Please note, there are two primary deadlines that applicants need to be aware of:

- **Thursday, 8 December 2022 at 5pm**: this is the deadline for Stage 1 Applications.
- **Thursday, 9 February 2023 at 5pm**: this is the deadline for Stage 2 Applications (shortlisted candidates only).

All applications must be submitted via the SGSSS online application platform, **SGSSS Apply**.

For the full Student-led Open Competition timeline, please click [here](#).
1. Overview

The guidance detailed within this document is for supervisors of potential students applying to the SGSSS Student-led Open Competition 2022/23.

Please note the process detailed below is entirely separate from the admissions process at your institution. The SGSSS-DTP plays no role in the institutional admissions process. Although applicants do not need to have been formally admitted in order to be considered for an ESRC studentship, some institutions require that this admissions process is complete prior to submitting an application for funding – you and the relevant Pathway Rep (within your discipline and at your institution) should advise your student as appropriate.

Should an applicant be successful in securing an ESRC studentship, the funding is conditional on the applicant obtaining an unconditional offer for entry to the institution to which they applied by the start date of the studentship funding (1 October 2022).

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the SGSSS Open Competition Guidance for Students.

1.1 Before a Student Applies

Applicants are not permitted to submit an application unless they have secured a first supervisor or supervisory team. As such, we expect supervisors to be fully aware of the projects being proposed. Student proposals typically benefit from supervisory input; however, the proposal must originate from the student and not the supervisor. Please note, an application that has previously been submitted to a SGSSS supervisor-led competition cannot be repurposed as a student-led application.

The Supervisor Statement of Support (see section 4) is worth 5 points out of a possible maximum of 25 (see section 3 for the Marking Framework). Please ensure that you address the content requirements to ensure your student has the best chance of success. The Supervisor Statement of Support is not a reference but rather an opportunity to provide details of proposed supervision arrangements as well as broader support and training opportunities to meet the needs of the student and the proposed project.

1.2 Eligibility

As per guidance published by UKRI in 2020, a minimum of 70% of all studentships awarded by SGSSS will be made to home students, while a maximum of 30% of all studentships awarded can be made to international students (as of 2021, a higher international cap of 50% can be applied to the economics pathway). Please note, it is not a requirement for 30% of studentships to be awarded to international students, as the quality of applications will always remain the primary assessment criterion during the Competition. In addition, some highly ranked international students may not be able to receive an award due to the 30% cap.

Residential Criteria

To be classed as a home student, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK national (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have settled status, or
- Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have indefinite leave to remain or enter.

If a student does not meet the criteria above, they will be classed as an international student.

To establish if a student would be classed as a home student, we have asked that they refer to pages 4 and 5 of the UKRI eligibility guidance here.
1.3 Length of Award

The length of award depends on the extent to which a student meets the core methods training requirements set out by ESRC. If you are applying for a +3 studentship, they must have already met the minimum ESRC training requirements. If not, then they may choose to apply for a 1+3 award instead. Please see here for guidance in determining which is the appropriate length of award.

Please note, SGSSS will also conduct an audit of the training needs of all final applicants – this means in some circumstances we may determine a fractional award, such as a 3.251 or a 3.52, is required where we identify that a student has some, but not all, of the core methods training required by ESRC. In some rare cases we may decide an applicant who holds a Master’s degree that is too far removed from the social sciences and/or the subject area of the research proposal, is required to undertake another Master’s programme to ensure the ESRC training requirements are met (as this is a condition of funding).

If a first year student (or part-time equivalent) is self-funding their PhD, or they are in receipt of financial support not in excess of an ESRC award3, they can apply for ESRC funding. If successful, SGSSS will conduct an audit of the applicant’s training requirements to determine if the student requires 2 or 3 years of funding.

Part-time awards are permitted and the funding and award lengths are pro-rated accordingly, in accordance with the ESRC funding guidance.

1.4 Masters Programmes

Students who are required to undertake a 1+3 award where their selected institution does not offer an ESRC approved Master’s programme on the desired SGSSS pathway, are required to undertake their Master’s in another eligible institution (within the SGSSS-DTP) before transferring to their ‘home’ institution for the PhD programme. If this applies to your student, then they must upload a SGSSS Masters Arrangement Form, completed in conjunction with the relevant SGSSS Deans of Graduate Studies Network representative at the institution where the Master’s will be undertaken. Students should work with their Pathway Rep, and you as their supervisor, to facilitate the completion of the SGSSS Masters Arrangement Form.

