make a total number of new awards within the range 800-850. It is expected that around 17.5% of all applicants offered awards each year will not take them up. ORSAS makes allowance for this 'non-acceptance' rate when offering the awards, thus seeking to ensure that the number actually taken up will be as close as can reasonably be predicted to the number of awards which it is allowed to make within its budget. There is no question, therefore, of making any reallocation of offers which are declined.

The quota system

6.3 As the number of new awards ORSAS can offer each year is strictly limited by the funding available, each participating institution is allocated a quota. This quota represents the maximum number of applications an institution may submit in the competition. The number of awards granted in respect of each institution is not subject to a quota, as this figure is dependent entirely on the academic quality of the applicants nominated by the institution. *[See Appendix 2 for details of how quotas are calculated].*

6.4 Institutions will receive a letter from ORSAS before 12 November 2004 advising them of their quota for the 2005 competition.

Reserve applications

6.5 For some years, ORSAS has operated an arrangement whereby institutions with small quotas have been allowed to submit reserve applications in addition to their quota. This measure was introduced to help institutions with low quotas increase their allocations. In recent years, around 30-40% of reserve applications have been successful.

6.6 For the 2005 competition, all institutions allocated a quota of 10 or less are invited to submit up to two reserve applications additional to their quota.

6.7 The following arrangements apply in respect of reserve applications:

- The reserve applications should be completed in the usual way and should be submitted along with the other applications, in accordance with the procedures set out in the these guidelines.
- The covering letter from your institution *[see paragraph 9.14]* should make clear the names of the reserve applicants. No indication of candidates' reserve status should appear on their application forms.

- Institutions should inform the reserve applicants whether or not their applications have been forwarded to the ORSAS Committee. However, please do not indicate to any reserve applicant that his/her application is being submitted on that basis.
- All reserve applications submitted will be considered and assessed by the ORSAS Committee in precisely the same way as all the others. Panel members will not be aware of the applicant's reserve status.

Eligibility

6.8 Please ensure that all the applicants your institution wishes to support satisfy the criteria for eligibility for an ORSAS scholarship [see paragraphs 2.1 to 2.11].

Students entering their final year of postgraduate study

6.9 As stated in paragraph 2.8, students entering their final year of postgraduate study are not generally eligible to apply for an ORSAS award. However, if the institution considers there are exceptional reasons for allowing the student to apply, then a supporting letter from the institution must be attached to the student's application. Without such a letter, the Committee will not consider the application.

Previous research experience of applicants

6.10 Having reviewed the results of competitions in recent years, the ORSAS Committee has noted that a number of applications are received from candidates who are already well established in their research careers. Such applicants are often very well qualified in terms of the ORSAS Committee's assessment criteria, but panel members have expressed concern that their selection for an award could be regarded as running counter to the general spirit of the Scheme. ORSAS wishes to make clear **that we do not discriminate solely on the basis of a candidate's age but we would discourage applications from well-established researchers.** The intention of the Scheme is to invest in and promote the developing research potential of the applicant, and especially to encourage those candidates who are at the start of their research career, rather than those who are already experienced researchers. It is for this reason that we emphasise to institutions that they should take account of this issue in their own internal selection process.

The flat-rate fee system

6.11 Prior to 2003, ORSAS awards covered the full difference between home/EU and international postgraduate research fees. However, since the 2003 competition, new awards have been subject to a flat-rate cap for each of the three main fee bands: (1) classroom-based (2) laboratory-based (3) clinical courses. London weightings also apply. [The background to the introduction of flat-rates and details of how they are calculated can be found at Appendix 3].

6.12 The flat-rate award levels agreed for the 2005-06 academic session are:

	HEIs outside London	HEIs in inner London	HEIs in outer London
Classroom-based courses	£5,461	£6,117	£5,898
Laboratory based courses	£7,966	£8,922	£8,604
Clinical courses	£16,467	£18,443	£17,784

6.13 In cases where the amount awarded is less than the difference between the home/EU and international fees for 2005-06 (because of the flat-rate limits), institutions have ultimate autonomy over who makes up any such funding shortfall. However, there is a strong expectation by ORSAS that institutions should agree to waive or make up any difference themselves, and not pass on that cost to the student.

6.14 In cases where the difference between the home/EU and international fees for 2005-06 is less than the flat-rates shown in the table at 6.13 above, then the amount awarded will represent the actual difference. **The award will not be ‘topped up’ to the flat-rates shown above.**

6.15 Students who won their awards before the 2003 competition can, when renewing their awards, claim the full fee difference [see paragraphs 13.1 to 13.10 for details of the renewal process].

6.16 Two illustrations of how the flat-rate fees work are as follows:

Example 1: where the amount awarded is less than the difference between the home/EU and international fees for 2005-06 - If an inner London institution’s 2005-06 international fees for a laboratory-based course were £12,000 and the home/EU fees were £3,000, this would leave a difference of £9,000. Prior to 2003, the figure of £9,000 would have been paid by ORSAS. However, the 2005-06 flat-rate cap is £8,922 [see table at paragraph 6.12] which is the maximum amount ORSAS can pay. This leaves an unpaid amount of £78 (£9,000 - £8,922 = £78) which the institution can choose either to waive or charge on to the student.

Example 2: where the difference between the home/EU and international fees for 2005-06 is less than the flat-rates - If an ‘outside London’ institution’s 2005-06 international fees for a classroom-based course were £6,000 and the home/EU fees were £3,000, this would leave a difference of £3,000 which would be paid in full by ORSAS because the 2005-06 flat-rate limit is £5,461. Please note that the amount claimed by the institution would be £3,000 not £5,461 as ORSAS does not top up awards to the flat-rate.

7. The application process

Advice to candidates

7.1 Please ensure that applicants fully understand that they may only apply for an ORSAS award through one academic institution per competition, otherwise they will be disqualified [see paragraph 3.1].

7.2 Before completing the application form, applicants must make sure that their chosen research programme and institution represents their final choice, taking into consideration both the resources available at the institution and the additional financial expenses that may be incurred at that particular institution. They must also have ensured that their research proposal is acceptable to the department, school or faculty in which they wish to study. Transfers of award to another institution will not be allowed except in the most exceptional of circumstances [see paragraph 3.7].

7.3 Candidates are required to complete an application form (ORS/1) and the supplementary equal opportunities monitoring form (ORS/1a). The application must be supported by two references (ORS/2 and ORS/3) and include an academic transcript where available. Other means of application, such as CVs or letters, are not acceptable.

Application and equal opportunities monitoring form

7.4 Students must complete the form fully after having read and understood the relevant sections of the 'Guidelines for Students' booklet (ORS/4).

7.5 As the applications will be photocopied, students are advised to complete the forms in typescript or handwrite/print them clearly in black ink.

