

GUIDANCE FOR SUPERVISING ESRC DOCTORAL STUDENTS

This document is based on guidance produced by the ESRC for doctoral supervisors, and the University of Sussex regulations.

Five Key Points

1. **The Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) is held accountable for the quality of the training that students receive.**

Therefore it is important to keep in touch and let us know if there are any difficulties with the studentship, supervision, or progress of the student you are supervising.

2. **Training Needs Analysis needs to be completed**

About the ESRC

ESRC is the largest organisation for funding research and postgraduate training on economic and social issues in the UK. At any one time it supports over 4,000 researchers and postgraduate students in academic institutions and independent research institutes. It is a non-Departmental Public Body, established in 1965, largely funded through the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

ESRC plays a key role in promoting and supporting training for the UK social science community throughout their careers. Investing in high-quality research training and development opportunities it produces skilled researchers who are able to tackle the most pressing social and economic challenges and thereby make an impact on wider society. For further information on the ESRC, please see the [ESRC website](#).

The DTC Network

The Sussex DTC is part of a national network of 21 institutional or consortia level ESRC Doctoral Training Centres. The DTCs were launched in 2011 through the introduction of the Postgraduate Training Framework, and have now recruited their last cohort of students. Future ESRC funding for doctoral students at Sussex will come via the South-East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) Doctoral Training Partnership.

The main objective of the DTCs and DTPs is to raise the standards of postgraduate training across the UK social science base. ESRC expects the training provided to reflect its core values, those of quality, impact and independence.

Supervising DTC Students

Supervisors are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the opportunities open to their students as part of the DTC. They are expected to guide their students so they can take advantage of these at the appropriate time, whilst balancing this with the need for timely submission of the thesis.

Supervisors should note that the University regulations for Postgraduate Research Students sometimes conflict with the ESRC regulations. They are encouraged to make themselves aware of both sets of regulations.

Core Subject-Specific Training

Compulsory training within a subject area remains a fundamental element of training for social science researchers. This includes the compulsory elements associated with the particular discipline or interdisciplinary training pathway on offer. The level and intensity of this core training may differ from subject to subject. This compulsory core is not restricted to research methods and applies also to subject knowledge or theoretical training which is deemed to be a core element of individual training pathways.

At Sussex we provide this training through:

- Regular research training and development activities for PhD students within their department or School
- Subject based research seminars
- Any modules of relevant masters courses

Advanced Training

The Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines state: "It is an requirement of the ESRC that studentship holders acquire "Training in subject

Additional funding and opportunities for ESRC students

As a supervisor of an ESRC funded student, please ensure that the student is aware of the opportunities available and encourage them to make the most of these:

Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)

All ESRC students are eligible for a Research Training Support Grant including a UK Fieldwork Allowance. This includes part-time and fees only award holders. This allowance is intended to be used to pay for expenses which the student/ supervisor/ department deem to be in direct support of a student's research. [11A](#) [the](#) [RTSG](#)

Examples are:

- UK fieldwork expenses (there is a different grant for overseas fieldwork)
- UK and overseas conferences and summer schools
- Language training courses usually undertaken in the UK prior to an overseas fieldwork trip
- Survey costs: printing, stationery, telephone calls
- Purchase of books and other reading material not available through the library
- Purchases of small items of equipment e.g. cameras, tape recorders, film. Equipment must be purchased through a University approved supplier, and remains the property of the University.

[Details on how to apply for RTSG can be found on the](#)

Internships

Library of Congress Placement Scheme

The ESRC collaborates with the Arts and Humanities Council (AHRC) in offering the opportunity to apply for a short-term fellowship at the Library of Congress in Washington. The world-class research facilities give Library of Congress fellows dedicated access to unique collections, programmes and expertise, plus the opportunity to network and form collaborative relationships. ESRC applicants can apply to spend from three to six months at the Library of Congress. Successful ESRC applicants will receive an award from the ESRC to contribute towards their flight costs plus a monthly living allowance of £1000 in addition to the existing stipend/salary they receive as part of their current ESRC funding. There is further information on the [Library of Congress Placement Scheme here](#).

Transferable Skills Training

ESRC believes that it is important for PhD students to receive training in career development and transferable skills as well as in research. Research organisations are expected to encourage and support students in developing their career options and ensure that the provision of professional and transferable skills forms a fundamental part of doctoral training.

Sussex requires students to work with their supervisors to complete a [Training Needs Analysis](#) at the start of each academic year. This is based on the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#), who also provide training courses that doctoral students can access. The Sussex [Researcher Development Programme](#) also offers courses in support of this, and students can also access a wide range of external courses via the [NCRM](#).

Media Training

ESRC training courses are available for social science researchers with preference given to ESRC-funded PhD students and researchers. The courses are free of charge and are held throughout the year. For students that are expecting only limited media coverage, other training courses are available which can help to make the most of the media. There is further information on [ESRC media training here](#).

Student Conferences

We are working with our Doctoral Training Centres to deliver conferences for ESRC-funded students.

These conferences are designed to provide students with:

- the opportunity to meet with peers within their cohort
- information on ESRC opportunities available during their studentship and following their PhDs
- practical advice and guidance for making the most of their studies and preparing themselves for the next steps.