

STUDENT-LED STUDENTSHIP APPLICATION: GUIDANCE NOTES FOR OCTOBER 2021 ENTRY

Please read these guidance notes before submitting your SeNSS application and, in particular, note the following:

1. You do not need to have a Masters degree to apply for a +3 PhD. If you have equivalent professional experience or an undergraduate degree plus relevant professional experience, you may be eligible for an award.
2. All studentships are offered on a full- or part- time basis, and on a three-year or four-year basis.
3. There are **four stages to making a SeNSS application**: a) check your eligibility (see p.5, below); b) if eligible, apply to your chosen university for a postgraduate place; c) discuss your application with your supervisor and, if they are supportive, then; d) apply for a SeNSS studentship.
4. The deadline for applying to your chosen university for a postgraduate place is **12.00 GMT on Monday 18 January 2021**. We strongly advise you to apply several weeks before this to allow sufficient time to complete the four stages above.

Once you have applied to your university, you must apply for SeNSS funding. The deadline for this competition is **12.00 GMT on Monday 1 February 2021**.

5. In order to submit an application, you must:
 - a. Discuss this with your proposed supervisor, who will be required to complete a statement of support for your application;
 - b. Complete the online application. Print outs and other forms of the application will not be accepted; and,
 - c. Read the criteria on pp.13-14, as your application will be judged according to these criteria.
6. You are only permitted to submit ONE application for a **student-led studentship** beginning in 2021. However, there is **no limit** on the number of **supervisor-led studentship applications** you can make, provided you are eligible for each of these. For further information, click [here](#).
7. Please note that your university will ask you to attend an interview in respect of your application for a PhD place, and/or your application for a SeNSS studentship.

Contents

THE APPLICATION FORM.....	4
1. COMPLETING THE PERSON INFORMATION FORM	4
2. COMPLETING THE PERSONAL DETAILS FORM	4
If you are applying for both a student-led and a supervisor-led studentship, you will need to complete two different applications.	4
SECTION ONE: PERSONAL DETAILS.....	4
1.1. Personal information.....	4
1.2. Reference number	4
1.3. Home address.....	5
1.4. Mode of study	5
1.5. Residential eligibility rules.....	5
2. COMPLETING THE MAIN APPLICATION FORM.....	7
SECTION ONE: STUDENTSHIP AWARD DETAILS.....	7
1.1. Studentship structure	7
1.2. Declaration regarding studentship structure	7
1.3. Applying for a SeNSS studentship if you have already started your PhD ..	8
1.4. The SeNSS compliant 2+2 or +4 degree you plan to study for	8
1.5. Your Masters degree	8
1.6. Your SeNSS home university and Pathway	9
1.7. Concurrent funding applications.....	9
SECTION TWO: YOUR RESEARCH PROPOSAL.....	10
2.1. Research projects which use advanced quantitative methods (AQM)	10
2.2. Your research proposal title	11
2.3. Your research proposal abstract.....	11
2.4. Giving permission for publishing your abstract.....	11
2.5. Description of your research proposal	11
2.6. Bibliography	13
2.7. Ethical considerations raised by your research proposal.....	13
SECTION THREE: RESOURCING.....	13
3.1. Research costs	13
3.2. Overseas fieldwork	14
3.3. Language training	14

SECTION FOUR: COLLABORATIVE STUDENTSHIP DETAILS	15
4.1.1. Information about your collaborative partner(s)	15
4.1.3. Your collaborative partner’s contribution.....	16
SECTION FIVE: YOUR EDUCATION AND TRAINING	16
5.1. Details of your previous education and training	16
SECTION SIX: YOUR PAST RESEARCH METHODS TRAINING	16
Research methods: prior training assessment	17
SECTION SEVEN: YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE	18
7.1. Your work experience	18
7.2. Gaps in this your work record	18
SECTION EIGHT: YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT	18
SECTION NINE: CONSULTING YOUR SUPERVISORY TEAM	19
SECTION TEN: YOUR DECLARATION	19
4. COMPLETING THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FORM	19
5. ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE APPLICATION FORM	20
5.1. Next steps	20
6. SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION.....	20

THE APPLICATION FORM

There are four forms to be completed:

- 1) The personal information form;
- 2) The personal details form;
- 3) The application form; and,
- 4) The equal opportunities form.

