

## GUIDANCE FOR SUPERVISING ESRC DOCTORAL STUDENTS

This document is based on guidance produced by the ESRC for doctoral supervisors, and the University of Sussex regulations.

### Five Key Points

**1. The Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) is held accountable for the quality of the training that students receive.**

Therefore it is important to keep in touch and let us know if there are any difficulties with the studentship, supervision, or progress of the student you are supervising.

**2. Training Needs Analysis needs to be completed annually and documented.**

This is University policy for all PhD students. For ESRC students we also need to provide evidence that supervisors are discussing training needs with their students and planning how these can be met.

**3. Be aware of the extra support available to your students.**

ESRC students have the benefit of being able to access extra funding for courses, conferences, overseas visits and knowledge exchange events. Full details of the extra support can be found on our webpages:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/internal/doctoralschool/esrcdtc/>

**4. As a supervisor, you are seen by the ESRC to be a member of one of the DTC pathways.**

Each pathway is part of a pathway cluster which corresponds to the School (in BMEC there are two Pathway clusters). The DTC makes resources available for pathway clusters to contribute to the doctoral work in the Schools.

**5. The DTC is there to help students and supervisors.**

Keep in touch! We are here to support you. If you would like to discuss your experience of supervision or provide any feedback to the DTC, then come and see us.

The success of the DTC and its students are important to the University.

Find us:

Doctoral School,

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Falmer House

T: 01273 877376

## About the ESRC

ESRC is the largest organisation for funding research and postgraduate training on economic and social issues in the UK. At any one time it supports over 4,000 researchers and postgraduate students in academic institutions and independent research institutes. It is a non-Departmental Public Body, established in 1965, largely funded through the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

ESRC plays a key role in promoting and supporting training for the UK social science community throughout their careers. Investing in high-quality research training and development opportunities it produces skilled researchers who are able to tackle the most pressing social and economic challenges and thereby make an impact on wider society. For further information on the ESRC, please see the [ESRC website](#).

## The DTC Network

The Sussex DTC is part of a national network of 21 institutional or consortia level ESRC Doctoral Training Centres. The DTCs were launched in 2011 through the introduction of the Postgraduate Training Framework, and have now recruited their last cohort of students. Future ESRC funding for doctoral students at Sussex will come via the South-East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) Doctoral Training Partnership.

The main objective of the DTCs and DTPs is to raise the standards of postgraduate training across the UK social science base. ESRC expects the training provided to reflect its core values, those of quality, impact and independence.

## Supervising DTC Students

Supervisors are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the opportunities open to their students as part of the DTC. They are expected to guide their students so they can take advantage of these at the appropriate time, whilst balancing this with the need for timely submission of the thesis.

Supervisors should note that the University regulations for Postgraduate Research Students sometimes conflict with the ESRC regulations. They are encouraged to make themselves aware of both sets of regulations. Sussex regulations are set out in the [Handbook and Regulations for Doctoral Researchers](#). Full details of the terms and conditions for the ESRC awards can be found in the [Postgraduate Funding Guide](#).

The DTC is happy to help with any queries you have, so feel free to contact either the DTC Director, Professor Alan Garnham ([a.garnham@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:a.garnham@sussex.ac.uk) T: 01273 678337) or the DTC Co-ordinator, Shelley Jenkins ([esrcdt@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:esrcdt@sussex.ac.uk) T: 01273 677376).

## **PGR student training.**

The ESRC sets out the training that should be undertaken during the course of a PhD in the [Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines](#). The guidelines cover compulsory core training requirements in general research skills, research methods and transferrable skills.

## **Training Pathways.**

Each DTC student is a member of a specified training pathway, with access to a core training programme that will equip them to conduct the research element of their doctorate and prepare them for their future career. At Sussex the accredited training pathways are:

Citizenship, Justice and Security (LPS)

Global Social Transformations (Global)

Knowledge and Society (ESW)

Global Economic Performance (BMEc)

Innovation and Sustainability (BMEc)

Understanding Behaviour (Psychology)

## **Core Training Programme**

The ESRC emphasises the importance of core training in research methods to enable all social scientists to understand and use essential qualitative and quantitative techniques. Full details of the core skills students are expected to acquire during their studies can be found in the [Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines](#).

