

## Doctoral Training Partnerships Call specification

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### Summary

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is pleased to announce a call for Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) to provide training for students across the full disciplinary range of the social sciences as well as areas of interdisciplinary research at the boundaries with other sciences.

We intend to support approximately 15 DTPs (depending on the quality of the proposals and outcome of the spending review), each supporting six cohorts of students. All DTP proposals must be multidisciplinary.

We invite proposals from UK-based research organisations (ROs) who can demonstrate excellence in the delivery of postgraduate training and meet the stated Research Excellence Framework (REF)-based metrics threshold. Individual ROs are only allowed to be part of one DTP proposal. Both single ROs and consortia are eligible to apply. There is no limit on

the number of ROs which can be involved in a consortium. Additional studentships will be made available for those who include what might be discipline-specific, local pockets of excellence.

This call specification must be read in conjunction with the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2015 (hereafter known as the guidelines) which sets out our detailed expectations for research training.

All applicants must submit an **expression of interest** by 16.00 on **30 October 2015** to [pgtframework@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:pgtframework@esrc.ac.uk), naming the DTP Director and setting out which ROs are involved in the proposal. They will only be used to help plan the peer review process.

**Deadline for proposals: 16.00 on 18 February 2016.**

DTP Directors will be interviewed as part of the Commissioning Panel process on either 27, 28 or 29 June 2016. Funding decisions will be announced in September 2016 and the first cohort of students will start in October 2017.

## **Background and scope**

We are committed to delivering excellence in postgraduate training and supporting the development of highly capable and innovative researchers for a wide range of careers. Building capability is one of the four key areas of activity set out in our Strategic Plan 2015 and our postgraduate training strategy 2017-2022 (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/skills-and-careers/studentships/postgraduate-strategy/>) is central to our delivery of this.

In 2010 the ESRC established a national network of 21 institutional and consortia level Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) through which we deliver our funding for postgraduate training. The 2014 independent evaluation of the DTC network (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/skills-and-careers/studentships/doctoral-training-centres/monitoring-and-evaluation-of-the-dtc-network/>) showed that the DTCs have been successful in equipping cohorts of social science postgraduates with skills of excellence, in research and other key areas. Therefore we want to build on this approach and support a network of Doctoral Training Partnerships each supporting six cohorts of students. Due to harmonisation of terms across all UK Research Councils, from this commissioning round DTCs will be known as Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs).

Studying as part of a cohort has been shown to be hugely beneficial to students in terms of the support they receive from one another and also the training opportunities available to them. We therefore want to increase the size of our cohorts and consolidate the DTP network to 15 centres (depending on the quality of the proposals and the outcome of the spending review).

The principal objective of our postgraduate training strategy is to deliver excellence in postgraduate training by building on the considerable strengths that exist across the social science community. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate this excellence in the delivery of core and advanced research skills and in transferable skills training, and set out how the DTP fits within their RO's strategy for doctoral training provision and how the

doctoral training strategy fits within the RO's overall vision and goals, particularly their strategy for social science research.

ROs will have flexibility in the content, structure and delivery of training as well as in the use of studentship funding. This flexibility allows ROs to be innovative in the training they offer, such as encouraging interdisciplinary approaches and being more responsive to student needs.

Through our DTPs we want our students to have the opportunity to engage internationally and gain experience of working in collaboration with external stakeholders in public services, business and civil society sector organisations. Students gain a wide range of benefits from engaging in collaborative activity and it also helps maximise the wider impact of the ESRC's training investments. We expect that 30 per cent of our DTP students will be engaging in collaborative activity with a non-academic partner over the course of their studentship.

## Call details

This call specification needs to be read in conjunction with our Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2015 which sets out our detailed expectations for research training. This specification describes our particular requirements relating to DTP provision 2017-2022 and we expect applicants to provide evidence to support their case.

Proposals will need to meet RCUK Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/frameworks/>) which sets out common principles for the support of all Research Council-funded students. Successful proposals will be awarded a training grant and be subject to RCUK terms and conditions as well as any specific ESRC conditions<sup>1</sup>.