References

7.6 **It is the responsibility of the academic institution concerned to obtain two references in support of each application.** The student will provide the referees' contact details in Section 10 of the application form (ORS/1). Referees should submit their references using the official reference forms ORS/2 or ORS/3. It is the institution's responsibility to check that the references appear to be genuine and have been provided by the referees named by the student.

7.7 The first reference (ORS/2) should be from a teacher with direct knowledge of the first degree course work of the applicant, or a referee with knowledge of the applicant's postgraduate studies if a first degree referee is difficult to locate. In the case of an applicant from an overseas institution, it will be sufficient, where the current UK institution already has a suitable reference for the applicant, to submit a certified copy of it on form ORS/2 as the first reference.

7.8 The second reference (ORS/3) should be provided by the student's (prospective) supervisor. If this is not possible, then the reference can be provided by the head or a

senior member of the academic staff of the department, school or faculty where the candidate will be undertaking their research.

7.9 The two references play a vital part in the selection procedure. ORS/2 and ORS/3 contain specific questions to aid the ORSAS Committee in their selection, and the forms must be completed even if the referee chooses to attach a letter of recommendation.

Guidance on the content of references

7.10 The importance of the referees' reports must be stressed, especially in the case of applicants whose grades fall on the borderline. ORSAS panel members have found that many reference reports - in particular the internal reference (ORS/3) - are still so inadequately presented as to be virtually valueless. For this reason, we outline here the main deficiencies noted by the Committee:

- References which are either too perfunctory to be of any real value or are excessively long. In the guidance notes on the reverse of the reference forms (ORS/2 and ORS/3), referees are asked not to exceed 500 words in their reports on applicants;
- Overseas references (ORS/2) which fail to provide any indication of the equivalence of the applicant's degree classification to that of the UK system;
- UK references (ORS/3) which, in the case of an applicant from an unfamiliar overseas institution, fail to comment on the applicant's standard of degree or on the institution itself;
- References which - without explanation - have been provided by a referee other than the one named by the student on the application form, thereby raising doubts on the authenticity of the reference submitted;
- References which concentrate on describing the research project, or which contain irrelevant information such as the financial circumstances of the applicant.

7.11 It is hoped that the guidance notes on the reverse of the referees' forms ORS/2 and ORS/3 will serve to make clear to referees the kind of information which is required to enable the selection panels to arrive at a fair and balanced assessment of the applicant. Please bring these points to the attention of your referees, so that the main deficiencies still apparent in many references can be avoided.

7.12 Specimen 'good practice' references will be provided and discussed at the forthcoming ORSAS seminars *[see paragraphs 18.1 to 18.3]*.

Academic transcripts

7.13 Applicants are asked to include with their application a transcript of their student record, if available. The transcript must be accompanied by some sort of explanatory information which makes clear the level at which the student record has been assessed.

7.14 Students are asked to ensure that any explanatory information about the transcripts is provided in English.

7.15 ORSAS selection panel members have stressed that no other enclosures or attachments are to be submitted with the application. Students are advised of this but panel members are nevertheless occasionally confronted with an overwhelming volume of material submitted with an application form. Such excessive documentation does not improve a candidate's chances of being selected for an award.

Submission of applications to institutions

7.16 Candidates have been instructed by ORSAS to submit their completed applications to the institution through which they have applied. **Please remind applicants that their completed applications must not be submitted directly to the ORSAS office at Universities UK.**

8. Institutions' internal selection process

8.1 ORSAS is conscious of its responsibility in seeking to ensure that the funding of approximately £5m (the total cost of the new awards made each year) is spent on selecting those applicants of the highest academic merit and research potential. Due to the increasingly competitive nature of the Scheme, it is important to ensure that a careful preliminary selection of applicants is made within each institution, and that the final nominations submitted to the ORSAS Committee represent the best candidates from the institution as a whole. Therefore, when carrying out your internal selection of candidates, please bear in mind the assessment criteria *[outlined in paragraphs 10.1 to 10.2]* which candidates will be expected to meet in order to stand a realistic chance of qualifying for an award.

9. Preparing the applications for submission to ORSAS

Checking the completed application

9.1 When the institution has decided which applicants it will support in the 2005 competition, the Registrar, Secretary or ORSAS Administrator should check that the application form (ORS/1) has been fully and correctly completed by the applicant. In particular, please ensure:

- the candidate has signed and dated Section 11 otherwise the application will be considered invalid and will not be accepted by the Committee;
- the candidate has submitted the ORS/1a Equal Opportunities form otherwise the application will be invalid.

Completion of the application form by institutions

9.2 Please complete the three boxes at the top of each supported application form in the following manner:

- the surname and initials of the applicant

- the principal subject and two-character HESA subject code (the HESA codes are downloadable from <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/Manuals/hesacode/hesacode.htm>)
- a reference number for each applicant, consisting of the code number for the institution [see list of institution code numbers at Appendix 1] and a unique identification number for each applicant. The identification numbers should run consecutively from the beginning of Set 1 to the end of Set 5. The institution code number remains the same throughout. So, for the University of Aberdeen, for example, the heading might appear as:

	HESA code		HEI no	ID number
SIRIUS, D.B.	CHEMISTRY	F 1	2005	001 007

9.3 It is the institution’s responsibility to enter the correct HESA code for each applicant. If the HESA code box is left blank, the application will not be forwarded to the Committee for consideration.

9.4 The certificate on the front page of ORS/1 should be completed fully, signed, dated and stamped with the institution’s official stamp. Please take care not to stamp over the top of the amounts entered, as these are very important. Again, any applications where the certificates are not completed and signed will be considered invalid.

9.5 Please ensure when you are completing the certificate that you are mindful of the flat-rate caps [see paragraphs 6.11 to 6.16].

Copying the applications

9.6 ORSAS requires **the original plus four photocopies** of each supported application form (ORS/1 and ORS/1a) and the references (ORS/2 and ORS/3). It is very important that only legible, full-size photocopies are submitted otherwise panel members will not consider them.

9.7 Copying costs will be refunded, if desired, on submission of an invoice which should be posted to the ORSAS office.

Organising the applications before sending them to ORSAS

9.8 The supported applications and referees' reports should be arranged in five sets corresponding to the subject areas of the ORSAS Committee’s five selection panels.

9.9 A control list of supported applications within each set should be provided on the appropriate form [example at Appendix 4] as indicated below.

