

SCOTTISH  
GRADUATE  
SCHOOL FOR  
ARTS &  
HUMANITIES

## **AHRC DTP Scotland Funded Studentship Competition 2017**

**Guidance for applicants and nominating HEIs for studentships  
beginning in October 2017**



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



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## Welcome

Welcome to the SGSAH Doctoral Training Partnership competition for 2017. This document brings together the guidance for applicants and for nominating HEIs in one place. We hope that it will answer most if not all of your questions, but if not then please don't hesitate to email us at [admin@sgsah.ac.uk](mailto:admin@sgsah.ac.uk).

## SGSAH Doctoral Training Partnership

The eight members of the Doctoral Training Partnership are:

[Glasgow School of Art](#)

[University of Aberdeen](#)

[University of Dundee](#)

[University of Edinburgh](#)

[University of Glasgow](#)

[University of St Andrews](#)

[University of Stirling](#)

[University of Strathclyde](#)

Our mission is to work together to inspire researchers who are capable, caring, ethical & reflective professionals with a demonstrable commitment to generating & mobilising knowledge across a range of scholarly, professional & public communities. By sharing expertise, best practice, resources & training we will set the standards for & raise the expectations of the postgraduate researcher experience across Scotland.

## Why SGSAH?

Our prestigious studentships offer:

- Fully-funded PhD studentships with a stipend of around £14,000 per annum plus fees
- A core training programme to develop your skills and knowledge as a future research leader
- Extra funds to extend your studies to gain additional skills through training, internships and doctoral artist-in-residencies
- Opportunities to travel abroad to carry out research and fieldwork
- Access to the richness of Scotland's research expertise and collections
- The chance to join an engaged and committed cohort of doctoral researchers working across the full range of arts & humanities disciplines

## **Partnerships and cross-HEI supervision**

Our DTP works as a partnership and we welcome proposals that are supervised across our member HEIs. We are also keen to see doctoral proposals developed in collaboration with external partners. Arrangements can be formal, for instance a proposal that includes a third supervisor or an advisor from a partner body, or includes a placement with a partner body that forms an integral part of a studentship; or informal, such as indications that external bodies may have an interest in your research and its outputs/outcomes, and that you might work with them either to conduct your research or to generate impact from it.

## **Eligibility**

The first step in the process is to check that you are eligible to receive an award. These studentships have residency requirements set by Research Councils UK, which are set out below. Contact the postgraduate office in your chosen HEI if you have any queries about your eligibility.

To be eligible you will also need to have been accepted on a PhD programme and nominated by one of the eight Doctoral Training Partnership members listed above.

## ***Residency criteria***

The following is taken from the RCUK Conditions of Research Council Training Grants document, p12.

“For purposes of residence requirements, the UK includes the United Kingdom and Islands (i.e. the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).

44. To be eligible for a full award a student must have:

- Settled status in the UK, meaning they have no restrictions on how long they can stay

And

- Been ‘ordinarily resident’ in the UK for 3 years prior to the start of the studentship. This means they must have been normally residing in the UK (apart from temporary or occasional absences)

And

- Not been residing in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of full-time education. (This does not apply to UK or EU nationals).

45. To be eligible for a fees only award:

- Students from EU countries other than the UK are generally eligible for a fees-only award. To be eligible for a fees-only award, a student must be ordinarily resident in a

member state of the EU; in the same way as UK students must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

- Note: These eligibility criteria are based on the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 and subsequent amendments.”

As things currently stand, EU students are eligible to apply for fees-only support for an award beginning in October 2017. At the time of writing (late September 2016) the RCUK’s formal position is that ‘Future funding arrangements for EU students will be determined as part of the UK’s discussions on its future relationship.’ We will publish any additional information as soon as we receive it.

### **Application process**

You are encouraged to read this guidance thoroughly before applying. You should then contact your chosen institution(s) as soon as possible to find out how they are selecting proposals for nomination, and their internal deadlines for applications.

SGSAH operates an electronic application system which will be open 1-13 February 2017 via our website. This guidance includes a template for the information you will be required to complete online.

The online process involves:

- Inputting information to our electronic form. See the guidance section below for details.
- Uploading one single PDF of your academic transcripts.
- Uploading the PDF Institutional Statement of Support that will be provided by your nominating HEI(s)
- Uploading confirmation of your offer of a place from your lead HEI.

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **Can I apply to more than one HEI?**

You can apply to study at more than one of our HEIs, but you can only submit one application to the AHRC DTP Scotland studentship competition in each year. If your nomination has been confirmed by more than one of our DTP HEIs, you must choose the one you wish to be registered at as a doctoral student. Please inform any other HEIs who have agreed to nominate you that you have decided not to accept their nomination. It is also possible to be supervised across HEIs. So, whilst you can only be nominated by one HEI, you could be supervised by a team from two. You should discuss this with your proposed supervisor at your chosen nominating HEI.

**How will my proposal be assessed?**

Our marking scheme and indicative criteria are contained in this guidance at page 35.

**When will I find out if I have been successful?**

We aim to make initial offers for awards starting in October 2017 in early-mid April 2017.

**Can I delay the start of my study?**

SGSAH aims to develop a strong and connected cohort of doctoral researchers and so we expect that all studentships will begin in October each year. Exceptionally we may permit deferment once awards have been made.

If you have a query that isn't answered here or on the FAQ section of our website, please email [enquiries@sgsah.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@sgsah.ac.uk).