1.5 Supervision

Applicants must have support from a first supervisor to be eligible to apply to this competition.

Students must be the lead authors of submitted proposals with guidance provided by the proposed supervisory team. Proposals should not be submitted that have been led or written by a supervisor, including an application that was previously submitted through a SGSSS supervisor-led competition.

First supervisors must be located at the institution to which the student is applying; however, a second supervisor/joint supervisor may be part of the supervisory team from any of the 16 partner institutions that form the SGSSS, either with or without pathway eligibility. If you are proposing a jointly supervised project between two institutions the rationale for such an arrangement should be clearly stated within the Supervisor Statement of Support (see section 4 for details). Where supervisors are from different institutions, the Supervisor Statement of Support must be jointly written by both supervisors and refer to the research and training environment within each institution.

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1 Three years and three months.
2 Three years and six months.
3 See page 10 and 11 of the ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide for details on financial support not in excess of an ESRC award, and/or if the applicant has undertaken one year (or less) of a PhD.
Please note, at least one supervisor on the supervisory team must have supervised a minimum of two PhD students to completion.

1.6 Interdisciplinary Proposals (optional)

The ESRC welcomes interdisciplinary studentships since many of the most pressing research challenges are interdisciplinary in nature. They are particularly interested in encouraging research that crosses over from the social sciences to other fields of science and to the arts and humanities. For that reason, we ask whether the applicant’s proposed research is deemed interdisciplinary.

To meet the criteria for this label (please see guidance here), the proposed research should include substantive interaction between disciplinary fields and incorporate training that is not constrained to one disciplinary approach, i.e., crosses the boundaries of social sciences to other sciences, arts and humanities. We have asked applicants to discuss this with their supervisor and Pathway Representative where relevant and, if appropriate, indicate within their proposals the potential applicability to be considered as interdisciplinary research. We have also asked that they specify which other research council Doctoral Training Partnership (or equivalent) their proposed work aligns with and, within which, training might be sought. You should read closely the ESRC guidance on requirements for interdisciplinary awards if your potential student wishes to badge their project as interdisciplinary, so you may guide them in their application.

1.7 Collaborative Partner Proposals (optional)

The ESRC welcomes studentships with collaborative partners. ‘Collaborative’ is defined broadly and covers studentships that are supported by private sector companies, public sector bodies or third sector organisations, i.e., non-academic partners. While many proposals feature work with non-academic partners, we are interested in if the studentship will be co-funded by said partner, i.e., they will contribute financially towards the costs of the studentship (please see the SGSSS Funding Arrangements document for details). We have asked that applicants liaise with their prospective supervisor(s) to help with discussions between them and their potential collaborative partner, if applicable.

Should a collaborative partner want to make a financial contribution towards the proposed studentship, the applicant will need to upload a Collaborative Partner Letter of Agreement as part of their online application. The Collaborative Partner Letter of Agreement should describe how the partner will support the project and should include details of the following:

- How the research project aligns to the priorities of the partner organisation and of the nature of the collaboration already underway (for example, the role of the partner in identifying the research need and in developing the application).
- How the collaborative partner will support the student’s supervision/development and their project.
- The agreed co-funding arrangement.
- Any agreed additional funding, i.e., this may include details of how the travel, subsistence and accommodation costs associated with the student’s visits to the non-academic organisation will be covered.
- Any arrangements for special materials and facilities which will be made available to the student.
- Any appropriate arrangements relating to Intellectual Property Rights.
- The details of any previous involvement in social science research by the collaborative partner. This should include any collaboration that has previously taken place, e.g., any former studentships they have co-funded.

This will act as a precursor to the SGSSS Collaborative Agreement, used primarily within our supervisor-led Open Collaborative Competition, and will be required if successful.
If you would like to discuss and/or enquire more into collaborative studentships, how this would work and/or the application requirements, please contact SGSSS at team@sgsss.ac.uk.

1.8 Funding Arrangements

As of 2019/20, SGSSS operates a funding model where all studentship awards are co-funded by the host institution, usually to the value of one-third, or more. Please see here for full guidance on the different types of SGSSS funding arrangements available for each studentship competition/studentship type.

