

SeNSS Supervisor-led Collaborative Studentship Competition 2018: Guidance for Supervisors

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The deadline for primary supervisors to submit their applications for a collaborative studentship, using FluidReview, is 23:59 GMT on 23 September 2018.

- In the supervisor-led collaborative studentship competition, you – as the primary supervisor - develop a research question and proposal in conjunction with a collaborative partner. You then enter your research proposal into the SeNSS collaborative studentship competition. If successful, your project will be awarded a studentship, which is then advertised publicly. If a suitable candidate is identified during the competition for that project, an award will be made to that candidate to work with you and your supervisory team and the collaborative partner on your research project.
- A collaborative partnership is defined as a research collaboration between a SeNSS supervisory team and a non-Higher Education Institution (non-HEI). A non-HEI can be a business, government or third sector organisation. The non-HEI must make a contribution to the studentship. This can be a financial or in kind contribution.
- All research proposals must be based primarily in one of the 13 SeNSS Pathways. You can only enter this competition if your home institution is a member of the Pathway for which you wish to submit an application.
- The collaborative supervisory team must consist of at least two supervisors. You, as the primary supervisor, are responsible for submitting the application for a studentship. **Both you and the second supervisor must meet the eligibility criteria detailed in section B.2. below.**
- Please complete your application using FluidReview, SeNSS's online application platform. Specific guidance on how to access and use FluidReview will be circulated when FluidReview is opened to applications on 16 July 2018.
- A letter of support from your collaborative partner must be uploaded to this platform (a template for this letter is provided at the end of this document in Appendix 1).
- The deadline for submitting the application form via FluidReview is **23 September 2018.**

- ***Selection process***
- The criteria by which your application will be assessed are provided in section A.4. below.
 - **First**, there will be an **institutional review**, to ensure that the applications are eligible, and meet a certain standard (timeline: 24 Sept – 8 October 2018)
 - There are no limits on the number of proposals each partner institution can nominate to the next review phase, but nominated applications must be of the highest quality.
 - **Second**, all the research proposals will be **reviewed by a sub-committee of the SeNSS Management Board** (timeline: 9-31 October 2018)
 - An external partner/non-HEI (without a conflict of interest) will be involved in this review process.
 - **Third**, the **SeNSS Management Board** will consider the sub-committee's ranking of these applications, and will discuss and approve the final rankings (timeline: 5-12 November 2018). The Board's final decision will be circulated to all applicants no later than 15 November 2018.
- ***Competition outcome***
 - The top six proposals will be awarded a studentship.
 - These six proposals will be advertised publicly, calling for applications for these studentships.
- ***Applications for studentships***
 - Six studentships have been ring-fenced as supervisor-led collaborative studentships.
 - Students must meet the same residential eligibility criteria as those in the student-led competition.
 - Studentships should be advertised as either +3s or 4-year opportunities.
 - Studentships must begin in the 2019/20 academic year.
 - Separate guidance will be issued for the student application part of this competition process. However, please note that you and your supervisory team will be involved in the sifting and interviewing phase of this competition.

Competition timetable

Activity	Date or timeframe
Call for supervisor-led collaborative studentship research proposals issued, and this competition policy document circulated	18 June 2018
Full guidance for supervisors and its attachments circulated	18 June 2018
FluidReview opened for applications to be submitted	16 July 2018
Closing date for proposals to be submitted via FluidReview	23 September 2018 (By 23.59 GMT)
Institutional Stage	
Institutional-level sifting and selection processes take place	24 September-8 October 2018
Date by which applications nominated by SeNSS partner institutions must reach the SeNSS office	8 October 2018 (By 16.00 GMT)
<p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will be referred to local level guidance on how the institutional stage of the competition will be managed at their home institution. • Home institutions are responsible for conducting supervisor eligibility checks. 	
Peer Review Stage	
SeNSS Office makes applications available on FluidReview to the Sub-Committee appointed by the Management Board	9 October 2018 (By 16.00 GMT)
Members of the Sub-Committee undertake their evaluations on FluidReview	10-24 October 2018
Members of the Sub-Committee submit their evaluations on FluidReview	24 October 2018 (by 15.00 GMT)
The Sub-Committee meets to finalise single ranked list	30/31 October 2017
<p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applications will be assessed on the basis of the selection criteria outlined above. • The single ranked list with scores agreed by the Sub-Committee must be provided to the SeNSS Office by the Chair of the Sub-Committee within 48 hours of the meeting. The lists should be accompanied by a full commentary on the reasoning behind the selections that have been nominated and behind the priority ranking agreed by the pathway. This should include any cases where there is a divergence of opinion which cannot be resolved. 	
Management Board: Final Selection Stage	
SeNSS Office provides an aggregated score sheet of evaluations to all academic members of Management Board via email	5 November 2018
SeNSS Management Board to confirm the successful supervisor-led collaborative studentship research proposal awards via email	By 12 November 2018 (Deadline: 16.00 GMT)
Outcomes circulated	As soon as possible after the email consultation
Advertisement of six top-ranked research proposals, calling for candidates to apply for the attached collaborative studentships	No later than 16 November 2018