## Guidance on completing the 2017 application form

### General notes on the application

We recommend that you read this guidance thoroughly before you begin your application. Your chosen HEI(s) will also have guidance on how to write a good research proposal, and your supervisory team will be able to give you advice. We asked our current students for advice for applicants, and that is provided on page 13.

### General note on the online form

Be aware that the online application form will automatically cut off entries over the stated word limits.

### Personal details

This section asks you to provide contact information. We will normally contact you by email so please ensure you use an address you check regularly and which will be available to you at least until May 2017.

### Eligibility

This section asks you to confirm whether you are eligible for a full studentship or for a fees-only award.

To be eligible for a full AHRC DTP Scotland studentship including stipend you must:

- be nominated by one of the SGSAH AHRC DTP consortium HEIs; and
- hold a conditional or unconditional offer of a place in a relevant discipline on a PhD programme at that HEI.

You must also meet the residency criteria set out in the RCUK Conditions of Research Training Grants (see p2 of this guidance). These state that, in general, fully funded studentships are available to applicants who are settled in the UK and have been ordinarily resident for a period of at least three years before the start of postgraduate studies.

EU nationals resident in the EEA are normally only eligible for fees-only awards. At the time of writing (late September 2016) the RCUK's formal position is that 'Future funding arrangements for EU students will be determined as part of the UK's discussions on its future relationship.' We will publish any additional information as soon as we receive it.

Overseas applicants are normally not eligible for awards unless they meet the residency criteria noted above. Further information for international students can be found on the UK Council for International Student Affairs [website](#).

Both new and continuing PhD students may apply for an award. To be eligible, continuing students must have at least 50% of their 3 year full-time or 6 year part-time PhD programme remaining as at 30 September 2017, and funding will only be available for this remaining period.

The AHRC expects that applicants to PhD programmes will normally hold, or be studying towards, a Masters qualification. Where you are not in this position, we provide a section called Relevant Professional Experience to enable you to demonstrate your readiness to undertake doctoral study. See below for further guidance.

If you have any queries about your eligibility, in particular your residency status, please contact the relevant postgraduate office in your nominating HEI for advice and guidance at an early stage in the process.

### **Reasonable distance**

AHRC studentships are awarded on condition that the student lives a 'reasonable distance' from their home/lead HEI. SGSAH's definition of reasonable distance is that a student ought if necessary to be able to travel to their lead University every day to work core hours (10am to 4pm).

### **Panel(s) of PhD Project**

SGSAH studentships are assessed by 4 panels. They cover the subjects set out below. Please indicate which panel covers your proposal. Please note that you should only select two panels if two of the members of your supervisory team come from disciplines covered by different panels. There is no advantage or disadvantage to selecting one panel rather than two. If you are unsure which Panel covers your proposal, please seek the advice of your proposed supervisors.

**Panel A covers:** History, Law and Legal Studies, Philosophy, Theology, Divinity and Religions

**Panel B covers:** Design, Visual Arts, Architecture, Creative Writing, Film, Drama and Theatre Studies, Cultural Policy (Policy, Arts Management and Creative Industries), Music, Television Studies, Dance Studies

**Panel C covers:** Art History, Library and Information Studies, Cultural and Museum Studies, Archaeology, Classics

**Panel D covers:** English Language, Linguistics, English Literature, Scottish Literature, Cultural and Popular Studies, Asiatic and Oriental Studies, French Studies, Scandinavian Studies, Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin Studies, Italian Studies, Middle Eastern and African Studies, Russian, Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, German Studies (including Dutch and Yiddish), British Sign

Language, Interpreting and Translation, Journalism and Publishing, Media and Communication Studies, Celtic Studies (excluding Celtic Language – see further information below).

### **Subject Area(s)**

We ask you to indicate the primary subject area(s) of your proposed PhD. The AHRC's subject guidance can be found via the website link here:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/funding/research/subjectcoverage/>

We have developed further specific guidance set out below with the relevant partners.

### ***AHRC/ESRC boundary***

We are aware that some research proposals will be situated on the edge of social science and arts and humanities. Reflecting the approach taken by the AHRC and ESRC, both we and the [Scottish Graduate School of Social Science](#) are prepared to fund proposals which include elements that might plausibly be funded by the other School, including where supervisory teams cross disciplinary boundaries. On this basis, we do not expect a significant number of applications to be made to both Schools. Where exceptionally this is the case, applications should be appropriately tailored for each Graduate School with the linkages between disciplines made clear. If applicants wish to be considered for joint funding by the two Schools they should ensure that both Graduate Schools are aware of this at the time of application, by sending an email to [admin@sgsah.ac.uk](mailto:admin@sgsah.ac.uk) and [studentships@socsciscotland.ac.uk](mailto:studentships@socsciscotland.ac.uk) with their name and research proposal title.

### ***Celtic Studies Proposals***

The AHRC has funded a separate [Centre for Doctoral Training in Celtic Languages](#) to which proposals in those languages should be made (i.e. the modern languages of Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Manx, Welsh, Breton, Cornish, and their medieval and ancient antecedents). Proposals in other areas related to Celtic Studies, but without a primary focus on Celtic languages and literatures - for instance, topics on the history of Ireland or Wales, or on the archaeology of early medieval Scotland - will usually best be made to SGSAH. If you are unsure whether to make an application to the CDT or to SGSAH, please contact the Director of the CDT in Celtic Languages Dr Katherine Forsyth ([Katherine.Forsyth@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Katherine.Forsyth@glasgow.ac.uk)) for an informal discussion in the first instance.