Because the forms must cover various scenarios (for example, whether you are a Home or International student, whether you are studying for a +3, a 1+3, a 2+2 or a +4 etc.), you will be directed to different questions depending on your answers to these questions. Where this occurs, we indicate this with **highlighted text**.

1. COMPLETING THE PERSON INFORMATION FORM

This very brief form must be completed at the beginning of the application process, as we are required by law to obtain your consent before we can ask you to share any of your personal information with us.

2. COMPLETING THE PERSONAL DETAILS FORM

Please indicate which kind of award you are applying for:

- A **student-led studentship**: you come up with your own research proposal; or,
- A **supervisor-led collaborative studentship**: a supervisor comes up with a research question, identifies a collaborative partner to work with them on it, and then SeNSS funds a student to work on this project and join this team.

If you are applying for both a student-led and a supervisor-led studentship, you will need to complete two different applications.

SECTION ONE: PERSONAL DETAILS

1.1. Personal information

If your surname has changed since birth for any reason (e.g. marriage), please could you include both your surname at birth and your current surname, as it is written on official documents such as your passport or identity document.

1.2. Reference number

Please create a unique application reference number. This should start with the first letter of your first name, followed by the first four letters of your surname, plus the code for your home university, plus the code for your Pathway.

Home university codes:

- City, University London = City
- University of East Anglia = UEA
- University of Essex = Ess

- Goldsmiths, University of London = Gold
- University of Kent = Kent
- University of Reading = Read
- University of Roehampton = Roe
- Royal Holloway, University of London = RHUL
- University of Surrey = Surr
- University of Sussex = Suss

Pathway codes:

- Business and Management Studies = BusMan
- Development Studies = Dev
- Economics = Econ
- Education = Edu
- Human Geography = HGeo
- Linguistics = Ling
- Politics and International Relations = Pol
- Psychology = Psych
- Science, Technology, and Sustainability Studies = STS
- Social Anthropology = SocA
- Social Work and Social Policy = SWSP
- Socio-Legal Studies = SocLeg
- Sociology = Socio

For example, John Smith attending the University of Essex in the Sociology Pathway would have a reference of: **JSmitEssSocio**;

and

Aaleyah Abidi attending the University of Sussex in the Development Studies Pathway would have a reference of: **AAbidSussDev**.

1.3. Home address

Please provide your home address at the point of application. That is, the address at which you are ordinarily resident during most of the year.

1.4. Mode of study

SeNSS offers both full-time and part-time study. Please indicate which you prefer.

1.5. Residential eligibility rules

Everyone, regardless of where they live, or their nationality/citizenship, is eligible to apply for these studentships (so long as you also meet the academic eligibility requirements).

However, we are **limited by the ESRC** to awarding approximately 10-12 studentships to international applicants each year (30% of the total number of studentship awards we make), and there may be **fees implications** for these applicants. That is, the ESRC pays students' fees at a rate of £4,425 p.a., whereas the international fee rate charged by most universities is around £15,000 p.a. SeNSS universities are yet to decide whether they will waive the difference (approximately £8,500 p.a.), meaning that international applicants will not be asked to pay any fees, or whether international applicants will be asked to fund this difference themselves. SeNSS universities will decide on this in December

2020, after which we will post this information on our website as well as update these guidance notes.

You must check your residential status, as you will need to indicate whether you are a **home** or an **international** applicant.

To be a **home** student, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK national (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have settled status, or
- Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have indefinite leave to remain or enter.

If you do not meet any of the criteria above, you are classed as an **international student**.

If you have any questions about your residential status, please contact your chosen university's SeNSS Administrative Lead.

All successful applicants, whether home or international, will be awarded a **full SeNSS ESRC-funded studentship award**, which includes the following for the duration of the award:

- your University tuition fees:
 - **home students:** these are paid in full directly to your University, and you will not be required to pay anything towards these fees;
 - **international students:** as noted, the ESRC pays students' fees at a rate of £4,425 p.a., whereas the international fee rate charged by most universities is around £15,000 p.a. SeNSS universities are yet to decide whether they will waive the difference (approximately £8,500 p.a.), meaning that international applicants will not be asked to pay any fees, or whether international applicants will be asked to fund this difference themselves. SeNSS universities will decide this in December 2020, after which we will post this information on our website and update these guidance notes;
- a tax-free maintenance stipend to pay your living costs: this is currently set at £15,285 per year. For those studying at universities based in London, there is an additional £2,000 per year paid as London Weighting, given that the cost of living is higher for those living in London. **If you are not studying at a London-based University, but still choose to live in London, you will not receive the London Weighting payment;**
- you will also be eligible to apply for other funding, including:
 - research training support grant funds of up to £750 per year; and,
 - funding for overseas fieldwork, overseas institutional visits, language training, and placements/internships etc.