Home Students

For home students, the SGSSS-DTP funding operates within the standard ESRC studentship package:

1. Tuition Fees;
2. Maintenance stipend;
3. Research Training Support Grant (RTSG);
4. Overseas fieldwork support (where applicable to the student’s project).

The ESRC studentship packages for years 2023/24 onwards are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Type</th>
<th>2023/24</th>
<th>2024/25</th>
<th>2025/26</th>
<th>2026/27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stipend(^5)</td>
<td>£18,180</td>
<td>£18,708</td>
<td>£19,250</td>
<td>£19,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Fees(^6)</td>
<td>£4,693</td>
<td>£4,791</td>
<td>£4,892</td>
<td>£4,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTSG</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>£750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas Fieldwork (if applicable)</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>£450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International Students

The funding arrangements for international students are the same as that of home students, i.e., they are eligible for the full ESRC studentship package and are not required to pay any additional international tuition fees (top up fees). This is because all our partner institutions have agreed to waive the difference between home and international tuition fees.

Please Note: If an applicant is applying to the University of Stirling, whilst fee waivers will be offered, this will be up to an internal institutional cap of 30%. As such, applicants will be advised to seek confirmation of the funding position from the University of Stirling directly.

Cross-Institutional Supervision

As detailed in section 1.5 above, we will continue to support cross-institutional supervision where the arrangements are in the best interest of the student. In these cases, the lead institution will be regarded as the host institution. The expectation is that the host institution will be responsible for covering the HEI contribution of studentship costs. The second institution will not be responsible for any proportion of the contribution towards studentships costs. Further, the fees due (from SGSSS) will be transferred to the host institution with no expectation of a proportion of the fees going to the second institution.

Exceptions will be made where the cross-institutional supervision partnership is with one of our four HEIs\(^7\) that currently do not hold studentships. For these studentships, 33.0% of fees income will go to the second institution.

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\(^5\) All stipend figures are approximations based on a 2.9% increase year on year using the 2022/23 stipend rate of £17,668 as the starting position.

\(^6\) All tuition fees figures are approximations based on a 2.1% increase year on year using the 2022/23 tuition fees rate of £4,596 as the starting position.

\(^7\) Abertay University, University of Highlands & Islands, Robert Gordon University, University of the West of Scotland.
institution as part of the SGSSS reconciliation process, with the remaining 67.0% going to the host institution.

1.9 Stuart Hall Foundation Fellowships (optional)

New from 2022/23, Scotland’s two national graduate schools (SGSSS and SGSAH\(^8\)) are delighted to be working with the Stuart Hall Foundation to offer up to six Stuart Hall Fellowships starting in October 2023.

Both SGSAH and SGSSS are committed to the public function of education and to addressing the barriers which exist to accessing higher education. The Fellowships, inspired by the life and work of Professor Stuart Hall and his research legacy in the areas of race, ethnicity, cultural and structural inequalities, will be used to provide opportunities for students from non-traditional and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Applications for these Fellowships are sought from UK candidates from non-traditional or disadvantaged backgrounds who are under-represented at graduate level in the Arts and Humanities and the Social Sciences in Scotland, and with a preference for those whose planned research aligns broadly with one of Stuart Hall’s many areas of interest: cultural studies, race, ethnicity and inequalities. Applicants can apply through SGSAH and SGSSS’s DTP Open Studentship Competitions, with selected successful candidates invited to apply for a Stuart Hall Foundation Fellowship. Each Graduate School will award up to three Stuart Hall Foundation Fellowships, which will be attached to funded studentships (covering fees, stipend and a research training grant). The Fellowships can be held within disciplines across the social sciences, arts and humanities at selected Scottish HEIs which form part of the relevant Graduate School.

Recipients of these Fellowships will benefit from access to the Stuart Hall Foundation Scholars and Fellows network programme, which includes regular events and opportunities to develop their career and research profile.

As per the SGSSS Open Competition Guidance for Students, should an applicant like to be considered for the above opportunity, they have been asked to indicate this within the online application form via SGSSS Apply.

