**Annex I**

**COMPETITION FOR STUDENTSHIPS IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

**Background**

As part of the UK Industrial Strategy, funding for talent and skills related to artificial intelligence has been made available including a UKRI-wide call to fund 10-20 Centres for Doctoral Training. Further information on this call can be found here:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/ukri-centres-for-doctoral-training-in-artificial-intelligence/>

Studentships funded under the CDTs will start from October 2019.

**Studentships starting in October 2018**

Ahead of this investment in AI skills, each council has received a small allocation of additional awards to start in October 2018. ESRC has been allocated 7 of these awards which we will allocate via a supervisor-led competition across the Doctoral Training Partnerships.

We are inviting applications that address the priority theme of applications and implications of Artificial Intelligence (AIAI) and further information on this priority can be found in Annex I of the guidance on the UKRI CDT call which is available here – as you will see a number of the themes speak directly to the social sciences:

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/files/funding/calls/2018/ukriaicdts/>

Whilst the **primary research area** must be within the social sciences, we encourage inter/multidisciplinary working both within and beyond the social sciences, as long as at least 50% of the proposed programme of research is within ESRC remit. Please refer to the list of research areas that fall within ESRC remit ([www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/is-my-research-suitable-for-esrc-](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/is-my-research-suitable-for-esrc-funding/discipline-classifications) [funding/discipline-classifications](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/is-my-research-suitable-for-esrc-funding/discipline-classifications)) for further information.

Whilst it is not mandatory for these studentships to involve business or industry project partners we would strongly encourage their participation. Where included, you will need to ensure that a collaboration agreement is in place for the start of the studentship.

Please note that these awards are for new studentships, they cannot be used to fund projects already underway.

**Process**

In order to apply for these studentships, the potential supervisor must submit the proforma attached at Annex II by 4pm on Friday 20 April 2018. The application must be accompanied by a letter of support from the DTP or CDT Director.

Each DTP or CDT can submit up to a maximum of two proposals.

The applications will be assessed by a specially convened panel and, if successful, the DTP/CDT can recruit a student to start in October 2018. As with all studentships, ESRC expects that recruitment to this award will be through an open and transparent process.

Once in place, the DTP or CDT should submit a grant maintenance request to add funding to their NPIF training grant.

**Assessment criteria**

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Fit to the theme of the call
* *Is the project well thought out in terms of the research questions asked and the approach and techniques to be used?*
* *Have they demonstrated a strength in AI and fit to the themes of the call?*
1. Programme of work
* *Is the proposed project suitable for a PhD proposal?*
* *Is it achievable within the proposed timescale; has good research design, methods and a sound plan for dissemination and maximising impact?*
1. Supervisory Arrangements
* *Are the nominated supervisors currently active within the area of the proposed topic and suitable to host the project?*
* *Do they have prior experience of supervising PhD students?*
1. Collaboration arrangements (if relevant)
* *Is the proposed non-academic partner suitable to collaborate in this research project?*
* *Is their role and contribution to the studentship clearly explained?*
1. Recruitment process
* *Are the arrangements for the selection of a student for the project, and the management and supervision arrangements proposed are adequate and suitable for the project?*