The five sets/panels

9.10 The five sets and the main subject groups into which the applications should be divided, are

Set/panel	Subjects/subject code groups	Control list
Set 1 – Panel A	Languages & related disciplines (Groups Q, R & T) Humanities (Group V) Creative arts (Group W)	ORS/6 – pink
Set 2 – Panel B	Social studies (Groups L & M) Business and administrative studies (Group N) Mass communications and documentation (Group P) Education (Group X)	ORS/7 – blue
Set 3 – Panel C	Engineering and technology (Groups H & J) Architecture (Group K)	ORS/8 – yellow
Set 4/ Panel D	Physical sciences (Group F) Mathematical and computing Sciences (Group G)	ORS/9 – green
Set 5/ Panel E	Medicine (Group A) Subjects allied to medicine (Group B) Biological sciences (Group C) Agriculture and related subjects (Group D)	ORS/10 – white

9.11 Within each set, applications should be arranged by subject, again according to the order of the HESA code, and then arranged alphabetically by name within each subject (not in any order of priority).

9.12 It would be greatly appreciated if institutions could separate their applications into the five sets/panels, with a set of the originals placed on the top of the pile. This arrangement will help to ensure that applications are speedily and efficiently processed in the ORSAS office and sent on to panel members.

9.13 The supported applications, together with their coloured control lists, should be posted to the ORSAS office.

9.14 Please enclose a covering letter which states clearly:

- the total number of applications received by your institution (excluding those ineligible)
- the names of the reserve applications.

9.15 It is most important that all the supported applications (originals and copies) from an institution are submitted at the same time. **THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE RECEIPT OF SUBMISSIONS IS FRIDAY 11 MARCH 2005.** Because of the very tight timetable which the ORSAS Committee has to observe in its selection arrangements, **no application received after that date can be considered.**

9.16 All applications and any correspondence regarding the Scheme should be addressed to: The Executive Secretary, Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme, Universities UK, Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, LONDON, WC1H 9HQ.

Informing the applicants

9.17 At this stage of the application process, we ask that applicants are informed whether or not his/her application has been forwarded to ORSAS. It may be helpful to refer unsuccessful students to the ORSAS website where links to other funding schemes may be found.

10. How applications are assessed

Assessment Criteria

10.1 As stated in paragraph 1.5, applications are graded solely on students' previous academic achievements and their research potential; no other factors will be taken into account. The applicant's aptitude for research work will be evaluated on the basis of his/her (expected) first and/or recent degree examination results, the referees' recommendations and, where applicable, reports on postgraduate work already undertaken.

10.2 The results of previous competitions have highlighted time and again the very high academic quality which an applicant has to possess in order to win an award. The following is a reminder of these basic assessment criteria:

- by the time they take up their award, students must hold an undergraduate degree with either first class or very good upper second class honours or the equivalent;
- the referees' reports must show beyond any doubt that the candidate possesses outstanding promise and research potential or is at least given clear, unqualified and strong support by his/her referees;
- awards are made in respect of the candidate's research strength or potential as an individual and not necessarily simply in terms of his/her research field;
- awards are regarded by the Committee as representing research studentships not fellowships;

- the Committee is not permitted to take any account of the financial circumstances of an applicant in the selection procedure.

Structure of the ORSAS Committee

10.3 The ORSAS Committee is responsible for the final selection of successful candidates. It comprises senior academic staff of UK higher education institutions whose combined expertise covers a wide range of research fields. The Committee is divided into five panels, each of four members, representing the broad subject areas set out in paragraph 9.10.

10.4 A copy of each application will be given to each appropriate panel member for assessment, according to the proposed subject of research.

Marking Procedure

10.5 Institutions may find it useful to see a more detailed breakdown of the way in which the applications are assessed. The basis of the assessment is that each applicant is marked against two criteria: the applicant's research potential and his/her academic achievement. These two criteria are broken down into categories and given a letter grade as outlined in the tables below:

Research Potential	Grade
Outstanding	A
very strongly supported	B++
strongly supported	B+
moderately supported	B

Academic Achievement	Grade
first class honours in first degree or equivalent	A
first class degree, but element of uncertainty when compared with UK qualification	A-
very good upper II or clear equivalent	B++
very good upper II, but element of uncertainty when compared with UK qualification	B+
Good upper II or equivalent	B
moderate or poor upper II or equivalent	B-

The letter grades for each of the two assessment criteria, i.e. research potential and academic achievement, are then given one numerical mark according to the following marksheet key.

Research Potential	A	A	A	B++	B+	B++	A	B+	B+	B+	Other grades
Academic Achievement	A	A-	B++	A	A	A-	B+	A-	A-	B++	
Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

10.6 In general, applicants assessed with combinations of grades in the two sets of criteria respectively of A/A (mark 1), A/A- (mark 2), A/B++ (mark 3) would normally be expected to qualify for a scholarship. Those marked B++/A (mark 4) B+/A (mark 5) and B++/A- (mark 6) would be regarded as borderline applicants. Those assessed with lower grade combinations would not generally be expected to qualify for an award.

10.7 The ‘cut-off’ marks for each panel are determined by establishing the number of applications received for that panel and apportioning the funds available on a pro-rata basis.

10.8 ORSAS wishes to emphasise that the criteria are used as a general guide to inform the selection panels and to help in their overall assessment of the applicant. It is important to make clear that there are occasions on which the panels’ academic judgement may override these criteria.

11. The competition timetable 2005

11.1 The timetable for the 2005 competition is as follows. Candidates have been advised that institutions may impose their own earlier deadline for the receipt of applications:

Application packs available from HEIs from 15 November 2004

Latest date for completed applications to arrive at HEIs 4 February 2005

Latest date for applications to arrive at ORSAS 11 March 2005

Assessment by the ORSAS Committee from 14 March 2005

Results letters posted to applicants 29 April 2005

Announcement of results

11.2 The results of the competition will be announced at the end of April. All candidates (successful and unsuccessful) whose applications were forwarded to the Committee will receive a letter from ORSAS. Each institution will also be notified of their applicants’ results.

11.3 From 2005, the letters to successful and unsuccessful applicants will include the grade awarded by the Committee and the cut-off mark for their panel.

Acceptance of awards

11.4 The offer letters will include instructions on how the student may accept the award and the deadline for doing so. If the student is unable to take up the award, he/she will be asked to provide a reason why. This information will be used for statistical purposes only.

11.5 As stated in paragraph 3.13, awards must only be accepted on the understanding that the awardholder accepts and is prepared to comply with the 'Conditions and Regulations of the Award' set out in Section 1.

Section 3: Awards maintenance

12. Guidelines for submission of invoices and refunds to ORSAS

12.1 Funding for the Scheme is provided through the four UK Higher Education funding bodies. In the first instance, however, all invoices for awardholders' fees must be submitted to ORSAS for checking and authorisation. Once authorised, invoices are forwarded to the funding bodies for payment which is made directly to HEIs.

