



University of Essex

Sustainable Transitions (Masters plus PHD) – Governance, Ecological Management and Society - Leverhulme Doctoral Training Programme 2026-27

The University of Essex is offering two fully funded Masters + PhD scholarships in the field of 'Sustainable Transitions'.

The Masters Plus PhD Scholarships are available for Home fee status students who identify as being from underrepresented groups that meet the following criteria:

- Not already have a Master's degree
- Applicants must be from a low-income household background as evidenced by, for example, being in receipt of a full maintenance loan or Special Support loan during their undergraduate studies.

And / Or

- Applicants must be one of the following categories of ethnicity:
 - Black African
 - Black Caribbean
 - Black Other
 - Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
 - Mixed – White and Black African
 - Other mixed background (including Black African, Black Caribbean and Black Other)

- Applicants can apply to one or more of the following seven areas of research for which these scholarships are available:
- [Investigating fake news related to climate change](#)
- [The relationship between legal and economic interventions for effective climate adaptation strategies](#)
- [How do climate-induced biodiversity targets influence the dynamics and effectiveness of international cooperation in biodiversity governance?](#)
- [Implementation of the Human Right to Water](#)
- [Building Energy Commons: Law, Governance and Community Power in African Renewable Energy Transitions](#)
- [Waste Management – Towards Sustainability](#)
- [Political Economy of the Environment and Development](#)
- [The Role of International Economic Law in Environmental Policy](#)

For further information on how to apply, please see below and refer to the ‘Guidance for Applicants’ document.

The successful applicants will receive a full Masters degree scholarship for one year and a PhD scholarship for a maximum of four years, both including full tuition fee waiver, a stipend payment towards your living costs, and for the PhD a research allowance.

Full funding scholarship available is as outlined below.

Type of award	Funding available
Full-funding award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home tuition fee waiver. ▪ Living costs stipend at the UK Research and Innovation recommended level per year. The stipend for 2025-26 is £20,780. The stipend for 2026-27 is to be confirmed. ▪ A research allowance for the PhD element of £10,000 (in total) to be spent on authorised research costs for example supplies and equipment, field work etc.

Terms and conditions

Eligibility

- Applicants must be assessed as a UK home fee paying student.
- Applicants must not already hold a masters qualification.
- Applicants must be from a low-income household background as evidenced by, for example, being in receipt of a full maintenance loan or Special Support loan during their undergraduate studies.

And / or

- Applicants must be one of the following categories of ethnicity:
 - Black African
 - Black Caribbean
 - Black Other
 - Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
 - Mixed – White and Black African
 - Other mixed background (including Black African, Black Caribbean and Black Other)
- Receipt of the scholarship is subject to the applicant also being accepted for the Masters degree commencing in October 2026 and the PhD course specified for the project you are applying for. (See the details below on How to apply)
- If offered the scholarship, you will need to register as a Full-Time student at the University of Essex for the 2026-27 academic year for the Masters course, and meet any conditions of our offer. (See the details below on How to apply.)
- Scholarships are for on campus study only (NOT for online or distance learning).
- Applicants must have achieved a Merit or higher Masters level qualification (or equivalence as assessed by our Postgraduate Admissions Team) to then continue on to the PhD phase of the scholarship programme.

- If English is not your first language, you will also need to meet the English language entry requirements for the PhD you have applied for.
- This scholarship is available for a standard 1 year Masters degree and a standard 3 year PhD with the possibility of extending up to four years of study for the PhD.
- The scholarship would not apply to repeat periods of study.
- These scholarships are restricted to students who would otherwise be entirely self-funded.*
- The award cannot be held in conjunction with any other University of Essex scholarships.
- Successful applicants should be available for promotional activities.
- Students who are funded by Leverhulme will be known as '**Leverhulme Trust Doctoral Scholars**' when they commence their PhD and then for the duration of their studies.

*Students receiving a repayable loan to fund their studies will be considered as self-funded.

Students who are not eligible

The following students are NOT eligible for this scholarship regardless of meeting the above criteria:

- This scholarship award does not apply to deferred entry. Where a scholarship has been awarded to a student who subsequently defers entry to the following academic year, the award will be withdrawn, and the applicant will be considered again in line with the terms and conditions that apply in the new proposed year of entry.
- Students who are distance learning.
- Students who are fully or partly sponsored.
- Students on a 4-year integrated PhD course
- Current students whose first year of study at the University of Essex, was prior to academic year 2026-27.

How to apply

You should apply separately for your PhD course and the scholarship.

To apply for the scholarship, please email SustainableLDTP@essex.ac.uk by **11:59pm BST on Monday 13th April 2026** and attach the following documents:

- Completed application form (available from the scholarship webpage)
- A detailed 3-page curriculum vitae.
- Evidence of your household income (if applying on the basis of being from a low income background)

It is not necessary at this stage for applicants to apply for the Master's Degree. Successful applicants will be invited to apply for the relevant Master's degree when notified of their scholarship offer.

