

# SeNSS Supervisor-led Collaborative Studentship Competition Policy

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## Introduction

Each year SeNSS **ring-fences six of its studentships** for the supervisor-led collaborative studentship competition.<sup>1</sup> These collaborative studentships are fully funded (where the applicants meet the studentship eligibility criteria), can be either +3 or 4-year (1+3, 2+2, +4) awards and, ideally, should be offered as being either a full-time or part-time opportunity. The current competition is for collaborative studentships which will begin in the 2019/20 academic year.

## What are supervisor-led collaborative studentship project proposals?

Supervisor-led collaborative studentship project proposals are those which are delivered in collaboration with a non-academic partner, which can be a business, public or third sector organisation. These will be termed “collaborative partners” in this document. These partners can be based in the UK, or overseas. 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, notional or actual RTSG, 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.

For the purposes of this competition, supervisors develop a research question and proposal in conjunction with a collaborative partner. The primary supervisor, who must be based at a SeNSS partner and who leads on the project, submits the research proposal on behalf of their team to the SeNSS supervisor-led collaborative studentship research project proposal competition. If successful, the research project is awarded a studentship, which is then publicly advertised. If a suitable candidate is selected during the competition for that project, a supervisor-led collaborative studentship award will be made to that candidate to work with the supervisor and the collaborative partner on the research project.

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> This is part of SeNSS’s plan to meet the ESRC’s requirement that collaborative awards constitute **30%** of the studentships awarded over the lifetime of the SeNSS ESRC Grant.

In addition, if a supervisor wishes to submit an application for a particular Pathway, they must ensure that their home institution is a member of that Pathway:

| <b>Pathways offered by each SeNSS member institution</b> |   |      |       |            |      |         |                |            |        |        |     |
|--|---|------|-------|------------|------|---------|----------------|------------|--------|--------|-----|
|  |   | 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.

## A. CALL FOR SUPERVISOR-LED RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSALS

### 1. Supervisor Eligibility

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.

The primary supervisor is responsible for submitting the research proposal on behalf of the proposed supervisory team. A primary supervisor may submit as many proposals as they like each year in which they are named as the primary supervisor.

In order to be eligible, the primary supervisor 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 their 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. Expression of interest

Should a supervisor be interested in submitting a research project proposal for consideration in this competition, they should express this interest to their home institution's administrative lead by 16 July 2018. However, should a supervisor later decide to enter the competition, not having submitted an expression of interest, this will not preclude them from submitting an application.

## 3. Submitting a proposal for a SeNSS supervisor-led collaborative studentship award

The primary supervisor (PS) is responsible for completing the application for a collaborative project and studentship. The *Guidance for Supervisors* document will steer the PS through this process.

To submit the proposal, the PS will need to create an account on FluidReview. Separate guidance on how to use FluidReview will be issued when the FluidReview site is opened for applications on 16 July 2018.

The PS will need to complete the four sections of the application form, as follows:

### 3.1. Supervisory team details

This section of the application form requires information about the supervisory team.

### **3.2. Collaboration details, and memorandum of understanding**

This section requires information about the collaborative partner, and the nature of the collaboration. It also requires that a letter of support from the collaborative partner must be obtained and uploaded as part of the application.

### **3.3. Proposal details and studentship advertisement**

This section of the application requires information about the research project, an advertisement for the studentship, information about the type of studentships the PS considers appropriate for this project, and any factors the PS would like to be considered during the process to identify the best candidate to work on that particular research project.

Where the best candidate for the studentship does not hold a Masters degree or holds one which is not compliant with the ESRC and SeNSS learning outcomes, that student can be awarded the studentship on a 4-year basis. However, the collaborative partner must be consulted to ensure that they are content that the research project may only start in earnest in the second year of the studentship, whilst the student undertakes the necessary training in research methods to bring them to compliance.

### **3.4. Costing and funding**

This section of the application requires a detailed explanation of all costs involved in the studentship. Ideally, the collaborative partner will contribute something financially to the cost of the studentship. However, this is not an absolute requirement.

