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**SGSSS Steers Studentship Competition 2025/26**

Stage 1 Application Form (Expression of Interest)

Please complete this application form and submit it via[*SGSSS Apply*](https://apply.sgsss.ac.uk/) by **5pm on 24 September 2025 (Wednesday)**.

Supervisors can only submit one application per supervisor-led competition – that is, a supervisor may apply once to the Open Collaborative, the Skills Development Scotland Collaborative and the Steers Competition. Please note, the single application requirement applies to any position within a supervisory team – that is, an applicant cannot apply to a competition as first supervisor on one application and second (or subsequent supervisor) on another application to the same competition. **Any application submitted to a supervisor-led competition must not be repurposed as a student-led application. Any applications to the Student-led Open Competition viewed to be resubmissions of a supervisor-led application will be withdrawn from the competition.**

1. **Applicant Details**

Please input your details below. The person submitting the application should be the first supervisor.

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| **Name:**  *Please include title* |  |
| **HEI:** | Choose an item. |
| **Email:** |  |

1. **Project Details**

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| **Proposed project title:** |  |
| **Steer(s):**  *Please tick all that apply* | AQM  Datasets  Interdisciplinary |
| **Research Council(s):**  *If Interdisciplinary, please advise which other Research Council(s) this project will span* |  |
| **Challenge-Led Pathway:**  *For more on the challenges,* [*visit here.*](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/files/SGSSS-Student-Led-Open-Competition-Challenge-Pathways-FAQs.pdf) | Click here to select Challenge-Led Pathway |
| **REF Unit of Assessment (UoA) of first supervisor (see note below):** | Click here to select REF Unit of Assessment |

**Unit of Assessment (UoA):** Each university will hold and update a register of eligibility.

To be eligible to be first supervisor in any SGSSS competition, supervisors will

1. Meet any institutional requirements of first supervisors that are not covered below. Contact your [HEI Admin lead](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/about-us/governance/) for this information
2. Have undergone supervisor training within your institution within the last 5 years
3. Hold a research and teaching or research only contract expected to last for the duration of the proposed PhD project
4. Work in a department/school/subject area that is administratively aligned to an eligible UoA for your Higher Education Institution
5. Are a research active Social Scientist with output (papers and/or research funding) that is aligned to your unit of assessment

In order to audit supervisor eligibility, as part of the application process, we ask all first supervisors to provide details of a paper or funded research project that adopts a social science perspective.

**For more on supervisor eligibility,** [**visit our webpage.**](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentships/supervisoreligibility/)

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| **Research Idea and Case for Support**  In 500 words or less, please set out the key idea(s) and objective(s) that this proposal will address, as well as the study design/methodological approach that will be utilised and the potential impact of the research.  **Please note that attention to feasibility of research proposal to be completed within the funded PhD is exceptionally important since the ESRC have announced that the thesis-pending or ‘writing-up’ year will no longer be acceptable – ie, submission within a fourth unfunded year will be counted as a late submission). The research of the PhD must be done in 3 years (or part-time equivalent). ESRC provide an additional 0.5 years but this is not for PhD research it comprises research in practice (+ training) and new skills that ESRC wish PhD students to be exposed to.** |
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| **How this Project fits with AQM and/or Datasets and/or Interdisciplinary Steer**  In no more than 250 words (per steer) and using the [ESRC Guidance on Steers and Targets](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/files/ESRC-Steers-Guidance.pdf), please describe how the proposed approach and supervisory team meet the relevant steer(s) to which you are applying to (a separate statement needs to be completed for each relevant steer).   1. **Interdisciplinary:** Please specify which research council(s) the proposal spans in addition to the ESRC. 2. **Datasets:** Please specify the exact dataset(s) you propose to use. In addition to the [ESRC Guidance on Steers and Targets](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/files/ESRC-Steers-Guidance.pdf) criteria, where applications involve the use of datasets created through their own research, you should evidence that:  * The primary project funding period has ended; * At least one publication deriving from the funded project has appeared in a peer-reviewed journal; and, * The project through which the dataset has been generated has been externally funded and awarded through a peer-review process.  1. **AQM:** Since 2019, there has been NO enhanced stipend for AQM awards. |
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1. **Supervisory Experience and Training**

The ESRC will audit SGSSS to check that all first supervisors are research active social scientists within a [Unit of Assessment](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/about-us/uoas/) for which an institution has eligibility.

The eligibility questions (see Apply, and our webpage, for [full list of questions](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/studentships/supervisoreligibility/)) allow us to determine eligibility and SGSSS will audit the information provided carefully. We will consult with institutions and remove an application if criteria are not met.

Note a second supervisor need not meet our full criteria assuming the first supervisor does. Second supervisors may work within any of the SGSSS 16 partner HEIs. You can find full information about our partner universities online [here](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/about-us/governance/).

**Please respond to those questions here. For any questions email** [**team@sgsss.ac.uk**](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk)

​​☐​ **I acknowledge I meet any institutional requirements of first supervisors that may not be covered in the other questions. If I am unsure of what they may be, I acknowledge I will contact my HEI Admin Lead for this information.**

**I have undergone supervisor training within my institution within the last 5 years**

☐​ Yes

☐​ No

If “no”, evidence of training will need to be provided prior to an award letter being issued, if successful.

**I hold a research and teaching contract or a research-only contract expected to last for the duration of the proposed PhD project**

☐​ Yes

☐​ No

If ‘no’ - you are not eligible to be a first supervisor but are eligible to be 2nd/3rd supervisor. Please email team@sgsss.ac.uk if you have any questions.

**I work in a department/school/subject area that is administratively aligned to an eligible UoA for my Higher Education Institution (HEI)**

☐​ Yes

☐​ No

If ‘no’ - you are not eligible to be a first supervisor but are eligible to be 2nd/3rd supervisor. Please email team@sgsss.ac.uk if you have any questions.

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| **REF Unit of Assessment (UoA) of Primary Supervisor (please see full list of eligible UoAs for your HEI** [**here**](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/about-us/challenge-led-pathways/)**):** | Click here to select REF Unit of Assessment |

**Have you ever served as PI of a research project funded by ESRC, Nuffield or another funder of Social Science research? Please indicate the agency below and the title of the project or indicate N/A if non-applicable**

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**Give the reference for one paper where you are a first or co-author, that involves social science research and is aligned in a disciplinary sense to your selected UoA**

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**First Supervisor’s Details**

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| **Name:**  *please include title* |  |
| **HEI:** | Choose an item. |
| **Email:** |  |

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| **Past and present students and their projects:** |
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| **Supervisory Team**  In no more than 250 words please outline the key strengths of the proposed supervisory team including how they will contribute to ensuring that the appointed student would emerge from the PhD with enhanced skills. Please note, SGSSS strongly support supervisory teams that build supervisory capacity through the inclusion of Early Career Researchers. Applications should set out the role of all supervisory team members including how Early Career Researchers will be supported. All supervisory teams should include one supervisor who is experienced in supervision of PhDs to completion (a minimum of two completions is required). |
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| **Please provide the Name, Unit of Assessment and HEI for each member of the proposed supervisory team.** |
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