### **Qualifications/Relevant professional experience**

The AHRC expects applicants to have completed or to be studying towards a relevant Masters qualification. The Relevant Professional Experience section should therefore **only** be completed by candidates:

- who do not have academic qualifications;
- whose academic qualifications are not in a relevant subject;
- who are currently studying for a Masters degree after a considerable break from study (i.e. more than 5 years) and who have significant professional experience which is relevant to their research proposal.

This section is intended to provide a level playing field for applicants with irrelevant or non-existent qualifications, not to provide mitigation for poor ones.

### **Qualifications**

This section requires you to complete the year, and if appropriate, grade, of your qualifications. Please provide full transcripts – copies of degree certificates alone do not provide sufficient evidence. Transcripts should be in English, and where necessary a certified translation should be provided.

Please note that the standard of applications we receive is very high. Every successful applicant in 2016 had either a first class honours degree, or a Masters' with distinction or their non-UK equivalent, or a statement of Relevant Professional Experience that was deemed by reviewers to be equivalent to this standard of achievement.

### **Relevant professional experience (300 words maximum)**

***You should only complete this section if you do not have, and are not working towards, a Masters qualification in a relevant subject area; or if you are currently working towards a Masters after a considerable break from study (i.e. more than five years) and have significant professional experience which is relevant to your research proposal.***

Whilst we do not wish to discriminate against applicants who might not previously have had the opportunity to study at postgraduate level, you should be aware that a doctoral degree is a rigorous training at a high academic standard. If you are completing this section of the application, you should make it very clear how your previous professional experience has prepared you, in particular, for the independent research element of your proposed area of study.

### **Preparedness for proposed doctoral project (300 words maximum)**

Please demonstrate how your previous study and/or professional experience and/or professional development have prepared you for this particular doctoral project. This might include reference to your Masters dissertation topic, specific methodological training, employment as a Research Assistant, employment in a relevant occupation etc.

Evidence of relevant prizes, awards, grants or publications should also be included here. You should include an indication of the significance of the prize or award - for

example 'I was awarded the [name] prize for English, coming first from over [number] applicants' or 'I successfully applied for the [name] grant for young musicians, receiving support of £[amount]. This fund is awarded by a panel of internationally-renowned musicians and receives [number] applications annually ' or 'I have published a journal article in the internationally peer-reviewed journal [title]'.

### **Research Proposal Title**

Please ensure that your research proposal title is straightforward, descriptive and informative.

### **Research question (100 words maximum)**

The research question should be clear and researchable. You may use bullet points to separate elements of your research question.

### **Research context, methods and sources (500 words maximum)**

This section must describe your proposal. We are seeking original, innovative, cogent and coherent proposals, which are well-written in their entirety. The methodology should be demonstrably appropriate and the whole proposal well-grounded in current research literature and/or practice.

Remember that you will be writing for reviewers who are experienced academics but may not be specialists in your specific field of enquiry. You should therefore ensure that your application is written clearly and without unnecessary jargon. You might wish to ask someone from a different discipline to read your proposal to check it from a non-specialist perspective.

### **Knowledge exchange, public engagement and research impact (300 words maximum)**

The UK Research Councils want to encourage researchers to be actively involved in thinking about how they will achieve excellence with impact and to explore the pathways for realising impacts. AHRC-funded students in SGSAH will be able to apply for funding to support activities which realise impact through the Student Development Fund. We recognise that someone applying to a doctoral research programme will not be able to demonstrate impact in the same way as an established researcher. We use the RCUK definition of impact, which also includes public engagement.

When we ask you to describe the impact your research might have, we are not asking you to answer your research question(s) or to anticipate the results of your research. Instead we are asking you to consider more broadly who, both within and beyond academia, may be interested in and/or benefit by your research and its findings; and to describe what methods you might use to engage with these people or groups during and after your research.

You might find these questions helpful in thinking about impact:

- What is happening – or not happening – now that you think your research findings could help to change?
- Who might be interested or involved in delivering or experiencing the change that may happen as a result of your findings?
- Why would these communities be interested? How might they benefit?
- How will you engage/communicate/network with these communities?
- How would you demonstrate/evidence any changes and the link back to your research findings, bearing in mind that you will be able to apply for funding to develop impact?

Research Councils UK (RCUK) describe impact on its [website](#):

### ***Academic impact***

The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application.

### ***Economic and societal impacts***

The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. Economic and societal impacts embrace all the extremely diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations by:

- fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom,
- increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy,
- enhancing quality of life, health and creative output.

Public engagement may be included as one element of your Pathway to Impact. Engaging the public with your research can improve the quality of research and its impact, raise your profile, and develop your skills. It also enables members of the public to act as informed citizens and can inspire the next generation of researchers.”

### **Personal statement (200 words maximum)**

This section asks you to tell us why you are a suitable candidate for a SGSAH studentship specifically. We are looking for evidence on how SGSAH fits with your career aspirations and training needs and how you plan to take best advantage of

the opportunities we offer. See the information below on training needs for more detail on what a SGSAH studentship offers.

We are also looking for your thoughts on how you might contribute to the development of your cohort by, for instance, working collaboratively with other students to organise events to meet your doctoral training needs.