Please note that you cannot hold a SeNSS studentship and another scholarship at the same time, except in exceptional circumstances. If you have been, or will be, offered another scholarship, please immediately contact your SeNSS Administrative Lead to discuss this.

*** Once you have completed this form, please click on the **green submit button** at the bottom of the screen. ***

2. COMPLETING THE MAIN APPLICATION FORM

SECTION ONE: STUDENTSHIP AWARD DETAILS

1.1. Studentship structure

This section applies to all applicants. However, depending on the structure of studentship you are applying for, you will be directed to different questions on the application form.

SeNSS offers the following studentship structures:

- **+3 studentship:** this consists of a three-year PhD;
- **1+3 studentship:** this comprises an integrated one-year Masters degree and a three-year PhD.;
- **2+2 studentship:** this consists of a longer Masters programme followed by a shorter PhD programme; and,
- **+4 studentship:** this comprises both core and advanced training within the PhD programme.

All Pathways offer 1+3 and +3 studentships. However:

- **2+2 studentships** are only offered by the Economics, and Politics and International Relations Pathways.
- **+4 studentships** may be offered by the following Pathways: Business and Management Studies, Economics, Education, Human Geography, Politics and International Relations, some sub-Pathways within Science, Technology, and Sustainability Studies, Socio-Legal Studies, and Sociology.

1.2. Declaration regarding studentship structure

This question applies to all applicants.

Please note that, if SeNSS determines that you have not already met the majority of the ESRC's core research methods training requirements, you may be offered a different award structure from the one for which you applied. The decision regarding which structure of studentship you may be offered will be based on evidence provided in the past research methods training section of this application form (see **Q6**, below).

- *If you are applying for a +3, 2+2 or +4 award, you will be directed to **Q1.3**.*
- *If you are applying for a 1+3 award, you will be directed to **Q1.5**.*

1.3. Applying for a SeNSS studentship if you have already started your PhD

This question only applies to those applying for a +3, 2+2 or +4.

You may apply for a studentship **even if you have already begun your PhD**, provided that, at the start of your award in October 2021, you meet the following requirements:

- you have **at least 50% of your period of study remaining** (excluding your 'writing up' period); AND
- your degree structure is either a **+3 studentship, a 2+2, or a +4 studentship**.

For example, if you have been registered for your +3 PhD for one year of a full-time PhD at the point at which the studentship would commence, you would be eligible to apply for 2 years of further funding. If you have already been registered for 2 years at this point, you are not eligible for funding.

If your application is successful, you will receive funding for the remainder of your studies. However, you may only apply for funding for the remaining period of your studies if you are already studying at one of the SeNSS universities, and your current research project falls into one of the 13 SeNSS Pathways. If you have already started a 2+2 or a +4 PhD, your degree must be on the [SeNSS compliant PhD list](#), or you will not be eligible for funding (see below).

*If you are doing a 2+2 or +4, your next question is **Q1.4**.*

*If you are doing a 1+3, your next question is **Q1.5**.*

*If you are doing a +3, your next question is **Q1.6**.*

1.4. The SeNSS compliant 2+2 or +4 degree you plan to study for

This question only applies to those applying for a 2+2 or +4.

Please consult the [SeNSS compliant PhD list](#) to obtain the full programme name and reference number of the compliant degree you plan to study for.

*Your next question is **Q1.6**.*

1.5. Your Masters degree

This question only applies to those applying for a 1+3.

1.5.1. The SeNSS compliant Masters you plan to study for

You may only apply for a Masters judged by SeNSS to be compliant with ESRC training outcomes, and offered by your chosen university.

In order to find out whether the Masters you want to take is compliant, please view the [SeNSS compliant Masters list](#).

Here, you will find an Excel spreadsheet containing all the Masters degrees from all ten SeNSS universities which have been judged compliant. Please provide the SeNSS reference number for your intended Masters degree, which appears in the first column of the spreadsheet, e.g. “m001”.