## Eligibility

All UK-based ROs that are eligible to receive Research Council funding for research, have the infrastructure in place to deliver doctoral training and meet the stated metrics threshold, will be eligible to submit a proposal for a DTP. ROs within Northern Ireland are eligible to apply; however, we will not duplicate studentship funding provided by the Department for Education and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI). Northern Ireland ROs will not be allocated studentships, instead they will be required to incorporate their DELNI studentships into the DTP studentship competition and ensure they receive the same level of fees, stipends, RTSG and overseas fieldwork as other ESRC students. We will fund the student and cohort development costs associated with these studentships. ROs are only allowed to be part of one DTP proposal. Proposals can come from both single ROs and consortia. We want to support excellence in postgraduate training wherever it is found, so there will not be a limit on the number of ROs which can be involved in consortia arrangements. Additional studentships will be made available for those who include what might be discipline-specific, local pockets of excellence in their proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> The current RCUK terms and conditions can be found at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/frameworks/>. The current ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide can be found at <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/skills-and-careers/studentships/esrc-students/>. Both are subject to annual review.

All DTP proposals must be multidisciplinary. Single discipline or narrowly focused DTPs are not eligible to apply.

### **Metrics threshold**

REF-based metrics will be used as part of the assessment criteria to ensure that we support consistently high quality pathways. Units of Assessment (UoA) which do not meet the threshold set out below will not be eligible for inclusion in pathways. We define 'pathway' as the training a student will receive in a particular disciplinary or thematic area of social science during the course of their PhD.

All DTP pathways must be made up of UoA which include all the criteria below:

- a greater than or equal to 50 per cent REF output (3\*+4\*)
- a greater than or equal to 50 per cent REF environment (3\*+4\*)
- a greater than or equal to 50 per cent REF impact (3\*+4\*)
- a research volume equivalent to a minimum of five FTE staff with output at 3\* or 4\* (calculated by number of FTE staff submitted to REF2014 'multiplied by' percentage of REF output at 3\* or 4\*).

The metric threshold applies at an individual training pathway level and while pathways can draw on multiple UoAs all must meet the threshold. New staff, staff not included in the REF submission and staff who were submitted to different UoAs, may still contribute to the supervision and training of students, but the training must be in the area where the UoA has met the threshold.

The threshold requirement for each UoA to have a minimum of 5 FTE staff with an output at 3\*+4\* applies at the institution level and not consortia level; in other words, this staffing level is required from each RO within a consortium. This is so that we can ensure the training will be sustainable over the course of the accreditation and there will be the capacity to provide supervision for students at the ROs within which they are registered.

Applicants will be required to submit an attachment detailing the REF data for each UoA relating to each training pathway. These will be checked at the submission stage, and the proposal will be returned through Je-S if any ineligible pathways are included so they can be removed before the proposal is peer reviewed.

### **Professional doctorates**

We do not fund Professional Doctorate (PD) programmes and ROs will not be accredited for specific PD training pathways as part of their training portfolio.

### **Master's degrees**

We do not fund studentships for standalone Master's degrees, and ROs will not be accredited for discrete Master's degrees as part of their training portfolio.

### **Institutional/consortia strategy and vision**

Applicants must set out how the vision for the DTP fits within their RO strategy for doctoral training provision and how the doctoral training strategy fits within the RO overall vision and goals, particularly the strategy for social science research.

We expect the proposed DTP to be a key part of institutional/consortia strategy, and we require applicants to set out how the DTP will link to and access wider institutional resources, such as other research council doctoral training provision, careers service, knowledge exchange facilities etc. Letters of support are required from each participating RO.

Whether a single RO or consortia, applicants are required to justify their structure, particularly the added value to the delivery of training and to the student experience. There is not a limit on the number of ROs which can be involved in consortia arrangements; however, proposals must state a clear case for the size of the consortia and each partner's participation in it. We acknowledge that it may take time for new collaborative arrangements to evolve fully and for partnerships to be consolidated or ultimately extended; however, inter-institutional bids will need to justify why the proposed partnership is a viable arrangement. They will also need to set out a clear strategy for how the collaboration will grow and mature over the six year accreditation period. This should include plans for monitoring the success of the collaborative arrangements and ensuring consistent offering for all students.

We are releasing a concurrent call for Centres for Doctoral Training (CDT) (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/call-for-centres-for-doctoral-training-cdts-in-biosocial-research-and-new-forms-of-data/>). ROs are able to apply for both a DTP and CDT, but they must provide an additional attachment setting out how they will co-ordinate/support the centres should all bids be successful, including a suitable governance structure and a strategy for sharing best practice.