\(^8\) Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities: https://www.sgsah.ac.uk/
2. Applications

2.1 Competition Stages and Timeline

There are four rigorous review stages during the Student-led Open Competition. Applicants will be updated after each relevant review stage until they are either awarded a studentship or their application is unsuccessful. For the full Student-led Open Competition timeline, please click here.

1. HEI Review Stage (3 October 2022 to 13 February 2023)
This stage is when universities shortlist Stage 1 applications, resulting in a decision about whether students are invited to submit a Stage 2 application or not. Each institution can nominate four applications per pathway for which it is eligible. Of the four applications, up to two may be international applicants.

2. Pathway Review Stage (14 February to 17 March 2023)
This stage is when pathways (made up of the relevant Pathway Reps from eligible institutions) shortlist Stage 2 applications. Each pathway can nominate six applications per eligible pathway. Of the six applications, up to two may be international applicants. Please note, the Economics pathway can nominate up to three international applicants as the ESRC are allowing a higher international allocation for this pathway, i.e., the cap is 50%, rather than 30%.

3. Hub Review Stage (20 March to 12 April 2023)
This stage is when our three Hubs⁹ (each Hub is made up of five relevant pathways) nominate 45 applications (15 per Hub) from the nominated applications at the Pathway Review Stage. Each Hub can nominate five international applicants out of their 15 nominations.

4. Global Review Stage (12 April to 12 May 2023)
This stage is when a final review panel consisting of Deans and members of the SGSSS Directorate meet to make the final award decisions. In 2022/23, approx. 30 applications, of the nominated 45 applications, will be funded. Of the 30 studentship awards, approx. 9 can be made to international applicants. On 12 May, the outcome of the competition will be announced to applicants.

Important dates to note are:

- **8 December 2022 at 5pm**
  Deadline for Stage 1 applications. Outcome of HEI Review Stage communicated on **30 January 2023**

- **9 February 2023 at 5pm**
  Deadline for Stage 2 applications. Outcome of Pathway Review Stage communicated on **17 March 2023**

- **12 April 2023**
  Outcome of Hub Review Stage communicated

- **12 May 2023**
  Outcome of Global Review Stage communicated, and awards made

⁹ See here for details of our three Hubs.
2.2 Overview of the Application Submission Process

Below is a high-level process for applicants submitting an application for the Student-led Open Competition.

Stage 1 Applications:

1. They register for SGSSS Apply as a “Prospective ESRC-Funded PhD student (SGSSS)” or “Current Non ESRC-Funded PhD Student (non SGSSS)”, depending on their individual circumstances.
2. They access the SGSSS Student-led Open Competition programme, or locate this on their Application Dashboard via SGSSS Apply.
3. Next, they complete the “Student-led Open Competition Pre-Application Questions” section. This will let them and us know if they are eligible to apply and/or if they are a home or international student (according to UKRI guidance).
4. Next, they complete the “Student-led Open Competition Institution” section. They can only apply to one institution, so when they select this, it will become locked in.
5. Next, they complete the “Student-led Open Competition References” section by inputting the contact details for two referees. SGSSS will contact their referees automatically to request that they provide a reference. It is important applicants complete this step as soon as possible to allow referees time to respond before the deadline. Please see section 3 below for full details on references, including how applicants can manage their reference requests.
6. Next, they complete the “Student-led Open Competition Application Form” section. This is where they will input the information about their research proposal, supervisory team, and the studentship award they are looking to apply for, e.g., award length and if they want to study full or part-time etc.
7. Next, they upload their transcripts (where available), as well as any confirmation of academic prizes, e.g., certificates and/or award letters, and their CV (academic where applicable) – all in pdf format. Please note, applications will be anonymised for reviewers and as such all documents they upload as part of their application MUST BE REDACTED, i.e., any documents they upload as part of their application must not contain their name and/or any identifiable information. While we ask that applicants attempt to redact documents themselves in the first instance, we have advised they can contact us if you require help with this process at least 2 weeks in advance of the application deadline, quoting their application ID.

Stage 2 Applications:

1. Once the initial HEI Review Stage is complete, applicants will be notified if they have been shortlisted or not (by 5pm on 30 January 2023).
2. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited (30 January 2023) to upload a Supervisor Statement of Support and to make any final minor amendments to their applications before the deadline of 5pm on 9 February 2023.