If you have any queries, please consult the detailed guidance for supervisors, or contact your institution's SeNSS administrative lead. These are:

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University of Essex: Laura Ruddick: laura@essex.ac.uk

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A. DETAILED GUIDANCE FOR SUPERVISORS

1. Introduction

This document is intended to guide you, as the primary supervisor, through the process of making an application to SeNSS for studentship for your collaborative research project.

SeNSS offers three types of studentships:

- Student-led studentships: for these awards, student applicants come up with, and develop, their own research questions;
- Student-led studentships, with non-Higher Education collaborative partners: for these awards, student applicants come up with, and develop, their own research question, and carry out this research project in partnership with a collaborative partner whom they have identified and developed a relationship with; and,
- Supervisor-led collaborative studentships: supervisors develop a research question and proposal in conjunction with a collaborative partner. If awarded a studentship, the supervisor, the student and the collaborative partner work together on the research project.

This guidance relates to the competition for the third type of studentship: the supervisor-led collaborative studentship.

SeNSS **ring-fences six of its studentships** for its annual supervisor-led collaborative studentship competition. Studentships are fully funded (where the candidates meet the studentship eligibility criteria, which are the same as for the student-led competition), and can be either +3 or 4-year (1+3, 2+2, +4) awards. These studentships must begin in the 2019/20 academic year.

2. What are supervisor-led collaborative research project proposals, and who constitutes a non-HEI for these purposes?

Supervisor-led collaborative research project proposals are those which involve a partnership with a non-Higher Education Institution (non-HEI), which can be a business, government or third sector organisation (these are all termed “collaborative partners” in this Guidance). These partners can be based in the UK, or overseas. For the purposes of this competition, supervisors develop a research question and proposal in conjunction with a collaborative partner.

Collaborative partners must contribute something of value to the research project. There are a wide range of things a collaborative partner can contribute, from a financial contribution, to a contribution in kind:

- A financial contribution could consist of paying up to 50% of the direct studentship costs, which include fees and a stipend, or travel costs for the student and supervisor to travel to meetings etc.
- A contribution in kind could consist of one or more of the following things: a co-supervisor for the studentship attached to the project; access to the collaborative partner's data; use of the collaborative partner's equipment, and/or office space etc.

3. Research proposals must be based primarily in one SeNSS Pathway

All projects must be based primarily in one of the thirteen SeNSS Pathways. These are:

- Business and Management Studies;
- Development Studies;
- Economics;
- Education;
- Human Geography;
- Linguistics;
- Politics and International Relations;
- Science, Technology, and Sustainability Studies;
- Social Anthropology;
- Social Work and Social Policy;
- Socio-Legal Studies; and,
- Sociology.
- Psychology;

In addition, if you wish to submit an application for a particular Pathway, you must confirm that your home institution is a member of that Pathway:

Pathways offered by each SeNSS member institution											
		City	Essex	Goldsmiths	Kent	Reading	Royal Holloway	Roehampton	Surrey	Sussex	UEA
1	Business and Management Studies	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+
2	Development					+	+		+	+	+
3	Economics	+	+			+	+		+	+	+
4	Education			+		+		+		+	+
5	Human Geography					+	+			+	+
6	Linguistics		+		+	+			+		+
7	Politics and International Relations		+		+	+	+			+	+
8	Psychology		+	+	+	+	+			+	+
9	Science, Technology, and Sustainability Studies				+				+	+	+
10	Social Anthropology			+	+			+		+	+
11	Social Work and Social Policy				+					+	+
12	Socio-Legal Studies		+		+	+				+	+
13	Sociology		+	+	+					+	

Students and supervisors involved with supervisor-led collaborative studentships must adhere to the requirements set down in the SeNSS progress and training procedures, e.g., completing certain training requirements, attending SeNSS training events, and participating in cohort building activities.

Prior to submission to SeNSS, proposals will be examined by your home institution to ensure that only appropriate proposals of the highest quality are submitted to the DTP. Once a proposal has been received by SeNSS, there will be no further opportunities to improve it. It is the additional responsibility of home institution to ensure that the primary supervisor of each proposal is eligible, according to the rules outlined in section B.2 below.

