



Student Led Training Fund (SLTF)

2026 (for events taking place in 2026-27)

Guidance

1. Purpose

The **Student Led Training Fund (SLTF)** supports the delivery of advanced and specialist training by students and early career researchers (ECRs). The SLTF is available to offer advanced training that speaks directly to the needs of students. This is an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange, and for students and ECRs to share their cutting-edge skills developed through their doctoral studies with the wider community. The SLTF also contributes to helping the SGSSS deliver the highest quality inclusive advanced training to postgraduate students in Scotland. In order to ensure that our training is inclusive, we are seeking training that is delivered in person, hybrid or online and that has accessible online materials.

What is it for?

- Supporting students and ECRs to deliver training events (online, in person or hybrid);
- Supporting students and ECRs to help us develop a bank of high-quality online asynchronous training materials on advanced social science topics;
- Some training opportunities will be offered to collaborative partners (see the website for further information about the January 2027 call).

What can it not be used for?

The fund is not to be used for core training delivered through postgraduate taught/Masters level modules.

2. Eligibility – who can apply?

The SLTF is open to:

- **All social science PhD students studying in Scotland** (as well as ESRC-funded students currently in their master's year of a 1+3/3.5 award) **who have the right to work during their studies**. Co-facilitators can be based elsewhere in the UK but training must take place in Scotland or online.
- **Early career researchers (ECRs) based in Scotland, defined as:** a university employed researcher usually on a fixed-term contract; an ECR is usually considered to be within seven years of completing their doctorate, although exceptions can be made for career interruptions and other routes into research roles.

We welcome SLTF proposals from students or ECRs based on any of our 16 partner universities: Aberdeen; Abertay; Dundee; Edinburgh; Glasgow; Glasgow Caledonian; Heriot-Watt; Highlands & Islands; Napier; Queen Margaret; Robert Gordon; SRUC; St Andrews; Stirling; Strathclyde; West of Scotland.

We welcome students to put forward cross-institution proposals, which are jointly conceived events that meet the needs of students across a number of SGSSS subjects or institutions. This fosters cohort-building that students often value beyond their own university and discipline.

There is no cap on the number of applications that can be submitted by an individual or institution, as funds will be allocated to quality SLTF proposals that meet the terms of funding and eligibility described in this guidance.

3. What types of training we would like to fund

We warmly welcome proposals for training. The SLTF will support training that benefits the wider student body or collaborative partners. All training events should be available to 1+3/3.5 and +3/3.5 social science PhD students or equivalent, regardless of funding status. We welcome innovative/cutting edge ideas around current gaps in provision.

- **Specialist research methods:**

SLTF training typically focuses on specialist (previously known as Advanced Methods) as defined in the [ESRC training guidelines](#). This is very broad and includes any cutting-edge training on research methods, and theoretical approaches spanning all fields of inquiry.

Some examples include:

- Advanced quantitative approaches e.g. handling missing data, MAIHDA
 - Training on using particular software e.g. advanced data visualisation with R Studio
 - Advanced qualitative analysis and data collection topics
 - Creative /art-based methods
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- **Engaging with non-academics / Research in practice**

We think it's really important that researchers can work with non-academics and translate their research outside of universities. We invite students to come forward and share their expertise and provide training on any of the following:

- Science communication and public engagement
- Participatory and stakeholder approaches
- Writing for policymakers

- **Professional and personal development (including wellbeing)**

We also consider support for training on personal and professional topics like well-being and employability; some past examples include preparation for the viva, mindfulness-based approaches to doctoral research, and cultivating resilience and agency in the face of climate change.

- **Emerging approaches for social science research using artificial intelligence**

This include uses of AI tools for all stages of the research lifecycle, as well as professional skills. All training should take a sufficiently critical approach which considering academic integrity and ethical issues.

4. Delivery format and materials

Training could be delivered in one of the following ways:

- **An in-person or hybrid event hosted at your own institution**
- **An online event hosted on a platform of your choice**

Please note: To approve hybrid events, we would need evidence that there would be parity of experience in person and online, for example a second facilitator dedicated to managing online attendees, and activities that work equally well across both modes. If we do not feel this threshold has been reached, we may suggest hosting your event either solely online or solely in person.