12.2 The ORSAS authorisation process entails:

- ensuring that a signed and dated certification label is attached to the invoice;
- matching the amount requested on the invoice with the amount requested on the application form (for new awardholders) or the renewal form/spreadsheet (for existing awardholders);
- checking that the student is entitled to the number of terms/months being claimed to ensure that the maximum of 9 terms/36 months would not be exceeded.

12.3 If any discrepancies arise, ORSAS is unable to authorise the invoice for payment and must contact the institution concerned for clarification. In many cases, this means invoices must be returned to HEIs for certification or amendment, thereby creating unnecessary extra work for all concerned as well as delaying payment.

12.4 We would therefore respectfully request that you:

- carefully read and comply with these guidelines, and
- forward a copy to your Finance Department.

When to submit invoices

12.5 Invoices must only be raised in respect of awardholders who have registered at your institution and are in attendance as full-time, postgraduate research students. As students can register at various times throughout the academic session, this has meant in previous years that ORSAS can receive a considerable number of invoices from institutions at different times during the year. It would be more efficient and cost effective for all concerned if HEIs could try to keep to a minimum the number of invoices submitted and/or the number of times per year that they submit invoices. The following is a suggested timetable. We appreciate that not all institutions may be able to adhere to it, but if you can, it would be most helpful to us.

12.6 Given that the majority of awardholders tend to register at the beginning of the academic year, we would ask HEIs to raise invoices for these students in October/November. For students who register between November 2004 and March 2005, please raise an invoice in March/April. For students who register between April and July

2005, please submit your final invoice as soon as possible after 31 July **but definitely before 31 August 2005**.

Student registers between

Sep 04 – Oct 04

Nov 04 – Mar 05

Apr 05 – 31 Jul 05

HEI to raise invoice

October/November 2004

March/April 2005

July/early August 2005

Amount to be invoiced

12.7 A number of HEIs currently invoice pro-rata. However, pro-rata invoicing for students who start later in the academic session means that only part of their available funding is used in the appropriate academic year, with a proportion being carried over to what is effectively year 4. In order to simplify matters, could we please ask that, *where possible*, **HEIs ensure the amounts invoiced for late starters cover the whole academic year's eligible award, regardless of the month in which the student registered.**

12.8 We appreciate that some institutions are only able to invoice pro-rata and in such cases we will, of course, continue to process pro-rata invoices as we have done previously. We would ask however in these instances that the full year's fees (excluding the home/EU element) and the number of terms/months being invoiced are stated either on the invoice or on an attached ORS invoicing/refund proforma [see Appendix 5].

12.9 Could we also ask that **in all instances where the amount claimed on the invoice differs from the amount requested on the application/renewal form that you please let us know the reason why** by either stating this on the invoice or on an attached invoicing/refund proforma. This will save us having to contact you and a possible delay in payment of your invoice.

Invoices for incorrect amounts

12.10 If you have sent us an invoice and subsequently discover that the amount invoiced was incorrect, please contact ORSAS. If the invoice has not been sent to the funding body, we will hold it and ask you to send a corrected replacement. Please **do not send another invoice for the correct amount without agreeing this with us first** as it causes much confusion.

12.11 If the incorrect invoice has already been paid by the funding body, then:

- if the amount invoiced was too high because a student has withdrawn, transferred to another institution or completed their studies part way through the academic session, we will require the overpaid amount to be refunded (please see 'Refunds' section below);

- if the amount invoiced was too high because the student has suspended their award then HEIs can either: (1) arrange a refund for the unused part of the academic year's study, or (2) carry the credit amount over to the next academic session. Where credits are carried over, please ensure they are deducted from the amount requested on the renewal form for the next academic session;
- if the amount invoiced was too low because the previous year's fees were quoted on the application/renewal form, then please claim the additional amount required on your next invoice. **Please avoid sending single separate corrected invoices if possible.** In addition, please ensure you provide a brief explanation of why the extra amount is required either on the invoice itself or on an attached invoicing/refund proforma.

Certification labels

12.12 A supply of certification labels for the 2004/05 academic session will be posted to you each September.

12.13 The signed certification label provides the funding bodies with confirmation that awardholders for whom they are making payment have registered and are currently in attendance as full-time, postgraduate, research students. In view of this, it is very important to ensure when a request is made to the Finance Department to raise an invoice, **that only those students who have registered are listed.**

12.14 As the funding bodies will not pay any invoice that does not have a signed certification label attached, such invoices will be returned by ORSAS to the HEI for completion, thereby delaying payment.

ORSAS reference number

12.15 Each student's ORSAS reference number **must** be quoted either on the invoice itself or on an attached invoicing/refund proforma. Searching database records via a student's name rather than their unique ORS reference number is very time-consuming for ORSAS staff. **Any invoice that does not include awardholder's ORS reference numbers will be returned to the HEI for completion,** thereby delaying payment.

12.16 In the event that your Finance Department cannot adjust the format of its invoices to include the ORS reference numbers, we would ask that HEIs please complete the attached invoicing/refund proforma and enclose it with the invoice. The proforma provides us with the information we require in order to authorise payment.

Fieldwork and writing-up fees

12.17 ORSAS does not provide funding for students undertaking fieldwork or for writing-up since these periods of study are, in the main, charged at the home/EU student rate. ORSAS should be informed, in advance wherever possible, if students intend to take time away from their institution to carry out fieldwork. Being informed in advance helps us to maintain accurate student records and account for the reduced amount invoiced.

12.18 If we are advised retrospectively that a student has been on fieldwork and their invoice has already been paid, then HEIs can either: (1) arrange a refund for the unused part of the academic year's study, or (2) carry the credit over to the next academic session.

12.19 If we are advised retrospectively that a student has been writing-up, then we will require a refund of any ORS monies paid during the writing up period.

12.20 We are aware that there are a few exceptions where institutions do not charge home/EU rates for fieldwork, and in these instances we will continue to support any international fees charged in the usual manner.

Refunds

12.21 Refunds are required where an invoice for the full academic session has been paid and the institution subsequently becomes aware that the student has either withdrawn, transferred to another institution or completed their studies part way through the year.

12.22 Refunds can also be raised where a student has unexpectedly suspended their award after an invoice for their full year's fees has been paid. However, it is also acceptable for the credit amount to be carried over to the next academic year rather than arranging a refund.