4. The criteria by which your application for a collaborative studentship will be assessed

Your application will be assessed according to the following four categories of criteria, which are explained in more detail in the table below:

1. The quality of your research proposal (30%)
2. The quality of your collaboration (30%)
3. Suitability and feasibility of your project for a studentship (30%)
4. Student training (10%)

The interpretation of each of these criteria is set out in the table below. **Please note, however, that where projects are deemed to be of equal quality, then, where the collaborative partner for one of the projects is offering a financial contribution to the project, that proposal may be ranked higher than the other proposals.**

1a	Quality of the Research Proposal	The research proposal should be of an outstanding quality, with clearly articulated aims, objectives and focus	30%
1b		The research methodology should be appropriate and very well defined, and should demonstrate that ethical considerations have been taken into account	
1c		The proposal should clearly show what impact the research will have, such as building research capacity, helping to transform business practices, helping to explore and develop the skills necessary in today's economy etc.	
1d		The project must be feasible within the given time and resource limitations	
2a	Quality of the Collaboration	The proposal should set out clearly how the collaborative partner will be involved in the management and supervision of the research project, and the research itself, that is, there should be strong evidence that this relationship is a genuine research partnership	30%
2b		The proposal should clearly set out what the collaborative partner will contribute to the research proposal and to the studentship, that is, there must be strong evidence that the collaborative partner is providing real value to the project	
2c		There should be real measurable benefits for the collaborative partner (for examples of these, see 1c above). However, the research outcomes should have wider relevance than simply addressing a need specific to the collaborative partner	
2d		The collaboration should provide real measurable benefits for the student, such as the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of a work environment outside academia	

3a	Suitability and Feasibility for a Studentship	The proposal must demonstrate that the project is well-suited to a PhD. It must have clear aims that provide opportunities for intellectual challenge whilst having a reasonable element of "security", in that due progress can be made within the time constraints and by a student who may be undertaking research for the first time.	30%
3b		The project should build in scope to enable the student to demonstrate a degree of independence and originality, to test ideas and hypotheses, and to make an original contribution to learning that will be potentially worthy of publication.	
3c		Proposals should demonstrate that the student will be engaged in a rewarding and relevant research project that will provide them with a first-class research experience.	
3d		The proposal must demonstrate that a high-quality research environment exists that will support the student on all levels (e.g. intellectually and practically). This includes demonstrating the expertise and relevance of the proposed supervisory team's research areas in relation to the proposed project.	
4a	Student Training	Proposals should demonstrate a high level of commitment to excellence in the provision of appropriate and necessary research training.	10%
4b		Training should lead to the development of advanced research skills and other generic/transferrable skills, and not limit the student to developing skills only within the narrow focus of the project	

Each category will be scored using the scale detailed below (from 0-6, **including one decimal place**):

Score	Definition
6	<i>Outstanding</i> : meets all standards at the highest level for all criteria
5.0-5.9	<i>Excellent</i> : demonstrates excellent standards for all criteria
4.0-4.9	<i>Very good</i> : meets high standards for all criteria or has excellent / outstanding standards for most but not all criteria
3.0-3.9	<i>Good</i> : has merit and meets satisfactory standards for most criteria and could potentially be readily improved
2.0-2.9	<i>Fair</i> : potentially of some merit but overall is of inconsistent quality and requires significant additional measures to improve to an acceptable standard
1.0-1.9	<i>Poor</i> : does not meet adequate standards for several criteria
0-0.9	<i>Non-scoring</i> : seriously scientifically flawed, serious technical impediments, insufficiently clearly written to be able to assess

5. The application process

Applications should be completed using FluidReview, SeNSS's online application platform. A letter of support from your collaborative partner must be uploaded to this platform (a template for this letter is provided at the end of this document in Appendix 2).

The deadline for submitting the application form via FluidReview is **23 September 2018**.

B. GUIDANCE FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

1. Supervisory team's details

Please note that, as a supervisor, you may submit as many proposals per year as you choose in which you are named as the primary supervisor. However, you can only be awarded one studentship per year, per project, in which you are named as the primary supervisor. There is no limit for the number of projects for which you may be named as a co-supervisor.

All research proposals must name two supervisors: the primary supervisor, who leads on the research project and who has overall responsibility for supervising the student attached to the project; and a second supervisor, who is not necessarily involved in the research project on a day-to-day basis, but who is familiar with it and brings their expertise to bear on the topic, as well as attending the supervisory progress meetings for the student concerned. The supervisory team should also include a representative or co-supervisor from the collaborative partner.