Please ensure that you enter the Masters programme name exactly as contained in the spreadsheet, in your application form, as there are many degrees with similar names. This is the name in the second column of the spreadsheet, e.g. “MRes Social Science Research Methods”.

1.5.2. Studying for a Masters degree at a different institution from where you plan to study for your PhD

You are expected to complete your Masters and PhD at the same university. It is only in exceptional circumstances that you will be permitted to study for these at different SeNSS universities. If you need to split these studies between two universities, please explain the exceptional circumstances that necessitate this split.

If you plan to study for your Masters at a different SeNSS university, you will need to discuss this very early on with both your proposed supervisor and your chosen university’s SeNSS Administrative Lead which, in this case, will be the supervisor and the lead at the university at which you plan to study at for your +3. Additional time will be required to organise this split between institutions, assuming it is possible.

1.6. Your SeNSS home university and Pathway

This question applies to all applicants.

Please identify the [SeNSS university](#) at which you propose to study - this will become your “home” university. You are only permitted to make **one application in the student-led competition to one SeNSS university**.

Please identify the Pathway your research topic falls under. A full list of the 13 Pathways SeNSS offers is available [here](#). If your proposal does not come within one of these, you will not be eligible for funding. SeNSS strongly encourages applications which are inter- or multi-disciplinary, so please identify any other disciplines which are covered by your topic.

1.7. Concurrent funding applications

This question applies to all applicants.

Please indicate whether you are also applying for any other funded studentship at any other university or any other studentship funded by UKRI (the umbrella body for all UK Research Councils).

Please note: this is for information only, and **will not prejudice your application to SeNSS in any way**.

SECTION TWO: YOUR RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This section applies to all applicants.

You **must** discuss your research proposal with your primary supervisor before submitting your application form. You will be asked to confirm in Section 9 of your application form that you have done this.

However, it is your responsibility to write your own research proposal, that is, it must not be written by anyone else, such as your supervisor. Past experience shows that it can be easy to detect a proposal that has been written, or even partly written, by a supervisor rather than the applicant. If this appears to be the case, your proposal may receive a lower score, or may be excluded from the competition altogether.

You should approach your proposal as an opportunity to show that you have begun to explore an important area of study, and that your research has the potential to challenge and develop that area. It is also important to demonstrate that you can express your ideas in clear and precise English, in such a way that someone who is an academic, but not a specialist in your subject area, can understand.

2.1. Research projects which use advanced quantitative methods (AQM)

SeNSS offers one AQM-badged studentship each year. To be eligible, you must show that your project meets one of the following three ESRC criteria:

Evidence that your research proposal is AQM-based: you must describe the relevance of particular AQMs to the main research questions presented in the proposal and demonstrate how AQMs are vital to exploring your research question. This should include information about the kind of quantitative methodology and analysis that you intend to focus on, your current level of proficiency in core and advanced quantitative methods, and how your advanced skills are intended to be developed through training, and then used to address problems in new or innovative ways.

Evidence that the use of large data sets is central to your research proposal: you must describe the existing data sets that you intend to use in your research, including at least one ESRC-funded data resource or infrastructure (these are outlined in the [AQM-Steered Studentship guidance document](#)). You must explain why these datasets are the best ones available to address your research questions / hypotheses. This should include some reference to whether or how far your proposed research will build on existing analyses using such data sets, and the capacity of your work to use under-exploited data sets. As appropriate, evidence of your past experience of using large datasets, or a training plan to equip you with the relevant technical skills, should be outlined.

Evidence that big data and associated data analysis skills are central to your research proposal: you must explain why big data approaches are particularly suited to the research questions / hypotheses you have listed in your proposal and why and how these approaches enhance and/or are complementary to more traditional sources of data. You must describe your current proficiency in core

and advanced data skills, and how your advanced skills are intended to be developed through training to support this project. If you plan to develop new and/or enhanced methods of analysis for such data, you must describe how you will do this, and what the impact of these new or enhanced methods will be.