### **Environment for postgraduate training and development**

We require applicants to support a high quality and coherent infrastructure for the delivery of core and advanced postgraduate training, and for the students to be based within a strong social science research environment. We encourage proposals from those who have a track record of promoting innovative, diverse or interdisciplinary research across the social sciences and, where appropriate, at the interfaces with other areas of the science base.

### **Cohort building**

Studying as part of a cohort has been shown to be hugely beneficial to students in terms of the support they receive from one another and also the training opportunities available to them. We remain committed to supporting cohorts of students and want ESRC DTP students to develop a cohort identity alongside other affiliations (to their discipline, department etc). Therefore applicants are required to outline their strategy for building a DTP cohort across all partners and pathways.

### **Facilities**

Applicants are required to set out the facilities which will be available to the students and the mechanisms for communicating opportunities and entitlements, ensuring consistency between pathways and collaborating institutions. Our recommendations for basic student facilities are set out in the guidelines. We recognise that ROs will need to approach all requirements with sufficient flexibility to meet the needs and capacities of students with disabilities.

## **Content and delivery of postgraduate training**

Applicants have flexibility in the content, structure and delivery of training and we allow a flexible portfolio of three-, four- and even five-year postgraduate training platforms (detailed in the guidelines).

Details of our expectations regarding methods training can be found in the guidelines. In this we detail the minimum level of skills and competencies in the application of research methods which students are expected to develop.

Within the case for support applicants need to indicate how the key elements of core, general research and transferable skills training will be integrated throughout an individual programme of study and how learning across pathways is shared. (We define 'pathway' as the broad training a student will receive during the course of their PhD; it can be disciplinary, interdisciplinary or thematic in nature.)

We expect applicants to complete a three page (maximum) document for each pathway which sets out the research context, structure of delivery, training provided, and research environment. There is no limit to the number of pathways which can be applied for, however applicants must justify the inclusion of each pathway and indicate the level of demand they expect to receive so they can demonstrate that a viable cohort of students will be sustained on each pathway. The cohort can include non-ESRC funded students.

Applicants wishing to establish new pathways which do not have historic student demand will need to explain why this area is a priority for the RO and demonstrate research strength and likely student demand in the area. Consortia are expected to run multi-institutional pathways rather than running the same pathway separately at each RO.

Applicants who wish a pathway to be considered for distance learning need to clearly explain how this will operate and how these students will be included in any cohort development activities.

### **Annual training needs analysis**

We expect each student to receive an annual training needs assessment (TNA) so that each student can demonstrate clear progression in their training in terms of level and/or breadth. Applicants must describe the processes they will put in place to enable annual training needs assessments, including how they will engage with supervisors to ensure that they are aware of the different training opportunities. The applicants will also need to explain how these processes will enable them to obtain an overarching view of training needs across the DTP.

DTPs will be required to report to the ESRC on training needs and emerging gaps in provision through their annual report and the ESRC will undertake an annual assurance check of a sample of TNA forms.

### **Supervision**

Effective supervision is critical to the success of a DTP, and details of our expectations regarding supervisory practice and policy can be found in the guidelines. Applicants are required to describe the formal systems which are in place for monitoring the performance

of supervisors, for identifying their training and professional development needs, and for ensuring that these are met.

Ensuring that supervisors are engaged with the DTP is essential to ensure that the student gets the most out of their ESRC studentship and the range of opportunities available to them. Applicants must set out a clear strategy for communicating with supervisors and ensuring that they are fully engaged with the aims and objectives of the DTP.

### **Widening participation**

We want to ensure that we support the most talented students whatever their background and regardless of where they undertook their first degree. To ensure that this happens we require:

- selection processes to be open and transparent and enable the potential of the candidate to be assessed whether they are applying on a full or part-time basis, whether they have prior research training or not, and regardless of their demographic background;
- all studentships to be available on a full or part-time basis and the availability of part-time awards must be clearly set out when advertising funding opportunities. Applicants must indicate within the bid if it is not possible to offer part time across all pathways and the reasoning for this will be assessed through peer review;
- the option of studying on a 1+3 type award must be clearly advertised and accommodated within the assessment process;
- students awarded onto a +3 training pathway must have previously completed the majority of our core methods requirements as set out in the guidelines;
- opportunities for ESRC-funded studentships to be actively publicised both within and beyond the host institutions.