Please note, there are two primary deadlines that applicants need to be aware of:

- Thursday, 8 December 2022 at 5pm: this is the deadline for Stage 1 Applications
- Thursday, 9 February 2023 at 5pm: this is the deadline for Stage 2 Applications (shortlisted candidates only).

Late or incomplete applications, at both stages, will not be considered.

After the deadline of 9 February 2023, SGSSS will work to select the ideal students who have applied to study within each pathway.

10 See Appendix 1 for a full list of all questions you will be required to answer via SGSSS Apply.
11 Undergraduate transcripts and Master’s transcripts (if applicable), combined as one pdf document.
Unsuccessful candidates will be informed if they have not progressed to the next review stage of the competition at the end of the previous review stage. We expect decisions on who has been selected to receive studentships (and, if relevant, who is being held on a reserve list) to be communicated by Friday, 12 May 2023. If you have any queries regarding the above-described application process, please email team@sgss.ac.uk.
3. Studentship Marking Framework

To view the SGSSS Studentship Marking Framework, please click here. Please note, since 2021/22, this single Marking Framework replaces the two Marking Frameworks from prior years (1+3 and +3).
4. **Supervisor Statement of Support**

All shortlisted applicants are required to submit a **Supervisor Statement of Support** provided by their prospective supervisor(s). This statement is a key component of the application and of the assessment process. We suggest that supervisors refer to the Marking Framework (see section 3 above) when writing their statement, as the purpose of this statement is primarily to detail the ways in which the student will fit within the institution’s overarching research environment (i.e., within the relevant department and beyond). In particular, we are looking for clarification on how the proposed supervisory team will provide the student with an outstanding PhD experience that engages with appropriate advanced training opportunities.

Once you have completed your **Supervisor Statement of Support**, please return it to your prospective student who will upload it as part of their final, Stage 2 application. Please note, the deadline for Stage 2 applications is **5pm on Thursday, 9 February 2023** and late applications will not be accepted.

**Supervisor statements should follow the style and content guidance provided below:**

**Style Guide**

- The statement must be in PDF format.
- The statement must display the letterhead of the supervisor’s home institution.
- The statement must clearly state the name and position of the supervisor(s).
- The statement must contain, as a subject line, the SGSSS pathway (e.g., Economics), the host institution (e.g., University of Glasgow) and the student’s SGSSS Apply application ID (e.g., SLOC-22-0000012345).
- Statements should not exceed two sides of A4.
- As applications are anonymised for reviewers, any mention of the student’s name within the **Supervisor Statement of Support** must be redacted or replaced with “student” or “applicant”.

**Content Guide** (statements should include all of the below)

- Proposed supervisory arrangements including second supervisor(s) and their relevance to the project, as well as contingency supervisory arrangements. Where the supervisory team is cross-institutional, the added benefits to the student and their proposed research should be detailed. Please note, if cross-institutional, the statement should be co-written and signed by both supervisors.
- A consideration of the research environment at the host institution, with specific reference to the fit between the department and the proposed topic of research.
- A consideration of how the supervisory team and the broader research environment supports the development of an inclusive and diverse PhD community.
- Detail of the potential research training courses/programmes offered by the host institution that would benefit the applicant; consideration of broader advanced training that will likely be required including, but not limited to, that provided by SGSSS.
- An assessment of the potential impact of the proposed research and its significance to the academic discipline(s) concerned.
- Details of the supervisory team’s experience of supervision. This should include the number of students supervised by each supervisor (including ongoing supervision) and their completion rates where applicable, i.e., we would like to know the proportion of students who have completed within four years (or equivalent for part-time students). In addition, we are interested to know of any specific research experience relevant to the student’s proposed project, including any particular methodological experience or training.
- Confirmation that the proposal is the applicant’s own work, although you may have provided advice on the content.
- Confirmation that the first supervisor has attended supervisory training within their institution within the last 5 years.
• A paragraph on the current and estimated progress of the applicant within their PhD, and confirmation that the supervisor agrees with the applicant’s assessment of their PhD progress (this is a question within the online application form). This point is only applicable if the applicant is already undertaking a PhD in their first year or part-time equivalent.
5. Example Applications

Please see the three examples below for what makes a good Student-led Open Competition application.