2.2. Your research proposal title

Please state the title of your proposed research project (or your current PhD title, if you have already begun your studies). Your title must be no more than **150 characters, including spaces between words and punctuation.**

2.3. Your research proposal abstract

Please provide an abstract, or summary, of your research proposal. **This is limited to a maximum of 4,000 characters, including spaces between words and punctuation.** This should be a complete but concise description of your research proposal, written in such a way that a non-specialist reader will quickly be able to ascertain the purpose of your research project. Please note that SeNSS panellists who will be assessing your application may not be experts in your disciplinary area.

2.4. Giving permission for publishing your abstract

If you are awarded a studentship, your full research abstract will be made public by the ESRC via UKRI's Gateway to Research. This is a condition of all studentship awards. If you are not happy for the version you provided in Q2.3 to be made public (for example, if you wish to protect your intellectual property), you will be offered the opportunity to provide a second version of your abstract that you are happy to see made public.

2.5. Description of your research proposal

There is a strict limit of 10,000 characters (including spaces between words and punctuation) for this section. This limit applies to the all the text contained in this text box, that is, to your proposal description, research background and questions, research methods, and schedule of work. This limit of 10,000 characters does not include your title, abstract or bibliography, for which different character limits apply. Please note that the application form does not accept footnotes.

If you exceed this limit, any additional characters will be disregarded by those assessing your application. This may mean that your application does not score as highly as it might have done.

Your proposal should follow the structure outlined below:

- Description of your research proposal (if your proposal uses advanced quantitative methods (AQM), please ensure you explain this)
- Research background and questions
- Research methods
- Proposed timeline
- Proposed impact

Consider covering the following points in this section:

- the key areas/issues covered by the project, the research problems or questions you intend to address and why;
- the research context within which those problems or questions are located;

- the particular contribution that you hope to make to the existing knowledge and understanding in this area, explaining why your research is important, and noting its relevance to, and potential impact for, non-academic beneficiaries, as appropriate;
- the methods and critical approaches that you plan to use, and the sources for these, if appropriate;
- if your project uses advanced quantitative methods (AQM), please explain which methods it uses, and how it uses them;
- if relevant, how the proposed research relates to what you have studied already (where there is overlap between your Masters dissertation and your doctoral research, you should demonstrate how the project will go further, and state the added value of continuing to research in this area);
- how the research project will develop over the period of the award (e.g. key stages, timetable); and,
- how this research relates to your eventual career aims.
- If you have already begun your doctoral study, indicate the work you have undertaken to date, providing information on main pieces of work completed.

In writing your proposal, please refer to the selection criteria, below, by which your application will be judged.

SeNSS STUDENT-LED STUDENTSHIP COMPETITION SELECTION CRITERIA

The following 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 your outline of your proposed research project, your reasons for pursuing it, and its wider significance. It will also be based on the information supplied by your proposed primary supervisor. SeNSS assessors will be looking for evidence of your ability to design and conduct a strong research project, a coherent and well thought-out research plan, a strong awareness of the place of your research within the current field, and potential impact. Reference will be made to your personal statement, as contained in your application, as well as your supervisor's supporting statement.

Evidence that you are well-prepared for your proposed research and future career (40%)

This will be based on your description of how your previous experience (academic and/or professional) has prepared you for postgraduate study and research. Reference will be made to the degree transcripts and module marks you have provided, as well as your supervisor's supporting statement.

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

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

Please note that all 4-year award applications (1+3, 2+2 and +4) will be assessed in a way that recognises that applicants are likely to have had less training and fewer opportunities to develop a detailed proposed research project than an applicant for a +3 studentship.

2.6. Bibliography

Please list the key texts to which you have referred in your research proposal. If there are additional important texts you wish to include, please do so. There is no character limit for this section, but you should only include texts which are directly relevant to your proposal.

2.7. Ethical considerations raised by your research proposal

Your proposed research is required to conform to the ethical standards of your home institution and to the [ESRC's Framework for Research Ethics](#).

If you are unsure about ethical considerations, please discuss this with your proposed primary supervisor in the first instance.

If your proposed research does not give rise to any ethical considerations (this will be rare), then simply state this in Q2.7.1.

SECTION THREE: RESOURCING

This section applies to all applicants.

Please note that simply stating in your application that you require additional resources does not guarantee that you will receive all the funds you have noted if your application is successful.

3.1. Research costs

Please read the [SeNSS Research Training Support Grant guidance notes](#), which sets out the costs you can apply for under this fund. These are available in the resources section of the FluidReview website.