We expect applicants to think imaginatively and address in their proposals how they will contribute to the widening participation agenda and promote postgraduate research to a diverse base of talented graduate students across the UK.

Since the introduction of the DTCs we have seen a national drift to awarding more +3 studentships. We want to ensure that all those on a +3 meet the threshold requirements, and that students who are unable to self-fund a Master's do not find this a barrier to enter postgraduate training. Therefore, excluding collaborative and associated studentships, we anticipate that DTPs will have a 50:50 split between three and four-year awards (this includes 1+3, 2+2, +4) averaged over the six-year cohort.

If the DTP needs to support more than 50 per cent four year studentships they can do this through the flexibility of the grant, and if necessary reduce the overall number of students supported to enable this. DTPs will be expected to report on the balance of different types of awards in their annual report and we reserve the right to reduce funding where there is a substantial imbalance between three and four-year allocations on an ongoing basis.

### **Steers**

The DTPs will be allocated an annual quota of studentships set for the six-year accreditation period (subject to satisfactory progress against metrics). The final calculation will be based on an allocation mechanism where 75 per cent of studentships will be allocated by algorithm

(used in the previous DTC commissioning exercise) and 25 per cent strategically by the ESRC.

As part of the strategic allocation we will provide additional studentships to DTP consortia which include pockets of excellence and these studentships can be allocated to any pathway. We will also provide additional studentships in the following priority areas:

- advanced quantitative methods
- use of ESRC data sets
- interdisciplinary research which straddles other research council remits.

Proposals will need to provide evidence of strength in these priority areas and demonstrate that it is an area of focus and importance, in order to be considered for additional studentships.

The allocation of these additional studentships will initially be for three years. The priority areas will then be reviewed; we reserve the right to change steers and allocations at this point.

We will no longer set national disciplinary benchmarks for our studentship portfolio. We will instead more regularly review demographic data to monitor the health of UK social sciences.

### **International engagement**

We are keen to support researchers to develop the capability to operate in a global context. Therefore we will continue to provide support for overseas fieldwork for doctoral students and provide extensions to awards (excluding 2+3 awards) to allow time for language training. We will also provide funding for overseas institutional visits of up to three months to undertake specialist research training and to develop collaborative links (more detail is provided in the 'Eligible Cost' section of this document).

ROs are encouraged to highlight the international aspects of their training provision in their proposals, drawing particular attention to aspects which develop the cultural and methodological skills required for working with international partners.

### **International eligibility**

Our standard funding rules require students to meet the following residential conditions before they are eligible for a full award (stipend and fees):

- Settled status in the UK, meaning there are no restrictions on how long you can stay.
- Been 'ordinarily resident' in the UK for three years prior to the start of the studentship grant. This means you must have been normally residing in the UK (apart from temporary or occasional absences).
- Not been residing in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of full-time education. This does not apply to UK and EU nationals.

To be eligible for fees only award, you must be ordinarily resident in an EU member state, in the same way as UK students must be ordinarily resident in the UK.



As a result of the 2010 Smith Review of postgraduate funding<sup>2</sup> RCUK has adopted the following principles in relation to their recruitment:

- Research Councils recognise the desirability of opening recruitment to attract the best international talent into excellent UK research and training environments – particularly in areas of skills shortage.
- The benefit to the UK of providing public funding to international students must be balanced against the availability of opportunities for UK-based graduates.

In line with this, we will allow DTPs to relax normal residential eligibility rules and pay full stipend and fees for international students in areas where the DTP can demonstrate a clear skills shortage. This will only occur in exceptional circumstances. The DTP will need to discuss the issue with the ESRC and have already carried out a proactive recruitment strategy before the office will agree to relax the eligibility rules. To note, international eligibility is no longer automatically granted in advanced quantitative methods and economics.

### **Collaboration with non-academic partners**

We are keen to positively encourage collaborations between public sector, business and civil society sector organisations to help maximise the wider impact of our training investments and to increase opportunities for doctoral students to work with external stakeholders. Students gain a wide range of benefits from engaging in collaborative activity, such as the opportunity to network within the policy arena and to develop their transferable skills and knowledge. We require 30 per cent of our DTP students to engage in collaborative activity with a non-academic partner, and some funding will be provided through the doctoral training grant to help enable this.

