Student-Led Training Fund (SLTF)
2023 (for events taking place in 2023/24)

Guidance

1. Introduction

The Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS) is committed to providing high quality training in research methods, graduate attributes and transferable skills to our postgraduate students. We do this in the following ways:

Stream	Training Element
Advanced Methods	Advanced Training: Sessions held across the year informed by TNA results
	Summer School: 4 days of advanced training with multiple sessions for students to choose from
	Spring into Methods: Interdisciplinary workshops run in partnership with SGSAH
Disciplinary Training	Disciplinary Training Event Fund (DTEF): Funding provided for training gaps identified by pathways/subject areas
	Hub Festival: 2 day event that brings 'Hubs' of pathways and subject areas together to consider the role of social sciences

The **Student-led Training Fund (SLTF)** is an initiative that supports the delivery of advanced and specialist training events (in addition to the above), where students can make an argument that their event offers something new and useful. Since 2022, we have been able to open this opportunity up to Early Career Researchers (ECRs).

The definition of ECR is as follows: a university employed researcher, usually with a PhD, on a fixed-term research contract. An ECR is usually considered to be within seven years of completing their doctorate, although exceptions can be made for career interruptions.

The SLTF aims to deliver the highest quality advanced training to postgraduate students in Scotland through producing a year-round calendar of events. In 2023, some training opportunities will also be offered to collaborative partners (see the section on Training With Collaborative Partners for more information). The fund is not to be used for core training delivered through Masters level modules, or to provide standard training that Higher Education Institutions deliver to PhD students.

Access and Inclusion in Learning

In order to ensure this part of our training is inclusive, for the next SLTF round, we are seeking training that is delivered online. Rather than providing funding to cover catering, travel etc., we will look to pay for costs associated with online events, e.g. the digitisation of training materials or the fee for PhD students to deliver an online session (preferably recorded).

The application process for SLTF is open to all social science PhD students studying in Scotland (as well as ESRC-funded students currently in their master's year of a 1+3 award) **who have the right to work during their studies, as well as ECR as defined above.**

2. Types of Training

New training

We warmly welcome proposals for training. We welcome innovative/cutting edge ideas around current gaps in provision.

Cross-institution/subject proposals

We especially encourage students to put forward cross-institution or subject event proposals, jointly conceived events that will meet the needs of students across a number of SGSSS subjects or institutions. This enables the cohort-building effect that students often value beyond their own university and discipline.

Online learning (see "Access and Inclusion in Learning" above)

We anticipate that the training will be delivered online, usually in a synchronous/live event. We are committed to developing online learning resources for all our students and invite event proposers to consider how their event might be suitable as a contribution to this (that is, share materials in our online repository for any student to access post-event). In some instances, it might be possible to film or record presentations on the day of the event. Alternatively, it might be possible for the event speaker to create a short podcast of particular aspects of the training for us to make more widely available, alongside associated learning materials. We realise that it will not always be possible to incorporate an asynchronous learning dimension to the event, however we strongly support attempts to do this as part of our commitment to provide training opportunities and resources accessible to all Social Science PhD students in Scotland.

Training with Collaborative Partners

Running as a pilot initiative in 2023, we will have a strand of SLTF that is designed with and for collaborative partners. SGSSS will ask collaborative partners to submit examples of training gaps that they feel could be supported by current research / research methods. SGSSS will then advertise these topics as part of the SLTF. Students and ECRs will be able to submit proposals to meet that training need, and collaborative partners will be invited to join the session along with current students (unless facilitators have a clear rationale for keeping their event for collaborative partners only).

This new strand will be a fantastic opportunity for applicants to deliver public-facing research training, and further the impact of their own research, knowledge and skills. SGSSS' collaborative partners include representatives of the public, private and third sectors.

Please see [Social](#) for a current list of collaborative partner training requests.

3. Eligibility

The application process for SLTF is open to all social science PhD students studying in Scotland (as well as ESRC-funded students currently in their master's year of a 1+3 award) and ECRs who have the right to work during their studies. We welcome SLTF proposals from all 16 partner HEIs: Aberdeen; Abertay; Dundee; Edinburgh; Glasgow; Glasgow Caledonian; Heriot-Watt; Highlands & Islands; Napier; Queen Margaret; Robert Gordons; SRUC; St Andrews; Stirling; Strathclyde; West of Scotland.

All training events should be available to 1+3 and + 3 students or equivalent, regardless of funding status.

4. The Purpose of the Fund

The overall fund is £5,000 per year. Each person preparing and delivering the learning materials for an event will be paid £250 for their overall contribution to a half day event and £500 for a full day event. No more than two students, or two ECRs can contribute to a single event, therefore events should cost between £250 and £1,000. Where two students or ECRs are involved, or the event is a full day, we encourage providing information about how this will be worth a higher investment (such as numbers of students that can be involved; commitment to synchronous delivery plus asynchronous materials; style of workshop etc.).

There is no cap on the number of applications that can be submitted by an individual or institution, as funds will be allocated to quality SLTF proposals that meet the terms of funding and eligibility described in this guidance.

What activity will be supported?

The SLTF will support training that benefits the wider student body or collaborative partners. SLTF training has traditionally focused on Advanced Methods and has also featured Well-Being, including resilience and adjusting research plans, and Employability.

