



Scottish
Graduate
School of
Social
Science

Sgoil Cheumnaichean Saidheans
Sòisealta na h-Alba

SFC Saltire Emerging Researcher Programme – Open Call

Guidelines for SGSSS Applicants

October 2021



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Introduction

The [Scottish Graduate School of Social Science](#) (SGSSS) is the UK's largest facilitator of funding, training, and support for PhD students in social science. By combining the expertise of sixteen universities across Scotland, the school facilitates world-class PhD research.

SGSSS's 16 partner Higher Education Institute (HEI) cover the whole of Scotland, from the Highlands and Islands to the Scottish Borders:

[Abertay University](#)

[Edinburgh Napier University](#)

[Glasgow Caledonian University](#)

[Heriot-Watt University](#)

[Queen Margaret University](#)

[Robert Gordon University](#)

[Scotland's Rural College](#)

[University of Aberdeen](#)

[University of Dundee](#)

[University of Edinburgh](#)

[University of Glasgow](#)

[University of St Andrews](#)

[University of Stirling](#)

[University of Strathclyde](#)

[University of the Highlands & Islands](#)

[University of the West of Scotland](#)

This document summarises the [SGSSS SFC Saltire Emerging Researcher Programme \(SER\)](#) for the Social Sciences and provides guideline for applicants and host institutions.

We encourage potential applicants, supervisors and host institutions to read the guidance carefully in advance of preparing applications.

If you require any further information or clarification, please contact us at team@sgsss.ac.uk. Further information about SGSSS can be found on our [website](#), via our [weekly newsletter](#), and our social media accounts ([Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)).

The SFC Saltire Emerging Researcher Programme

Overview

The SER Programme for the Social Sciences is a programme run by SGSSS with funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to enable research collaborations between Scotland and Europe through a series of research placements. It will enable PhD students and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) from SGSSS partner HEIs to undertake a period of mobility in one of the EU Member States, EEA (European Economic Area) and EFTA countries.

At this stage, we are seeking applicants for **outgoing** visits – i.e., PhD students and ECRs based at SGSSS's partner HEIs travelling **to** one of the EU Member States, EEA or EFTA countries.

The main objectives of the Programme are:

- ✓ Enabling research collaboration and professional network development with European partners
- ✓ Identifying common research priorities, promoting the sharing of research themes, data, methodologies, and approaches
- ✓ Fostering the development of long-term relationships between Scottish and European social science researchers for future joint research initiatives
- ✓ Establishing networks with non-academic collaborators (policy makers, businesses, third sector organisations) and engaging with the wider population through public engagement activities
- ✓ Developing future leadership skills to develop capacity for application to external funders such as ESRC (Economic and Social Research Centre) New Investigator awards

For more details of the SER Programme visit the [Saltire Emerging Research Scheme website](#).

The Placement

The placements are for PhD and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) – see page 9 for further details on eligibility - in the social sciences to benefit from a period of time spent in another country, working with a mentor, and accessing the networks and resources of the host institution.

Placements can last from one to six months and can take place between January and July 2022.

To support applicants who are unable to be away for a prolonged period, placements can include elements of flexibility, such as combining short visits with a longer online engagement.

The programme will operate through two routes:

1. **Open call for applications** (up to 6 opportunities). PhD students and ECRs can submit a proposal, aligned with one of our priority research themes, drawing on their developing networks including those of their research group(s). The SGSSS priority themes are based on the [National Outcomes](#), which track Scotland's progress in the [National Performance Framework](#).
2. **Targeted opportunities** (up to 6) with existing partners within the SGSSS consortium. The partnership details will be finalised in autumn as we work with our existing training pathways to identify candidate partnerships for inclusion, and then prioritise the most

promising opportunities for collaborative work with European partners. These are likely to include existing research infrastructure investments such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Networks.

For all applicants, the programme includes an in-person, hybrid and online cohort development set of activities to nurture PhD and ECR perspectives, professional skills and support future career development. Placement researchers will additionally have an opportunity to display their work through the final Award ceremony in August 2022, and other summer activities organised by SGSSS such as the SGSSS Summer School and the SGSSS Final Year Conference.

SGSSS will host a Q&A session on 15 November 2021 at 2.00-3.00pm to discuss the SER programme, offer examples of similar placements activities and further guidance to potential applicants. Reserve your space by [registering here](#).

Cohort Building, Training and Development

The SGSSS's cohort development activities for the SER programme will provide tangible learning outcomes and networking opportunities to support the participants pre, during and post-placement, and to enable flexibility in the timing of researchers' placements to maximise opportunities at their receiving HEIs.

Please see the table below for a summary of the cohort building, training and development activities.

Please note that some of these activities are mandatory part of the placement programme, while others are elective and will respond to the individual development needs of participants. In addition, some of these activities will be open to a wider group of participants undertaking a placement through other Scottish and European research pools, while others are dedicated to SGSSS Saltire placements awardees.

Please note these are subject to change; any changes will be announced via SGSSS communication channels, a dedicated LinkedIn group and, where possible, by contacting registered participants directly.