As the primary supervisor, you are responsible for submitting the research proposal. You may submit as many proposals as you like each year in which you are named as the primary supervisor.

2. Supervisor eligibility

In order to be eligible, you must:

- be a research-active member of staff. This is defined as:
 - someone who was successfully submitted by their institution for REF 2014; and,
 - whose research proposal comes under a SeNSS Pathway for which their home institution submitted a qualifying unit of assessment in the SeNSS DTP bid. Where a potential applicant is an **early career researcher**, and therefore was not submitted for consideration in REF 2014, they would still qualify in terms of (2) above.
- have undertaken approved professional development training in relation to your supervisory role within the last three years (this requirement must be satisfied by the time of registration of the student concerned, or within three months of that date); and,
- have an excellent record of formal progress reporting in the previous 12 months for all their PGR students.

Responsibility for checking supervisor eligibility lies with the supervisor's home institution, which must confirm that it has done so to SeNSS.

2.1. Primary supervisor's details

Please provide your title, first name, surname, email address, job title, and the name of your department and University. You will also be required to confirm that you meet the **supervisor eligibility criteria**, set out above.

2.2. Second supervisor's details

The second supervisor, who could either be from the same university or a different university from you, the primary supervisor. You will need to provide the same details for the second supervisor as you provided for yourself (see point 1.1., above). As the applicant, you will also be required to confirm that the second supervisor meets the supervisor eligibility criteria outlined above.

3. Collaboration details

The following information must be provided:

- The name of your collaborative partner;
- Your collaborative partner's address;
- The name of your contact representing your collaborative partner;
- Your contact's email address;
- Your contact's job title;
- Whether this contact will form part of the supervisory team;
- If this contact will not form part of the supervisory team, please provide the details of the person who will take on that role.

2.3. Description of the collaboration

Please describe the collaboration, noting that there is a word limit of 3,000 words for this description.

2.4. Letter of support from your collaborative partner

Please provide a letter of support from your collaborative partner as part of your application. A template of this letter, and a list of the issues and points it must address, is contained in Appendix 2 to this Guidance. Please ensure this letter is limited to two A4 pages.

3. Research Project Proposal Details

3.1. Research Project Proposal Title

Please provide the full title for your project.

3.2. Research Project Description

Please describe your research project. **Please note that there is a strict word limit for this description of 3,000 words.** In describing your research proposal, please address the following:

- The nature and significance of the proposed research, including expected outcomes and impact, and the work that would be undertaken by the funded student;
- Outline the proposed timetable for the research;
- Any other research activity which is planned (workshops, conference etc.).

3.3. Research Project Pathway

Your research project proposal must sit primarily within one of the SeNSS Pathways, which are listed in section A.3., above. In addition, your home institution must be a member of the Pathway for which you wish to enter an application.

3.3.1. Inter- or multi-disciplinary proposals

If your proposal is inter- or multi-disciplinary, please indicate which other SeNSS Pathways are involved, and describe the inter- or multi-disciplinary nature of the research. Please note that there is a limit of 100 words for this description.

4. Advertisement for a studentship

Should your application for a studentship be successful, SeNSS will advertise publicly for applicants for this studentship, using the advertisement that you have drafted. As this advertisement is key to attracting high-quality applicants, we recommend that you refer to the guidance provided in Appendix 3 to this document.

Please note that **there is a strict limit of 280 words for your advert**. SeNSS will draft some standard text which will be appended to the end of your advert. This text will include the following information:

- What SeNSS is;
- That this studentship is being funded by the ESRC, through the SeNSS DTP;
- What the eligibility criteria are for this studentship; and,
- What funding the student will receive.

Guidance for drafting an advertisement

Substance

- Your advert should include a clear description of the research background, the project's aims and objectives, and information on the role the studentship will play in this project.
- It should also include any specific training opportunities for the student.
- Where relevant, include hyperlinks to other websites offering further information related to the project (e.g. information on the collaborative partner).

Style

- When writing your advertisement, it's best to assume that your audience is final year undergraduates.
- It is strongly recommended that you use subheadings and short paragraphs in this your advert. Some examples of headings or subheadings are:
 - *Scientific background/rationale and significance*
 - *Research methodology (the role of the student)*
 - *Training (what opportunities will the student have?)*
 - *Person specification (what are you looking for in applicants?), including the desired first degree subject(s).*
 - You may wish to mention any collaborations with other institutions and co-supervisors, and/or involvement with existing research projects/groups; and any travel/research opportunities.