12.23 The refund process is as follows:

For HEIs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

There are three acceptable methods of refunding:

- (1) Refunds can be offset against the next invoice by listing the credit amount against a student's name and deducting it from the total amount invoiced. **However, please do not issue separate credit notes.**
- (2) HEIs who would prefer to refund by cheque should make them payable to HEFCE, HEFCW or DEL as appropriate but should post them to ORSAS. We will update our records before forwarding the cheques to the appropriate funding body. Please remember when sending refund cheques to enclose a completed invoicing/refund proforma. **Please do not send cheques without a proforma.**
- (3) Refunds can also be made by BACS transfer but please ensure that an advice slip is sent to the funding body and a completed **invoicing/refund proforma is emailed to ORSAS.**

For HEIs in Scotland

As SHEFC cannot accept refunds made by cheque or BACS credit, we would ask HEIs in Scotland to please email a completed invoicing/refund proforma to ORSAS. We will update our records before forwarding the information to SHEFC who will offset this amount against their reimbursement to the HEI.

Overdue payments

12.24 If payment of an invoice is overdue, **please contact ORSAS in the first instance**. If we have not received the invoice, we will ask you to provide us with a copy with the word ‘COPY’ written/stamped on it. Please **do not resend copies of the same invoice** unless you have agreed this with us, as it causes much confusion.

12.25 If we have already authorised the invoice for payment, we will confirm the date we posted it to the funding body and ask you to contact them directly to ascertain whether they received it and, if so, the date they made payment.

12.26 The first points of contact at the funding bodies are:

HEFCE Liz Rosier – 0117 931 7442

SHEFC Sarah Kirkpatrick – 0131 313 6501

HEFCW Emma Morris – 029 2068 2292

DEL Martin Fullerton – 028 9025 7693

Address for invoices and refund cheques

12.27 Please ensure that your Finance Department has our correct postal address. Many invoices get delayed in UUK’s internal mail because they do not specify ORSAS in the address or they are addressed to ‘CVCP’ (which no longer exists) at 29 Tavistock Square (our old address). The correct postal address for invoices is:

Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme
Universities UK
Woburn House
20 Tavistock Square
LONDON
WC1H 9HQ

Who to contact in ORSAS if you have a query

12.28 Paula Teo and Bethany Elphick will be your first point of contact for any invoicing enquiries.

Paula Teo – 020 7419 5497 email Paula.Teo@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

Bethany Elphick – 020 7419 5499 email Bethany.Elphick@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

13. The renewals process

13.1 At the end of January 2005, we will ask institutions to review the progress of each of their current ORSAS awardholders and advise us whether a renewal of his/her award is recommended for the next academic session.

13.2 We will email to each ORSAS Administrator: (1) an Excel spreadsheet listing all of their current awardholders, and (2) a renewal form (for optional use).

Renewal forms

13.3 Some institutions may prefer to complete a separate “pink” renewal form for each awardholder and to disseminate these forms to the relevant departments/supervisors for completion. However, please note that ORSAS would much prefer institutions to complete and return the Excel spreadsheets to us with all the information so gathered, rather than providing us with the separate forms.

Completing the renewals spreadsheet

13.4 Please find below an example of the spreadsheet.

ORSAS STUDENT REF NO	FORENAMES	SURNAME	NO OF TERMS/ MONTHS USED BY JUL 05	RATE FOR INT'L STUDENTS (£)	RATE FOR HOME STUDENTS (£)	AMT REQ'D FOR 2005/06 (£)	IF RENEWAL IS NOT REQ'D, PLEASE BRIEFLY STATE WHY NOT
2001 111 111	Eg 1		3	10,000	3,000	7,000	05/06 rates not confirmed – based on 04/05 fees
2002 222 222	Eg 2		6	-	-	-	Will be writing up from Oct 2005
2003 333 333	Eg 3		6	-	-	-	Student withdrew on 23/05/04 due to unsatisfactory progress

13.5 Please complete the following fields with regard to each award holder:

(a) Number of terms/months used by Jul 05:

This column refers to the number of terms/months/years of funding student will have claimed from ORSAS from the start of their award until the end of the current academic year. It does **not** mean the number of terms/months the student has been in attendance at the institution since starting his/her course.

(b) Rate for international students, rate for home students and amount required for 2005/06:

Please remember that awards won from 2003 onwards are subject to the flat-rate limits as detailed in paragraphs 6.11 to 6.16. If the fee rates for the academic session in question have not yet been set, please base your calculations on the current year's rates, clearly indicating that you have done so, as shown in the above example. However,

please remember to inform us when the new rates are confirmed to ensure awardholders receive the correct amount of funding.

(c) If renewal is not required, please briefly state why not. This helps us to allocate the correct code in our database and close the student's file.

(d) Please do not add or delete fields to the spreadsheet. Spreadsheets that do not provide all the information we have requested will be returned to institutions for completion.

Returning the spreadsheets to ORSAS

13.6 Completed spreadsheets should be emailed to us **before 18 March 2005**.

13.7 We will also require a signed and stamped hard copy of the spreadsheet for our records.

Confirmation of renewal

13.8 When we have checked that the renewals information supplied by institutions appears to be correct, we will update our records to reflect the amounts requested for each awardholder for the next academic session. The figures supplied by institutions will be used to check against their invoices later in the academic session.

13.9 Institutions and awardholders will be notified of the confirmation of their renewal and the amount granted by letter in early May 2005.

Late starters

13.10 Renewals for awardholders who start late in the 2004/05 academic session clearly cannot be requested in February 2005. In such cases (which should hopefully be fairly few), renewals will need to be requested on an ad hoc basis.

14. Procedures for maintaining awards

Deferrals

14.1 As stated in paragraph 3.4, deferrals of award to a later academic session are very rarely granted. Moreover, to qualify for an award, **students must register at the academic institution concerned by 31 July 2006**. Any student unable to register by that date will forfeit his/her award.

14.2 Institutions who believe there is a highly exceptional reason for requesting a deferral must submit a written request to the ORSAS Executive Secretary in the first instance.

Leave of absence/suspension

14.3 If a student needs to take time out from their studies due to illness, accident, fieldwork or for any other serious cause, the institution must report this to the ORSAS office in writing as soon as possible and request a temporary suspension of award funding.

Change of Research Project

14.4 Should an awardholder wish to make a change to: (a) their research project, or (b) their supervisor or department, please write to/email us outlining the changes proposed and providing confirmation of: (a) the institution's support of such changes, and (b) the tuition fees (if they are different from the amount originally requested).

Transfers

14.5 Awardholders are expected to have considered the regulations outlined in the 'Guidelines for Students' before they apply for an ORSAS award. They should therefore be aware that only in the most exceptional circumstances can their award be transferred to an institution other than the one which originally supported their application. We receive numerous requests for transfer from students. The reason most often given is financial difficulties. Unfortunately, this does not qualify as an exceptional reason for transfer and such requests will be automatically declined.

14.6 It is not possible for us to set out what counts as 'exceptional reasons' because each case is considered individually. However, an awardholder whose supervisor is moving to another institution will usually be granted a transfer to the same institution, providing both institutions are in agreement.