Events

Please note that all events should have some accompanying materials that are shareable and accessible to students after the event. Applications should include justification for the proposed format and explanation of how this will be successfully delivered (taking into account any equality, diversity and inclusion considerations). In particular, we will seek reassurance that hybrid sessions are being appropriately resourced and facilitated, for example by the use of appropriate technology and the use of both in person and online facilitators.

Accompanying materials for events: Proposals should specify how the event could produce accompanying accessible online materials that any student could access post-event. This might include, for example:

- Audio visual materials e.g. presentation slide deck, a recording of training on the day of the event, short guidelines of particular aspects of the training for us to make more widely available.
- Practical materials for students to follow in their own time

We realise that it will not always be possible to incorporate an asynchronous learning dimension to the event, however we strongly support attempts to do this as part of our commitment to provide training opportunities and resources accessible to all Social Science PhD students in Scotland.

5. How the funding can be used

- Payment for PGRs and ECRs to develop and deliver training events: Each person preparing and delivering the learning materials for an event will be paid £250 for their overall contribution to a half day event and £500 for a full day event.
- No more than two students, or two ECRs can contribute to a single event, therefore events should cost between £250 and £1,000. Where two students or ECRs are involved, or the event is a full day, we encourage providing information about how this will be worth a higher investment (such as numbers of students that can be involved; commitment to synchronous delivery plus asynchronous materials; style of workshop etc.)
- Funds could cover related logistical costs involved in running events, which might include, in limited circumstances, venue hire. Please note, where possible we recommend holding events in host HEIs and room hire costs are expected to be reduced or waived by the hosting institution.

- We do not cover catering costs for events, and recommend that any full day events specify that refreshments will not be provided and attendees are either welcome to bring their own or buy locally during a suitable break.
- We cannot cover payments for external speakers.
- For in person events, students will be able to reclaim travel or accommodation costs in line with the [SGSSS expenses policy](#), so these costs do not need to be included in any application.
- Costs for predicted accessibility needs, including BSL interpreters, do not need to be included in your application, although an indication where these are likely to be required should be noted.

6. What is the deadline for applications, and timeline for delivery?

The deadline to apply for the first call (for events that will take place between 2 November 2026 and 26 February 2027) is **5pm on Friday 11 September 2026**. The deadline to apply for the second call (for events that will take place between 9 April 2027 to 27 August 2027) is **5pm on Friday 12 February 2027**. Applicants must submit their application via [SGSSS Apply](#). Applications will then be reviewed by the SGSSS Directorate.

For this call, we expect training events to be delivered **between 2 November 2026 and 26 February 2027**. This is to allow time to review proposals, get booking information online and give students time to plan for their training needs in advance. The SGSSS online platform Portal will be kept up to date with all our training events.

Please use the notes below to help guide you through the SLTF process:

First Call Timeline	31 July 2026
	First call launched
	11 September 2026
	Deadline for applications
	End September 2026
	Decisions made and communicated to applicants
	02 November 2026 - 26 February 2027
	SLTF events to take place