5. How will the process be managed?

The deadline to apply for events that will take place between 01 October 2023 to 01 March 2024 is 4pm on **Friday 28 July 2023**. The deadline to apply for events that will take place between 02 May 2024 to 30 August 2024 is 4pm on **Wednesday 28 February 2024**. Applicants must submit their application via [SGSSS SOCIAL](#). Applications will then be reviewed by the SGSSS Directorate.

We will only accept SLTF applications where the event is due to run more **than 6 weeks** after the deadline date. This is to allow time to review proposals, get booking information online and give students time to plan for their training needs in advance. The SGSSS online platform Social will be kept up to date with all our training events. The training must be delivered in full before **30 August 2024**.

Please use the notes below to help guide you through the SLTF process:

First Call Timeline	13 June 2023
	First call launched including list of training gaps idientified by collaborative partners
	28 July 2023
	Deadline for applications
	Mid-August 2023
	Decisions made and communicated to applicants
	01 October 2023 - 01 March 2024
	SLTF events to take place

Second Call Timeline	16 January 2024
	Second call launched including list of training gaps idientified by collaborative partners
	28 February 2024
	Deadline for applications
	Mid-March 2024
	Decisions made and communicated to applicants
	02 May to 30 August 2024
	SLTF events to take place

1. SLTF application forms must be submitted via Social by 4pm on the relevant deadline date.

2. Applications are reviewed by the Deputy Director (Training) a Student Representative (Hubs and Training) and the Knowledge Exchange Manager or alternate for SGSSS. As part of the process, we may request a call (via online platform or telephone) to find out more details and to help us finalise our decision. Our decision is then submitted to the SGSSS Directorate for final approval. This process is typically completed within 3 weeks of the application deadline.

3. Successful applicants are then issued an award letter and asked to submit a description of the event, if possible including the preliminary programme which can be advertised to students. They will also be asked for proof of their right to work (RTW) and set up on the University of Edinburgh system in order to receive payment (although RTW will be established prior to the event, payment will be made after the event has run).

4. SGSSS will set up a registration system for each approved event to allow for attendance booking, monitoring and data collection. We will also publicise the event through our website, social media, Social mailing lists and other external channels, as appropriate to the event and in collaboration with the event organiser, who is also expected to undertake active dissemination of their event through their networks.

5. Regarding payment for event delivery, SGSSS will pay the individual(s). **Please note, we will only pay for event delivery; we do not expect any additional associated costs.**

6. Before payment can be made, a list of attendees must be submitted within two weeks of the event along with a post-event evaluation.

5. Examples of events suitable for SLTF

The SLTF is available to offer advanced training that speaks directly to the needs of students. This may include advanced methods, however these funds should not cover anything that would feature at Core Training; either in terms of methods or in terms of disciplinary or substantive content.

There have been three broad types of training event that have been successful; these are described below to help deliver clarity on what makes a suitable SLTF event.

Event 1
Educational Reform in Scotland. An event hosted by one student in their writing-up year, who has completed relevant data analysis and can give oversight of contemporary policy structures in Education. In addition to a background synthesis of this new data with relevant literature, the event includes a pre-recorded interview with a senior Scottish Government official who works closely with the Scottish Minister for Education. This interview will focus on substantive changes to the policy field in the last two years and considers the grand challenges facing Scottish Education over the next period.

£250 is paid to the student to deliver this session which will last approx. 2.5 hours; there is no cap on student numbers; there is also a limited time available for a Q&A.

Event 2
A student who uses zine-making as a method delivers training on this approach with their supervisor. The method is used specifically to examine how to engage children as participants, but the training makes some general points applicable to other groups of people.

£500 fees paid to the student as the event runs over one full day. The event will be capped at 30 students, will last for 6 hours and use Collaborate. The supervisor and student alternate to provide guidance and instruction, as well as technical support using the Collaborate chat function.

Event 3
Emerging from the Field: This training is focused on several aspects of returning from intensive or overseas field work. It is ideal for students who have researched in overseas locations where they used a language other than English, where they have spent more than three months 'away' and particularly where research has taken place in a conflict zone. The training is delivered by two students who provide the training together, including interactive sessions involving online 'breakout rooms' where each student works directly with a smaller group. The training is captured via Zoom and some written accounts of their experiences are available as legacy materials. The breakout sessions are not recorded, they are only available as a one-off live event.

This event will last 3 hours therefore each student is paid £250 with a total cost of £500. The breakout rooms will accommodate up to 30 students, 15 in each room. There is no cap on the number of students who engage with the initial training section.

6. Feedback from Previous Award Holders

The following are reflective comments from award holders who hosted events between July – October 2020.
- *In future workshops, I would plan more time for collaborative discussions and more detailed discussions of practical examples. I would also strongly encourage attendees to engage in Social and introduce their areas of research and post questions to the presenter in advance of the workshop.*

- *Lessons learnt: taking space to rethink is vital, people appreciated having a creative co-learning space to think about their respective institutions and how education could be conceptualised and delivered in alternative ways.*
- *Students requested we both run more sessions of similar training (Exploring Reflexive Writing as a Quantitative or Mixed Researcher).*
- *I observed that a one-day workshop (8 hours) can be exhausting for participants as understanding IE requires some background reading. It would have been a better idea to organise the workshop in two days (4 hours each day). I realised that some topic/concepts could have discussed in detail with sufficient example and exercises. More time for discussion will allow participants to grasp information easily. Also, developing some introductory video and sharing with participants prior to the workshop could be useful so that the student can have a basic understanding about IE and its related concept.*