If successful, you will be able to claim up to £750 per year, or up to £3,500 across the lifetime of your award, for costs incurred directly in support of your research (**excluding** language training and overseas fieldwork, as discussed below). For

example, these costs could be incurred in relation to interviewing participants, travel, attending conferences, accessing datasets etc.

If you are intending to undertake **fieldwork in the UK**, please note this, and set out your costs. In this case, you may be able to access more than £750 a year, or more than £3,500 across the lifetime of your award.

If your non-fieldwork research costs are **likely to exceed £750 per year**, or more than £3,500 across the lifetime of your award, please state in Q.3.1.1 what your anticipated costs are, and how you plan to meet these costs.

3.2. Overseas fieldwork

Please think very carefully about whether you will need to conduct overseas fieldwork (OFW) for your research, and discuss this with your supervisor. OFW is defined as conducting fieldwork **anywhere outside the UK**. SeNSS offers a **maximum of £6,000** to students wishing to conduct OFW.

If you are planning to conduct OFW, you must read the [SeNSS Overseas Fieldwork policy: Guidance for students](#) before completing this question. It is available in the resources section of the FluidReview website.

You will need to draw up a clear budget for your OFW that itemises all the standard costs you will incur (flights, visa, vaccinations etc.) with a brief justification for any further costs. Please be realistic when drawing up your fieldwork budget. That is, **please do not significantly under- or over-cost** it. Those reviewing your SeNSS application form will assess whether your research project is feasible in light of your plan and budget for conducting OFW.

If you are awarded a SeNSS Studentship, you will still need to submit a formal, more detailed application, supported by your supervisor, for funding for OFW once you have started your studies, as this funding will not be automatically paid to you.

If you state in your application that you will not need to conduct OFW but change your mind after you start your studies, it is highly unlikely that you will be permitted to apply for funding to support this, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3.3. Language training

It is possible to be granted an extension to your funding for up to one year if you need to acquire or develop a working ability with a language where this is crucial to the success of your research. If you are planning to spend extended time in the field, **you are expected to be competent in a language which is used in the area in which you will be based.**

If you need to learn a language, you will need to check whether this language qualifies for an extension and, if so, for how long. Please refer to Annex 2 on page 43 of the [ESRC's Postgraduate Funding Guide](#) for this information. (Please note that the ESRC refers to learning any language as "difficult language training".) Please discuss this with your supervisor. In doing so, you will need to consider issues such

as whether you will need to develop competence in a local dialect, the level of competence you need to achieve in this language to carry out your research etc. You **must** read the [SeNSS Difficult Language Training policy: Guidance for Students](#) before answering this question. It is available in the resources section of the FluidReview website.

If you answer no to this question, you will not be permitted to apply for a language training extension if you change your mind once you have started your studentship.

Those reviewing your SeNSS application form will assess whether your research project is feasible in light of the language training you propose to undertake. In exceptional circumstances, we may require further evidence that you will be capable of learning the language in the time available.

Please note that, if you are awarded a SeNSS studentship, you will need to submit a more detailed application, supported by your supervisor, for an extension to your funding on the basis of needing to learn or develop a language, as this is not automatically granted.

SECTION FOUR: COLLABORATIVE STUDENTSHIP DETAILS

Q4.1. applies to all applicants.

A student-led research project with a collaborative element is one which is devised by the student, who identifies and approaches a non-academic partner (termed a “collaborative partner”) to work with the student on their research project. **A collaborative partner is not a university, but can be a business, public or third sector organisation.** There can be more than one collaborative partner.

Collaborative partners must contribute something of value to the research project, for example, contributing financially to help cover studentship costs, providing access to their datasets, providing an additional supervisor, or providing a placement. It is not only important to demonstrate that the research project will benefit from this partner’s knowledge, skills and resources, but also how this partner will ultimately benefit from the knowledge and outcomes generated by the research project (impact).

4.1.1. Information about your collaborative partner(s)

If you answer “no” to Q4.1, you will be directed to Q5.

If you are applying for a studentship with a collaborative element, please provide:

- The name of the collaborating organisation(s); and,
- The name, position, and contact details of your contact in this (these) organisation(s).