- The supervisor can apply for up to £1,500 to support their research project from SeNSS in addition to the costs generated by the studentship.
- The SeNSS partner hosting the research project must commit to match-funding the studentship at the usual 33%, unless the collaborative partner contributes financially to the studentship. Where this is the case, the SeNSS partner's financial contribution will be reduced accordingly.<sup>2</sup>
- Where the collaborative partner contributes financially to the studentship, this contribution may not exceed 50% of the studentship costs, as it is a RCUK requirement that 50% of the studentship funding must come from the Research Council concerned (the ESRC).
- Where a collaborative partner has indicated that they are prepared to fund some, or all, of the +3 portion of a four-year studentship, but not the +1 phase, this is permissible. In this case, the SeNSS partner would need to match-fund the first year of the studentship at the full 33%.

Collaborative students will benefit from the same funding, training opportunities, and period of study, as any other SeNSS DTP student. SeNSS DTP studentship awards will provide tuition fees and a stipend at the standard ESRC rate for three or four years (where the student is eligible for this payment), as appropriate, as well as the opportunity to apply for additional funding, such as RTSG (Research and Training Support Grant) and funding for overseas fieldwork, during the life of the studentship award.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, if the collaborative partner contributes 10% of the total studentship costs, the SeNSS partner will need to contribute the remaining 23% of the total costs.

#### 4. Criteria for assessing supervisor-led collaborative project proposals

The general criteria proposed to be used by SeNSS for assessing supervisor-led collaborative project proposals fall into four categories:

1. The quality of the research proposal (30%)
2. The quality of the collaboration (30%)
3. Suitability and feasibility of the 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 firsthand 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/transferable skills, and not limit the student to developing skills only within the narrow focus of the project  |     |

Each category should be scored from 0-6 (please note that up to one decimal point will be used when grading applications, e.g. 5.6, or 4.9), according to the definitions below:

| Score    | Definition  |
|----------|---|
| <b>6</b> | <i>Outstanding:</i> meets all standards at the highest level for all criteria   |
| <b>5</b> | <i>Excellent:</i> demonstrates excellent standards for all criteria   |
| <b>4</b> | <i>Very good:</i> meets high standards for all criteria or has excellent /outstanding standards for most, but not all, criteria                                   |
| <b>3</b> | <i>Good:</i> has merit and meets satisfactory standards for most criteria and could potentially be readily improved   |
| <b>2</b> | <i>Fair:</i> potentially of some merit, but overall is of inconsistent quality, and requires significant additional measures to improve to an acceptable standard |
| <b>1</b> | <i>Poor:</i> does not meet adequate standards for several criteria  |
| <b>0</b> | <i>Non-scoring:</i> seriously scientifically flawed, serious technical impediments, or insufficiently clearly written to be able to assess                        |



## 5. The sifting process

### 5.1. Institutional review

Prior to submission to SeNSS, proposals will be assessed by the PS's home institution, and there is no limit on the number of proposals each SeNSS partner may nominate for consideration. However, SeNSS member institutions are asked to ensure that **only appropriate proposals of the highest quality are nominated to the next round of the competition.**

It is to be left to each SeNSS member institution to determine how they will organise their sifting process after the deadline has passed for the submission of applications using FluidReview (**23 September 2018**), so long as institutionally-nominated proposals are submitted to the SeNSS office, using FluidReview, by **8 October 2018**, and that the SeNSS assessment criteria are used in reviewing these proposals.

Institutional selection panels are required to check that word counts have been adhered to, and that the adverts have been drafted according to the guidance notes.<sup>3</sup> Any concerns should be noted (using the comments section of the review form). These panels are also required to confirm that their institution has checked supervisor eligibility, and are content that the supervisors concerned are eligible.

Once a proposal has been nominated by a SeNSS partner institution, and has been submitted to the SeNSS office, there will be no further opportunities to improve it.

### 5.2. Further review process

#### 5.2.1. Review by a Sub-Committee constituted by the Management Board

At its meeting in September 2018, the Management Board will constitute a sub-committee to review and rank the proposals put forward by each SeNSS member institution. This ranking will initially be carried out on-line, using FluidReview, but the sub-committee will meet face-to-face to confirm its final ranking of submissions. This sub-committee will include:

- five members of the MB (including either the Director and/or Deputy Director, or both);
- at least one non-HEI representative; and,
- the SeNSS Training Manager, acting as the secretary to this sub-committee.

#### 5.2.2. Management Board review process

The final rankings, as compiled by the MB sub-committee, will be circulated to the Management Board by email. The Board will be asked to approve the final ranking of the proposals.

Once the Board has approved the ranked list, the six top-ranked proposals will be advertised, calling for applications from candidates for the attached collaborative studentships. All SeNSS member institutions will be asked to advertise all six studentship opportunities on their appropriate institutional websites and subject-specific mailing lists.