Mandatory Activities	Elective Activities
Available to all Scottish and European awardees of the Saltire Programme through external provision	
LinkedIn group	Peer to peer mentoring amongst all consortia's cohorts
Workshop 1: exploring benefits of collaboration (February) Workshop 2: priorities for research collaboration (May)	<i>Networking coffee @Saltire</i> amongst all consortia's cohorts
Minimum 2 out of any of the masterclasses between January and July 2022 (potential topics: communication strategies, public engagement, design training, leadership and entrepreneurship, research culture)	
Pre-recorded flash presentation (3-5 min max) to describe the outcomes of their exchange but with the aim of being accessible to a non-academic audience (August 2022)	
Final Conference and Award ceremony for the pre-recorded flash presentations	
Dedicated to SGSSS awardees of the Saltire Programme and delivered by SGSSS and SGSSS training partners	
Social group, virtual discussion boards	Q&A panel with recent students who have undertaken a similar placement
Pre-placement survey	Extra online self-led resources
	Additional workshops between January and July 2022 (potential topics: project management, establishing networks, cross cultural communications, stakeholders' management, and conflict resolution)
	Buddy system amongst SGSSS candidates
	Legacy commitment with SGSSS (participation in summer events, research impact showcase)
	SGSSS end of programme celebratory event

Equalities Statement

The SGSSS SER Programme intends to ensure equity of experience and opportunity to access the programme, in alignment with our existing Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy. In so doing, SGSSS intends to remove barriers and widen access to international mobility, supporting active participation in global opportunities by creating an in-person, hybrid, and online placement programme to nurture global PGR (Postgraduate Research) and ECR perspectives, skills, and qualities. Core to the Programme is an understanding that any international opportunity is accessible, ethical, and diverse in terms of our researchers, international partners, and the projects they propose to undertake.

Specifically, this programme includes:

- A flexible approach to the structure of the proposed placement, including online and hybrid models
- A dedicated fund for those with access requirements and additional responsibilities which might otherwise inhibit full participation in the Programme
- All PhD researchers receive a monthly stipend to cover costs, allowing them to pause their PhD whilst undertaking the placement.

If you have any queries about the SGSSS's approach in relation to EDI in this programme, including your circumstances and how we might support your application, please email team@sgsss.ac.uk.

Timeline

Programme launch and guidelines available	Wednesday 20 October 2021
Online system open and call for applications	Monday 25 October 2021
Application workshop	2.00-3.00pm, Monday 15 November 2021
Application deadline	5.00pm, Friday 3 December 2021
Notification of application outcomes	Friday 17 December 2021
Acceptance of award deadline	Tuesday 21 December 2021
Placements and tailored training and development opportunities	January 2022 - July 2022
End of Programme conference and ceremony	August 2022

Eligibility

Eligibility is not based on nationality, but on the country of location of the PhD registration or ECR employment. Applicants for this open call (October 2021) must be currently registered for a PhD or employed as an ECR at an SGSSS partner HEI in a disciplinary area which broadly falls under Social Science disciplines detailed by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Centre). Please note that for any interdisciplinary PhDs, at least 50% of the project must fall within Social Sciences disciplines. Placements must take place at an EU, EEA, or EFTA HEIs and applicants must also have met any immigration requirements to allow them to undertake the placement in the proposed country (unless the placement is completely online).

For the purposes of this programme, ECRs applicants must be within 3 years of the award of their PhD (from the point of notification of award to the point of applying). Notification of award means the date at which you received notification that your PhD would be awarded/has passed, not the date of a graduation ceremony or receipt of a certificate.

For PhD candidates, it is expected that the placement will be separate to the PhD and an interruption will be taken to ensure the placement is not detrimental to on time PhD completion.

If you are offered an award, you will be asked to confirm that you (a) have appropriate approval from your HEI to allow the placement to take place, and (b) are covered by your home HEI for insurance purposes to undertake the research placement.

Application process

Application deadline

The open call for applications is open from **Monday 25 October 2021 until Friday 3 December 2021**.

Read the information below thoroughly before applying, ensuring you are reading the most recent version. You should then contact your PhD supervisor (or line manager if you are an ECR) and your proposed host HEI as soon as possible to give them time to prepare their supporting documents.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that you have all the necessary documents ready to upload to the application system.

The online application system will close at **5pm GMT on Friday 3 December 2021**.

Late applications will only be considered where there is an evidenced breakdown in the SGSSS's operational systems and where such systemic failures have made submission by the deadline impossible. Please note that we will **not** accept late applications where there has been a failure at the applicant's end. For this reason, **we strongly advise applicants to complete the application process at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline**.

Online Application System

SGSSS uses an online application system, which you can access via [this link](#) from **Monday 25th October at 5pm**.

If you do not already have one, you need to create an account on the system, using an email address (ideally an institutional email address) which you check regularly. Please ensure you check your spam or junk filters for any emails from the system.

To start your application, please select 'Saltire Emerging Researcher (SER) Programme – Open Call' from the list of programmes. Please, use the 'Save and Continue Editing' button as you input the relevant information in the online application system, in order not to lose your drafts.

