

# Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS)

2024/25 Student Recruitment for the  
Supervisor-Led Projects  
- **Applicant Guidance**



Scottish  
Graduate  
School of  
Social  
Science

Sgoil Cheumnaichean Saidheans  
Sòisealta na h-Alba

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All applications must be submitted via the SGSSS online application platform, [SGSSS Apply](#).

For the full timeline, [please click here](#)

## 1. Introduction to SGSSS

Thank you for your interest in our DTP (Doctoral Training Partnership), the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (or SGSSS). This document will provide an overview of the application process for our available Supervisor-Led projects and outlines important details on our funding conditions.

The studentship awards made through SGSSS are co-funded by the Economic and Social Research Council ([ESRC](#)) and partner universities (institutions) and are governed by the [ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide](#). Some projects may also receive funding from a collaborative partner, and as a DTP we receive funding for training from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Of the 16 institutions in Scotland that are partners of SGSSS, 14 are eligible to receive ESRC funding across 21 Units of Assessment (UoA). Each UoA is analogous to a subject area / discipline. Not all 14 institutions are eligible to hold studentships in all UoAs. A comprehensive list of the eligible institutions and UoAs can be found on the SGSSS website [here](#). The two institutions who are not eligible for funding (Queen Margaret University and Robert Gordon University) are eligible for any training events offered by SGSSS.

From 2024 our training pathways will be organised around a set of key societal challenges. These challenges were developed so that they represent the kinds of social science research that our students do and to reflect the themes of the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We want our pathways to give students the opportunity to develop capacity for interdisciplinary connections within the social sciences and beyond. In practical terms, we want our students to be able to communicate key disciplinary concepts and methods emerging from their own disciplines and specific research proposals to other researchers and to that outside academia. We also want students to learn from one another about new methods and theories and knowledge exchange networks. Each challenge pathway will be made up of students at different stages of their research and from different disciplines but with a broad interest in elements of a particular challenge. Training will be organised to encourage peer-to-peer learning and to bring in expertise from non-academic partners. Students from any discipline can apply to any challenge pathway. To learn more about the pathways, [visit this link](#). Each project listed below will have a challenge-led pathway noted.

## 2. 24/25 studentships now open for applications

Below is the full list of studentships open for applications with the details of supervisory team and their contact information. Each project is funded through one of our three Supervisor-Led Competitions (Skills Development Scotland, Open Collaborative, and Steers). Before applying, we strongly encourage you to read the full project description (the title contains a link to the full project description within corresponding advert on [our website](#)).

**You may direct most questions to the supervisors listed (only first and second supervisors are listed, however, some projects may have more than two supervisors). For any questions about the application portal, technical difficulties uploading references, etc., please email the SGSSS Team at [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk).**

### 2.1 Skills Development Scotland Studentships

Since 2013, SGSSS has worked with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to fund studentships that engage with the academic community to support the creation of new, high-quality research focused on the Scottish labour market. Every year, SDS identifies key careers and skills focused topics which supervisors from across our DTP are then invited to respond by proposing PhD projects.

To learn more about the SDS Collaborative PhD Programme and read about the work currently underway by SDS PhD students, and alumni, and get a quick glimpse on the programme you would have access to as an SDS student, see the [2024/25 programme brochure, here](#). The SDS studentships that are offered in 2025/26 are provided below.

**Institution:** University of Aberdeen

**Project Title:** The future of Careers Guidance: What Can Generative AI Do, and Should We Let Them Do It?

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Communication, AI and New Technologies

**SDS Topic:** The role of generative artificial intelligence in careers guidance

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Kevin Allan, [k.allan@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:k.allan@abdn.ac.uk)

- Second Supervisor: Professor Sheila Cunningham, [s.cunningham@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:s.cunningham@abertay.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Yaji Sripada, [yaji.sripada@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:yaji.sripada@abdn.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/the-future-of-careers-guidance>

**Institution:** University of Edinburgh

**Project Title:** Vulnerable young people on the threshold to adulthood: How do they fare? A longitudinal investigation in a Scottish birth cohort.

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities

**SDS Topic:** Exploring transitions to early adulthood using data from Growing Up in Scotland

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Jasmin Wertz, [jasmin.wertz@ed.ac.uk](mailto:jasmin.wertz@ed.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Bonnie Auyeung, [bonnie.auyeung@ed.ac.uk](mailto:bonnie.auyeung@ed.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Elke Heins, [elke.heins@ed.ac.uk](mailto:elke.heins@ed.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/vulnerable-young-peoples-experiences-during-the-transition-to-adulthood-a-longitudinal-investigation-in-a-scottish-birth-cohort>

## 2.2 Open Collaborative Studentships

Our funding body, the ESRC, is committed to supporting knowledge exchange and collaboration to ensure that research has a positive impact on society and the economy. The ESRC's expectation is that at least 15% of the studentships awarded by DTPs are collaborative studentships run in partnership with a non-academic partner organisation. We define "collaborative" broadly, so this term encompasses collaboration with private sector companies, public sector bodies or third sector organisations. The Open Collaborative studentships are listed below.

**Institution:** Abertay University

**Project Title:** Trauma and Justice: Advancing Investigative Interviews with the Trauma-Informed Cognitive Interview (TICI).