**In the event that one or more of the six studentships are not awarded, they will be placed back in the studentship pool to be distributed through the student-led competition.**

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<sup>3</sup> This information will be contained in the *Guidance for Supervisors* document.



### 5.3. 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                                     |
| <b>Closing date for proposals to be submitted via FluidReview</b>   | <b>23 September 2018</b><br>(By 23.59 GMT)       |
| <b>Institutional Stage</b>  |  |
| 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)                    |
| <b>Note:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will be referred to local level guidance on how the institutional stage of the competition will be managed at their home institution.</li> <li>Home institutions are responsible for conducting supervisor eligibility checks.</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>Peer Review Stage</b>  |  |
| 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                               |
| <b>Note:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applications will be assessed on the basis of the selection criteria outlined above.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Management Board: Final Selection Stage</b>  |  |
| 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<br>(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                   |

## **B. STUDENTSHIP COMPETITION FOR SUPERVISOR-LED RESEARCH PROJECTS: PROCESS AND TIMELINE<sup>4</sup>**

### **1. Application process**

Applicants apply for a studentship connected to a particular project, using FluidReview. The deadline for submission of application forms will be approximately 15 February 2019 (date to be confirmed by the launch of the collaborative studentship competition).

### **2. Shortlisting process**

- An online shortlisting process will be conducted to identify three to four candidates to be interviewed for each collaborative studentship. The shortlisting process will be conducted by the supervisory team - the primary and secondary academic supervisors, and the representative/supervisor from the collaborative partner.
- The relevant SeNSS administrative lead will be asked to provide administrative support, including assisting, where appropriate, with conducting residential eligibility checks, supervisor eligibility checks, and training compliance checks.
- The shortlisted candidates will be interviewed by the primary supervisor and the external collaborator at a minimum. The admin lead may attend as note-taker, if required. The member institution's Academic Lead (or their representative) will sit in on these interviews.
- The interview should last approximately 30 minutes, and should cover appropriate topics, such as the whether the key criteria are met and how, and should probe the appropriateness of the candidate's fit to the project.
- It is recognised that some research teams will already have identified a potential candidate for their studentship. However, given the need to ensure fair and equal opportunities for all applicants applying for these studentships, and to be able to assure all the SeNSS member institutions that these awards have been made in a transparent manner with the best candidate being appointed, there must be an interview process even where an ideal candidate has been already been identified.
- After the interviews have been held, the panel must agree first and second places (the second ranked candidate will be the reserve candidate, provided they meet at least the minimum selection requirements in case the first ranked candidate declines).
- Interview panels must not tell candidates they have been successful at this first stage, and must let candidates know that there is a second stage to this competition – approval by the MB.
- By 11 March 2018, panel must have forwarded a report on this process, via FluidReview, identifying the preferred candidate and the reserve candidate, plus the reasons for their decisions, to the SeNSS office.

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<sup>4</sup> Applicants may enter both the SeNSS student-led studentship competition and the supervisor-led collaborative studentship competition. However, they may only be awarded one studentship.

- These reports will be circulated to the MB to discuss and approve alongside student-led studentship candidates.
- Applicants must meet a certain standard in order to be appointable and, in cases where an appropriately qualified candidate is not identified, the DTP funding will be redirected to the SeNSS student-led competition.

### **3. Selection criteria for applications for the supervisor-led collaborative studentship competition**

The following three categories of criteria will be used to assess applications for the supervisor-led collaborative studentships:

**Evidence of the applicant's suitability ("fit") for this research project (40%)** – This will be based on the applicant's account of their suitability for the research project for which they are applying, as well as their reasons for pursuing doctoral study. Reference will be made to their Supporting Statement, as contained in their application. It will also be based on the information supplied by their referees. The SeNSS assessors will be looking for evidence of how well the applicant matches or "fits" with the research project, evidence of their understanding of the place of this research project within the current field and its potential impact, and their knowledge of the collaborative partner.

