Admission Statement for 2021/2022 Entry

General Criteria and Principles

1. The SWDTP upholds the principles of equality and diversity, respect and dignity. Applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion or belief, disability, health or age.

2. No institutional minimum or maximum allocation: allocations are primarily based on merit and strategic fit with the aims of the SWDTP and ESRC.

3. To encourage disciplinary diversity and methodological pluralism from across the pathways and within each annual intake, the number of applicants that an individual pathway can be put forward for consideration by the Awards and Ratification Committee (ARC) is capped.

4. The Awards and Ratification Committee (ARC) will:

    ● retain the right to assess all applications and make awards on the basis of other, more broad strategic considerations, as and when is necessary. This may mean that lower ranked applications are moved up in the ranking, especially in the case of ESRC providing steers or conditions to the quota allocation.

    ● manage the process whereby the scoring of applications is moderated across pathways to ensure awards are made in a robust and fair manner. Wherever possible this process will respect the scores and rank-ordering of applicants provided by pathways but the power is retained to: changes the scores and/or rankings if deemed necessary; require that a pathway re-scores the applicants in cases when there is evidence that the scores have been exaggerated or the criteria inconsistently applied; if necessary, withdraw applications from consideration.

5. If a Pathway is unable to produce as many applications as they would like in their ranked lists, the process will continue as outlined (no extra time or special allowances will be made).

6. There should be resources available in the discipline and the host institution to support the research proposal, including the provision of a suitable supervisory team.

7. Each applicant must have a team of two supervisors in place. The SWDTP requires that at least one of those supervisors has supervised a minimum of one PhD student, from start to a successful completion. This PhD supervision must have been completed within the UK system so that at least one of the two supervisors has familiarity with and experience of the UK system. In addition, local University regulations on supervision (for example, who can be the lead supervisor) apply and should be checked prior to submitting a supporting statement (Annex B).

8. Co-supervision with earlier career academics is encouraged – there will be no disadvantage in the allocation process for including a supervisor without previous supervisory experience provided that the conditions outlined under (7) (above) and (9) (below) are fulfilled.

9. For ID Pathways, the lead supervisor must be from the student's home institution. The location of the second supervisor will be based on academic grounds. Collaborative supervision across the SWDTP is encouraged: ideally, the second supervisor will be from a second institution and discipline that are different to the lead. However, if the academic fit is better, then the second supervisor may be from the same institution as the Lead but **MUST** be from a substantively different discipline (not just a different sub-discipline). This is to maintain the interdisciplinarity of the programme.

10. Given the importance of ESRC Completion Rates, it is essential that projects are deemed as being achievable within three years and complete within four years (or part time equivalent). The expectation of the supervisory team should be for the student to complete within their funded period of three years (six years for p/t).

11. Students will not already hold a doctorate or equivalent qualification and will not normally have commenced a PhD. All students will commence their studies from the beginning of the programme.

12. It is important that any training needs for the student can be met by the discipline / SWDTP.

13. A maximum number of 30 per cent of the total studentships for the cohort can be awarded to international students. EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals are treated as international. The UKRI funding will not cover international fees set by universities, only the home rate. It is important that this does not become a barrier to fair recruitment within pathways or to treating applications on merit. Overseas applicants should be informed, prior to the submission of their application, of any fees that they may incur.

Entry Requirements

Applicants for a +3 studentship should have:

- completed, or be due to complete, an ESRC-accredited or an equivalent research Masters* with a significant element of research training. Applicants may be asked for further information to determine the relevance of the content covered.

    *An equivalent research Masters is defined as including significant social sciences research design and quantitative and qualitative research methods elements. The transcript will need to show that **a minimum of a third of the taught stage of the programme entailed research methods elements** – which should normally be roughly divided equally between social sciences research design, quantitative and qualitative research methods elements – and that there is also a Dissertation. For students who have undertaken a Masters outside the UK we will look for appropriate equivalencies. All awards are subject to ratification by the "Awards and Ratification Committee", who shall have the authority to reconsider the equivalence of any Masters awards.

    The ESRC's requirements for postgraduate training and development can be viewed at https://esrc.ukri.org/files/skills-and-careers/doctoral-training/postgraduate-training-and-development-guidelines-2015/

- achieved a current average grade of their Masters (at the point of application) normally of at least Merit (60%) grade. Successful applicants must ultimately achieve BOTH an overall average of at least 60% across the taught units/modules AND at least 60% for the dissertation component as a condition of their funding.