At Sussex basic core training for each pathway is represented by:

- The modules of the relevant ESRC recognised MSc/MRes degree in year 1 (1+3 route)
- Regular research training and development activities for research students within the department or school
- Single events organised to meet the training needs identified by students and supervisors, provided by schools, departments or by the DTC.

## **Core Researcher Development Skills**

The ESRC considers the provision of researcher development skills as an integral part of a broadly based training programme. This incorporates generic research skills, as well as transferable skills training. Within the Framework the ESRC has placed considerable emphasis on the deeper embedding of general research and transferable skills into substantive research training.

At Sussex we meet this need with the Doctoral School's [Researcher Development Programme](#).

## Core Subject-Specific Training

Compulsory training within a subject area remains a fundamental element of training for social science researchers. This includes the compulsory elements associated with the particular discipline or interdisciplinary training pathway on offer. The level and intensity of this core training may differ from subject to subject. This compulsory core is not restricted to research methods and applies also to subject knowledge or theoretical training which is deemed to be a core element of individual training pathways.

At Sussex we provide this training through:

- Regular research training and development activities for PhD students within their department or School
- Subject based research seminars
- Any modules of relevant masters courses

## Advanced Training

The Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines state: “It is an requirement of the ESRC that studentship holders acquire “more advanced levels of competence in quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (including data analysis techniques that are appropriate for survey and aggregate data analysis or for specific experimental, quasi- experimental or evaluation methods), depending on the subject area or discipline ... [and] an understanding and appreciation of how to combine quantitative and qualitative techniques through mixed method approaches.”

Advanced Training is available through:

- [DTC Advanced Training at Sussex](#)
- [Advanced training available through the DTC network](#) (at low/no cost)
- [Sussex Researcher Development workshops](#)
- [National Centre for Research Methods](#)
- [Methodological training at national level](#)
- The relevant scholarly, disciplinary or sub-disciplinary organisation (e.g. BSA for sociology; BPS for psychology)
- [Vitae courses \(especially transferable skills\)](#)
- [Web-based research training at Sussex](#)
- [NCRM Online Resources](#)
- [Moocs](#)
- Specific University Research centres (e.g. [Bristol Centre for Multilevel Modelling](#))

## **Additional funding and opportunities for ESRC students**

As a supervisor of an ESRC funded student, please ensure that the student is aware of the opportunities available and encourage them to make the most of these:

### **Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)**

All ESRC students are eligible for a Research Training Support Grant including a UK Fieldwork Allowance. This includes part-time and fees only award holders. This allowance is intended to be used to pay for expenses which the student/ supervisor/ department deem to be in direct support of a student's research.

Examples are:

- UK fieldwork expenses (there is a different grant for overseas fieldwork)
- UK and overseas conferences and summer schools
- Language training courses usually undertaken in the UK prior to an overseas fieldwork trip
- Survey costs: printing, stationery, telephone calls
- Purchase of books and other reading material not available through the library
- Purchases of small items of equipment e.g. cameras, tape recorders, film. Equipment must be purchased through a University approved supplier, and remains the property of the University.

[Details on how to apply for RTSG can be found on the DTC Website.](#)

### **Overseas Fieldwork Allowance and Difficult Language Training**

ESRC students who included overseas fieldwork in their original application to the DTC are eligible to apply for the Overseas Fieldwork Allowance. This will only be granted where such fieldwork is essential to the success of the research project, and supervisors will be required to confirm this. Funding is limited to a contribution towards the extra costs incurred by students undertaking a period of fieldwork abroad, and is not expected to cover the full costs of the fieldwork.