To apply for the PhD course: please complete our online course application, which is quick and straightforward, and the following pages give you all the details: [PhD application information | University of Essex](#)

On the application form on the 'Course' page, there is a section entitled, '*Proposed research topic or area of research **' - In the adjacent box please note that you are applying for a 'Sustainable Transitions' Masters plus PhD scholarship and provide the title of the project.

On the same Course Page there is a section that states '*If you have contacted a potential supervisor to discuss your application or research proposal, please provide the person's full name.*' - In the adjacent box please state the name of the primary discipline supervisor for the project.

You should apply for a place to study as soon as possible, and at the latest by **11:59pm BST on Monday 13th April 2026**.

Schedule for Shortlisting and Interviews

Applicants shortlisted for interview will be informed by 29th April 2026.

Two rounds of interviews will take place between 7th May to 19th May 2026 and 27th May to 9th June 2026.

Outcomes for interviewed applicants (i.e. offer, place on waiting list, unsuccessful application) will be made by 26th June 2026.

You can learn about postgraduate research at the University of Essex more generally here:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/postgraduate/research>.

Payment arrangements

- The tuition fee element of this scholarship will be made available as a waiver of the tuition fee that is payable on registration at the University.
- If you intermit from your course, you may, at the discretion of the University, be entitled to a pro rata payment of the remainder of your award on your return to study. Please contact the [Funding Team](#) for further information.
- This scholarship is awarded for each year of study for a period of up to a maximum of five years. The fee element will be deducted automatically, and the stipend will be paid in quarterly instalments in October, January, April, and July. *The university reserves the right to change the payment schedule, for example to monthly, to align with university processes if required.*
- Awards are granted for one year in the first instance but will be renewed, subject to the award holder's satisfactory progress, for a second, third, fourth and fifth year – up to a maximum tenure of fifteen terms or five years, provided the award holder is still engaged in full-time research (and excepting the circumstances stated in the section on termination).
- Where progress is satisfactory, renewal of the award is automatic. Students who are exceptionally permitted to extend their period of study beyond the twelve terms will have to meet the additional costs themselves.

Scholarship suspension

Students must be registered and meet the above conditions to receive payment. The scholarship will be suspended during a period of approved leave of absence (intermission) where this period covers a whole or part of an academic year and may be reinstated on your return to full-time study subject to the conditions above. On your return to study, you will be entitled to the balance of the scholarship for the stage. There will be no payment for repeat periods of study in any circumstances.

Holiday

Scholarship holders are entitled to a maximum of eight weeks' holiday (including bank holidays and the University closure at Christmas) per annum and pro-rata. Holidays should be agreed in advance with

the supervisor and, in cases where the awardee is engaged in teaching and demonstrating, with the approval of the head of the student's department, school or centre.

Termination of Scholarship

The University will terminate a scholarship when progress or performance is deemed to be unsatisfactory. The scholarship will be terminated if a student ceases to be registered as a student with the University, or for good cause at the discretion of our Dean of Postgraduate Research & Education, or their nominee for this purpose.

If a scholarship is terminated prematurely for any reason, an awardee must repay to the University any monies including maintenance, travel, subsistence, fees overpaid from the date of the termination of the scholarship. If an awardee submits their thesis before the end of the scholarship, the scholarship will be terminated on the date of submission. If an awardee takes up full-time employment whilst in receipt of a scholarship, the scholarship will be terminated as of the first day of employment.

Transferability

Scholarships under this programme relate to specific PhD projects and are not transferable except under exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Dean of Postgraduate Research Education in consultation with the Director of the Sustainable Transitions – Leverhulme Doctoral Programme.

Data Privacy Statement

The University of Essex takes confidentiality very seriously, your application form will only be seen by members of staff involved in processing your application. Information is kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as it applies in the UK, tailored by the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data will be used solely for statistical purposes and electronic record keeping and may be made available to authorised University staff to allow statistical information to be analysed.

This data will not be passed to any other third party without your consent, except when the University is required to do so by law. Any formal enquiries concerning the use of data noted here should be addressed to the Head of Student Services.

Resolution of disputes

Acceptance of this award constitutes acceptance of these terms and conditions. Registered students should contact the [Funding Team](#) in the first instance for guidance regarding this award. In cases not covered by the above terms and conditions, or where a student claims exceptional circumstances, or disputes a decision not to make payments due under an award, final appeals on decisions regarding eligibility must be made via the [Student Complaints process](#). The Academic Registrar or their nominee will review the case and his/her decision will be final.

These terms and conditions apply to the academic year 2026-27. The University of Essex reserves the right to update these terms and conditions as necessary.