

STUDENT-LED STUDENTSHIP COMPETITION: GUIDANCE FOR SUPERVISORS

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This guidance is aimed at supervisors whose prospective students are entering the student-led studentship competition, which opens each October.

SeNSS requires that all applicants discuss their application for a studentship with their proposed primary supervisor. In addition, the proposed primary supervisor is required to complete a supervisor's statement as part of the application process.

Please note that applicants will not be considered for an award unless their proposed primary supervisors' supporting statement has been completed and submitted via SeNSS' HEIapply on-line application platform by the relevant deadline.

Once the applicant has entered your details in their online application form, you will receive an email from SeNSS (via HEIapply, our online application management platform. It will contain a link – please note that **THIS LINK CAN ONLY BE USED ONCE. PLEASE DRAFT YOUR SUPPORTING STATEMENT OFF-LINE, AND CUT AND PASTE IT INTO HEIAPPLY ONCE YOU ARE CONTENT THAT IT IS COMPLETE.** This statement cannot be amended once you have submitted it.

1. Eligibility

To be eligible to supervise a SeNSS-funded student, you must meet two conditions:

- Either the primary or the second supervisor must be experienced, i.e. at least one of the supervisors must have supervised more than two students to completion.
 - However, if the best supervisory team “fit” consists of two inexperienced supervisors, they will be permitted to supervise if an experienced academic is appointed to mentor them.
- Both the primary and second supervisor must either have attended supervisor training or supervisory best practice events in the past three years or must complete this training or attend an event within six months of their SeNSS student starting their studies.

2. The application process

- If your applicant meets the eligibility criteria, they must first apply to your university for a place to study. **The deadline for doing so is determined by that university.**
- Next, your applicant must apply for a SeNSS studentship. **The deadline for doing so is 12.00 GMT on Friday 20 January 2023.**
- Please note that your applicant will be interviewed in respect of their application for a place at your university and their SeNSS application.

3. Summary of the supervisor’s role in the application process

- Confirm that your applicant is **eligible for a SeNSS studentship**. Reminder: all applicants, whether home or international, are eligible, and will receive fully-funded studentships.
 - International students, like home students, receive a full stipend and are not required to pay any tuition fees during their funded studentship.
 - UKRI/ESRC rules stipulate that only 30% of the total number of studentships each DTP awards can be made to international students. For SeNSS, this means awarding 12-14 international studentships per year.
 - **This year, SeNSS universities are encouraged to put up to two additional applicants forward per Pathway for consideration at the Pathway review phase if these applicants meet certain [widening participation criteria](#). The fourth candidate must be a home candidate who meeting at least one of the agreed criteria, whilst - if the university wishes to put forward a fifth candidate - they must be a home candidate who is also a BAME candidate.**
We would encourage you to encourage applicants meeting these criteria to apply to SeNSS.
- Provide your applicant with the following advice/guidance:
 - Whether their application qualifies for the ring-fenced **AQM studentship** – view the AQM guidance [here](#);
 - Whether they are applying for the **correct structure of studies** (1+3, +3, 2+2, +4). If they are applying for a +3, whether they have sufficient research methods training for a +3, or whether they may need an additional term or two to reach the required training level. The advice for selecting the correct

structure is available [here](#), and the SeNSS learning outcomes are available [here](#).

- The **ethical considerations** their proposed research gives rise to;
 - Whether their plan for **overseas fieldwork** and/or **language training** is appropriate and properly costed; and,
 - **Outline guidance on drafting their research proposal.**
- In consultation with the applicant, identify who will act as **second supervisor** for this research project. The applicant will need to provide their details when completing their application form.
 - Provide a **supporting statement** for your applicant via SeNSS's on-line application portal, HEIapply.

4. Using HEIapply

- You will receive an automated email from HEIapply, SeNSS's online application platform, asking you to provide a supporting statement for your applicant. If you can't find this email, please check your junk/spam box.
- Please click on the link provided in the email and fill out the "Supervisor Statement" form. **THIS LINK CAN ONLY BE USED ONCE. PLEASE DRAFT YOUR SUPPORTING STATEMENT OFF-LINE, AND CUT AND PASTE IT INTO HEIAPPLY ONCE YOU ARE CONTENT THAT IT IS COMPLETE.** Once you have submitted it, this statement cannot be amended again before the 20 January deadline.

5. Notes on completing your supervisor's statement

5.1. Supervisory expertise

- All SeNSS students must have two supervisors: a primary supervisor, based at the same institution as the applicant, and a second supervisor. The second supervisor can be based either at the same university, or at any of the other SeNSS member institutions.
 - You will be asked to confirm that the second supervisor has already been identified.
 - You will also be asked which of you is considered experienced. Either the primary or the second supervisor must be experienced, i.e. at least one of the supervisors must have supervised more than two students to completion. However, if the best supervisory team "fit" consists of two inexperienced supervisors, they will be permitted to supervise if an experienced academic is appointed to mentor them. That mentor's name must be provided, along with an outline of how this mentoring arrangement will work.
- Please provide information about any supervisor training or best practice sessions you have attended in the past three years, as well as any attended by the second supervisor.

