

Applying for a Advanced Quantitative Methods studentship

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Outline

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The Advanced Quantitative Methods steer

- Since 2017, ESRC has provided SGSSS with an additional allocation of studentships known as 'steer studentships' which aim to develop specific advanced skills.
- One of these steers is for Advanced Quantitative Methods Studentships
 - ❖ they are supervisor-led, i.e. the proposal is submitted by the supervisor, not by the student
- ESRC funds 4 SGSSS Advanced Quantitative Methods studentships each year
- Each student has two supervisors with sufficient expertise to cover the methodological (quantitative) and substantive themes of the proposal

What does 'advanced' mean in this context?

- Applications must contain methods that are advanced in the context of the particular discipline in which the proposal is based:
 - ❖ a level over and above the basic generic and subject-specific methods requirements for that discipline
- Evaluation of proposals involves academics with expertise in use of quantitative methods in different disciplines
- An application of Multilevel models in a proposal based in, for example, Human Geography or Education, would not meet the requirements since such models are routinely used
- However a proposal would meet the 'advanced' criteria if it were extended to (for example):
 - ❖ Evaluate of the underlying assumption of multilevel models or
 - ❖ Develop multilevel modelling methods to accommodate spatial information or non-hierarchical structures possibly in novel ways

Writing your application 1: demonstrate the methods are 'advanced'

- Justify how the proposed methods for collecting and/or analysing data are assessed as being of a level that constitutes advanced quantitative methods within the specified discipline.

In doing so you may consider:

- Are you developing an existing quantitative method in a new and innovative way?
- Are you critiquing the assumptions underpinning a particular quantitative method?
- Are you developing a new quantitative method?
- Are you connecting two different methods in a novel way?

Writing your application 2: remit and rationale

- Describe how the proposed methods map on to the research questions to be addressed and will be used to move beyond core quantitative techniques in the student's discipline.
 - ❖ what added value does the proposed methodology bring over existing simpler techniques?
 - ❖ not just methods, but contribution of methods to concepts, literatures and wider substantive knowledge
 - ❖ what are the benefits of advanced quantitative methods for impact and KE?

Writing your application 3: training

- Detail specific training needs, including how these exceed generic and subject-specific requirements
 - ❖ How will training needs be met and monitored
 - ❖ what challenges will the AQM nature of the project present?
 - ❖ consider whether it will take longer for a student to get up to speed – learning how to use software, familiarisation with new statistical/computational techniques and connecting AQM to concepts, theories and data
 - ❖ adjust the timescale to take account of possible extra training needs that may evolve
 - ❖ how will the training be distributed across the two (or three, if necessary) supervisors?
 - ❖ What external training/connections might be necessary for methods at the forefront of current practice?

Writing your application 4: being realistic

- The project must be suitable for completion in three years
 - ❖ extra time is not available because it applies an advanced quantitative methodology
 - ❖ provide a detailed and convincing timetable
 - ❖ students should adhere to the disciplinary steer throughout the 3 years
 - ❖ the proposed project is for a PhD student, not for a research assistant
- What experience of AQM research do the supervisors have?
 - ❖ have they worked together before?
 - ❖ how will supervision be allocated and managed?
 - ❖ What contacts do they have to individuals and institutions specializing in particular quantitative methodologies
- How will you recruit a suitable student?
- How will the research environment support AQM work?

The process: Expression of Interest

- Expression of Interest (500 words)
 - ❖ This should be developed by both supervisors
 - ❖ *In 250 words or fewer, please outline the key strengths of the proposed supervisory team including how they will contribute to ensuring that the appointed student would emerge from the PhD with enhanced skills.*
 - ❖ *In no more than 250 words and using the [ESRC Guidance on Steers and Targets](#), describe how the proposed approach and supervisory team meet the relevant steer.*
 - ❖ Make sure that you address ethics.
- Reviewed by members of the SGSSS directorate;
 - ❖ we avoid reviewers considering applications from their own HEI
- 12 go through to full proposal
 - ❖ 4 of these will typically be selected for funding

The process: full proposal

- Abstract - 300 words
- Impact summary - 250 words
- Fit with Advanced Quantitative Methods steer - 250 words
- Feasibility of project being completed in three years - 250 words
- Case for support – 2250 words (exc references)
- Risk assessment – 250 words
- Strengths of supervisory team – 350 words (update from video)

The process: review

- Three external peer reviewers with expertise in advanced quantitative methods across a variety of disciplines
- Panel meeting
 - ❖ Directorate, Deans' Network & expert reviewers
 - ❖ 4 AQM steer studentships awarded



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More information: www.sgsss.ac.uk/



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