Please supply a letter of support from your collaborative partner(s) for your research proposal if you are able to do so. A [template for a letter of support](#) is available in the

resources section of the SeNSS on-line application website. In brief, the letter should:

- state why the collaborator(s) would like to be a partner in this research project, and what they hope to gain from the collaboration; and,
- provide a brief statement about what the collaborator(s) will contribute to this project, including any cash and/or in-kind contributions (such as access to their data).

To **upload the letter of support**, from the main menu click on 'Add Document' (on right hand side) and then either drag and drop the file or click on 'Browse for files'.

4.1.3. Your collaborative partner's contribution

Your collaborative partners can either contribute financially (up to 50% of the total value of the studentship), or in kind. "In kind" means that your collaborative partner will make a non-monetary contribution to your studentship, for example, it may provide an external supervisor for you, allow you to access its datasets or offer you a placement.

SECTION FIVE: YOUR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This section applies to all applicants.

5.1. Details of your previous education and training

For each higher education qualification you hold, please provide the information outlined below. To assist you, examples of undergraduate and Masters degrees are provided on the application form.

- Qualification and title of award;
- Name of university/institution studied at;
- Name of country in which this university/institution is situated;
- Month and year that the programme started;
- Month and year that the programme has been/will be completed; and,
- Degree classification (where awarded), or marks obtained for completed modules.

If you have already started your PhD, for the "degree classification" line, please state whether, at your last supervisory board meeting (or equivalent), your progress was satisfactory or not.

SECTION SIX: YOUR PAST RESEARCH METHODS TRAINING

If you are applying for a 1+3, 2+2 or +4, and have neither a Masters nor any professional experience, simply answer "no" to Q6.1 and Q6.2, then move to Q8.

For those who already hold a Masters degree, or who are currently studying for a Masters degree, and/or have relevant professional experience, please answer all the questions in section 6.

This information is needed to determine whether your Masters degree complies with the prior research methods training outcomes required by both SeNSS and the ESRC. These learning outcomes have been agreed in order to ensure you are in the best possible position to undertake your PhD research, and to build your employability and transferrable skills. Both the [ESRC's requirements and SeNSS's Learning Outcomes](#) are available in the FluidReview resources section.

- **If you either hold a Masters from a SeNSS university, or you are currently studying for a Masters through a SeNSS university**, you will need to check whether it is compliant with the ESRC and SeNSS's learning outcomes. The database of compliant Masters is available at: [SeNSS compliant Masters list](#).
 - If your degree is on the compliant list, you will need to enter your Masters' reference number and name, and you will be directed to Section Seven (**Q7**) next.
 - If your degree is not on the compliant list, you will be directed to **Q6.3**, where you will be asked questions about your professional experience in relation research methods training.
- **If you hold a Masters degree from a university which is not a member of the SeNSS consortium**, you will be directed to **Q6.3**, where you will be asked questions about your professional experience in relation research methods training.
- **If you do not hold a Masters degree, but think that you have professional experience which you believe is equivalent to a Masters**, you will be directed to **Q6.3**, where you will be asked questions about your professional experience in relation research methods training.

Based on the information you provide, if your Masters degree and/or your professional experience is judged as having sufficient research methods training, you will be permitted to apply for a +3 PhD.

If your Masters degree or professional experience does not include sufficient research methods training, you will either be required to study for a second Masters degree via our 1+3 structure of study, or you might be awarded one or two terms' worth of additional funding (either a +3.25 or a +3.5 award) to complete this training.

Research methods: prior training assessment

There are seven elements of research methods training to be assessed. For each of these seven elements, there is a list of all the types of training you may have undergone or where your professional experience may have covered these:

- the use of software;
- academic communication;
- research design;
- basic scientific method;
- qualitative research methods;

- quantitative research methods; and,
- and general research knowledge and skills.

Please tick all of those which apply, and state *either* which modules covered this training, and how it was covered, *or* how your professional experience has covered these. If you have had formal training in these elements, please provide the name of the module which covered these, and either provide a hyperlink to a webpage with a detailed module outline, or upload a copy of the detailed module outline to FluidReview.

SECTION SEVEN: YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE

This section applies to all applicants.

7.1. Your work experience

Please detail any work experience that is relevant to your proposed project. If you have never had any work experience, this will not have a negative effect on your application.

Where you have held more than one relevant post, please record all of these, placing line breaks in between each, using the following format:

- The name of your employer/organisation;
- The position you held in this organisation;
- The date you started working there, and the date on which you finished your employment;
- Briefly, what your responsibilities were in relation to your position; and,
- Any on the job training you received and/or skills you gained. If these have any bearing on your proposed research project, please provide details of how this training and these skills will benefit you in carrying out your research.