14.7 Awardholders wishing to request a transfer, and who consider that they have exceptional reasons for doing so, should submit a written request to the ORSAS Executive Secretary for consideration, outlining those reasons and including a supporting statement from their institution. If ORSAS decides that a transfer is permissible, the student will be sent a 'Transfer Application form' [see example at Appendix 6] and a covering letter which explains how to complete the form and what to do with it. This letter is copied to the ORSAS Administrators at both the institution where the student is currently studying and the institution to which he/she wishes to transfer. The student should complete Part A of the form and forward it for completion by both ORSAS Administrators, before returning it to the ORSAS office. When the completed form has been received by ORSAS, a transfer confirmation letter, stating the revised value of the award and the remaining number of terms of funding the student is eligible to claim, will be sent to the student and copied to both of the academic institutions concerned.

Home Office letters

14.8 Previous awardholders who request a letter from ORSAS to support their application for visa extension, will be asked to provide a brief email or letter from his/her institution (the International Office or Registry) confirming that he/she is still in attendance.

14.9 When writing, please quote the student's ORSAS reference number and their expected study completion date. We will then produce a letter for the student which confirms that they are/were an ORSAS awardholder (with dates) and that we have no objection to his/her remaining in the UK to complete his/her studies. By following this procedure, we can avoid providing supporting letters for past students who are not in attendance at the institution.

15. Surveys of past ORSAS awardholders

15.1 In previous years, ORSAS has conducted an annual survey to obtain information to evaluate the success of past awardholders in obtaining their higher research degrees. The first survey was undertaken in 1987 and was based on the cohort of students given awards for the first time in 1982. In 1988, the ORSAS Committee drew attention to the value of the surveys as a means of demonstrating the Scheme's success to the then DES and UGC, and it was agreed that a survey on these lines should be conducted every year.

15.2 The survey is designed in a way that also makes it possible for the results to be compared with published statistics on submission rates of PhD theses by students in receipt of Research Council postgraduate awards. Those statistics were published initially in 1987 in a National Audit Office Report on Postgraduate Awards; more recently they have been included in reports from the Office of Science and Technology, based on data supplied by the Office for National Statistics.

Survey procedure

15.3 The 2005 survey of awardholders offered new awards in 2000 will commence in March 2005 when ORSAS will email each institution a spreadsheet listing their students. The spreadsheet will include two columns which we would like institutions to complete by inserting the appropriate letter(s) in accordance with the codes below. Since the students named will be all of those who were offered awards in 2000, the list will most likely include some students who never registered at your institution.

15.4 We would like institutions to classify each of the students listed according to the stage they have reached by the time the survey is conducted, i.e. after approximately four years and therefore broadly equivalent to the period covered in the statistics of research council awardholders. The main categories are as follows:

A - those who had completed the course and had been awarded a higher degree,

B - those who had submitted a thesis but not had not yet been examined,

C - those whose thesis had not yet been submitted,

D - those who had completed the course but were unsuccessful, and

F - those who withdrew before completion of their course

G - those who did not register at the institution

H - any circumstances not covered by the above categories

A second letter should be added, where appropriate, to designate the degree concerned:

X – masters degree

Y – doctorate

Follow-up survey

15.5 At the same time as the general survey is conducted, we would also like to conduct a follow-up survey based on the progress (after a further period of four years) of those PhD students who had originally been recorded in either category B (thesis submitted within the initial four-year period but not examined), or in category C (thesis not by then submitted).

15.6 Specifically, for the 2005 follow-up survey, ORSAS wishes to establish, after eight years, the present position of those PhD students who were offered awards in 1995, and who – in the 2000 survey – were recorded in either category B or category C. This additional survey necessarily involves a much smaller number of institutions than those from whom we will be seeking information for the general survey, and for such institutions an additional note and spreadsheet will be attached to the general email.

Section 4: Support and feedback to institutions

16. Post-competition feedback

Feedback on the selection of applicants in the 2005 competition

16.1 ORSAS recognises the need by institutions and candidates for feedback on the outcome of the competition, especially in relation to unsuccessful applicants. The Committee feels it would be impractical to attempt to provide such information on all failed applications. In addition, a detailed explanation of the reasons for failure on an ad hominem basis could present problems of a legal or practical nature.

16.2 However, in accordance with requests from institutions put forward at the 2003 ORSAS seminars, letters to all candidates (successful and unsuccessful) in the 2005 competition will detail the grade awarded to that candidate by the ORSAS Committee. The letters will also state the ‘cut-off’ mark for that panel (i.e. the lowest mark a candidate could be given and still win an award [*see paragraphs 10.5 to 10.8 for details of how grades are determined*]).

16.3 We would ask institutions to understand however that ORSAS staff are not, under any circumstances, in a position to provide an explanation as to how grades were determined. It is hoped that the information given in these guidelines on the assessment criteria, including both the standard of an applicant’s qualifications and potential for research, and the quality of the referees’ reports, will help to explain the reasons for failure in particular cases.

16.4 We hope that by providing feedback on the submission of the applications and on the quality of references provided, academic institutions will gain a better understanding of the qualities the selection panels would expect a successful applicant to have. ORSAS will continue to do all it can to provide, on request, guidance of a general nature about the results of applications, particularly with the aim of giving institutions a greater understanding of the basis for its selection.

Feedback on the quality of references and completion of applications submitted

16.5 In order to help institutions identify ‘best practice’ and thus improve their success rate in the annual competition, the ORSAS Committee has introduced a grading system to assess the quality of the references submitted by each institution, plus general feedback on the satisfactory completion and submission of the applications as a whole.

16.6 The Committee reviewed the outcome of the 2002 survey on the quality of the references alone and was concerned to note that 14% of the assessments on the reports had been graded by members in the ‘below adequate standard’ category. The analysis of these results was made available at the 2003 ORSAS seminars. In early November 2004, institutions will receive an individual feedback report on the quality of the applications

(from an administrative perspective only) and the references submitted to ORSAS. The overall results and analysis of these reports will also be open to discussion at the seminars organised for November and December 2004 [see paragraphs 18.1 to 18.3].

17. The ORSAS Committee

The Annual Committee Meeting

17.1 The ORSAS Annual Committee Meeting takes place in early September. These meetings are held to discuss the results of the year's competition, to review the terms and conditions of the Scheme and to consider any other matters that have arisen during the year.

Nominations for new Panel Members

17.2 ORSAS panel members serve on the Committee for four years, acting as Chair of their panel in their final year. Four new panel members are appointed each year. Nominations are sought from all participating institutions. New members are appointed in such a way as to endeavour to maintain fair and equal representation of all participating institutions.