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing and Communities

**Collaborative Partner:** Police Scotland

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Julie Gawrylowicz, [j.gawrylowicz@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:j.gawrylowicz@abertay.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Penny Woolnough, [p.woolnough@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:p.woolnough@abertay.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Karen Goodall, [karen.goodall@ed.ac.uk](mailto:karen.goodall@ed.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/trauma-and-justice-advancing-investigative-interviews-with-the-trauma-informed-cognitive-interview-tici>

**Institution:** University of Dundee

**Project Title:** Following the money: anti-trafficking funding, networks and commodity chains

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Securities: Justice, Economies and Conflict

**Collaborative Partner:** La Strada International

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Jonathan Mendel, [j.m.mendel@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:j.m.mendel@dundee.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Kiril Sharapov, [k.sharapov@napier.ac.uk](mailto:k.sharapov@napier.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/following-the-money-anti-trafficking-funding-networks-and-commodity-chains>

**Institution:** University of Edinburgh

**Project Title:** Intimate Partner Violence in Young People's Relationships – Care and Justice for Whom?

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing and Communities

**Collaborative Partner:** Edinburgh Women's Aid

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Claire Houghton, [claire.houghton@ed.ac.uk](mailto:claire.houghton@ed.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Professor John Devaney, [j.devaney@ed.ac.uk](mailto:j.devaney@ed.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Rebecca Hewer, [rebecca.hewer@ed.ac.uk](mailto:rebecca.hewer@ed.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/intimate-partner-violence-in-young-peoples-relationships-care-and-justice-for-whom>

**Institution:** University of Edinburgh

**Project Title:** Edinburgh Parents' Panel: transforming systems and practice for parents and families involved in social work services

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities

**Collaborative Partner:** City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Mary Mitchell, [mary.mitchell@ed.ac.uk](mailto:mary.mitchell@ed.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Autumn Roesch-Marsh, [A.Roeschmarsh@ed.ac.uk](mailto:A.Roeschmarsh@ed.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/edinburgh-parents-panel-transforming-systems-and-practice-with-parents-and-families-involved-in-social-work-services>

**Institution:** University of Edinburgh

**Project Title:** Rural Homelessness in Scotland: scale, causes, manifestations, and impacts

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities

**Collaborative Partner:** CrossReach

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Professor Sarah Johnsen, [sarah.johnsen@ed.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.johnsen@ed.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Sarah Rhynas, [sarah.rhynas@ed.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.rhynas@ed.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Richard Lowrie, [Richard.lowrie@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Richard.lowrie@ed.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/rural-homelessness-in-scotland-scale-causes-manifestations-and-impacts>

**Institution:** University of Edinburgh

**Project Title:** From Message to Movement: Scaling Behaviour Change with the Physical Activity Messaging Framework and The Daily Mile

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing and Communities

**Collaborative Partner:** The Daily Mile Foundation

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Josie Booth, [josie.booth@ed.ac.uk](mailto:josie.booth@ed.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Chloë Williamson, [chloe.williamson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:chloe.williamson@ed.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Colin Moran, [colin.moran@stir.ac.uk](mailto:colin.moran@stir.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/from-message-to-movement-scaling-behaviour-change-with-the-physical-activity-messaging-framework-and-the-daily-mile>

**Institution:** University of Edinburgh

**Project Title:** A Just Transition for our Homes? Retrofitting, tenure, and community in Edinburgh

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities

**Collaborative Partner:** Living Rent

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Hamish Kallin, [h.kallin@ed.ac.uk](mailto:h.kallin@ed.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Claire Haggett, [claire.haggett@ed.ac.uk](mailto:claire.haggett@ed.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/a-just-transition-for-our-homes-retrofitting-tenure-and-community-in-edinburgh>

**Institution:** University of Glasgow

**Project Title:** Public Futures, Deprivatisation and Municipalisation: Addressing Inequalities of Local Public Provision

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities

**Collaborative Partner:** Transnational Institute

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Franziska Paul, [franziska.paul@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:franziska.paul@glasgow.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Professor Andrew Cumbers, [andrew.cumbers@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.cumbers@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/public-futures-deprivatisation-and-municipalisation-addressing-inequalities-of-local-public-provision>

**Institution:** Glasgow Caledonian University

**Project Title:** The alterity and transformative potential of democratic finance in Scotland

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing and Communities

**Collaborative Partner:** Scottish Communities Finance

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Professor Neil McHugh, [neil.mchugh@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:neil.mchugh@gcu.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Micaela Mazzei, [micaela.mazzei@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:micaela.mazzei@gcu.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Professor Olga Biosca, [olga.biosca@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:olga.biosca@gcu.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/the-alterity-and-transformative-potential-of-democratic-finance-in-scotland>

**Institution:** Edinburgh Napier University

**Project Title:** Thought disorder in psychosis: developing a psychological model.

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing and Communities

**Collaborative Partner:** NHS Grampian

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Professor Paul Hutton, [P.Hutton@napier.ac.uk](mailto:P.Hutton@napier.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Amanda Woodrow, [a.woodrow@napier.ac.uk](mailto:a.woodrow@napier.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/thought-disorder-in-psychosis-development-of-a-psychological-model>