The expenses that can be covered are:

- Difficult Language training
- Return flights to the country of fieldwork
- Visa costs
- Vaccinations
- Interpreter / translation costs

A student may make a case for additional funding for costs not listed above, if these are essential to the success of the research, and would not normally be incurred by students on fieldwork in their home country. However, provision of such funds is at the discretion of the DTC Director.

[Full details of the Overseas Fieldwork Allowance are available on the DTC website.](#)

## **Internships Scheme**

The ESRC student internship scheme provides current ESRC-funded PhD students with the opportunity to spend up to six months in a non-academic organisation within the public, private or third sector. The internship scheme provides both student and host organisations with a rich set of benefits and contributes to the skills and professional development of PhD students. Students can benefit from:

- Networking within the policy arena
- Transferable skills and knowledge
- Time management skills
- Report writing skills

Internship award holders receive an extension to their ESRC award and will be able to claim for reasonable travel and accommodation costs (conditions apply). There is further information on the [Internships Scheme here](#).

The DTC will keep supervisors and students informed of internship calls.

Applicants will need to complete the online application form, available on the RCUK website, for the host organisation that they wish to apply to, and attach a letter of support on university letterhead signed by their supervisor.

Applications are competitive and a placement cannot be guaranteed. Students that are successful will need to complete and submit an End of Award Report to ESRC, alongside their host institution, within three months of completing the internship.

## **Overseas Institutional Visits Scheme**

The OIV Scheme is one of the main mechanisms in which the ESRC supports the international engagement of their PhD students. This scheme enables ESRC students to apply for financial support to visit an overseas institution for between four and 13 weeks, and is a fantastic opportunity to:

- undertake additional specialist research training not available on the UK
- develop language skills
- establish research links that will be beneficial to their current or future academic career
- disseminate early research findings
- attend and participate in seminars where directly relevant to their research.

There are limited funds to support OIVs, therefore the DTC holds an annual competition that students can apply to. Only one or two students a year can be supported through the OIV scheme. Students who are successful also receive an extension to their ESRC award, for the period of the OIV.

[Further details on the OIV including guidance notes and the application form are available on our website.](#)

## Library of Congress Placement Scheme

The ESRC collaborates with the Arts and Humanities Council (AHRC) in offering the opportunity to apply for a short-term fellowship at the Library of Congress in Washington. The world-class research facilities give Library of Congress fellows dedicated access to unique collections, programmes and expertise, plus the opportunity to network and form collaborative relationships. ESRC applicants can apply to spend from three to six months at the Library of Congress. Successful ESRC applicants will receive an award from the ESRC to contribute towards their flight costs plus a monthly living allowance of £1000 in addition to the existing stipend/salary they receive as part of their current ESRC funding. There is further information on the [Library of Congress Placement Scheme here](#).

## Transferable Skills Training

ESRC believes that it is important for PhD students to receive training in career development and transferable skills as well as in research. Research organisations are expected to encourage and support students in developing their career options and ensure that the provision of professional and transferable skills forms a fundamental part of doctoral training.

Sussex requires students to work with their supervisors to complete a [Training Needs Analysis](#) at the start of each academic year. This is based on the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#), who also provide training courses that doctoral students can access. The Sussex [Researcher Development Programme](#) also offers courses in support of this, and students can also access a wide range of external courses via the [NCRM](#).

## Media Training

ESRC training courses are available for social science researchers with preference given to ESRC-funded PhD students and researchers. The courses are free of charge and are held throughout the year. For students that are expecting only limited media coverage, other training courses are available which can help to make the most of the media. There is further information on [ESRC media training here](#).

## Student Conferences

We are working with our Doctoral Training Centres to deliver conferences for ESRC-funded students.

These conferences are designed to provide students with:

- the opportunity to meet with peers within their cohort
- information on ESRC opportunities available during their studentship and following their PhDs
- practical advice and guidance for making the most of their studies and preparing themselves for the next steps.