7.2. Gaps in this your work record

If there are any gaps in your professional experience record, please explain these. For example, gaps may appear in your record from taking parental leave, being someone's carer, or being unemployed, etc. Please note that any gaps you list will not disqualify you from applying for a studentship.

SECTION EIGHT: YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

This section applies to all applicants.

Please address the issues outlined below:

- **Your reasons for applying, and why you deserve a studentship:** please discuss your academic interests, and why you wish to study with SeNSS, your chosen university, and your chosen department. Please discuss those aspects of studying with SeNSS you find most appealing, such as taking certain modules or placement opportunities. Please demonstrate your preparedness for the

demands of postgraduate life by discussing your passion for your topic, as well as your existing knowledge and experience.

- **your career goals:** please tell us about your long-term career ambitions, and how a SeNSS studentship relates to these.
- **your preparation:** please discuss how your undergraduate and/or Masters degree has prepared you for your proposed research project.
- **your skillset:** please highlight your relevant skills and knowledge that will enable you to make an impact, and explain what that impact will be. Please also summarise your abilities in core areas related to your research project, including IT, organisation, communication, time management and critical thinking. Please also make reference to any grades you've achieved, awards you've won, placements you've undertaken, or conferences you've attended which have either helped prepare you for your research project, or which make you an excellent candidate for a SeNSS studentship.

Please note: there is a maximum word count of 500 words for this section.

SECTION NINE: CONSULTING YOUR SUPERVISORY TEAM

This section applies to all applicants.

You must consult with your primary supervisor when drafting your application.

For information: SeNSS and the ESRC both require that you have **at least two supervisors**, one of whom will be your **primary supervisor**. Your proposed primary supervisor must be based at your chosen SeNSS university, and you must consult this supervisor about completing your application form. You should discuss the issue of who your second supervisor should be with your primary supervisor, as they are best-placed to know who would add the most value to your research project and your supervisory team. Your second supervisor can also be based at your chosen university, or can be based at another SeNSS university.

SECTION TEN: YOUR DECLARATION

This section applies to all applicants.

Please complete the declaration.

4. COMPLETING THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FORM

This form applies to all applicants.

SeNSS is committed to an Equal Opportunities Policy, and we acknowledge and embrace diversity.

SeNSS and the ESRC are committed to ensuring that those applying for studentships are selected on the basis of merit. By completing this form, you will help

us to ensure that our policies and procedures are effective in avoiding discrimination and promoting equal opportunities in awarding studentships. SeNSS needs your help and co-operation to enable it to do this. Filling in this form is not voluntary but, if there are questions you do not wish to answer, you have the option of ticking “prefer not to say”. The information you provide will be used for monitoring and statistical purposes only, will stay confidential, and be stored securely. Access to this information will be limited to the core SeNSS staff members.

The information you provide on this form will not be released to those involved in making the decision on who receives a studentship.

5. ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE APPLICATION FORM

5.1. Next steps

- You will need to save the form and exit it once you have completed filling it in. You will then be returned to your application home page.
- **Upload degree transcripts:** please scan your degree certificates or official award letters and official transcripts, and upload them to your application. You can do this by clicking the start button.
- **Upload a letter of support, if you have a collaborative element to your studentship:** if you are applying for a studentship with a collaborative element, please scan your letter of support from your collaborative partner, and upload it to your application. You can do this by clicking the start button.
- **For your supervisor’s details:** click the start button for the supervisor. This will open a new page. Please type in the first name, last name and email address of your proposed supervisor. You will also be asked how you know this person (how you identified them as a potential PhD supervisor).

In order to ensure that your supervisor completes a supporting statement for you, please inform them that they will be getting an email requesting a statement. Sometimes these emails may get labelled as spam and placed in their spam/junk folder, so please ask them to check these folders in the event that they don't see the email requesting them to write a supporting statement.

Note: If your supervisor doesn't receive an email within 24 hours, you can try resending the request. If your supervisor still doesn't get the email, please contact FluidReview via their [support page](#). Please be sure to include the email address of your supervisor when contacting FluidReview.

6. SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Once your application is complete, you must submit it online.