**Institution:** University of St Andrews

**Project Title:** Exploring the experiences of van dwelling as a sustainable lifestyle in Scotland

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing and Communities

**Collaborative Partner:** James Hutton Institute

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Louise Reid, [lar9@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:lar9@st-andrews.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Rachel Hunt, [rachel.hunt@ed.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.hunt@ed.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/exploring-the-experiences-of-van-dwelling-as-a-sustainable-lifestyle-in-scotland>

**Institution:** University of Stirling

**Project Title:** Stakeholder Approach to the Pedagogical Possibilities and Practices of the Mindsport Bridge

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing and Communities

**Collaborative Partner Topic:** World Bridge Federation

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Professor Samantha Punch, [s.v.punch@stir.ac.uk](mailto:s.v.punch@stir.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Alison Murray, [alison.murray1@stir.ac.uk](mailto:alison.murray1@stir.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/stakeholder-approach-to-the-pedagogical-possibilities-and-practices-of-the-mindsport-bridge>

**Institution:** University of Strathclyde

**Project Title:** Caring for people with progressive ataxia – lived experience of family carers and co-development of support mechanisms

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing and Communities

**Collaborative Partner:** Ataxia UK

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Professor Anja Lowit, [a.lowit@strath.ac.uk](mailto:a.lowit@strath.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Professor Christopher Graham, [christopher.graham@strath.ac.uk](mailto:christopher.graham@strath.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Craig Donnachie, [craig.donnachie@strath.ac.uk](mailto:craig.donnachie@strath.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/caring-for-people-with-progressive-ataxia-lived-experience-of-family-carers-and-co-development-of-support-mechanisms>

**Institution:** University of Strathclyde

**Project Title:** Spatialising Glasgow’s Involvement in Transatlantic Slaving Economies: A Study of the Historical and Postcolonial Roles and Impacts of the Tobacco Merchant’s House since the 1780s

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities

**Collaborative Partner:** Scottish Civic Trust

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr David Wilson, [david.wilson.101@strath.ac.uk](mailto:david.wilson.101@strath.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Professor Tanja Buelmann, [Tanja.Buelmann@strath.ac.uk](mailto:Tanja.Buelmann@strath.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/spatialising-glasgows-involvement-in-transatlantic-slaving-economies-a-study-of-the-historical-and-postcolonial-roles-and-impacts-of-the-tobacco-merchants-house-since-the-1780s>

## 2.3 Steers Studentships

As an ESRC-funded DTP, SGSSS is awarded funding for projects which are tied to a “steer”. A steer is an area that the ESRC has identified as a priority for increasing research skills and capacity. The projects listed below are aligned to one of the three steers: Advanced Quantitative Methods, Datasets, and Interdisciplinary. If you are successful in your application to one of these projects, you will be required to attend additional training every year to develop your skills that relate to the steer of your studentship.

- **AQM – Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM):** These projects aim to encourage the development of advanced quantitative methods skills in relation to the norms of the discipline. The aim of this steer is to provide training and develop research capacity in the use of advanced quantitative methods in the social sciences. The research and training for students on an AQM studentship is expected to be at a level over and above the basic generic and subject-specific methods requirements for that discipline.
- **Datasets:** These projects aim to encourage the development of secondary data analysis skills. The focus of this steer is to develop researchers with the skills to exploit fully the increasing volumes of large and complex data for social science research purposes.
- **Interdisciplinary:** These projects aim to encourage conceptual and methodological creativity through research that spans disciplinary boundaries. Students on these projects will receive training and undertake research that is genuinely interdisciplinary in nature that straddles the social sciences and other research council remits.

For more on the ESRC’s guidance on Steers and Targets [visit this link](#).

### **Advanced Quantitative Methods**

**Institution:** University of Edinburgh

**Project Title:** Understanding the complex place-based factors associated with the spread of COVID-19 infection amongst populations in the UK

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing and Communities

**Steer:** AQM (Advanced Quantitative Methods)

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Zhiqiang Feng, [zhiqiang.feng@ed.ac.uk](mailto:zhiqiang.feng@ed.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Professor Jamie Pearce, [jamie.pearce@ed.ac.uk](mailto:jamie.pearce@ed.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Professor Sarah Curtis, [v1scurti@exseed.ed.ac.uk](mailto:v1scurti@exseed.ed.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/understanding-the-complex-place-based-factors-associated-with-the-spread-of-covid-19-infection-amongst-populations-in-the-uk>

**Institution:** University of Edinburgh

**Project Title:** ‘Connecting the dots’: investigating how multiple sources of disadvantage intersect and shape attitudes towards school, work and post-school destinations

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities

**Steer:** AQM (Advanced Quantitative Methods)

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Adriana Duta, [Adriana.Duta@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Adriana.Duta@ed.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Valeria Skafida, [valeria.skafida@ed.ac.uk](mailto:valeria.skafida@ed.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Patricio Troncoso, [Patricio.Troncoso@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Patricio.Troncoso@ed.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/connecting-the-dots-how-does-multidimensional-disadvantage-across-the-life-course-intersect-and-shape-young-peoples-attitudes-towards-school-work-and-post-school-destinations>

**Institution:** University of Strathclyde

**Project Title:** Integrating Behavioural Theories into Simulation Models to Advance the Health Policy Evaluation Approach in Value-Based Health and Care

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Health, Wellbeing, and Communities