Substantial non-academic user engagement is an essential part of collaboration, but the collaboration itself can take many forms. For example:

- a CASE style studentship which delivers a co-produced research idea and is co-supervised with a partner organisation
- internships (including those administered by RCUK) which apply social science skills in a practical situation or delivers a focused piece of research
- other activities which enhance the PhD, such as work experience to open up data access/exchange/collection or conducting a project in partnership.

We encourage the development of innovative activities and mechanisms through which 'people exchange' initiatives may provide experienced-based learning to assist doctoral students with further enhancing their broader capabilities such as communication and leadership skills. We are not proposing to set targets on the number of students which have to undertake specific types of activity, but we would expect to see a broad range of activities, including CASE style studentships and internships.

Applicants will need to provide evidence of their track record in enabling students to engage in collaborative activities and set out a clear strategy for how they will achieve the 30 per

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<sup>2</sup> One Step Beyond: Making the most of postgraduate education, March 2010 <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/470/>

cent collaboration target. They will also need to detail their wider approach to knowledge exchange and impact and how they will draw on relevant institutional services.

## **Governance, organisation and management**

In order for ROs to maximise the potential of a DTP, a necessary pre-condition is a governance structure which enables effective engagement and communication with all levels of the DTP, including, pathway convenors, supervisors and students to ensure best practice is effectively shared.

Proposals to the DTP call will need to provide a clear justification on how the DTP will be governed and managed, especially the provision made for a Director post. Applicants will need to explain the suitability of the Director and the senior management team. It is important that the Director has appropriate experience and institutional standing in order to promote the interests of the DTP. For consortia proposals, the Director needs to be from the RO who will manage the DTP on behalf of partners.

We require the following minimum resourcing:

- **Single institution DTPs:** a Professorial (in exceptional cases senior) level DTP Director post more than 20 per cent FTE, an experienced senior level DTP Manager and a DTP Administrator.
- **Consortia institution DTPs:** a Professorial (in exceptional cases senior) level DTP Director post more than 30 per cent FTE, an experienced senior level DTP Manager, a DTP Administrator and administrators/point of contact based at each partner institution.
- **All DTPs:** Pathway Convenors, Management Board commitment and support for finance and knowledge exchange. Other support will depend on the individual institutional configuration.

The named Director on the DTP proposal will be interviewed as part of the peer review process. We expect that the Director will remain in place for the duration of the DTP and if they step down then ESRC will be required to approve their replacement. The Director will be required to attend bi-annual DTP Director Meetings.

### **Internal allocation of studentships**

The allocation of studentships will be devolved to the DTPs, apart from steered additional studentships awarded by the ESRC. To ensure excellence is the primary criterion, we expect the majority of studentships to be allocated through a fair and transparent open competition, not based on internal quotas. As such applicants must set out how they will run the allocation process.

Applicants wishing to build capacity in particular strategic areas or to strengthen partnerships can request that a small proportion of the studentships are ring-fenced. DTPs will have the opportunity to update these ring-fenced areas through the annual reporting process.

### **Eligible costs**

Successful applicants will be notified in September 2016 of their core allocation of studentships plus any additional studentships from strategic steers. The table below shows the approximate amount of funding which will be provided.

<b>Core allowances</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>	<b>Calculation</b>
Stipend	14,482	Subject to indexation and calculated per student, per year, for 3.5 years
Fees	4,175	Subject to indexation and calculated per student, per year, for 3.5 years
Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)	750	Not indexed and calculated per student, per year, for 3.5 years
Overseas fieldwork	450	Not indexed and calculated per student, per year, for 3.5 years
<b>Student and cohort development</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>	<b>Calculation</b>
This funding is to cover activities relating to student and cohort development.	4,000	Not indexed and subject to spending review outcome. Paid as a single payment
<b>Additional allowances</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>	<b>Calculation</b>
London allowance	2,000	Only applicable to students studying at a London institution. Subject to indexation and calculated per London based student, per year, for 3.5 years

For information about how our postgraduate training funding can be used flexibly, please see our Postgraduate Funding Guide (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/skills-and-careers/studentships/esrc-students/>) (this is subject to annual review).

Whilst no formal target, DTPs are encouraged to use the funding provided by ESRC to leverage funding from other sources and thereby maximise the number of studentships available.

