Scottish Graduate School of Social Science
Sgoil Cheumnaichean Saidheans Sòisealta na h-Alba

SGSSS SDS Studentship Competition Marking Framework 2024/25

Each application is to be assessed according to three categories with a total score out of 25. These categories are:

1. Research Proposal – Score out of 10 (40%) **((Please note that attention to feasibility of research proposal to be completed within the funded PhD is exceptionally important since the ESRC have announced that the thesis-pending or 'writing-up' year will no longer be acceptable – ie, submission within a fourth unfunded year will be counted as a late submission). The research of the PhD must be done in 3 years. ESRC provide an additional 0.5 years but this is not for PhD research it comprises research in practice (+ training) and new skills that ESRC wish PhD students to be exposed to.**

2. Supervision & Training – Score out of 10 (40%)

3. Collaboration – Score out of 5 (20%)

Score	Research Proposal (OUT OF 10)	Supervision & Training (OUT OF 10)	Collaboration (OUT OF 5)
	Descriptors: Please note that the descriptors can be used with discretion where there is a good case to do so		

10	An excellent proposal and scoring well in terms of both cogency and originality. All components – overview, context, methodology, and impact – will be well thought out and clearly expressed. **PLUS** Proposal is exceptionally good in all of its components. **AND** Fulfils criteria 9 to 7 below	Supervision arrangements represent a near-perfect fit with the proposed research in relation to methods, substantive topic area and academic/policy networks. The supervisory team includes at least one experienced supervisor with recognised expertise in the field (SGSSS is very supportive of the inclusion of a less experienced supervisor for capacity building reasons). There is excellent fit between the research and the wider department/school/college. The supervisory team demonstrates excellence in their commitment to helping the student address their development needs over the course of the PhD and in their existing plans to meet these within and outside the home HEI. They have also engaged very well with the identification of their own development needs.	
9	Proposal is highly original and innovative, at the cutting edge of developments substantively and methodologically. **AND** Fulfils criteria 8 to 7 below.		
8	Proposal contains clear awareness of the potential impact of the research. **AND** Fulfils criterion 7 below.	Supervision arrangements represent a very good fit with the proposed research in relation to methods, substantive topic area and academic/policy networks. The supervisory team includes at least one experienced supervisor with a strong reputation for research in this field. There is very good fit between the research and the wider	

7	A well-defined proposal with researchable questions, appropriately identified sources, an awareness of the theoretical and empirical background to the research and an appropriate methodology cognisant of ethical issues. The proposal should display an awareness of the research of the economic and societal relevance feasible within 3.5 years of a funded PhD including appropriate risk assessment.	department/school/college. The supervisory team demonstrates very good commitment to helping the student address their development needs over the course of the PhD and in their existing plans to meet these within and outside the home HEI. They have also engaged well with the identification of their own development needs.	
6	A good and promising proposal but with identifiable weaknesses. Some, but not all, components of the proposal will be problematic, ill- expressed, or show a lack of knowledge. **PLUS** A good proposal with only minor but still identifiable weaknesses. The research question will be clear, the methodology appropriate and clearly presented, and most of the appropriate literature identified.	Supervision arrangements represent a good fit with the proposed research in relation to methods, substantive topic area and academic/policy networks. The supervisory team includes at least one experienced supervisor with a good reputation for research in this field. There is good fit between the research and the wider department/school/college. The supervisory team demonstrates good commitment to helping the student address their development needs over the course of the PhD and have articulated their existing plans to meet these within and outside the home HEI. They have also engaged with the identification of their own development needs.	
5	A promising proposal that suffers from several weaknesses. The methodology is appropriate but ill-expressed. The proposal is only weakly grounded in relevant literature.		The proposal represents an ideal fit with topic requirements and demonstrates excellent understanding of the policy context. Strong consideration has been given to how the collaboration with SDS (and other relevant partners) will operate throughout the PhD.

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.	Supervision arrangements are appropriate though the fit is not as strong as it could be but at least one supervisor has some experience in the area of the proposed research in relation to methods, substantive topic area and academic/policy networks. There is some fit between the research and the wider department/school/college although the relationship might be rather weak. The supervisory team demonstrates some but not strong commitment to helping the student address their development needs over the course of the PhD and have some plans to meet these within and outside the home HEI. Their identification of their own development needs is weak .	The proposal represents a very good fit with topic requirements and demonstrates very good excellent understanding of the policy context. Strong consideration has been given to how the collaboration with SDS (and other relevant partners) will operate throughout the PhD.
3	A proposal with significant weaknesses in multiple components, little appreciation of possible methodologies, and/or awareness of relevant literature.		The proposal represents a good ideal fit with topic requirements and/or demonstrates good understanding of the policy context. Some consideration has been given to how the collaboration with SDS (and other relevant partners) will operate throughout the PhD.
2	A problematic proposal that would need considerable additional work before being fundable. All components of the proposal will require further work and/or demonstrate little or no background or interest in their subject.	There is a poor fit between the proposal and supervisor experience and/or the wider department/school/college AND/OR consideration of likely development needs (supervisor and student) and how they will be addressed is cursory/generic.	The proposal represents an adequate fit with topic requirements and/or demonstrates only limited understanding of the policy context. Limited consideration has been given to how the collaboration with SDS (and other relevant partners) will operate throughout the PhD.
1			The proposal represents a poor fit with topic requirements and/or demonstrates poor understanding of the policy context. Little consideration has been given to how the collaboration with SDS (and other relevant partners) will operate throughout the PhD.