3.4. Student applicant information

3.4.1. Full-time and part-time studentships

All studentships should be available on both a full-time and a part-time basis. If this studentship cannot be made available on a part-time basis, please provide the reasons for this.

3.4.2. +3 and 4-year studentships

SeNSS is required to ensure that there is a 50:50 split in funding +3:4-year awards. Is there any reason why this studentship cannot be advertised as a 4-year award?

3.4.3. Financial contributions to the first year of a 4-year studentship

If the best candidate for the studentship is a 4-year applicant, is the collaborative partner willing to contribute financially to the first year of their studies, as well as the remaining three years? (This question only applies to projects to which the collaborative partner is making a financial contribution.)

3.4.4. Determining the best candidate for this studentship

If there are any particular factors that you think should be taken into account in determining the best applicant for this studentship, please note these in this section.

5. Costing and Funding

SeNSS will provide additional funding to support your research project, **to a maximum of £1,500**, in addition to the usual studentship costs. Please describe any additional costs that you anticipate may arise in the course of this research project for the studentship. For example, you should include costs for travel between your home institution and your collaborative partner (where these costs are not being borne by your collaborative partner, or partly paid by that partner).

You do **not** need to include the following costings in your budget for the studentship:

- Compulsory cohort training (e.g. SeNSS Winter Induction and Summer Conferences, including associated travel and accommodation); and,
- Expenses which fall under the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) and the Overseas Fieldwork Grant.

3.5. Justification for additional costs

If you have included additional costs for this studentship, please provide a justification for these.

APPENDIX 1: TEMPLATE FOR YOUR COLLABORATIVE PARTNER'S LETTER OF SUPPORT

[Collaborative partner's address]

[Date]

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SeNSS STAFF-LED COLLABORATIVE STUDENTSHIP RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This letter should include the following information:

- The title of the research project, and the name of the primary supervisor (with whom the collaborative partner has been working on developing this proposal).

Rationale

Why the collaborative partner wishes to be a partner in this project.

Input

What the collaborative partner will contribute to this project, including:

- any cash and in-kind contributions (which can include staff time, access to equipment in their organisation, provision of data, software or materials - expressed as cash equivalent);
- in particular, please include and highlight details of contributions which are essential to the successful conduct of the research (e.g. confirming access to datasets, or confirming access to or use of facilities provided by the collaborative partner); and,
- whether a representative from the collaborative partner will act as a co-supervisor for the studentship.

Output

- Details regarding the collaborative partner's involvement in, and commitment to, research and/or doctoral research, or why the collaborative partner wishes to develop its role in research and/or doctoral research (e.g. to build capacity, or product or service development etc.).
 - Please note that collaborative partners are not required to have past involvement in doctoral or academic research, but may wish to be a partner in order to develop future collaborations.
- The collaborative partner's assessment of the likely or potential impacts of the research project.
- Any other comments the collaborative partner wishes to make in support of this project.

[Signature: representative of collaborative partner]

Name of representative:

Representative's job title:

Name of collaborative partner:

APPENDIX 2: GUIDANCE FOR WRITING A STUDENTSHIP ADVERT

1. Write for your audience

When writing your advertisement, it's best to assume that your audience is final year undergraduates. As a result, we recommend that you avoid using jargon or overly expert or technical language.

2. Give concrete details

Consider including details such as:

- Who is the collaborative partner, and what do they bring to the table for this project?
- What is the problem to be solved, and what are the objectives of the project/studentship?
- Why is this research important, and why now?
- What will the student actually do?
- What training opportunities might the student have?
- What are the (complementary) strengths of the members of the supervisory team?

3. Take a look at existing examples of adverts on advertising websites

- Website such as FindaPhD, and jobs.ac.uk are particularly helpful for this.

4. Keep it concise and specific

- People tend to scan web content in a rough 'F' shape, where the left hand side of the page is used, so sub-headings, short paragraphs, and bullet points are great for this.
- Put all of the key information in a sentence at the beginning of each section so you don't lose your reader's attention.

5. Be enthusiastic!

- If you think your project is exciting and innovative, then say so in your advert.
- As your project involves collaboration, be sure to point on how valuable this is, and consider using links to the collaborative partner's website or research.

6. Be encouraging to increase applicant interest

- You can encourage applications from candidates from other disciplines by reassuring them about any training or upskilling that will be provided for them.
- Try to allow for candidates from a wide range of degree subjects.
- And, most importantly, do not use jargon without explanations, always write for a knowledgeable but non-specialist applicant.