- You will be asked to comment, in a maximum of 1,000 characters, how you as a supervisory team will work together to support the applicant. Please address aspects such as:
 - Whether you have supervised students as a team before; and/or
 - Any other complementarities you consider as bringing particular strengths to the supervisory team.
- **Tip:** we suggest that you draft your answers for this section using Word (or equivalent) which can count characters and then cut and paste it into the application form, to ensure you stick to the character limit.

5.2. Supervisory team supporting statement

Before completing these three sections, please read the SeNSS selection criteria on p. 5.

Tip: we suggest that you draft your answers for this section using Word (or equivalent) which can count characters and then cut and paste it into the application form, to ensure you stick to the character limit.

1. Please comment (in a maximum of 2,000 characters) on the quality and feasibility of your applicant's research proposal. In doing so, please reflect on: the proposal's broader significance in the discipline(s); the positioning of the proposal in the relevant literature; the research plan; and, the potential impact on professional practice. If your applicant's research project plans to use advanced quantitative methods, and/or the use of large datasets, and/or the use of big data methods and associated innovative analytical methods, please highlight this as SeNSS will be awarding one AQM-steered studentship each year.
2. Please comment (in a maximum of 2,000 characters) on the applicant's ability to conduct the proposed research. In doing so, please reflect on: the applicant's previous education, work, and life experience; and the training the applicant will need to complete this project. If your applicant is applying for a +3 studentship, please state whether, in your opinion, they are compliant with the ESRC's learning outcomes. If your applicant lacks some past research methods training, please note which training they lack, and whether they would need an additional 3 or 6 months' funding to fill these gaps (that is, a +3.25 or +3.5 award, rather than simply a +3 award).
3. Please comment (in a maximum of 3,000 characters) on the fit between this research proposal and your collective research agenda. In doing so, please refer to your recent publications or other intellectual contributions (within the latest REF cycle) that relate to this project; work with external partners that has generated an impact on professional practice; existing or past supervision of other doctoral researchers in the same disciplinary area; and, ways in which you can support the applicant to identify and cover their training needs.

6. The SeNSS studentship competition selection criteria

The following three criteria will be used to assess applications across all pathways and degree formats.

Evidence of the quality and feasibility of the proposal (40%)

This will be based on the applicant's outline of their proposed research project, their reasons for pursuing it, and its wider significance. SeNSS assessors will be looking for evidence of the applicant's ability to design and conduct a research project, a coherent and well thought-out research plan, a strong awareness of the literature within their current field, and the potential impact of their research on professional practice. Reference will be made to the applicant's personal statement, as contained in their application, as well as the proposed supervisor's supporting statement.

Evidence that the applicant is well-prepared for their proposed research and future career (40%)

This will be based on the applicant's description of how their previous educational, work, and life experience has prepared them for postgraduate study and research. Reference will be made to the applicant's personal statement, as well as the proposed supervisor's supporting statement.

Evidence of the suitability of the proposed supervision and training (20%)

This will be based on the proposed supervisors' research areas, knowledge and expertise in relation to the applicant's proposed research project, the individual roles of the proposed supervisory team, and the identified training needs and suggested ways of meeting those training needs. Reference should be made to the information provided by the proposed primary supervisor which should, in turn, reflect on the expertise brought to the project by the second supervisor.

All 4-year award applications (1+3, 2+2, +4) will be assessed in a way that recognises that someone applying for a 4-year studentship has had less training and fewer opportunities to think about and research their proposed topic than someone applying for a +3 studentship. In other words, the way in which the selection process is carried out will ensure that those applying for 4-year awards will not be disadvantaged relative to +3 applicants.

7. The studentship selection process

- The applications are reviewed internally by your university, which may submit up to three applications per Pathway it is involved in to the second round of the competition.
 - If an applicant is unsuccessful at this first round, your home university will let you and the applicant know.
- In the second round, applications are considered by the disciplinary-based Pathway Groups, which nominate their best applicants to the SeNSS Management Board for consideration.

- If an applicant is unsuccessful in the second round of the competition, SeNSS will let you and the applicant know, and provide a short paragraph of feedback.
- The SeNSS Management Board makes the final award decisions, and applicants will be told the outcome of their applications by mid-April.
 - If an applicant is unsuccessful in this final phase of the competition, SeNSS will let you and the applicant know, and provide a short paragraph of feedback. If an applicant is unsuccessful, but is highly ranked, they will stay on the reserve list, in case any of the awardees turn down their offers.

8. General information about the SeNSS Doctoral Training Partnership

For information about SeNSS, please go to the [SeNSS website](#).

9. Any queries

If you have any queries, please contact your university's [SeNSS administrative lead](#) in the first instance.