Read the below information thoroughly before you begin your application.

Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be assessed on three weight criteria distributed as follow:

- Quality and feasibility of the proposed collaboration, Including quality of the supporting statements (50%)
- Benefits and impact (30%)
- Value for money and appropriate costing of activities including match contributions (20%)

Completing the application form

To apply for the SER programme, you will be required to submit:

1. Your details
2. Saltire placement details
3. Case for placement
4. Risk assessment
5. Supporting statements from Primary Supervisor/Line Manager and Host organisation

Please refer to [this template](#) to prepare your documentation ahead of submitting your online application. The below information will help to inform the development of your placement arrangements and your supporting statements.

Type of Placement

There are three main models of placement. In all examples, it is expected that the placement activity is not included as part of the PhD and PhD applicants would interrupt their studies and claim stipend as part of their budget. For ECR applicants, placements should be agreed with your current institution as being supported within your current employment contract.

In Person: The researcher will be based at the host institution for the full duration of the placement undertaking a full-time programme of activities.

Hybrid: The researcher will make one or two shorter visits to the host institution as well as engaging in online activity before/during/after the visits. In this scenario, the total amount of time (in days) should be estimated and justified in the workplan. PhD researchers taking this option would require the support from their home institutions to suspend their studies or reduce their FTE for the actual duration of time needed for the placement. E.g. A student spends on day per week focussing on defined placement activities for 3 months followed by a one week visit and then a further two weeks of one day per week engagement. In total they are spending 21 days (three weeks) on the placement. The home HEI supports a three week suspension of studies for this placement during which time the researcher receives the stipend they requested in their application budget.

Fully Online: The researcher will engage fully online with the host institution. In this scenario, the total amount of time (in days) should be estimated and justified in the workplan. PhD researchers taking this option would require the support from their home institutions to suspend their studies or reduce their FTE for the actual duration of time needed for the placement. E.g. A researcher spends one day per week focussing on defined placement activities for 3 months. In this period, they reduce to 0.8 FTE with the remaining 0.2FTE stipend payment covered by stipend they requested in their application budget.

Additional Document Uploads

You are additionally asked to upload three documents in PDF format. Please note all document uploads should be in English:

1. CV (2 pages maximum): There is no specific format for the CV, but it could include (as relevant) academic achievements, publications and presentations, grant funding, service roles, and any relevant external activities.
2. Letter of support from your PhD supervisor/Line Manager (500 words maximum): You should include a letter of support with an institutional header and contact details from your current lead supervisor if you are a current PhD researcher, or from your line manager/lead supervisor if you are an ECR. In either case, if it is not possible to get a reference from your lead supervisor, please ask another member of your supervisory team or the Head of

Department or equivalent and ask the replacement to detail in their letter (in brief) their relationship to you. The letter of support should be written in the form of a reference, and detail why you would particularly benefit from the proposed placement. If you are currently registered as a PhD researcher, your supervisor should confirm that they will support an interruption of studies for the placement period. If you have completed your PhD, please attach evidence of the notification of your PhD Award.

3. Letter of support from your proposed Host Institution (500 words maximum): You should include a letter of support with an institutional header and contact details from the Head of Department or equivalent in the proposed institution (this can be co-written with the member(s) of staff with whom you intend to work). The letter should confirm that the host institution supports your application and will be able to host you, including arrangements for registration and as appropriate, office space and access to facilities. The letter should detail in what ways your proposed research placement is a good fit to the host institution, include a lead mentor who will be your point of contact and will oversee your time while on the placement, and how the expertise of the mentor will support your placement. The letter could also detail the broader research environment that will be offered to you, including additional members of staff and PhD/ECR researchers with whom you will work, any activities and groups with which you will be involved (e.g., seminar series, reading groups, training activities), and the opportunities that will be available to you while you are undertaking the placement. The letter should also confirm whether there is a bench or registration fee associated with registering with the host institution, and how much the cost is. Ideally, this fee should be waived by the host institution as a contribution in kind to the proposed research placement, but this is not compulsory.

VISA requirements

If you are travelling to Europe, you may need to apply for a visa or permit first.

You may need a visa and, or permit, if:

- you are staying for longer than 90 days
- studying
- travelling for business
- working (carrying out work-related activities not covered by the visa waiver)

Each country has its own definitions of work and different rules that you must follow. For example, in one country opening and responding to emails could be classed as work. In another it may not be.

You must always check with your host HEI and the authorities of the country you want to visit before you travel so you meet their legal requirements.

The country's [embassy or consulate](#) will have the most up-to-date information and can also advise you. If you need a visa or permit they can tell you how to apply.

[Check general foreign travel advice](#) for updates on issues, such as safety and security, entry requirements and travel warnings before travelling, or planning to travel.

Further queries and contact details

If you have any further queries, please contact the SGSSS office via team@sgsss.ac.uk.

[Join the Q&A session](#) on 15 November 14.00-15.00, visit the [SGSSS website](#) or subscribe to our [newsletter](#) for more details.