For each, we have included the full application form (slight differences to the 2022/23 online application form) and the Supervisor Statement of Support, both anonymised.

1. PhD title: An Economic Approach to Machine Learning and Algorithm Bias
   
   Key Information:
   - **Institution:** Heriot-Watt University
   - **Pathway:** Economics
   - **Hub:** Economies, Mind and Technologies

   Click [here](#) to view the Application Form and Supervisor Statement of Support.

2. PhD title: Realising inclusive communicative practices in support services for refugees and other migrants: The role of translanguaging in a linguistically diverse third-sector organisation
   
   Key Information:
   - **Institution:** University of Stirling
   - **Pathway:** Education
   - **Hub:** Society and Welfare

   Click [here](#) to view the Application Form and Supervisor Statement of Support.

3. PhD title: Between the Life and Death of a River: Contested Knowledge in a Toxic Commons
   
   Key Information:
   - **Institution:** University of Edinburgh
   - **Pathway:** Social Anthropology
   - **Hub:** People and Place

   Click [here](#) to view the Application Form and Supervisor Statement of Support.
6. Appendix 1: Project Proposal Application Questions

Below are the questions applicants will be asked to answer online via SGSSS Apply within the “Student-led Open Competition Application Form” section of their application, relating to their project proposal.

1. Lay Summary
   Please provide a lay summary that explains your project and its significance to society/academic discipline to a non-academic audience. (250 words max)

2. Preparedness to undertake and complete a PhD and to flourish as a result of PhD funding
   Successfully undertaking a PhD requires not only academic ability but also resourcefulness, commitment and resilience. It involves a range of skills including the ability to communicate complex ideas (about why a research question is of societal and academic importance, why it can be addressed using particular methods and why your findings matter), planning and organisation (including within changing circumstances), working with others (inside and outside of universities) to increase the chances of your research making a difference. You may find it useful to refer to the Researcher Development Framework in thinking about this question.

   Drawing on your own background (including your life experiences, journey to/through university, work experiences or volunteering) please provide a summary of why you are ready to undertake a PhD now and how you will flourish as a result of PhD funding. You might include, for example, personal challenges that you have overcome or achievements that you are proud of in your work, study or life experiences and how these map onto the skills required to flourish in a PhD programme. Challenges could include, but are not limited to, protected characteristics, socio-economic status and of being first-in-a-generation to university or care-experienced. (400 words max)

3. Contributing to a positive and diverse PhD community
   SGSSS aims to attract and support a positive and diverse PhD community where everyone can reach their full potential; Research and Development (R&D) is a supportive and fulfilling sector to work in; and is seen as a shared endeavour across society rather than only the concern of professional researchers. You may find it useful to refer to the UK Government’s R&D People and Culture Strategy when thinking about this question.

   Reflecting on your own background and/or proposed approach to PhD study and the opportunities which it will present, how will you support diversity and inclusion in the PhD community? (250 words max)

4. Research Proposal
   The research proposal must be a detailed description of the intended research topic. It will form the basis for assessing the application. The proposal should be written in a clear and concise manner. The main body of the research proposal (excluding the bibliography) must not exceed 1,500 words.

   Please also note that reviewers of this proposal will include those outwith your discipline.

   The Research Proposal MUST include the following sections:
   - Overview – a general introduction that succinctly sets out exactly what the project seeks to explore. This should also include the research question(s) to be addressed and the overall aim of the project.
   - Context – situate the research within the relevant literature/s. This should include a brief summary of research already taken in the field, addressing key works and scholars. Specific attention should be paid to problems in the existing literature and ways in which your proposed research challenges/addresses these problems. You should also give an account of the theoretical issues relevant to your research, and whether you intend to test existing theories or develop new ones.
   - Methodology – provide a detailed account of the methodology and/or methods that will be used.
Specific attention should be paid, where relevant, to any innovative aspects of the proposed methodology.

- An indication of ethical issues associated with this proposal (including those that may impact on formal ethics committee approval and those requiring ongoing consideration in the field/during analysis) and proposed actions to mitigate these.
- Impact – a brief discussion of the implications of the proposed research for the broader discipline, any practical applications, and/or any policy relevance.

5. **Indicative Bibliography**
Enter bibliography here. References within the research proposal should be Harvard Style and the bibliography should reflect this. Please only include references referred to in the research proposal.