### **Training needs assessment (200 words maximum)**

***This section will not be considered by reviewers.***

We ask you to provide this information to prompt you to think about your doctoral training needs as early as possible, and to help us with our own planning and budgeting. SGSAH provides core training for its funded cohort across the three years (full-time equivalent) of their study. Doctoral researchers must attend one residential event each year plus an induction and three annual summer schools.

In addition, SGSAH expects all AHRC funded students to undertake some advanced inter/disciplinary training specific to their own needs, and the AHRC provides generous funding to support this through the Student Development Fund. This is a key benefit of AHRC funding and is available to **extend the duration of PhD studentships** flexibly and responsively to support an appropriate range of training for individual AHRC-funded students according to their individual needs. It can also be used to **support additional costs** associated with training, e.g. travel, equipment, and to support the realisation of impact of their research. SGSAH's internship and doctoral artist-in-residency programme allows you to apply for a post advertised by us or to identify your own internship. This needn't be directly relevant to your research but can make use of your skills, knowledge and experience in a context beyond academia. If you choose to do an internship or doctoral artist-in-residency your funded study period will be extended by up to three months.

**You are strongly encouraged to review the [SDF](#) pages on our website and to discuss your potential training needs with your supervisor before applying for an AHRC studentship, to make full use of the opportunities available.**

### **Fieldwork (100 words maximum)**

***This section will not be considered by reviewers.***

Whilst you may apply for support for training throughout your period of study, we would normally expect key elements of fieldwork/archival visits/internship work vital to your research proposal to have been identified and agreed by us before you start your studies, particularly if these are likely to require overseas travel.

### **Nominating Member of Staff and Email**

Please provide a name and contact for your nominating institution. This should normally be the person who signs the nominating form.

### **Further queries**

If you have any further queries not covered in this guidance please contact the SGSAH office via [enquiries@sgsah.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@sgsah.ac.uk) or 0141 330 3408.

## Advice from successful applicants

### ***Start early***

Begin your application as early as possible. Even if you are sitting on the draft for a few weeks or months before the deadline, having time to think over your proposal, and allowing time for many edits is beyond valuable, even necessary.

*Daniel*

Get in touch with your proposed supervisor as soon as possible. Not only will they let you know if your project is viable for funding, they'll also provide invaluable insight into how to frame your research proposal in line with AHRC scholarship objectives.

*Naomi*

### ***Find the right supervisor for you***

Start by finding a potential supervisor who's enthusiastic about your project and has experience guiding PhD applicants! It's really invaluable to have good practical support for your application.

*Harry*

Find a supervisor that you work well with and find inspiring. Discuss and work through your application with them in order to frame your good ideas so that they become more relevant and compelling.

*Pernille*

### ***Share your draft widely...***

I found it very helpful to get feedback from as many people as possible - academics from different disciplines can pick up on different issues in the text, and the more varied the comments the better.

*Eva*

Just having someone else give a second opinion on what works and what doesn't was so incredibly useful to me when I was completing my application. They can help make sure that you are getting your point across as clearly and precisely as possible, which to me was absolutely critical.

Adam

### ***...and make use of feedback***

Don't be afraid to ask your prospective supervisors to look over drafts of your application and to take their advice on board.

*Fraser*

### ***Keep it clear***

Reading my proposal to friends and family who knew little about my subject forced me to better clarify my argument and resulted in a much stronger application.

*Juliet*

Have a parent, friend, or sibling read it. If they don't understand something (especially if it's specific to your field) make sure you clarify so that anyone judging from different disciplines can understand. However, find a way to not clarify too much that it weakens the proposed idea's academic integrity.

*Daniel*

### ***Think about all elements of the application***

Do your research on SGSAH. See how your project connects with existing research groups or relates to work currently being carried out by researchers across the SGSAH network.

*Naomi*

It is highly important that impact be allowed to shape the research question and method, and discussions with potential supervisors, from the very outset.

*Kevin*

### ***Draft and redraft (and redraft again)***

Revise, revise, revise your application until you wouldn't alter a single word.

*Tim*

There is never a final draft. There are always improvements that can be made in your application answers. I worked on the form for weeks and each time I thought it was complete I remembered something else I could add, or noticed a sentence that could be redrafted. Don't rest on your laurels, there's always more to do.

*Chris*

### ***And finally...***

I want to encourage students who are discouraged by similar experiences or find the process/competition daunting that sometimes it does take some people a bit longer than others, and that if you are committed, have a really excellent project, and listen to the advice of your supervisors, you can be successful with the SGSAH.

*Katy*

*Thanks to all the SGSAH 2016 Cohort who shared their experiences with us.*

## Application Form Template 2017

A word version of this template is available to download on our website so you can prepare in advance of the online portal opening.

Please check the guidance document carefully before completing the application form.

### Personal Details

Name
Research proposal title
Email <i>We will normally contact you by email so please ensure you use an address you check regularly and which will be available to you <b>at least until May 2017.</b></i>
Permanent Address
Correspondence Address if different
Eligibility <i>Please indicate whether you are eligible for a full studentship or fees-only (please see p2 of Guidance for more information)</i>

## PhD Programme of Study

Institution at which you will be registered (the home/lead institution)	
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## Cross-institutional supervision (if applicable)

Yes/No	
Institution	

## Subject Panel(s) of PhD Project

SGSAH studentships are assessed by 4 panels. They cover the subjects set out below. Please indicate which panel covers your proposal. Please note that you should only select two panels if two of the members of your supervisory team come from disciplines covered by different panels. There is no advantage or disadvantage to selecting one panel rather than two. If you are unsure which Panel covers your proposal, please seek the advice of your proposed supervisor(s).

- Panel A** covers: History, Law & Legal Studies, Philosophy, Theology, Divinity & Religions
- Panel B** covers: Design, Visual Arts, Architecture, Creative Writing, Film, Drama & Theatre Studies, Cultural Policy (Policy, Arts Management & Creative Industries), Music, Television Studies
- Panel C** covers: Art History, Library & Information Studies, Cultural & Museum Studies, Archaeology, Classics
- Panel D** covers: English Language, Linguistics, British Sign Language, English Literature, Scottish Literature, Cultural & Popular Studies, Asiatic & Oriental Studies, French Studies, Scandinavian Studies, Hispanic, Portuguese & Latin Studies, Italian Studies, Middle Eastern & African Studies, Russian, Slavonic & Eastern European Studies, German Studies (including Dutch & Yiddish), Interpreting & Translation, Journalism & Publishing, Media & Communication Studies

**Subject Area(s) of PhD Project** (At least one and up to two may be selected)

Subject Area:

**Are you also seeking funding from the Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences? Yes/No**

**If yes, do you wish your application to be considered for joint funding?** (*please note relevant guidance*)

**Qualifications**

***Please note:*** The AHRC expects applicants to have completed or to be studying towards a Masters qualification. If you are not in this position you must use the “Relevant Professional Experience” section to provide evidence that the training and development you have received is equivalent to that obtained through a Masters course and, therefore, prepares you to continue to doctoral study. **If you have or are working towards a relevant Masters qualification, please DO NOT complete the Relevant Professional Experience section. The only exception to this is if you are currently undertaking a Masters after a considerable break from study (i.e. more than 5 years) and have significant professional experience which is relevant to your research proposal.**

University or College	Dates of award	Degree/Diploma	Main subjects	Grade, Class or GPA

**Qualifications pending**

<b>University or College</b>	<b>Anticipated date of award</b>	<b>Degree/Diploma</b>	<b>Main subjects</b>

**ONLY TO BE COMPLETED WHERE AN APPLICANT DOES NOT HAVE OR IS NOT STUDYING TOWARDS A MASTERS DEGREE OR EQUIVALENT, OR IS RETURNING TO MASTERS STUDY AFTER A CONSIDERABLE BREAK**

**Relevant professional experience (300 words maximum)**

**Preparedness for proposed doctoral project (300 words maximum)**

## **Research Proposal**

**Research proposal title**

**Research question (100 words maximum)**

**Research context, methods and sources (500 words maximum)**

**Knowledge exchange, public engagement and research impact (300 words maximum)**

**Personal statement (200 words maximum)**

**Training needs assessment (200 words maximum)**

**Fieldwork (100 words maximum)**

**Nominating Member of Staff**

*Please provide a name and contact for your nominating institution. This should normally be the person who signs the nominating form. It will not necessarily be your proposed supervisor; this will depend on your chosen HEI's nomination process.*

<b>Nominator Email</b>	
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# **Guidance for nominating institutions on completing the AHRC DTP Scotland Institutional Statement of Support for studentships beginning in October 2017**

## **Purpose of the Institutional Statement of Support**

The institutional statement of support is designed to allow institutions to make the case for the students they nominate. It is intended to enable institutions to present their assessment of:

- the quality of the student and their proposal;
- the student's preparedness to undertake and complete this specific doctoral proposal;
- the relevance and fit of the proposal with the proposed supervisory team; and
- the nature and level of support to be provided to the student by the supervising institution(s).

## **General notes**

Please note and abide by the word limits provided. Note also that for the 2017 competition (ie for those students who will begin in October 2017) we have rolled together the statements on Research Support/Fit and Supervisory Expertise.

SGSAH is committed to a fair and transparent selection process and to that end the criteria for marking are attached to this guidance. For 2017 all Panel members involved in the AHRC competition review process will be asked to undertake unconscious bias training.

## **Guidance on training/fieldwork**

**We expect the applicant to have discussed this element of their application with their proposed supervisory team and provide the information below to support this discussion.**

SGSAH requires all AHRC funded students to complete its core training programme consisting of an induction, one residential event for each full time year of study and three summer schools which take place in the third week of June each year. In addition to this the applicant is required to identify a) training needs and b) fieldwork requirements associated with their project. This information is not used in the review process.

We would draw your attention to the fact that AHRC studentships provide the opportunity for doctoral researchers to benefit from Student Development Funding (SDF). This is available to extend the duration of PhD studentships flexibly and responsively to support an appropriate range of training for individual AHRC-funded

students according to their individual needs. These might include international placements, specific skills development, or an internship which is not an integral part of the PhD study.

We would normally expect extended study periods for international placements and/or specific skills development, including placements with partner organisations central to the proposal, to have been clearly identified in the original proposal, and these to have been agreed before the studentship begins. This also applies to fieldwork which can reasonably be foreseen at the outset to be essential to the successful completion of a research project. Please ensure that, if the proposal you are nominating is likely to have such requirements, these have been identified and any appropriate extension is included in the section on Additional Training Needs and/or Fieldwork sections to be completed by the applicant. Note that fieldwork which is an essential part of your research proposal will not qualify for an extension.

### **Nominating an EU national for fees-only support**

AHRC studentships only provide fees for EU students from countries beyond the UK. As things currently stand, EU students are eligible to apply for fees-only support for an award beginning in October 2017. At the time of writing (late September 2016) the RCUK's formal position is that 'Future funding arrangements for EU students will be determined as part of the UK's discussions on its future relationship.' We will publish any additional information as soon as we receive it.

### **Guidance on completing the form**

#### **Name of nominating member of staff**

We do not specify who within a nominating institution should complete the Institutional Statement of Support. We will check nominations from HEIs against applications received.

#### **Confirmation of interdisciplinarity**

Occasionally applicants select more than one Panel when this is not appropriate. This section allows us to check that the application should indeed be reviewed by two Panels. Cross-Panel applications should have one supervisor from each Panel in the team.

#### **Preparedness for doctoral research (400 words maximum)**

Please indicate why this particular applicant is well placed to undertake this specific research project.

#### **Quality of the applicant's research proposal (500 words maximum)**

Please provide an assessment of the quality of this research proposal.

### **Research support/fit and supervisory expertise (400 words maximum)**

The AHRC Scottish Doctoral Training Partnership is committed to ensuring that students are supervised by the most appropriate team of supervisors from across the consortium. The DTP members have developed a cross-HEI co-supervision agreement. The full membership of the DTP is:

- Glasgow School of Art
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of St Andrews
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde

Cross-supervisory [benchmarks](#) have been agreed by the DTP and are available on our website. Please note that in cross-supervisory arrangements the Principal Supervisor must be located in the HEI at which the student is registered and from which they will graduate.

Reviewers are seeking evidence that the team identified provides the **best possible support** to the applicant that is available **within the SGSAH consortium as a whole** and that the supervision arrangements represent a perfect fit with the proposed research. They will look for evidence that the supervisory team, in its totality, provides the student with the best possible support available – that is, world-leading. This does not imply that all members of the supervisory team have significant experience of supervision; at least one member of the team must have supervised doctoral students to successful completion but the SGSAH is committed to increasing supervisory capacity and reviewers will look at the fit between the proposal and the supervisory team and resources first and foremost.

High-scoring proposals will demonstrate that the resources required for the research – e.g. specialist libraries, collections or equipment – are available and have guaranteed accessibility either with the supervising HEI(s) or with other HEIs or partner organisations. Successful applications will provide evidence that the research fits well with the expertise and/or priorities and/or research clusters of the supervising HEI(s), and demonstrate the ‘added value’ for the student of being hosted by the HEI/co-supervised between HEIs.

### **Additional information**

Please include information here on any ethical issues attached to the project and how these will be approached.

## Institutional Statement of Support Form 2017

The Institutional Statement of Support is designed to allow institutions to make the case for the student they nominate. It is intended to enable institutions to present their assessment of:

- the quality of the student and their proposal;
- the student's preparedness to undertake and complete this specific doctoral study proposal;
- the relevance and fit of the proposal with the proposed supervisory team;
- the nature and level of support to be provided to the student by the supervising institution(s).

Please check the guidance carefully before completing the form. In particular, reviewers have asked us to request that you note and comply with the word limits.

**CHANGE FOR 2017: this year the sections on supervisory fit and experience have been rolled into one 400 word section.**

The Institutional Statement of Support should be copied and pasted onto the nominating institution's headed paper and forwarded **as a PDF document** to the nominated student, who will then upload it with their application. A word version of the ISS is available to download from the SGSAH website.

**Name of Applicant:**

**Title of research proposal:**

**Name of Nominating Member of Staff:**

**Institution:**

**Email Address:**

*(this must be an ".ac.uk" email address. Nominators will receive an automatic email reply confirming the application has been submitted by the student.)*

**Confirmation of interdisciplinarity**

*Please state 'Yes' or 'No' in this box to confirm whether a proposal is interdisciplinary – i.e. the supervisory team cover more than one Panel – and should therefore be reviewed by more than one Panel.*

**Confirmation of supervisory requirements**

*Please state 'Yes' or 'No' in this box to confirm that at least one member of the proposed supervisory team has previously supervised at least one doctoral candidate to successful completion.*

**Preparedness for doctoral research (400 words maximum)**

**Quality of the applicant's research proposal (500 words maximum)**

**Research support/fit and supervisory expertise** (400 words maximum)

**Supervisor 1 Name:**

Institution:

Position:

Number of students supervising currently (as FTE):

**Supervisor 2 Name:**

Institution:

Position:

Number of students supervising currently (as FTE):

**Supervisor 3 Name:**

Institution:

Position:

Number of students supervising currently (as FTE):

**Additional Information:**

*Please identify any ethical issues attached to the research project and how these will be addressed.*

**Signed:**

**Date:**

## Marking criteria for 2017

SGSAH is concerned to fund the very best students. We have developed a set of criteria to help us to make difficult decisions in a transparent way.

In essence, the questions we ask are:

- Why this student?
- Why this research project?
- Why this consortium?
- Why this host HEI and supervisory team?

### Qualifications/Relevant Professional Experience

The Relevant Professional Experience section is intended to provide a level playing field for applicants with relevant professional experience that would be considered **equivalent** to a Masters degree. Therefore the **only** candidates who should complete the Relevant Professional Experience section are those:

- whose academic qualifications are not in a relevant subject, or
- who do not have and are not working towards a Masters qualification, or
- who are currently undertaking a Masters after a considerable break from study (i.e. more than 5 years) and who have significant professional experience that is relevant to their research proposal.

### Qualifications OR Relevant Professional Experience

Mark	Qualifications description	Relevant Professional Experience description
5	<p>A first class degree with evidence of exit velocity as demonstrated by maintained high/increasing marks in undergraduate transcripts</p> <p><b>OR</b> a Masters level distinction with a dissertation mark of 70% first class/A grade or equivalent</p> <p><b>OR</b> clear evidence in the nominating statement of excellence in the dissertation/independent research element of a postgraduate research degree (e.g. MPhil), e.g. comment from external examiner or dissertation of publishable quality</p>	<p>A compelling case that relevant professional experience is <b>at least equal to</b> the completion of a Masters degree, including strong evidence of independent research thinking and excellent quality output</p>

4	<p>A first class degree</p> <p><b>OR</b> a Masters level distinction with dissertation mark less than 70% first class/A grade or equivalent</p> <p><b>OR</b> clear evidence in the nominating statement of a high standard of achievement in the dissertation/independent research element of a postgraduate research degree (e.g. MPhil), e.g. dissertation of near-publishable quality</p>	<p>A good case is made including evidence of independent research thinking and high quality output</p>
3	<p>Masters with merit (overall mark 60 - 69%, or equivalent) with a dissertation mark over 70% or equivalent</p>	<p>A case is made that relevant professional experience is <b>at least equal to</b> the completion of a Masters degree, but is not compelling. For instance: evidence is available of research thinking but the level of independence is unclear; evidence is available for output but the quality is not excellent.</p>
2	<p>Masters with merit (overall mark 60 - 69%, or equivalent) with a dissertation mark up to 69% or equivalent</p>	<p>A case is made that relevant professional experience is <b>at least equal to</b> the completion of a Masters degree, but is not strong. This might include a lack of evidence of independent research thinking and poor quality output, for example.</p>
1	<p>Masters at pass (overall mark 50-59% or equivalent) Or Undergraduate degree at 2:1</p>	<p>Little effort is made to provide evidence that the experience described is equivalent to the completion of a Masters degree.</p>
0	<p>Threshold not met</p>	<p>Threshold not met</p>

## Preparedness for research

Mark	Description
5	<p><b>Excellent evidence</b> that the applicant is well-prepared for <b>their proposed research</b> in <b>at least two</b> of the following areas:</p> <p>A - Previous related study (e.g.: the relevance of an undergraduate or Masters' dissertation topic; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of academic esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>B - Relevant professional experience (e.g. employment in a relevant field with equivalence to Masters' study; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of peer esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>C - Professional development (e.g. informal/unpaid research/academic roles or training e.g. editing a peer-reviewed journal, publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals, substantial and/or regular non-academic publications, related to the proposed subject area of the PhD)</p>
4	<p><b>Excellent evidence</b> that the applicant is well-prepared for their proposed research in <b>one</b> of the following areas:</p> <p>A – Previous related study (e.g.: the relevance of an undergraduate or Masters' dissertation topic; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of academic esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>B - Relevant professional experience (e.g.: employment in a relevant field with equivalence to Masters' study; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of peer esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>C - Professional Development (e.g. informal/unpaid research/academic roles or training e.g. editing a peer-reviewed journal, publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals, substantial and/or regular non-academic publications, related to the proposed subject area of the PhD)</p>

3	<p><b>Good evidence</b> that the applicant is well-prepared for their proposed research in <b>at least two</b> of the following areas:</p> <p>A - Previous study (e.g.: the relevance of an undergraduate or Masters dissertation topic; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of academic esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>B - Relevant professional experience (e.g.: employment in a relevant field with equivalence to Masters study; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of peer esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>C - Professional development (e.g. informal/unpaid research/academic roles or training e.g. editing a peer-reviewed journal, publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals, substantial and/or regular non-academic publications, related to the proposed subject area of the PhD)</p>
2	<p><b>Good evidence</b> that the applicant is well-prepared for their proposed research in <b>at least one</b> of the following areas:</p> <p>A - Previous study (e.g.: the relevance of an undergraduate or Masters dissertation topic; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of academic esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>B - Relevant professional experience (e.g.: employment in a relevant field with equivalence to Masters study; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of peer esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>C - Professional development (e.g. informal/unpaid research/academic roles or training e.g. editing a peer-reviewed journal, publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals, substantial and/or regular non-academic publications, related to the proposed subject area of the PhD)</p>

0	<p><b>Limited evidence</b> in all of the following areas that the applicant is well-prepared for their proposed research:</p> <p>A - Previous study (e.g.: the relevance of an undergraduate or Masters dissertation topic; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of academic esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>B - Relevant professional experience (e.g.: employment in a relevant field with equivalence to Masters study; specific methodological training and/or experience; employment as a Research Assistant; prizes or other indicators of peer esteem, the importance of which are clearly established in monetary and/or reputational terms)</p> <p>C - Professional development (e.g. informal/unpaid research/academic roles or training e.g. editing a peer-reviewed journal, publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals, substantial and/or regular non-academic publications, related to the proposed subject area of the PhD)</p>
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## Quality of Research Proposal