Holders of Masters degrees that are not considered equivalent (as above), will be considered for a 1+3 award. However, where only a small component of the required, prior training is missing, the Awards and Ratification Committee / SWDTP Director may exercise discretion and offer a PhD award conditional on the award recipient taking one or more research modules and passing their assessment at a grade of 60% or above in the first year of the recipient's PhD. In such cases, failure to complete the required modules at this grade threshold may lead to funding being withdrawn.

In the case of 1 + 3 awards, continuation of funding from the '1' stage to the '+3' stage of the programme will be subject to achieving 60% across the taught units / modules **AND** 60% for the dissertation component. Students who fail to achieve these conditions may have their funding terminated and may be required to refund any money paid to them during the PhD portion of the programme.

Types of Research Proposal

The ESRC continues to emphasise the importance of **collaboration with non-academic public, private and civil-society sector organisations**. As such, the SWDTP is required to achieve a minimum of 30% collaboration (in practice the SWDTP target is nearer to 50%). There are no prescribed boundaries determining the nature of collaboration, but DTPs should demonstrate that studentships are developed in collaboration with other organisations and should involve substantive user engagement and knowledge-exchange activity as part of the award. ESRC guidance can be found on the following websites: Collaboration, https://esrc.ukri.org/collaboration/; Knowledge exchange activity, https://esrc.ukri.org/collaboration/guidance-for-collaboration/; Impact, https://esrc.ukri.org/research/impact-toolkit/; and, Evaluation and Impact https://esrc.ukri.org/research/research-and-impact-evaluation/.

However, the ESRC also encourages ambitious and novel research proposals addressing new concepts and techniques with the potential for significant scientific or societal and economic impact – as can be evidenced through calls such as https://esrc.ukri.org/files/funding/funding-opportunities/research-grants-open-call-call-specification/

The SWDTP therefore encourages two **complementary** types of proposal:

(a) **Collaborative, Impact and Engagement Elements** – important factors include a relevant external partner to have been identified, a collaboration plan (with partner), impact and awareness of opportunities and challenges that external collaborations bring.

(b) **Ambitious and Novel Research Proposal** – important factors include novelty/fresh ideas, new concepts / techniques with the potential for significant scientific or societal and economic impact, innovative or even untested methods within the context of the particular project, involve multiple or unusual disciplinary combinations both within and beyond the social sciences, and accessing difficult/challenging data or generating new data in challenging settings.

Additional Information Required

Students are able to claim additional funding during their studies for the following:

- Difficult Language Training
- Overseas Institutional Visits
- Overseas Fieldwork

Further information is on the SWDTP website at https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/funding-for-current-students/

NOTE: Additional funding for Difficult Language Training and Overseas Fieldwork can only be claimed if details are outlined in the original research proposal at the time of studentship application. There is some flexibility with regards to additional funding for Overseas Institutional Visits as these opportunities might not be known at the point of application.

The Research Proposal should therefore include such details and it must be noted for each student on the Nominations Template (Annex E) from each site/Pathway when sending the ranked list to the SWDTP Hub.

What else do I need to know?

Timeline Overview

Tuesday 19th January 2021 12 noon GMT	Funding application deadline
w/c 22nd February 2021	Interview invitations sent out
w/c 1st March 2021	Interviews held online
From Friday 26th March 2021	Offers to be sent out by institution to which you applied Note: you may receive a letter stating you are on the reserve list in which case you may not hear if you have an offer until after 14th April 2021
Wednesday 14th April 2020	Deadline for studentship offer acceptance if you have had an offer

How will my proposal be scored?

Please see pages 5-9 for the SWDTP Scoring Criteria and Guidelines

Where can I find copies of the SWDTP related forms? (Note: follow institutional requirements for all information that needs to be submitted)

https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/prospective-students-and-fellows/

Institutional contacts for application administrative enquiries

Bath	Doctoral Recruitment Team	doctoraladmissions@bath.ac.uk
Bristol	James Camp	swdtp-bristol@bristol.ac.uk
Exeter	Anna Dolman	doctoral.college@exeter.ac.uk
Plymouth	Sarah Kearns	doctoralcollege@plymouth.ac.uk
UWE	Vicky Nash	graduateschool@uwe.ac.uk

SWDTP Scoring Criteria and Guidelines

The criteria for the scoring of applicants by the Independent Scoring Committee are below. Pathway Leads should also use these in the shortlisting process. Additional criteria for the interview stage are included.