ORSAS interim and annual reports

17.3 The interim report provides an initial analysis of the results of the most recent competition. It is released around August each year and is emailed to all ORSAS Administrators. This report contains data showing: number of applications received; number of awards offered; breakdown of offers by institution, country of origin and subject of study; competition standard; and distribution of awards by gender and country.

17.4 The ORSAS Annual Report is a full report on the last-but-one competition which is published each February. In addition to statistics for the breakdown of applications and offers of awards, it covers the history of the Scheme, its administration, growth and publicity; residence of applicants; results of the surveys of past awardholders; expenditure; general conclusions of the competition; and membership of the ORSAS Committee that year. The Annual Report is distributed to all ORSAS Committee members and institutional contacts, and is available in pdf format on the ORSAS website.

18. ORSAS seminars

18.1 Each Autumn, the ORSAS administrative team hosts a series of one-day seminars across the UK, to which all ORSAS Administrators are invited. These seminars aim to support institutions by providing a two-way forum whereby representatives from the ORSAS Committee and administrative team provide an inside view of how the Scheme, including the competition, operates, and discuss specific issues or problems raised by the institutions. We hope that institutions will find the seminars useful with regard to improving their success rate in the annual competitions. ORSAS Administrators will also have the opportunity to discuss best practices with each other.

18.2 In 2003, seminars were held in London, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Manchester. The topics covered included: ‘What makes a successful application?’; the selection of panel members; quotas; flat-rate fees; evaluation and marking of applications; post-competition feedback; and marketing strategy. Almost 68% of attendees rated the 2003 seminars as “excellent” in terms of meeting their objectives, with a rating of “good” received from the remaining 32%.

18.3 Details of the 2004 seminars were disseminated in early October. To ensure the usefulness of the seminars, ORSAS Administrators were invited to suggest issues they would like to discuss. When the majority of responses have been received, we will plan the agenda accordingly.

Appendix 1

UK academic institutions currently participating in the ORSAS Scheme 2003

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Code</i>
University of Aberdeen	001	University of Edinburgh	014
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	045	Edinburgh College of Art	168
University of Abertay Dundee	109	University of Essex	015
Anglia Polytechnic University	100	University of Exeter	016
Aston University	002	Falmouth College of Arts	169
University of Wales, Bangor	046	University of Glamorgan	111
University of Bath	003	University of Glasgow	017
Bath Spa University College	150	Glasgow Caledonian University	112
Queen's University of Belfast	004	Glasgow School of Art	170
Bell College of Technology	220	University of Gloucestershire	158
University of Birmingham	005	University of Greenwich	113
Bishop Grosseteste College	151	Harper Adams University College	172
Bolton Institute of HE	152	Heriot-Watt University	018
Bournemouth University	102	University of Hertfordshire	114
University of Bradford	006	University of Huddersfield	115
University of Brighton	103	University of Hull	019
University of Bristol	007	Keele University	020
Brunel University	008	University of Kent	021
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College	154	Kent Institute of Art and Design	175
University of Cambridge	009	King Alfred's College, Winchester	176
Canterbury Christ Church University College	155	Kingston University	117
Cardiff University	047	University of Wales, Lampeter	051
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	156	University of Lancaster	022
University of Central England, Birmingham	101	University of Leeds	023
University of Central Lancashire	118	Leeds Metropolitan University	119
Central School of Speech and Drama	157	University of Leicester	024
University College Chester	159	University of Lincoln	116
University College Chichester	212	University of Liverpool	025
City University	010	Liverpool Hope College	178
College of St Mark and St John	163	Liverpool John Moores University	120
Coventry University	106	University of London (see overleaf)	
Cranfield University	089	The London Institute	179
Dartington College of Arts	165	London Metropolitan University	219
De Montfort University	107	London South Bank University	133
University of Derby	108	Loughborough University	026
University of Dundee	011	University of Luton	181
University of Durham	012	University of Manchester	027
University of East Anglia	013	Manchester Metropolitan University	121
University of East London	110	Middlesex University	122
Edge Hill College of HE	167	Napier University	123
		University of Newcastle upon Tyne	029
		Newman College	184
		University of Wales College, Newport	171

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Code</i>
North East Wales Institute	185
University College Northampton	183
Northern School of Contemporary Dance	216
North Riding College	187
University of Northumbria	125
Norwich School of Art and Design	217
University of Nottingham	030
Nottingham Trent University	126
Open University	031
University of Oxford	032
Oxford Brookes University	127
University of Paisley	128
University of Plymouth	129
University of Portsmouth	130
Queen Margeret University College	188
Ravensbourne College	189
RCN Institute	174
University of Reading	033
Robert Gordon University	131
Rose Bruford College	191
Royal College of Art	092
Royal College of Music	193
Royal Northern College of Music	194
Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama	195
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	207
University of St Andrews	034
St Martin's College, Lancaster	197
St Mary's College, Twickenham	198
University of Salford	035
University of Sheffield	036
Sheffield Hallam University	132
University of Southampton	037
Southampton Institute	201
Staffordshire University	134
U H I Millennium Institute	221
University of Stirling	038
University of Strathclyde	039
University of Sunderland	135
University of Surrey	040
University of Surrey Roehampton	190
Surrey Institute of Art and Design, University College	211
University of Sussex	041
University of Wales, Swansea	048
Swansea Institute of HE	202
University of Teesside	136
Thames Valley University	137
Trinity and All Saints, Leeds	203
Trinity College, Carmarthen	204
Trinity College of Music	205

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Code</i>
University of Ulster	042
University of Warwick	043
University of the West of England, Bristol	104
University of Westminster	138
University College Worcester	215
Wimbledon School of Art	213
University of Wolverhampton	139
University College Worcester	215
Writtle College	218
University of York	044
York St John College	162
University of London:	
Birkbeck	052
Goldsmiths	093
Imperial	053
Institute of Education	070
King's	054
LSE	055
London School of Hygiene	087
Queen Mary	056
Royal Academy of Music	192
Royal Holloway	057
Royal Veterinary College	058
St George's	083
SOAS	059
School of Pharmacy	060
UCL	061
Heythrop	064
Courtauld	065
Institute of Advanced Legal Studies	066
Institute of Cancer Research	098
Centre for Defence Studies	097
Institute of Classical Studies	068
Institute of Commonwealth Studies	069
Institute of English Studies	067
Institute of Germanic Studies	071
Institute of Historical Research	072
Institute of Latin American Studies	073
British Institute in Paris	074
Institute of Romance Studies	095
Institute of United States Studies	096
Warburg	077
UMBS Millport	094

Appendix 2

Calculation of quotas

1. The current system of calculating the quotas is based on a model which combines each institution's success rate in the competition over the last 3 years (in comparison with the other participating institutions) with their quality-related research funding allocation (as approved annually by their respective funding council/body).
2. Prior to 2003, the weighting of success rate to QR funding had been 3:2. However, the special Review Committee, set up for considering the outcome of the 2002 review of the Scheme, discussed the quota system and it was agreed with the ORSAS Committee that more weight should be placed on RAE ratings through institutional share of QR. Therefore, in 2003, an equal weighting (1:1 ratio) was applied to the success rate factor and QR funding proportion and this will prevail for calculation of quotas in the 2005 competition.
3. As has been the practice in the past, the quota model provides for an allocation of a minimum quota of two for those institutions where the formula calculation leads to a figure of one or zero.
4. Additionally, all institutions with a quota of less than 10 may submit 2 reserve applications *[see paragraphs 6.6 to 6.7 for the process]*.