**Steer:** AQM (Advanced Quantitative Methods)

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Professor Susan Howick, [susan.howick@strath.ac.uk](mailto:susan.howick@strath.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Le Nguyen, [nguyen-le-khanh-ngan@strath.ac.uk](mailto:nguyen-le-khanh-ngan@strath.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/integrating-behavioural-theories-into-simulation-models-to-advance-the-health-policy-evaluation-approach-in-value-based-health-and-care>

### **Datasets**

**Institution:** University of Glasgow

**Project Title:** Evaluating the impact of minimum unit pricing on alcohol consumption and harm using record linked datasets

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities

**Steer:** Datasets

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Professor Peter Craig, [peter.craig@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:peter.craig@glasgow.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Professor Jim Lewsey, [jim.lewsey@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:jim.lewsey@glasgow.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Eliud Kibuchi, [eliud.kibuchi@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:eliud.kibuchi@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/evaluating-the-impact-of-minimum-unit-pricing-on-alcohol-consumption-and-harm-using-record-linked-datasets>

**Institution:** University of Glasgow

**Project Title:** Disabled People’s Lived Experiences of Benefit Reform and the Costs of Disability

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities



**Steer:** Datasets

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Professor Sharon Wright, [sharon.wright@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:sharon.wright@glasgow.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Professor Charlotte Pearson, [charlotte.pearson@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:charlotte.pearson@glasgow.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Clementine Hill O'Connor: [clementine.hilloconnor@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:clementine.hilloconnor@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/disabled-peoples-lived-experiences-of-benefit-reform-and-the-costs-of-disability>

**Institution:** University of Glasgow

**Project Title:** Public transport and social welfare: The impact of bus connectivity on employment outcomes for low-income populations

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Social Inequalities

**Steer:** Datasets

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr J Rafael Verduzco Torres, [JoseRafael.Verduzco-Torres@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:JoseRafael.Verduzco-Torres@glasgow.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Professor Nick Bailey, [Nick.Bailey@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Nick.Bailey@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/public-transport-and-social-welfare-the-impact-of-bus-connectivity-on-employment-outcomes-for-low-income-populations>

### Interdisciplinary

**Institution:** University of Dundee

**Project Title:** Leveraging gridded population data to advance risk assessment for geohazards.

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Environment, Migration and Demographic Change

**Steer:** Interdisciplinary

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Alistair Geddes, [A.Y.Geddes@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:A.Y.Geddes@dundee.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Simon Cook, [s.y.cook@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:s.y.cook@dundee.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/leveraging-gridded-population-data-products-for-enhancing-geohazard-risk-assessment>

**Institution:** University of Glasgow

**Project Title:** Adaptive Reading Technologies

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Communication, AI and New Technologies

**Steer:** Interdisciplinary

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Dr Sara Sereno, [Sara.Sereno@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Sara.Sereno@glasgow.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Mohamed Khamis, [Mohamed.Khamis@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Mohamed.Khamis@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Link to full advert:** <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/adaptive-reading-technologies>

**Institution:** University of the Highlands & Islands

**Project Title:** Contributing cross cultural meaning to sentiment analysis: a case study of qualitative data sets on youth and uncertainty from Ethiopia and Nepal

**Challenge Led Pathway:** Communication, AI and New Technologies

**Steer:** Interdisciplinary

**Supervisory Team:**

- First Supervisor: Professor Vicky Johnson, [Vicky.Johnson.ic@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Vicky.Johnson.ic@uhi.ac.uk)
- Second Supervisor: Dr Andrew Duncan, [Andrew.Duncan.ic@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Andrew.Duncan.ic@uhi.ac.uk)
- Third Supervisor: Dr Sarah Wagner, [Sarah.Wagner.ic@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Sarah.Wagner.ic@uhi.ac.uk)

Link to full advert: <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentship/contributing-cross-cultural-meaning-to-sentiment-analysis-a-case-study-of-qualitative-data-sets-on-youth-and-uncertainty-from-ethiopia-and-nepal>

You are welcome to apply to more than one of the projects open for applicants.

### 3. Timeline

Date	Action
<b>13 March (Thursday)</b>	All studentship projects available open for applicants. Both international and home students may apply to these opportunities.
<b>10 April (Thursday), 5 p.m. BST</b>	Deadline for applicants to submit their applications. If one or both references are missing, it is okay, the portal will still allow for application submission.  References have until 16 April to complete this. If you need to update the reference information to a new one, after submitting your application, please contact <a href="mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk">team@sgsss.ac.uk</a> as soon as possible.
<b>16 April (Wednesday), 5 p.m. BST</b>	Deadline for references to submit their response within SGSSS Apply.  <b>We do not accept references via email.</b> References must be anonymised, instead of using the applicant’s name they must indicate the applicant’s application ID. For equity purposes, there is also a word limit for the references.  <b>Late submissions for references will be NOT accepted.</b>
<b>17 April (Thursday) - onwards</b>	First date the shortlisting can occur, this will vary for each project. This process takes place internally at the institution. The supervisory teams will indicate within the Apply portal if you are shortlisted or not. Regardless of the outcome, you will receive an automatic message from the system informing you of this.  If you are shortlisted, the institution and supervisory team will contact you separately to schedule an interview. <b>SGSSS will not play a role in contacting you for interviews.</b>
<b>29 April (Tuesday) - onwards</b>	First date interviews can take place, however interview dates are set differently for each project. To allow for fairness and equity across all institutions and regions within Scotland (due to different school holidays etc.), the earliest date that student interviews can take place is 29 April 2025.  This is the first date that we can receive nominations from supervisory teams. Shortly after this, our team will begin to review nominations and release preliminary awards. If you are shortlisted for an interview, you may receive an unofficial offer from the supervisory team. However, you will not get an official offer until after your nomination has been reviewed by our team.
<b>SGSSS will confirm nominations on a rolling basis.</b>	

## 4. Application Process

### 4.1 Eligibility Criteria

As per [guidance](#) published by UKRI in 2020, a minimum of 70% of all studentships awarded by SGSSS will be made to [home](#) students, while a maximum of 30% of all studentships awarded can be made to [international](#) students. Please note, it is not a requirement for 30% of studentships to be awarded to international students, as the quality of applications will always remain the primary assessment criterion during the Competitions. In addition, unfortunately some highly ranked international students may not be able to receive an award due to the 30% cap.

#### Residential Criteria

To be classed as a home student, applicants 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 the criteria above, you will be classed as an international student.

To establish if you would be classed as a home student, please see pages 4 and 5 of the UKRI eligibility guidance [here](#).

#### International Students

The funding arrangements for international students are the same as that of home students, i.e., you are eligible for the full ESRC studentship package and are not required to pay any additional international tuition fees (“top up” fees). This is because all of our partner institutions have agreed to waive the difference between home and international tuition fees.

As a DTP funded through the ESRC, SGSSS is required to **only** award a maximum of 30% of its studentships to international applicants. For the projects listed in this document, SGSSS will only be able to award eight out of the 25 studentships to international applicants.

### 4.2 How to Apply

When applying to our Supervisor-Led projects, there is no limit to the number of applications you can submit. Regardless of the number of applications you submit, in order to be considered you must make sure the following items are submitted by the deadlines detailed below.



**Check  
your time  
zone!**

#### Application Components

1. **To start an application**, you must have an account in our application portal, SGSSS Apply. To start one or log in to your existing account, visit [apply.sgsss.ac.uk](https://apply.sgsss.ac.uk). Click “Register” in the top right-hand corner of the screen, completing the details as prompted.

If you are new to the portal, after you create an account you will be asked to answer the question, ‘**Please select the category below which is applicable to you.**’ Your answer to this question will enable you to see the right programme in the portal to apply to these positions.

In order to view this programme, you must have selected ‘Prospective ESRC-Funded PhD Student (SGSSS)’. No other option will enable this programme.

Note: Please note the application portal will list the due date under the time zone the United Kingdom is currently in. When the call opens for applicants, it will list it under GMT, on 30 March it will change to BST due to the daylight-saving hour change.

It is **IMPERATIVE** that you note this difference in your own personal time zone if you are outside of the country. Closing time for all due dates will be 5 p.m. BST. No late applications or references will be accepted.

To change or view the time zone your account is in, visit your account settings on Apply by selecting the arrow next to your name on the top right corner after you log in.



2. **Next**, your dashboard will show you '24/25 SGSSS Supervisor-led PhD Studentship Opportunities'. Select this to start an application.
3. **Within the application, you will be asked to complete the following tasks:**
  - a. **Equality Opportunities Monitoring Form** - The first section you will be asked to complete is our Equality Opportunities Monitoring Form. Please note, this information is kept private and is not considered by reviewers during the competition process. For more on this, visit the section in the next page titled 'Equalities Opportunities Monitoring Form'.
  - b. **Supervisor-led Student Recruitment Pre-Application Questions** - This will let you and us know if you are eligible to apply and/or if you are a home or international student (according to UKRI guidance). You will answer other questions regarding your current address.
  - c. **Supervisor-led Student Recruitment Application Information - Part 1** – Here you will indicate which project you are applying to and you will indicate your proposed award length and study mode
  - d. **Application Information - Part 2** – Here you will answer three prompts: '[Preparedness to undertake and complete a PhD and to flourish as a result of PhD funding](#)'; '[Contributing to a positive and diverse PhD community](#)'; and '[Personal Statement](#)'. **Please read section 8 for more.**
  - e. **Student Recruitment References (please complete ASAP)** – here you will provide us with the full name and email address of two (2) referees who will provide you with a reference. For more on references, **please read section 5.**
    - i. If any of your referees are no longer available to provide a reference, please [use this visual guide](#) to update the contact details in the portal. For any questions, contact us at [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk)
  - f. **CV (for uploading)** – here, you will upload your latest CV. Read more on anonymization, below.
  - g. **Transcripts<sup>1</sup> (for uploading)** – here you will upload your undergraduate and graduate transcripts (if applicable). Read more on anonymization, below.
  - h. **Additional Documentation (for uploading)** – here, you can upload any awards, recognitions, which may support your application.
    - i. NOTE: Some projects may require additional documentation. You must review the advert in detail before submitting to assure that no additional documents are missing.
    - ii. Note, as part of the application process, you will not be asked to submit a full project proposal. You may be asked to submit a response to the project abstract, etc. However, this will depend on any additional documentation (if any) that the supervisory team may request.
  - i. **Declaration & Artificial Intelligence Statement** – here, you will sign off on the content of the application. For more on the AI Statement, **read section 6.**

**Any documents you upload must be in PDF format, only. Word documents will **not** be accepted.**

### **Application Anonymisation**

Please note, applications will be anonymised for reviewers and as such all documents you upload as part of your application **MUST BE REDACTED**, i.e., any documents you upload as part of your application must not contain your name and/or any identifiable information. We ask that you attempt to redact your documents yourself in the first instance and the application process contains instructions on how to hide such information in PDF files.

However, if you require further help with this process, please contact SGSSS via [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk) at least 2 weeks in advance of the application deadline, quoting your application ID.

For more on anonymisation, use [this quick guide](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Undergraduate transcripts and Master's transcripts (if applicable), combined as one pdf document.

## Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

### **SGSSS commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

SGSSS believes in the benefits that come from diverse student, supervisor and staff populations. We are committed to facilitating inclusion and removing any barriers to participation during applications and throughout the PhD experience. We actively work against any forms of discrimination in relation to the [Equality Act 2010](#) protected characteristics, alongside characteristics that are not covered by the Act.

### **Purpose of this form and how we use this data**

Through the following form we collect a range of data that are used in an aggregated and anonymised format to monitor trends, identify potential areas for improvement and report statistics related to EDI to our funders. We ask that you complete the form as fully as possible, but you may of course skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering.

This data is not used for application review: it will be held confidentially and separately from any applications you submit to us. Your individual information will not be passed on to academic departments, universities or to anyone else such as a supervisor. Data will only be kept until our Training Grant expires.

### **Support for individual disability related adjustments**

The data supplied is very helpful to SGSSS for informing actions that may encourage people with disabilities to apply and participate in PhD study. As the information supplied is only used in an aggregated anonymised way however, it cannot be used by us to inform individual circumstances. SGSSS encourage students to consider disclosing disabilities, or other circumstances that may require support, to their supervisors and aligned university services, e.g. Disability Support Services. This will then enable appropriate and confidential discussion of what additional support measures may help you.

Helpful information about Disabled Students' Allowance, is also available through our [Handbook](#). For SGSSS events, we will request information on an event-by-event basis specific to the type of activity, so you can highlight any adjustments or requirements necessary to ensure your ability to participate. **Completing this form helps us and others to better understand issues of selection, participation and under-representation in postgraduate research. We are grateful for you time in completing it. For any questions, please email us at [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk)**

## **5. References**

Each applicant is required to provide the details of two referees. To do this, applicants need to click into the "Student Recruitment References (please complete ASAP)" section within the online application process via SGSSS Apply.

**References are due on 16 April (Wednesday), 5 p.m. BST**

Your application deadline (10 April, 5 p.m. BST) is before the date for references (16<sup>th</sup> April, 5pm BST), and submitting your application **WILL NOT** impact your referees from submitting their reference. If you need to update the reference information to a new one, after submitting your application, please contact [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk) as soon as is possible.

We do not accept references via email. References must be anonymised, instead of using the applicant's name they must indicate the applicant's application ID. For equity purposes, there is also a word limit for the references. Late submissions references will be **NOT accepted**.

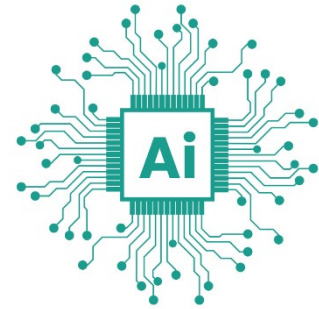
### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. What is the purpose of references?**

We ask for references as this is an opportunity for an academic, or line manager from work, known to you to provide our reviewers with an overview of you as an individual, as well as how you perform academically (or within your workplace). In addition, a reference is a good way for reviewers to try to gauge if you are ready to undertake a PhD.

#### **2. What is SGSSS asking within the reference template, which will be sent to my referees?**

“Please provide an assessment of the applicant’s preparedness to undertake and complete a PhD and to flourish as a result of PhD funding, bearing in mind their academic work and other life experiences.”



**3. Who can provide my references?**

Where possible your references should include an academic familiar with your work (this can be, but does not have to be, a member of your supervisory team). Both references can be from academics, but you may include a work reference, especially if you have been out of academia for more than 5 years.

**4. What happens when I submit my referees’ details as part of my application via SGSSS Apply?**

Once you submit your two referees’ details (full name and email address) online via *SGSSS Apply*, the system will automatically send them an email invite asking that they complete an online reference to support your application. They then need to follow the link detailed within the email to create an SGSSS Apply “recommender” account (this takes a few minutes), at which point they can then complete the online reference template. Once completed and submitted online by your referee, the reference will be ‘attached’ to your application automatically. You will receive an email confirming when this has been done. In addition, you will be able to see when your references have been returned via your application on *SGSSS Apply*. Please note, you will not be able to read your references, you will just be able to see when they have been completed.

**5. When should I request my references?**

As you can request your references well before you submit your full application, **we encourage you to submit both of your referees’ details as soon as possible to allow them as much time as possible to respond.** If you only request your references a week or so before the application deadline, this may not be enough time for your referees to respond, whereas if you do this a month before the deadline, you are giving yourself a higher chance that your references will come in by the deadline and your application can progress to the next stage.

**6. I am concerned one or both of my referees might not respond to my reference request; what should I do?**

As an automatic reference request will be issued to your referees via *SGSSS Apply* as soon as you submit their details online, it is imperative that you have sought their permission before you send them a reference request.

If you have sought permission from your referees and you are still worried one or both may not complete the reference template on time or may forget, you can manage your reference requests yourself via your application within *SGSSS Apply*. The system will allow you to send reminders to your referees as well as change who your referees are (by withdrawing your reference request and deleting it, before submitting a new reference request). **We recommended you do not fully submit your application until both your references have been received, as once you fully submit your application you will no longer have the permissions to make changes to your reference requests. If you do, however, and need to update the reference request, please email us at [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk) as soon as possible.**

As the application system will allow you to prepare the rest of your application, i.e., you can save your application and return as many times as you like without fully submitting it, it is possible to manage your references and have your application ready for submission well before the application deadline.

**7. What if my referee submits my reference late?**

We will not provide referees any additional time to submit their reference. This deadline is final and should references still be outstanding, applications will automatically be marked as unsuccessful.

## **6. Artificial Intelligence Statement**

The Scottish Graduate School of Social Science emphasises the importance of academic integrity and personal intellect in developing all submissions. While AI tools may support the research and writing process, it is crucial that the studentship application is a reflection of the applicant’s own intellectual endeavour and critical thinking.

Misrepresenting AI-generated content as original work is strictly prohibited. Any use of AI must be transparently acknowledged, ensuring that the final submission remains a true and honest representation of the applicant's own intellectual contributions.

As part of your application, you will be asked to confirm if you used AI when creating the application. If you confirm 'yes' we will ask to elaborate on your answer.

## 7. Application Questions

Below are questions you will be asked to answer online via SGSSS Apply within the “**Supervisor-led Student Recruitment Application Information - Part 1**” section of your application, relating to your project proposal. Should you prefer to download a Word version of the below to use to develop your research proposal/application responses, [please click here](#).

PLEASE NOTE, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO UPLOAD THIS APPLICATION FORM - ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE MADE USING THE ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM, i.e., the Word version can be used to develop your application offline and to share with your supervisors for feedback, but cannot be submitted as an attachment or via email. You will be able to copy across from the Word version to the online application system (SGSSS Apply).

If you need an alternative route to submitting your application, please contact us at [team@sgss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgss.ac.uk) so we can assist you.



### 1. Preparedness to undertake and complete a PhD and to flourish as a result of PhD funding

Successfully undertaking a PhD requires not only academic ability but also resourcefulness, commitment and resilience. It involves a range of skills including the ability to communicate complex ideas (about why a research question is of societal and academic importance, why it can be addressed using particular methods and why your findings matter), planning and organisation (including within changing circumstances), working with others (inside and outside of universities) to increase the chances of your research making a difference. You may find it useful to refer to the [Researcher Development Framework](#) in thinking about this question.

Drawing on your own background (including your life experiences, journey to/through university, work experiences or volunteering) please provide a summary of why you are ready to undertake a PhD now and how you will flourish as a result of PhD funding. You might include, for example, personal challenges that you have overcome or achievements that you are proud of in your work, study or life experiences and how these map onto the skills required to flourish in a PhD programme. Challenges could include, but are not limited to, protected characteristics, socio-economic status and of being first-in-a-generation to university or care-experienced. (400 words max)

### 2. Contributing to a positive and diverse PhD community

SGSSS aims to attract and support a positive and diverse PhD community where everyone can reach their full potential; Research and Development (R&D) is a supportive and fulfilling sector to work in; and is seen as a shared endeavour across society rather than only the concern of professional researchers. You may find it useful to refer to the UK Government's [R&D People and Culture Strategy](#) when thinking about this question.

Reflecting on your own background and/or proposed approach to PhD study and the opportunities which it will present, how will you support diversity and inclusion in the PhD community? (250 words max)

### 3. Personal Statement

Please provide a personal statement of approximately 750 words specifying how your skills, experience and academic interests align with the aims of this studentship project.

## 8. Things to know if you are successful

### Applying for a visa

If you are an international applicant and are successful through this recruitment process, as part of your university and studentship admission process you will be required to apply for a visa. SGSSS is **not involved** in this process, and you must coordinate this with the institution you will be expected to study at.

As a DTP, we cannot cover visa costs for international students. This includes the visa application fees and the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). For any visa or immigration advice, please speak to your institutions visa compliance team. If you are successful, we recommend you contact the [HEI Administrative Lead](#) at the institution your studentship is housed in: they will be able to direct you to that team.

### **8.1 Language requirements and admissions into a PhD programme**

Although you **can** apply for our studentships before securing an offer from the institution where the position will be, you must have secured an unconditional offer by the time the studentship starts in October 2025 (some institutions start their academic year in September).

Please note, SGSSS play no role in institutional admissions process and each institution will have varying application processes and eligibility requirements. This includes the language requirements you may be asked to provide proof of, in order to receive admission. If you have any questions about your eligibility for this admission process, please email the HEI Administrative Lead at the institution the project will be held in, **preferably, before you submit an application your project(s) of interest**. A full list of HEI Administrative Leads can be found [here](#).

### **8.2 Educational / professional background & Development Needs Analysis**

Applicants must hold or be predicted a First or a good 2:1 undergraduate degree in the social sciences, or have relevant comparable experience. Additionally, if you are applying for a +3.5 award then you must also hold or be completing a Masters degree in the social sciences, which satisfies the ESRC 2022 methods training requirements. To learn more about the award lengths, [visit this guidance](#).

#### **Development Needs Analysis (DNA) Meeting & Award Letters**

As part of your application, you will be asked to answer a question regarding the award length you expect to have. The options available are: 'PhD Funding' or 'Masters + PhD Funding'. To learn more about the award lengths, [visit this guidance](#).

If you are successful following your interview, your nomination will be sent to our team for further review and confirmation of award and award length. At this point, the SGSS academic team will determine a preliminary award length. We may request additional information: if this is the case, you will receive an email from us (team@sgsss.ac.uk).

This preliminary award will be made available to you via the application portal where you will be able to review it and answer your Pre-DNA meeting survey and book your DNA meeting.

This is all part of the "At-Award Development Needs Analysis" (DNA) process. The DNA is a conversation between you, your supervisor(s) and a member of the SGSSS Directorate, to develop a bespoke plan of training and development for you that covers the entire lifecycle of the PhD (including a masters year if applicable). The DNA process also ensures your training plan delivers the skills in the ESRC Postgraduate training guidelines, which are detailed here: [2022 guidelines](#). To read more about the DNA, [click here](#).

**It is during this meeting that your final award length will be determined. An award letter is issued after this, at which point you may start the admissions process and/or visa process (for international applicants). See section 3.1 about the visa process.**

### **8.3 Study Mode & Residential Requirement**

All of our studentships can be awarded on a part-time or full-time study mode. The funding and award lengths are pro-rated accordingly, in accordance with the [ESRC funding guidance](#).

When completing the application, applicants will be asked to indicate if they wish to complete the studentship on a full or part-time basis. Part-time students must spend **no less** than 50% of their working time (i.e. 18.75 hours, with



18.75 hours available for non-PhD activity) on their PhD research. To read more about this, review the [ESRC funding guidance](#).

For any further questions, email [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk) before submitting your application.

As per our [ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide](#), (see pg. 5), ‘all activity undertaken as part of the ESRC award must be carried out within the UK, except as part of overseas fieldwork which is an integral part of the study, conferences, or training. All students **must reside within a reasonable travel time of the Research Organisation (the institution where the studentship will be in)** at which they are registered, and we would expect there to be direct contact between the student and supervisor.’

For this reason, **we do not offer our studentships on a remote basis**. Each of our institutions have different internal policies as it relates to ‘reasonable travel time’ so we recommend you check with the [HEI Administrative Lead](#) at the institution are you are interested in applying to for more on this.

## 8.4 Thesis Submission Expectations

In line with ESRC guidance, students holding SGSSS studentships from October 2024 onwards will be required to submit their thesis **within their funded period**. There will no longer be a ‘writing up’ period during which a student can submit.

## 8.5 Funding Arrangements and Stipend Distribution

The SGSSS DTP funding operates within the standard [ESRC studentship package](#):

1. Tuition fees;
2. Maintenance stipend;
3. Research Training Support Grant (RTSG);
4. Overseas fieldwork support (where applicable to the student’s project).

### **Estimates for 1+3.5 award (based on a full-time award):**

Full award	2025/26*	2026/27*	2027/28*	2028/29*	2029/30*
Stipend	£20,780	£21,383	£22,003	£22,641	£11,649
Fees	£5,006	£5,111	£5,213	£5,317	£2,712
OFW	£450	£450	£450	£450	£225
RTSG	£940	£940	£940	£940	£470
Cohort Development	£3,330	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£30,506</b>	<b>£27,884</b>	<b>£28,606</b>	<b>£29,348</b>	<b>£15,056</b>

### **Estimates for 3.5 award (based on a full-time award):**

Full award	2025/26*	2026/27*	2027/28*	2028/29*
Stipend	£20,780	£21,383	£22,003	£11,321
Fees	£5,006	£5,111	£5,213	£1,274
OFW	£450	£450	£450	£225
RTSG	£940	£940	£940	£470
Cohort Development	£3,330	£0	£0	£0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£30,506</b>	<b>£27,884</b>	<b>£28,606</b>	<b>£13,290</b>

\*Assumed figures at a 2.9% increase for stipends and 2.1% for fees, year on year. Please note, the percentage increases are decided by UKRI annually who consider UK inflation rates (taking into account the UK Government's annual [GDP deflator index](#)) and market conditions. Due to the current economic situation in the UK, we suspect that the annual percentage increases are likely to vary from those assumed above.

## **Stipend Distribution**

As per the ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide, all our studentships officially start on 1 October of each year. However, depending on your DNA meeting, you may be asked to partake in additional training (e.g., some courses / Masters programme). In this instance, some universities may require for you to start before 1 October as some courses may start as early as mid-September.

Regardless of your situation, the studentship stipend will commence on 1 October. Stipend distribution schedules may vary between institutions. Recipients should confirm the details with the HEI Administrative Lead at the university where their studentship is based.

**If you are awarded one of our studentships, you will be asked to review and acknowledge that you have read our [SGSSS Student Handbook](#), the [ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide](#) and the [UKRI Terms and Conditions](#). However, we strongly encourage you to read this guidance in advance to submitting an application as it can answer questions that may come up after you are successful. For any other questions, email us at [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk).**