Student Name:	Pathway:	Institution to which they are applying:

Relevant experience/prior attainment	Note: the following criteria will usually apply. However, please refer to and, where appropriate, assess based on any contextual information provided in the application.	Score:
3 (Very strong potential)	The applicant has very strong potential to undertake research at the highest level. This might be evidenced by academic success such as achieving or being on-track to achieve a strong first-class result (75% average or above) or equivalent at either the undergraduate or Masters level; however pathways are encouraged to consider other contextual factors where relevant and not just academic attainment.	0 / 1 / 2 / 3
2 (Strong potential)	The applicant has strong potential to undertake research at the highest level. This might be evidenced by academic success such as achieving or being on-track to achieve a higher 2:1 or lower first-class result (67 to 74% average) or equivalent at either the undergraduate or Masters level; however pathways are encouraged to consider other contextual factors where relevant and not just academic attainment.	
1 (Suitable potential)	The applicant shows potential to undertake research at a level required of a PhD. This might be evidenced by academic success such as achieving or being on-track to achieve a lower to mid-2:1 class result (60 to 66% average) or equivalent at either the undergraduate or Masters; however pathways are encouraged to consider other contextual factors where relevant and not just academic attainment.	
0 (May not be suitable for funding)	There is little evidence, academic, professional or vocational that the applicant has the relevant experience/prior attainment that would suggest their suitability for 1 + 3 or +3 funding even after allowing for contextual factors where relevant and not just academic attainment. **Note: the applicant should only be shortlisted for interview if there is sufficient merit in their proposal and the supervisor's supporting statement to justify it.**	

Lead Supervisor's Statement *(Note: assess not only the statement but also the 'research fit' (see descriptions below)*		Score:
3 (Extremely supportive and a strong fit)	The supervisor is strongly supportive of the student. This will be evidenced by clearly outlining why the student is a good fit (to the supervisors and also the broader institutional context), what is innovative about the proposed research and 'why it matters', a clear statement of the strengths (and, where relevant, weaknesses) of the proposal and the applicant, and an assessment of the overall quality of the application as A or above in the supervisor's statement (but check that their assessment is accurate and not inflated).	0 / 1 / 2 / 3
2 (Very supportive and a good fit)	The supervisor is supportive of the student but not to the extent described above. This might be evidenced by a less complete supporting statement, particularly one that fails to establish the fit, relevance and/or originality of the research. The supervisor will have assessed the application to be of a minimum of a B standard, but it could be higher.	
1 (Broadly supportive and/or uncertain fit)	The supervisor is broadly supportive but not especially so. This may be evidenced by the supervisor having graded the applicant as C in their statement but it is also possible that the supervisor will have graded the applicant much higher yet the supporting statement is largely incomplete, thereby failing to provide much that would substantiate the grading. **Alternatively**, the fit between the proposed research and the prospective supervisors' own research expertise, discipline and/or wider institutional context may be weak.	
0 (Not supportive or not justified)	There supervisor's statement is largely incomplete providing little by way of support for the student. Alternatively, the grade they have assigned to the student may be out of odds with the contents of the proposal – for example, if the supervisor grades the proposal as A or A+ yet the pathway leads agree that is clearly and identifiably weaker. **Note: the supervisor may have graded the applicant as D in their statement, in which case, unless there is a strong reason to act otherwise, the applicant should not be shortlisted.**	

Research proposal	*Assign a mark in the range 0 to 2 to each of the following.* *Note: please take into consideration the educational stage of the applicant (i.e. a Masters student has more experience than a undergraduate)*	Score
2 = strongly evident in the proposal 1 = moderately evident in the proposal	An original contribution with a clear research question	0 / 1 / 2
	Establishes an academic relevance for the research and shows clear understanding of the field	0 / 1 / 2
	Outlines appropriate methods (or, for 1 + 3, is aware of methodological needs), and shows awareness of ethics	0 / 1 / 2
	Shows understanding of the demands of the project and that the research is achievable within the 3-year funded period. Has given consideration to the possible effect of Covid-19 and to possible ways to adapt the research accordingly.	0 / 1 / 2

0 = Weakly addressed or not at all	Fits the strategic priorities of the ESRC, chosen Faculty / School Department or ID Pathway, and/or gives focused consideration to the potential for impact	0 / 1 / 2

EITHER: (A) Collaborative, Impact and Engagement Elements		Score
4 or 5 (Excellent or Outstanding)	Proposal clearly identifies single or multiple user groups and effectively outlines their roles and responsibilities within the research. It also presents an excellent and detailed plan for collaboration with a clear initial commitment to collaborate from an external partner.	0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5
2 and 3 (Good or Very Good)	Proposal identifies single or multiple user groups but with less detail pertaining to how they will be engaged in the research. In addition, or alternatively, it presents a good yet less detailed plan for collaboration; external partners are identified but their level of commitment is not as strongly supportive as above.	
1 (Adequate)	Proposal identifies actual or potential user groups but lacks any clear and/or viable plans for user engagement; and/or the proposal provides some but limited information as to how they plan to collaborate with partners or potential partners, and/or only vaguely identifies who those partners are / might be.	
0 (Weak)	User engagement is not addressed or is not coherently addressed and/or the collaborative element is missing, unclear and/or unlikely to be attainable / come to fruition. **Note: unless there is a strong reason otherwise, the applicant should not be shortlisted.**	