Appendix 3

Calculation of flat-rate fees

1. The question of the level of the ORSAS award was one of the main issues covered in the consultation process for the 2002 review of the Scheme. Responses from institutions showed that many felt that it would be undesirable to increase the award levels without increasing the overall budget for the Scheme. The consensus was that institutions would rather see more awards of a lower value than fewer awards at a higher value.
2. The Review Committee accordingly agreed that the principle of the current system, whereby the value of the awards reflect the difference between the home/EU and international postgraduate tuition fees, be maintained in favour of increasing the award to the full postgraduate fee. It was also agreed however that, as from the 2003 competition, and in the light of the comments made by institutions, new ORS awards would be made on the basis of a flat- rate level for each of the three main fee bands: classroom-based, laboratory-based and clinical courses.
3. So far as the method of determining the flat-cap rate levels is concerned, the Review Committee recommended that these should be set by the ORS Committee in line with the average cost of an award in each of the three fee bands, should be uplifted each year in line with inflation, and should be reviewed by the ORS Committee every two years. It was also recommended that the basic flat-rates should in the first instance be set at 2% above the average award level, and that a standard London weighting – for inner and outer London institutions as appropriate – should be applied to awards given to students wishing to study at such institutions.
4. At its October 2002 meeting, the ORS Committee accepted these recommendations and agreed that the initial calculation of the three flat-rates should be based on the average cost of the actual offers of award in the 2002 competition for the subjects falling within each of the three fee bands. It also agreed the recommended uplift of 2% on each of the three average levels, together with London weightings of 12% and 8% for inner and outer London institutions respectively. (These are the weightings applied by HEFCE to its research allocations for such institutions.)
5. For the year 2005/06, the ORS Committee has agreed that the above award levels should be uplifted by 4% for inflation and so that flat-rate limits are as set out in the table at paragraph 6.12, and reproduced here for ease of reference:

	HEIs outside London	HEIs in inner London	HEIs in outer London
classroom-based courses	5,461	6,117	5,898
laboratory-based courses	7,966	8,922	8,604
clinical courses	16,467	18,443	17,784

Appendix 4

ORS AWARDS SCHEME 2005

Control List of Supported Applications in Set 1

Institution:

ORS ref no.	Surname	Other names	Subject

Appendix 5

Checklist for invoices and refunds

Invoices

- Has the awardholder registered and is s/he currently in full-time attendance?
- Is a signed and dated certification label attached to the invoice?
- Are the ORS reference numbers quoted for every student listed? If not, is a completed proforma enclosed?
- Do the amounts requested for each student listed on the invoice match with the amounts requested on their application / renewal forms? If not, is a completed proforma enclosed?
- Is the student entitled to the terms/months being invoiced, i.e. has the student been funded for less than 9 terms / 36 months?

Refunds

For HEIs in **England, Wales and Northern Ireland**, please either:

- (1) offset the refund amount on your next invoice by listing it as a credit (but please do not send a credit notes)

or

- (2) post a cheque to ORSAS enclosing a completed proforma

or

- (3) arrange for a BACS credit to be made directly to HEFCE, HEFCW or DEL and send an advice slip to the funding body and email a completed proforma to ORSAS

For HEIs in **Scotland**, please email a completed proforma to ORSAS.

OVERSEAS RESEARCH STUDENTS AWARDS SCHEME

OVERSEAS RESEARCH STUDENTS AWARDS SCHEME

Invoicing / Refund Proforma

* [Please indicate either 'invoice' or 'refund']

Institution				
Date of Invoice / cheque / BACS tfr				
Invoice / cheque / reference number				
ORS ref no	Student's full name	Amount £	Terms/months invoiced or refunded	Comments

Appendix 6

Request for Transfer of ORS Award to another Academic Institution

OVERSEAS RESEARCH STUDENTS AWARDS SCHEME

ORS/T

Copies of this form are obtainable only from the Executive Secretary, ORS Awards Scheme, Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, LONDON WC1H 9HQ or email ors_scheme@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

Please follow the instructions carefully.

1. You must complete PART A yourself.
2. You must then send the form to the REGISTRAR/SECRETARY of the institution at which you hold the ORS award, and ask for PART B to be completed. At this stage you may be asked to produce evidence of acceptance for admission as a full-time research student in Session 200 /0 at the institution to which you wish to have your ORS award transferred.
3. When the form has been returned to you with PART B completed you should sent it to the REGISTRAR/SECRETARY of the institution to which you wish to have your award transferred. In a covering letter you should ask for PART C to be completed and the form sent on to the Secretary of the ORS Committee for the consideration of your request.

PART A

Award no. ORS _____ held at _____

Surname or Family name _____

Other names _____

Address for correspondence _____

I request that my ORS award be transferred to _____

where I have been accepted for admission as a full-time registered research student in Session 200/0 to study

(subject)

My reasons for this request are

Signature _____ Date _____

PART B - STATEMENT BY TRANSFEROR INSTITUTION

This institution does not object to the transfer of award no. ORS/ _____
held by _____ (name)
at _____ to _____

Official Stamp of Institution _____
Signed _____
Status _____
Date _____

PART C - STATEMENT BY TRANSFEREE INSTITUTION

I confirm that the applicant has been accepted for admission as a research registered student for a full-time course of study, commencing from _____ (month),
_____ (year) for the postgraduate degree of _____
subject to the following conditions:

I confirm that the request for the transfer of award no. ORS/ _____
has the approval and support of this institution, on whose behalf I accept the conditions set out in the booklet "Overseas Research Students ORS Awards 2004".

Should this request for transfer be approved, the amount receivable by this institution for tuition fees would be the Overseas Students Rate (£ _____) less Home Students Rate (£ _____) subject to the flat rates outlined below. Thus the amount of the award, pro rata for the year, would be (£ _____).

Official Stamp of Institution _____
Signed _____
Status _____
Date _____

FLAT RATES - award levels agreed for the 200 / academic session are as follows: