

Guidance notes for Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP applicants – October 2017 Entry

The deadline for applications is Tuesday 24th January 2017 (23:59 GMT)

It is important that you allow yourself sufficient time to read these Guidance Notes before you complete your application form.

Before you make your ESRC DTP studentship application you need to decide which of the available [training pathways](#) is most suitable for you, and at which University you would like to study. You must have applied for a PhD place to study at that University before making your studentship application.

Student Application Form

Do not attempt to complete the application form until you have read the guidance notes as outlined below.

Please be aware that while you may have already submitted some of this information as part of your course application to your chosen University, we will require you to repeat it for the purposes of this form. Reviewers of the applications will only have access to the information included in this Studentship Application Form. It is therefore important that you include all relevant information in this form.

Think about how to make the best case possible. Make sure that you proof read your application before submitting it. Try to avoid careless spelling or grammatical errors.

Work with your prospective supervisors to complete your application

This will help you to identify the academics whose published work and research expertise are closest to your interests, and to find the team that will best facilitate your studies. Please remember that you will not be working with a single supervisor but with a team of at least two supervisors in the doctoral element of your award. Start the search process early by sending an outline of your PhD topic to the supervisors with whom you might like to work as a postgraduate researcher. It may take a number of iterations to refine your funding proposal and your potential supervisors will be the best people to help with this process.

In identifying your potential supervisors, use a number of key search terms to bring up different combinations of academics and expertise. Have the academics already published books and articles in the area of your proposed research or in an area that is related to some of your key ideas? Are they researching and presenting papers in your research area? Are they using a methodology that could underpin your project?

You will need to have applied for a place to study at your chosen University. It is not necessary for you to have received written confirmation that you have been offered a place at your selected university in order to *apply* for funding, but your application to study must be in process and in due course you will need to hold an offer from your chosen university in order for your application to be considered for ESRC funding.

Question 1. Applicant Details

Please ensure that you include the student ID/ application ID number of the application you have made for a place to study. Please ensure that these questions are answered fully. We need your date of birth for identification purposes, i.e. to ensure that you are not confused with another applicant with a similar name.

Question 2. The University, School/Department in which you intend to study and your intended programme of research

Question guidance on which scheme you are applying for:

1+3 +3 +3.5 +4

The ESRC expects all DTP researchers to be trained in the following areas:

- **Philosophy of Social Science Research**
- **Research Design, Practice and Ethics**
- **Quantitative Research Methods**
- **Qualitative Research Methods**

If you have (or will have completed) a Masters course by the time you begin your PhD and you have undertaken modules which cover **all** these research skill areas you should apply for a **+3 award**. In question 5 you will be asked for details of modules undertaken during your Masters course in order for the DTP to determine whether your prior research methods training and core discipline skills match those required by the ESRC.

If you have (or will have completed) a Masters course by the time you begin your PhD and you have undertaken modules which cover **2** of these research skill areas you should apply for a **+3.5 award**. In question 5 you will be asked for details of modules undertaken during your Masters course in order for the DTP to determine whether your prior research methods training and core discipline skills match those required by the ESRC. If you are awarded a +3.5 you will be expected to undertake 2 ESRC DTP core training modules during your first year of PhD study to cover the training areas which you have not previously undertaken.

If you have not undertaken a Masters course or you have completed a Masters course that did not cover the ESRC's core research skill areas then you should apply for a **1+3 award**. If you are awarded a 1+3 you will be expected to complete the DTP Masters in Social Science Research at your chosen institution before proceeding to PhD study.

+4 programmes are offered only on specific interdisciplinary pathways (Digital Society and Mental Health and Wellbeing at the University of Nottingham), where the subject specific training that is drawn on will not be limited to one specific subject. +4 candidates are not expected to have previously covered the core training requirements at point of application, and are not expected to have a fully developed research proposal at this stage.

Please give the name of the University, the School/Department training pathway in which you intend to study and the names of your proposed supervisors. (Please note that not all training pathways are available in all DTP institutions – please [see here](#) for which pathways are available in each institution).

Please indicate whether you intend to study full-time or part-time by ticking one of the boxes.

Question 3: Residency

This section must be completed fully because it will be used to confirm your residency eligibility for ESRC Funding, which is limited to UK and EU Citizens only. EU applicants will normally receive a 'Fees Only' award. If it can be confirmed that as an EU applicant you have been resident in the UK for a minimum of 3 years prior to applying for funding, you may be eligible for a full award.

Please refer to [Eligibility Requirements](#) for further information and full details regarding residential eligibility requirements.

Question 4: Qualifications

Please provide details of the institutions you have attended (or are attending), and the courses you have taken at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. You should enter **one** undergraduate and **one** Masters level degree, but there is also space on the form to add other qualifications at the same level or other relevant qualifications. If you have already started your PhD, please include the date on which your studies commenced and whether you have been studying part-time or full-time.

If your qualification was completed outside the UK, please tell us the name of your qualification in the **original language** (e.g. Maîtrise, and **not the English equivalent**).

Question 5: Previous Research Methods and Core Skills Training

If you are applying for a +3 or +3.5 programme you must hold, or have completed by the time you begin the programme, a Masters qualification with a high grade.

Please give details of the composition of your Masters course by listing modules you have (or will have) undertaken. You must provide sufficient information for us to assess whether the Masters course contained the requisite training in research methods and core discipline skills to prepare you for a research degree.

If you are applying for a 1+3 award but have previously completed a Masters course, please also outline the content of your Masters modules here.

If you are unsure as to which award length you should be applying for please see the guidance notes above for Question 2.

Question 6: Professional Experience that is relevant to this application

Please provide information about any employment, work or professional experience that is relevant to your proposed programme of study. This is of particular importance if your programme is practice-based, or if you have had no Masters level training but substantial professional experience relevant to the subject of your proposed research. You should use this space to give details of any professional experience that you wish the assessors to take into account.

Question 7: Other Experience and/or Awards

Please provide details of any other achievements or experience that are relevant to your application, including details of any academic prizes awarded; publications; and relevant voluntary or extracurricular activities.

Question 8: Project Details

This section plays a key part in the assessment of your application. That is why we recommend that you discuss the content of this section with your proposed supervisors. The assessors are looking for evidence of high quality research and strong potential for postgraduate study. Enthusiasm and interest are important but assessors seek evidence of:

- intellectual purpose and originality. What are your key research questions? How will your research project intervene in your chosen field?
- your reasons for undertaking this specific project, your approach and methodology
- a keen awareness of the research context (i.e. what debates or secondary literature does your project engage with?)

You need to present your case clearly and concisely.

The case for support should include:

- **An outline of your research project and its theoretical background**
- **How your project relates to previous and current research in the field**
- **The significance of the proposed research (intellectual, practical, etc.)**
- **The methodology and why it is a good fit for your project**
- **How your project relates to your previous research and experience**

1+3 programme applicants need to give an indicative answer as your research interests will develop further during the year of your Masters training. We are not looking for a refined research proposal with full methodological detail at this stage, but an indication of your probable research area, an indicative topic and a case for why this is important. You should show how this will build towards a PhD.

If you have already begun your doctoral study, please remember to refer to the research you have undertaken to date.

You may include an additional 1 side of A4 for references and figures (this will not be included in the 1,000 word count of this section).

Question 9: Personal Statement

In this section provide a personal statement that outlines your motivation for PhD research and also provide a rationale for your choice of University.

Question 10: Details of Project Partners and Collaborators

Some PhD research involves collaboration with external partners. If this is the case for your research and your project is likely to involve collaboration with an external partner please provide details of the following:

- **Name of the organisation**
- **Name and details of contact at the organisation**
- **Sector of organisation (public, private, voluntary/charitable)**
- **Nature of collaboration (e.g. internship, placement, allocated workspace)**

Question 11: Overseas Fieldwork

If you need to carry out a study or archive visit or a fieldwork trip overseas during the period of your award, state your planned destinations, the expected duration and purpose of your visit(s), and indicate how they are integral to your research. Please also provide an approximate cost for fieldwork. **If you do not mention an essential visit at this stage or fail to estimate the duration of your visit(s), funding to support this activity may not be available to you.**

Question 12: Ethical and Intellectual Property Issues

You should identify and address any ethical issues relating to your research project as far as you can. Your potential supervisors will help with this. If the project will be undertaken with an external organisation, please explain the arrangements regarding disclosure of results. Will there be any restrictions on making the results public? Contractual arrangements with external organisations must be in place before the PhD

research programme commences, covering financial, intellectual property and confidentiality arrangements.

If there are no ethical or intellectual property issues related to your proposed research, then make that statement here.

Question 13: Have you applied for an ESRC award at any other DTP for a 2017 start

Please give details here of any other applications you have made for DTP funding.

Question 14: Uploading Supervisor Supporting Statement, References and other Documentation

Supporting Statement from Prospective Lead Supervisor

Please ask your prospective lead supervisor to complete this form as part of your studentship application. The form is available [from here as a PDF](#) or [from here as a Word Document](#).

This supporting statement forms an important part of the application and this will need **to be directly uploaded by the applicant** as part of the online funding application process. It is your responsibility to ensure that your lead supervisor completes this form. Make sure they are aware of the funding application deadline that you need to meet.

References and Referees

You will need to provide two references in support of your ESRC DTP funding application and these will need to be directly uploaded by the applicant as part of the online funding application process. You should select referees who have the detailed knowledge required to appraise your recent intellectual development and preparedness for the programme of study you will be undertaking.

To ensure that your references are satisfactory, please make sure you contact your referees and ensure that they have all the information they require e.g. your marks from Undergraduate and Masters level study if you have them. Your referees will be expected to provide evidence of your previous high performance. Make sure they are aware of the funding application deadline that you need to meet.

When selecting your referees, you **should not usually ask a potential supervisor** to act as a reference as they will be completing the 'Supporting Statement from Prospective Lead Supervisor' form as part of your studentship application (see above).

You should ask your referees to send their signed references on letter-headed paper directly to you for this funding application. It is your responsibility to upload these references as part of the online DTP funding application. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

If you are currently a first year PhD student (whether full-time or part-time) and are applying for funding for the remaining years (up to 2 years of full-time funding or the part-time equivalent), it is advisable that one of your referees is a current supervisor of your PhD and can therefore comment in detail on the quality and the quantity of the work you have completed to date.

Applicants who have not been in education for a period of time may choose to select a referee who is, for example, an employer. In this case, you should ensure that referees are aware that they will need to comment in detail on the research proposal as well as you as a person.

Transcripts

Please ensure you also upload copies of the transcripts of your previous qualifications.

Assessment Criteria

Your application will be assessed on the following 3 criteria:

Criteria	Source of evidence	Weighting
Person and Preparedness	Qualifications Experience References	40%
Project	Originality and Significance of Research Project Clearly Defined Research Questions Engagement with Relevant Literature Research Design and Methodology	40%
Place	Fit between the project and the expertise of the proposed supervisors Fit between the project and the chosen pathway and department	20%

Application Submission

Applications need to be submitted online by **Tuesday 24th January 2017 (23:59 GMT)**.

Please be aware, you will only be able to submit **one funding application** to the MGS DTP for entry in 2017 and you **cannot apply for pathway funding at multiple MGS DTP institutions**.

You must make sure that you have completed all relevant sections of the application form and uploaded all relevant documentation by the deadline. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

We expect to notify successful applicants of the outcome by late March/early April 2017.

CHECKLIST

Please ensure that you have:

Applied for a place to study at your chosen University	
Completed all the sections of the 'Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP Studentship Application' form as fully as possible	
Uploaded your 'Project Details' (Question 8)	
Uploaded the completed 'Supporting Statement from Prospective Lead Supervisor' (Question 14)	
Uploaded 2 signed references on letter-headed paper in support of your studentship application (Question 14)	
Uploaded transcripts of your previous qualifications (Question 14)	

Any additional information submitted with the application (for example a covering letter) will be removed prior to assessment.