OR: (B) Ambitious and Novel Research Elements		Score
4 or 5 (Excellent or Outstanding)	The proposed study involves (a) the use, testing, or development of new concepts, ideas and/or theories, and (b) new methods and techniques that have the potential to result in important and cutting-edge advancements in the field	0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5
2 and 3 (Good or Very Good)	The proposed study involves (a) the use, testing, or development of new concepts, ideas and/or theories, and (b) new methods and techniques, where one or both of (a) and (b), while not entirely ground-breaking, are still cutting-edge, novel and innovative, offering important advancements in the field	
1 (Adequate)	The proposed study involves (a) the use, testing, or development of new concepts, ideas and/or theories, and (b) new methods and techniques, but they are somewhat less cutting-edge than above, lacking the same degree of originality and innovation	

0 (Weak)	The proposed study does not involve the use, testing, or development of any particularly new concepts, ideas and/or theories, nor of new methods and techniques. Those that are used are somewhat pedestrian and routine. **Note: unless there is a strong reason otherwise, the applicant should not be shortlisted.**	

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR THE INTERVIEWING STAGE – all interviews to be conducted online
(The maximum number of applicants who may be shortlisted for interview is $3n + 1$, where n is the number of universities running the pathway)

Interview performance		Score
4 or 5 (Excellent or Outstanding)	The applicant is extremely lucid in interview, demonstrating an excellent or outstanding knowledge of the wider research field in which their research is situated and able to articulate, with confidence and enthusiasm, the relevance of their proposed research to it. There is clear articulation of an appropriate research question, comprehension relevant to the discipline(s)/topics, articulation and discussion of relevant theory, awareness of methodological demands and needs, of relevant ethical issues, and understanding of the demands of the project. The applicant strongly convinces either on the novelty of the contribution, including new ideas and methods, or on the potential collaborative opportunities and challenges, and avenues for user engagement. The applicant answers with conviction and insight, inspiring confidence in their ownership and understanding of the research.	
2 and 3 (Good or Very Good)	The applicant performs well in interview but with some gaps in their knowledge, understanding or wider framing of their research topic. They demonstrate a good or very good knowledge of the wider research field in which their research is situated and are able to articulate, with limited uncertainty, the relevance of their proposed research to it. There is articulation of an appropriate research question, broad comprehension relevant to the discipline(s)/topics, some knowledge and discussion of relevant theory, some consideration to methodological demands and needs, of relevant ethical issues, and understanding of the demands of the project. The applicant makes a reasonable case for either the novelty of the contribution, including new ideas and methods, or for the potential collaborative opportunities, with understanding of the challenges and avenues for user engagement. The applicant answers with reasonable confidence, knowledge, and insight.	0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5
1 (Adequate)	The applicant is adequate but does not excel in the interview, revealing some systematic gaps in their knowledge, understanding or wider framing of their research topic. They demonstrate an adequate but limited knowledge of the wider research field in which their research is situated and are unpersuasive about the relevance of their proposed research to it. There is some articulation of an appropriate research question, broad but not especially compelling comprehension relevant to the discipline(s)/topics, some knowledge and discussion of relevant theory, some consideration to methodological demands and needs, of relevant ethical issues, and understanding of the demands of the project but also some clear areas of uncertainty. The applicant makes a case for either the novelty of the contribution, including new ideas and methods, or for the potential collaborative opportunities, with understanding of the challenges and avenues for user engagement. However, the case is not as well made as other applicants, likely lacking the same level of confidence, knowledge, and insight.	

0 (Weak)	The interview is unpersuasive in interview, raising concerns about their understanding of the research or research field, the suitability and/or viability of their proposed research theories or methods, or plans for collaboration / user engagement, of the ethics of the proposed research, and/or their suitability to undertake a PhD. **Note: unless there is a strong reason otherwise, the applicant should not be nominated for a studentship.**	

Total score (out of 26):

Rank position within the pathway (tied ranks are not permitted):

Is the application nominated by the pathway to go forward for moderation and for consideration for a studentship by the Awards Ratification committee? YES / NO

If YES:

Short narrative (<u>no more than 50 words</u>) in support of the proposal (e.g. highlighting its distinctiveness):

Note: the maximum number of applicants that may be nominated by a pathway is $2n + 1$, where n is the number of universities running the pathway. Please only nominate applicants with a realistic prospect of being funded.