**Evidence that the applicant is well-prepared for taking part in this research project, and their future career (40%)** – This will be based on the applicant's description of how their previous experience (academic and professional) has prepared them for doctoral study and research, their referees' evaluation of their suitability for doctoral research (this will be done through considering evidence both the applicant and their referees have provided about the applicant's performance at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and of any relevant professional experience), and the applicant's description of how the programme will contribute to their long-term career aims. Reference will again be made to the applicant's Supporting Statement, as well as the Degree Transcripts, individual module marks and degree results they have provided. Please note that 1+3/+4/2+2 applications will be assessed in a way that recognises that someone applying for a 1+3/+4/2+2 studentship has had less training and fewer opportunities to think about their suitability for the research project than someone applying for a +3 studentship. In other words, the way in which the selection process is carried out will ensure that those applying for 1+3/+4/2+2 studentships will not be disadvantaged relative to +3 applicants.

**Evidence that the applicant's training needs have been properly identified and planned for (20%)** – In their application, the applicant will be asked to provide information about their prior training and/or equivalent professional experience. **In drawing up a shortlist of candidates, the shortlisting panel must assess this information, and must ensure that the supervisor creates a training plan for each candidate, should one be required.** This will be discussed with the candidate at their interview, and will be assessed as part of the final decision on which two candidates to nominate for the studentship.

### 3.1. Applying the criteria

| Grade | Quality of application   | SELECTION CRITERIA: APPLICANTS FOR SUPERVISOR-LED STUDENTSHIPS  |  |   |
|-------|--|---|--|---|
|       |  | Applicant's fit to the research project   | Applicant's preparedness for this research project, and future career  | Applicant's training needs  |
| 6     | <b>Excellent:</b><br>applications coming within this category are deemed to have the highest priority for funding. | <p>The applicant's articulation of their understanding of the following points is of highest quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the research project itself</li> <li>their fit to that project</li> <li>the research environment in which that project will take place</li> <li>the impact that the research is likely to have</li> </ul>        | <p>The applicant demonstrates outstanding potential and preparedness – academic and/or professional - in relation to the research project. The applicant's application clearly sets out how the programme will contribute to their long-term career aims.</p> <p>The references are highly supportive both of the applicant's capacity to undertake doctoral research and this specific research project, and provide sufficient detail to explain this support. The references also demonstrate an understanding of the demands of doctoral research.</p> | All training needs beyond core methods training are clearly identified, and there is a plausible plan in place to address them. |
| 5     | <b>Very good:</b><br>applications coming within this category are deemed to have a high priority for funding       | <p>The applicant's articulation of their understanding of the following points is rigorous to a high degree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the research project itself</li> <li>their fit to that project</li> <li>the research environment in which that project will take place</li> <li>the impact that the research is likely to have</li> </ul> | <p>The applicant demonstrates strong potential and preparedness – academic and/or professional - in relation to the research project. Their application includes a consideration of how the programme will contribute to their long-term career aims.</p> <p>The references are highly supportive of the applicant in relation to this specific research project, but do not supply sufficient detail to justify this confidence.</p>  | Most training needs beyond core methods training are clearly identified and there is a plausible plan in place to address them. |

| Grade | Quality of application  | SELECTION CRITERIA: APPLICANT FOR SUPERVISOR-LED STUDENTSHIPS   |   |  |
|-------|---|---|---|--|
|       |   | Applicant's fit to the research proposal  | Applicant's preparedness for this research project, and future career   | Applicant's training needs   |
| 4     | <b>Good:</b><br>applications coming within this category are deemed to have medium priority for funding | <p>Despite the applicant's reasonable articulation of their understanding of the following points, there are one or more areas in which they are lacking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the research project itself</li> <li>their fit to that project</li> <li>the research environment in which that project will take place</li> <li>the impact that the research is likely to have.</li> </ul> | <p>The applicant shows satisfactory potential and preparedness - academic and/or professional - in relation to the research project. However, the applicant's application includes little consideration of how the programme will contribute to their long-term career aims.</p> <p>The references are not highly supportive of the applicant and/or their fit with the research project, and/or they do not demonstrate an understanding of doctoral research.</p> | Some of the training needs have been identified and there is a plausible plan in place to address them.  |
| 3     | <b>Fair:</b><br>applications coming within this category are deemed not to be a priority for funding    | <p>The applicant demonstrates some understanding of the following points, but does not meet the required standard in this regard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the research project itself</li> <li>their fit to that project</li> <li>the research environment in which that project will take place</li> <li>the impact that the research is likely to have.</li> </ul>                         | <p>The applicant shows some potential and preparedness - academic and/or professional - in relation to the research project. However, the applicant's application does not consider how the programme will contribute to their long-term career aims.</p> <p>The references are not particularly supportive of the applicant's fit to the research project, and/or they do not demonstrate an understanding of doctoral research.</p>                               | Some important training needs have not been identified or the plans for addressing identified gaps may not be plausible within the project time-frame. |