Mark	Description
10	An exceptional proposal in all of its components – questions, context, methods and sources will be well thought out and clearly expressed, demonstrating excellent knowledge of the field and preparedness to undertake the proposed research project. The proposal will be original and innovative – substantively and/or methodologically e.g. engaging in challenging interdisciplinary research. A clear gap in existing knowledge will be identified and the writing and presentation will be excellent in all parts of the proposal.
9	Whilst not exceptional in its entirety, the proposal is original, innovative, cogent and coherent.
8	A well-defined proposal with researchable questions, appropriately identified sources and an appropriate methodology.
7	A good proposal with researchable questions, appropriately identified sources, an appropriate methodology.
6	A good proposal, but with minor weaknesses. The research question will be clear, the methodology appropriate and clearly presented, and most of the appropriate literature or other research sources identified.
5	A promising proposal that suffers from several weaknesses. For instance, the methodology may be appropriate but is ill-expressed; the proposal is only weakly grounded in relevant literature; the fit between the applicant and the project is not entirely persuasive; ethical issues attached to the project are not identified and/or not addressed.
0-4	A proposal with one serious weakness or several minor ones, which suggests gaps in knowledge and a weak grasp of the proposed methodology and its suitability. The proposal is poorly expressed in places and difficult to comprehend. May be scored 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4.

## Knowledge Exchange, Public Engagement & Impact

Mark	Description
5	The potential for knowledge exchange, public engagement and/or impact will be explicit, with realistic and appropriate plans for delivery – for example, with a sense of possible or confirmed partnerships with non-HEIs.
4	The proposal will demonstrate a clear sense of potential knowledge exchange, public engagement and/or impact activities together with a plan to deliver these.
3	There will be indications of awareness of the potential for knowledge exchange, public engagement and/or impact activities but the proposal will lack realistic plans for implementation.
2	There will be some limited indications of awareness of the potential for knowledge exchange, public engagement and/or impact activities but the proposal will lack detail and a sense of how this might be exploited.
0-1	The proposal will indicate little (1 mark) or no (0 marks) sense of potential for knowledge exchange, public engagement or impact from the research proposed.

## Supervisory fit and nature and level of supervisory support

Mark	Description
10	<p>Supervision arrangements represent a perfect fit with the proposed research. The supervisory team, in its totality, provides the student with the best possible support available – that is, world-leading. This might include formal co-supervisory arrangements with an HEI from within the consortium. This does not imply that all members of the supervisory team have significant experience of supervision; at least one member of the team must have supervised a doctoral student to successful completion but the SGSAH is committed to increasing supervisory capacity and will look at the fit between the proposal and the supervisory team and resources first and foremost.</p> <p>Resources required for the research – e.g. specialist libraries, collections or equipment – are available and have guaranteed accessibility either with the supervising HEI(s) or with other HEIs or partner organisations.</p> <p>The research fits well with the expertise and/or priorities and/or research clusters of the supervising HEI(s).</p> <p>There is demonstrable ‘added value’ for the student being hosted by the HEI or by being co-supervised between HEIs.</p>
9	<p>Supervision arrangements represent a near-perfect fit with the proposed research. There is an excellent research environment, with the supervisory team able to offer excellent support, and the environment providing excellent access to necessary research resources. There is evidence of existing or emerging capacity in the proposed research area and this might be supported by a co-supervisory arrangement with another HEI within the consortium.</p>
8	<p>Supervision arrangements represent a very close fit with the proposed research. There is a strong research environment, with the supervisory team able to offer very good support, with the HEI able to ensure access to necessary research resources. There is evidence of emerging capacity in the proposed research area.</p>
7	<p>Supervision arrangements represent a very close fit with the proposed research. There is a strong research environment, with the HEI able to ensure access to necessary research resources.</p>
6	<p>Supervision arrangements are appropriate with at least one supervisor having excellent experience in the precise area of the proposed research. There is a strong research environment with resources adequate for the needs of the project.</p>
5	<p>Supervision arrangements are adequate, though supervisors might not have</p>

	experience in the precise area of the proposed research. There is a strong research environment with resources adequate for the needs of the project.
<b>4-0</b>	Supervision arrangements are adequate, with supervisors having some experience in the subject area but questions exist about the fit between the supervisory team and proposed research. There is no sense of a fit between the resource needs of the project and the research environment. May be scored 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4.

## Personal Statement

<b>2</b>	<p>The statement provides clear evidence of: the applicants' commitment to becoming a member of the AHRC DTP Scotland and the SGSAH; awareness of the specificity of what the AHRC DTP Scotland and the SGSAH offers and how this will benefit them specifically; and consideration of what they themselves might seek to contribute to the development of a cohort.</p> <p>This might include realistic plans to: organise student-led academic events or training using Cohort Development Funding; undertake an internship or specific additional training using Student Development Funding (SDF); apply for SDF funding to realise the impact of research or carry out public engagement; apply for a SGSAH Visiting Doctoral Researcher award. Previous examples of innovation and initiative will be in evidence.</p>
<b>1</b>	The proposal provides some evidence of the awareness of the AHRC DTP/SGSAH offer and consideration of what they might contribute. Some elements of the proposals are unrealistic or the application contains perfunctory statements of the value of the Scottish DTP and SGSAH without conviction.
<b>0</b>	Little or no effort is made to convince the reviewer that SGSAH is the DTP of choice for the applicant; there will be a strong sense that the applicant's chosen place of study is elsewhere. This might manifest through statements which could apply equally to all DTPs.