Second Call Timeline

15 January 2027

Second call launched

12 February 2027

Deadline for applications

Beginning March 2027

Decisions made and communicated to applicants

09 April 2027 - 27 August 2027

SLTF events to take place

1. SLTF application forms must be submitted via SGSSS Apply by 5pm on the relevant deadline date.
2. Applications are reviewed by a panel of at least three people headed up by the Deputy Director (Training). As part of the process, we may request a call (via online platform or telephone) to find out more details and to help us finalise our decision. This process is typically completed within 2-3 weeks of the application deadline.
3. Successful applicants are then issued an award letter and asked to submit a description of the event, if possible including the preliminary programme which can be advertised to students. They will also be asked for proof of their right to work (RTW) and set up on the University of Edinburgh system in order to receive payment. Although RTW must be established prior to the event, payment will be made after the event has happened.
4. SGSSS will provide guidance about how to support event planning and course design, with a particular focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.
5. SGSSS will set up a registration system for each approved event to allow for attendance booking, monitoring and data collection. We will also publicise the event through our website, social media, mailing lists and other external channels, as appropriate to the event and in collaboration with the event organiser, who is also expected to undertake active dissemination of their event through their networks.
6. Regarding payment for event delivery, SGSSS will pay the individual(s) after the work has occurred. Payment can only be made if the individual's right to work has been established in advance as per University of Edinburgh regulations. **Please note, we will only pay for event/training preparation and delivery, as per the rates noted above; we do not expect any additional associated costs to be claimed by the organiser.**
7. Payment for facilitators is made via the University of Edinburgh, as the host organisation for SGSSS. This means that if a facilitator is already a staff member of the University of Edinburgh their payment will be added to their normal payroll payment. **Please note that managing taxes and benefits is the responsibility of the facilitator and we encourage you to assess any impact this ad hoc payment may have on your own circumstances.**
8. A list of attendees must be submitted within two weeks of the event along with a post-event evaluation.

7. Examples of past SLTF events

In the past, there have been three broad types of training event that have been successful; these are described below to clarify what makes a suitable SLTF event.

Event 1

Educational Reform in Scotland. An online event hosted by one student in their third year, who has completed relevant data analysis and can give oversight of contemporary policy structures in Education. In addition to a background synthesis of this new data with relevant literature, the event includes a pre-recorded interview with a senior Scottish Government official who works closely with the Scottish Minister for Education. This interview will focus on substantive changes to the policy field in the last two years and considers the grand challenges facing Scottish Education over the next period.

£250 is paid to the student to deliver this session which will last approx. 3 hours; there is no cap on student numbers; there is also a limited time available for a Q&A.

Event 2

Two Early Career Researchers who use co-production as a method deliver training on how they utilised this approach in their PhDs. The method is used specifically to examine how to engage children and young people as participants, but the training makes some general points applicable to other groups of people and includes interactive elements where students can apply the principles to their own work.

The ECRs are paid £500 each for delivery of the training as the event runs over one full day. The event is capped at 30 students due to the interactive nature of the session, and is delivered in hybrid format using Collaborate and a lecture room at the ECRs' home institution. The facilitators alternate to provide guidance and instruction, as well as hybrid facilitation using the Collaborate chat function to ensure that both online and in-person attendees have an equal opportunity to participate.

Event 3

Emerging from the Field: This online training is focused on several aspects of returning from intensive or overseas field work. It is ideal for students who have researched in overseas locations where they used a language other than English, where they have spent more than three months 'away' and particularly where research has taken place in a conflict zone. The training is delivered by two students who provide the training together, including interactive sessions involving online 'breakout rooms' where each student works directly with a smaller group. The training is captured via Zoom and some written accounts of their experiences are available as legacy materials. The breakout sessions are not recorded, they are only available as a one-off live event.

This event will last 3 hours therefore each student is paid £250 with a total cost of £500. The breakout rooms will accommodate up to 30 students, 15 in each room. There is no cap on the number of students who engage with the initial training section.

8. Feedback from Previous Award Holders

The following are reflective comments from award holders who have hosted events over the past few years.

- *The event went well, with good engagement from the participants - there was more interaction than previous workshops I have led. I think the students considering these methods got an opportunity to learn more about these methods, think of how they might apply it and ask questions.*
- *Lessons learnt: taking space to rethink is vital, people appreciated having a creative co-learning space to think about their respective institutions and how education could be conceptualised and delivered in alternative ways.*

- *Despite the small number of people, they were very engaged and asked very good questions. We had the feeling that the participants were interested and learned but especially will return to the recording and slides to have a closer look when they decide to use one of the methods in their own research.*
- *I observed that a one-day workshop (8 hours) can be exhausting for participants as understanding IE requires some background reading. It would have been a better idea to organise the workshop in two days (4 hours each day). I realised that some topic/concepts could have discussed in detail with sufficient example and exercises. More time for discussion will allow participants to grasp information easily. Also, developing some introductory video and sharing with participants prior to the workshop could be useful so that the student can have a basic understanding about IE and its related concept.*