In a separate attachment, applicants must set out how they intend to allocate funds from the 'Student and cohort development' category. This should include, but is not limited to, initiatives to enhance: collaboration, interdisciplinary working, cohort development, Overseas International Visits (OIVs), and internships funded through the RCUK internship scheme. The funding for interdisciplinary working is intended to enable students trained in a particular discipline to engage with and understand different disciplinary approaches. In the attachment applicants must also set out how they would make savings and allocate funding if the Research Councils receive a constrained spending review settlement and the DTP budget is reduced by 25 per cent. Purely to enable comparison between proposals, applicants should base their approaches on an allocation of 30 students.

### **Enhanced stipends**

Enhanced stipends will no longer automatically be provided to AQM and economics students. Instead, the DTP will be able to use the flexibility of the doctoral training grant and award-enhanced stipends in any disciplinary area where they have recruitment difficulties.

### **Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), and Overseas Fieldwork (OSFW)**

The total amount of funding we provide to each DTP for the RTSG and OSFW is based on a fixed amount per student per year. We encourage DTPs to consider the total RTSG and OSFW payments as a pot from which to allocate funds. This will be based on student needs and priorities, as well as on DTP strategy and the opportunities for efficiencies provided through economies of scale.

It is the DTPs' responsibility to ensure that funds are used responsibly, and DTPs should ensure a process is in place for managing RTSG and OSFW that is responsive to the needs of their students. Students should discuss their needs with the DTP early in their funding.

### **Overseas Institutional Visits (OIVs)**

The OIV scheme funds an extension to the studentship of up to three months plus travel and subsistence costs. The scheme is open to all students and awards are allocated on a competitive basis. DTPs will have considerable flexibility in administering the funding and must establish their own processes to support the scheme. Details of the scheme can be found on page 26 of ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/skills-and-careers/studentships/esrc-students/>).

### **Town hall meeting**

A town hall meeting to discuss the detailed requirements of the call will be held on 29 September 2015 at Goodenough College (<http://www.goodenough.ac.uk/>). Up to two members from each RO are eligible to attend and **must** register by emailing [pgtframework@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:pgtframework@esrc.ac.uk). Full details of the event will then be provided.

### **How to apply**

All applicants must submit an expression of interest (Eoi) by **16.00 on 30 October 2015** to [pgtframework@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:pgtframework@esrc.ac.uk), naming the Director and setting out which ROs are involved in the proposal. The Eois will only be used to help plan the peer review process.

Proposals must be submitted by **16.00 on 18 February 2016** through the Research Council's Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>). See the proposal guidance notes for further details, available on the ESRC website at: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/call-for-doctoral-training-partnerships-dtps/>

If you are not currently Je-S registered and intend to apply, please ensure that you allow sufficient time for registration as no extensions to the deadline will be permitted. Hard-copy, faxed or emailed proposals will not be accepted.

Applicants must be based at a research organisation eligible for research council funding (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/>) and which has the infrastructure in place to deliver doctoral training.

Once the minimum number of peer review comments required have been received proposals will be sent to the applicant for comment, along with the reviewer assessments. Proposals, along with the reviewer comments and grades and the applicants' responses, will then be assessed by a specially convened commissioning panel. The panel meeting will take place on either the 27, 28 or 29 June 2016 and will involve an interview of each DTP Director who will be allowed to invite up to three other members of the team. The panel will then agree final grades and make accreditation recommendations to the ESRC.

Applicants will be informed of decisions in September 2016 and the first studentships will commence in October 2017.

### **Assessment criteria**

Eligible proposals will be assessed by reviewers and panel members against the following criteria:

- Vision for the DTP and how it fits within RO's overall strategy
- Quality of research environment
- Quality of the training approach
- Supervisory practice and policy
- Partnership and engagement, specifically collaboration with non-academic partners engagement and knowledge exchange
- Management and delivery, including governance structure and administrative support

### **Commissioning timetable**

- Call open: September 2015
- Deadline for **expressions of interest**: 16.00 on **30 October 2015**
- Deadline for submitting **proposals** - 16.00 on **18 February 2016**
- Panel assessment, including DTP Director interviews – 27, 28 and 29 June 2016
- Decisions to applicants – September 2016
- First cohort of students start – October 2017

### **Contacts**

Please address any queries to:

- Andrea Bond  
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Telephone: 01793 413145

Enquiries relating to technical aspects of the Je-S form should be addressed to:

- Je-S Helpdesk  
Email: [jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk)  
Telephone: 01793 444164