

Full Eligibility Rules (2025–2026)

1. General Eligibility

- a) The National Eczema Society (NES) **PhD Studentships** are open to any UK-based researcher employed at a recognised UK research institution (e.g. university, NHS Trust, or research organisation) seeking to undertake research focused on **eczema** that aligns with NES's **Research Strategy** and benefits people living with eczema.
 - b) **PhD Studentship Applications must be submitted by the proposed PhD Supervisor.** NES does not accept applications directly from prospective PhD students.
 - c) A maximum of **one application per Principal Investigator** is permitted per funding round.
 - d) **Collaborative and multi-institutional proposals** are welcome, provided a single lead UK-based institution is identified for contract and fund management purposes.
 - e) Projects must demonstrate **scientific rigour, originality, and relevance** to dermatology and eczema care.
 - f) Proposals must align with the **NES Research Strategy**, contribute to capacity-building within eczema research, and demonstrate measurable benefit for patients, carers, or the wider eczema community.
 - g) All applicants and host institutions must adhere to NES's **Grant Terms and Conditions** and ethical, governance, and reporting requirements as specified therein.
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2. Funding and Financial Details

- h) The **maximum funding available** for NES PhD Studentships is **£33,000 per year**, inclusive of stipend, tuition fees, and research expenses. NES does not provide top-ups or additional extensions beyond the agreed award period.
- i) NES will cover **domestic student tuition fees up to £5,000 per academic year**. International student fees are not eligible.
- j) The studentship provides a **three-year, full-time tax-free stipend** in line with current **UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)** rates, with annual increments for inflation.
- k) The maximum studentship duration is **36 months**. Reasonable **no-cost extensions** may be considered on a case-by-case basis for circumstances such as illness, parental leave, or caring responsibilities, subject to approval by NES.

l) NES will not fund part-time or distance-learning PhD arrangements. The student must be **registered full-time** for the entire award period.

m) Host institutions must ensure compliance with **UKRI's Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, research integrity, and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)** principles.

3. Award Administration

n) Research Awards must be **formally accepted within 4-weeks** of the award letter being issued, with signed confirmation from both the awardee and the host institution.

o) Projects must **commence within one month** of the signed grant agreement, typically beginning in **Autumn 2026**.

p) All members of the supervisory and research team, including co-investigators and collaborators, must have a valid **ORCID ID** prior to the activation of the award.

q) Successful applicants acknowledge that NES may publish the **project title, host institution, and Principal Investigator's name** on its website and social media platforms to promote transparency and awareness.

r) The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for the **scientific and technical direction** of the project and must promptly inform NES of any changes to supervision, project design, or student recruitment.

4. Reporting, Monitoring, and Financial Management

s) All funding claims must be made by the host institution's finance office via **quarterly invoices** (March, July, October, January), accompanied by an expenditure statement and receipts.

t) The PI must submit **annual scientific and lay progress reports**, reviewed by NES and its Medical Advisory Board (MAB). Continued funding depends on satisfactory progress.

u) A comprehensive **final report** (scientific and lay versions) and financial statement must be submitted within **twelve weeks** of project completion.

v) All unclaimed expenses or invoices must be submitted within **three months** of the project end date. NES will not make payments beyond this point.

w) Any changes to the project, including supervision, budget reallocations, or timeline adjustments, require **written approval from NES** in advance.

5. Ethical, Regulatory, and Research Conduct

x) All research must comply with applicable **ethical, legal, and regulatory standards**, including those relating to human subjects, data protection, and biosafety. Proof of ethical approval (or pending application) must be provided **before funds are released**.

y) Projects must follow the **AMRC's principles of best scientific practice, maintaining integrity, transparency, and reproducibility**.

z) NES has a **zero-tolerance policy on bullying and harassment**. All award holders and institutions must uphold an inclusive and respectful research environment.

6. Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)

aa) Applicants must include meaningful **patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE)** throughout their project, following NES and NIHR guidance.

bb) NES strongly encourages engagement with members of its **Expert by Experience (EXEC) Group**, involving them in research design, delivery, and dissemination.

7. Acknowledgement, Open Access, and Communication

dd) All publications, presentations, and public outputs must **acknowledge NES funding**, including the grant reference number.

ee) NES mandates **open access publication** of all peer-reviewed research arising from its funding, in line with AMRC and UKRI open research principles.

ff) Researchers are encouraged to share findings with the public and patient communities, co-producing accessible summaries, infographics, and updates with NES's Communications Team.

gg) Award holders must comply with NES's **social media Policy** and actively engage with NES's communication channels, ensuring responsible and ethical online engagement.

hh) Copies of all outputs (scientific papers, lay summaries, conference abstracts) must be sent to research@eczema.org for dissemination.

8. Intellectual Property and Data

ii) Intellectual property (IP) generated under NES funding is owned by the **host institution**, but NES retains a **non-exclusive, royalty-free licence** to use results for non-commercial, educational, and advocacy purposes.

jj) The institution must notify NES promptly of any IP arising and follow appropriate procedures for protection, exploitation, and revenue-sharing in accordance with the **NES Research Grant Terms and Conditions (2025–2026)**.

kk) NES and the institution share any net revenue from IP exploitation equally (50% each) after deduction of approved translation costs and direct expenses.

9. Compliance, Audit, and Termination

ll) The host institution must maintain accurate financial records and cooperate with any **NES audit or evaluation** of the funded project.

mm) NES reserves the right to **suspend or terminate** the grant for non-compliance, unsatisfactory progress, or ethical breaches.

nn) Upon termination, any **unspent funds must be returned** to NES, accompanied by a final financial statement within 30 days.