6. **Risk Assessment**
Please set out the aspects of your proposal that are at particular risk of non-implementation and indicate the approaches that you will take to manage such risks to ensure that your timely submission is not compromised. (250 words max)

7. **Provisional Timeline**
This section must only include an indicative timeline for your research. Any substantive discussion of your research in this box will not be considered by reviewers. Please note, your timetable should take account of the expectation that your PhD will be submitted at the end of your 3 year funded period.

8. **Interdisciplinary Proposal (optional)**
The ESRC welcomes interdisciplinary studentships since many of the most pressing research challenges are interdisciplinary in nature. They are particularly interested in encouraging research that crosses over from the social sciences to other fields of science and to the arts and humanities. For that reason, we ask whether your proposed research is deemed interdisciplinary.

To meet the criteria for this label (please see guidance here), the proposed research should include substantive interaction between disciplinary fields and incorporate training that is not constrained to one disciplinary approach, i.e., crosses the boundaries of social sciences to other sciences, arts and humanities. Please discuss this with your supervisor and Pathway Representative where relevant and, if appropriate, indicate your proposal’s potential applicability to be considered as interdisciplinary research. Please specify which other research council Doctoral Training Partnership (or equivalent) your proposed work aligns with and, within which, training might be sought.

You should read closely the ESRC guidance on requirements for interdisciplinary awards.

If this proposal is interdisciplinary, please provide justification as detailed above. (250 words max)

9. **Collaborative Partnership (optional)**
The ESRC welcomes studentships with collaborative partners. 'Collaborative' is defined broadly and covers studentships that are supported by private sector companies, public sector bodies or third sector organisations, i.e., non-academic partners. While many proposals feature work with non-academic partners, here we are interested in if your studentship will be co-funded by said partner, i.e., they will contribute financially towards the costs of your studentship. We ask that you liaise with your prospective supervisor(s) to help with discussions between you and your potential collaborative partner, if applicable.

**Private Sector**
Depending on the size of the private sector organisation, this will determine the expected co-funding of the studentships costs as per the below:

1. Less than 10 employees would equal a 10% contribution towards studentship costs.
2. More than 10 employees but less than 50 would equal a 25% contribution towards studentship costs.
3. More than 50 employees but less than 250 would equal a 33% contribution towards studentship costs.
4. More than 250 employees would equal a 50% contribution towards studentship costs.

Public Sector
If the collaborative partner is the Scottish Government or a Scottish Public Body, then we expect co-funding to be at the rate of 33% for all studentship costs.

Charity/Third Sector
If the collaborative partner is charity or falls within the third sector, then we expect co-funding to be at the rate of 10% for all studentship costs.

If applicable, as part of an application we will require a letter from the collaborative partner called a **Collaborative Partner Letter of Agreement**. This acts as a precursor to a formal **Collaborative Agreement** (this is required if successful in this competition).

The **Collaborative Partner Letter of Agreement** should describe how the partner will support the project and should include details of the following:

- How the research project aligns to the priorities of the partner organisation and of the nature of the collaboration already underway (for example, the role of the partner in identifying the research need and in developing the application).
- How the collaborative partner will support your supervision/development and your project.
- The agreed co-funding arrangement.
- Any agreed additional funding, i.e., this may include details of how the travel, subsistence and accommodation costs associated with your visits to the non-academic organisation will be covered.
- Any arrangements for special materials and facilities which will be made available to you.
- Any appropriate arrangements relating to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).
- The details of any previous involvement in social science research by the collaborative partner. This should include any collaboration that has previously taken place, e.g., any former studentships they have co-funded.

If this proposal will include a collaborative partner, please upload a **Collaborative Partner Letter of Agreement**.

10. Additional Costs for Difficult Language Training, an Overseas Institutional Visit and/or Overseas Fieldwork

Please indicate if your proposal is expected to benefit from the following:

- Difficult Language Training
- Overseas Institutional Visit
- Overseas Fieldwork

**Domestic Fieldwork**
If this proposal does not involve overseas fieldwork, can you confirm that the proposed fieldwork is likely to be undertaken within the notional **RTSG** allowance of £750 per annum. If not, please explain why and specify any likely additional costs. Please specify how additional costs will be met. (150 words max)