| Grade | Quality of application  | SELECTION CRITERIA: APPLICANTS FOR SUPERVISOR-LED STUDENTSHIPS   |   |   |
|-------|---|--|---|---|
|       |   | Applicant's fit to the research project  | Applicant's preparedness for this research project, and future career   | Applicant's training needs  |
| 2     | <b>Weak:</b><br>applications coming within this category should not be funded | <p>The applicant is unable to articulate an understanding of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the research project itself</li> <li>their fit to that project</li> <li>the research environment in which that project will take place</li> <li>the impact that the research is likely to have</li> </ul>  | <p>The applicant shows little potential and preparedness - academic and/or professional - in relation to the research project. The applicant's application does not contain any consideration as to how the programme will contribute to their long-term career aims.</p> <p>The references are not supportive of the applicant and/or their fit to the research project, and/or they do not demonstrate an understanding of doctoral research.</p> | <p>The training or preparation necessary to the success of the research project has not been identified, such that the project is unlikely to be successfully completed.</p>  |
| 1     | <b>Poor:</b><br>applications coming within this category should not be funded | <p>The applicant demonstrates such serious flaws in their ability to articulate an understanding of the following points that they should not be funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the research project itself</li> <li>their fit to that project</li> <li>the research environment in which that project will take place</li> <li>the impact that the research is likely to have.</li> </ul> | <p>The applicant does have the necessary formal academic qualifications, that is, the entry requirements have not been met.</p> <p>The references are not at all supportive of the applicant and/or their fit to the research project, and/or they do not demonstrate an understanding of doctoral research.</p>  | <p>The application does not meet the criteria for supervision or access to essential resources. Either training needs have not been identified, or the plans for addressing poorly identified needs are clearly implausible</p> |

### 3.2. Student shortlisting and selection timeline

The student shortlisting and selection process must take place between 18 February and 11 March 2019.

| Activity   | Date or timeframe                     |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Advertise for applications for supervisor-led collaborative studentships   | No later than 16 November 2018        |
| Deadline for applications to be received   | 15 February 2019 (TBC)                |
| <b>Institutional Stage</b>   |                                       |
| Institutional-level shortlisting and selection processes   | 18 February to 11 March 2019 (TBC)    |
| Date by which details of the two candidates nominated per research proposal must reach the SeNSS office  | 11 March 2019 (TBC)                   |
| <b>Note:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Home institutions are responsible for conducting supervisor eligibility checks, residential eligibility checks, and training compliance checks.</i></li><li>• <i>The applications must be assessed solely on the basis of the approved selection criteria.</i></li></ul> |                                       |
| <b>Management Board: Final Selection Stage</b>   |                                       |
| SeNSS Office does due diligence on assurance checks on nominated candidates  | 12 to 15 March 2019 (TBC)             |
| SeNSS Office provides Management Board with a list of the candidates for the supervisor-led collaborative studentship competition (preferred candidate, plus reserve candidate, and the reasoning for this ranking)  | 18 March 2019 (TBC)                   |
| SeNSS Management Board meets to confirm the successful candidates for the supervisor-led collaborative studentship competition   | Week of 25 March 2019 (TBC)           |
| Outcomes circulated  | As soon as possible after the meeting |

**Please note:** a supervisor-led collaborative studentship award is contingent on recruiting a suitable high-quality student. Confirmation of the final student selection is at the discretion of the SeNSS DTP Management Board.



## Document history

| Date         | Version  |
|--------------|--|
| 12 May 2017  | V1: Drafted by Manager   |
| 18 May 2017  | V2: Comments by Deputy Director  |
| 06 June 2017 | V3: Discussed by Management Board, which decided to adopt a CASE-style competition format. This resulted in this policy document being re-drafted. |
| 27 June 2017 | V4: Re-drafted by Manager, according to the Management Board's decisions   |
| 11 July 2017 | V5: Discussed by SeNSS core team, and re-drafted by Manager  |
| 20 July 2017 | V6: SeNSS member institutions' feedback incorporated into this version   |
| 21 July 2017 | V7: Discussed by Director, Deputy Director and Manager, and finalized for circulation to SeNSS members   |
| 18 June 2018 | V8: Updated by SeNSS Core Team   |