



Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) 2024 Peer Reviewer Guidance

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Introduction

These notes provide guidance on reviewing proposals received under the Doctoral Training Partnerships 2024 Call. Before you begin your assessment please read the specification for this call, including the frequently asked questions ([ESRC Doctoral Training Partnerships: 2024 – UKRI](#)) and the ESRC's Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022 ([ESRC postgraduate training and development guidelines – UKRI](#))

Background to the Doctoral Training Network

In 2017 the ESRC established a national network of 14 institutional and consortia level Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) and 2 Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) through which we deliver our funding for postgraduate training across the full disciplinary range of the social sciences as well as areas of interdisciplinary research at the boundaries with other sciences.

Over the last few years we commissioned a number of reviews and evidence gathering exercises – [Review of the PhD in the Social Sciences](#); [Data-Driven Research Skills Scoping Review](#); [Strengthening the role of the TNA](#) Report and the [Supporting Excellent Supervisory Practice](#) report. These have contributed to our renewed vision for postgraduate training and the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022 – to inform the development of our strategy to support doctoral training.

The key findings of these activities emphasised:

- The student must be at the centre of the training process
- That training should reflect both the needs of the individual and of their discipline/interdisciplinary area or field of study
- The importance of a holistic, evidence-based development needs analysis in determining the training and development students receive
- The importance of innovation in core training content and delivery, particularly in relation to data management, digital skills and the skills to analyse large and complex data
- The importance of 'Research in Practice' as a core component of the doctoral experience for all ESRC funded students, including the need for placement opportunities for all
- The importance of DTPs considering broadly how they can meet students' training needs including the opportunities to source specialist training from other providers including the National Centre for Research Methods, ESRC investments, other appropriate training providers or by working in partnership with other organisations.

Our renewed Postgraduate Training Strategy includes this open competition to support the next round of DTPs for studentships starting from October 2024.

Aims and objectives of this call

The principal objective of this call is to fund a network of doctoral training partnerships that deliver excellence in postgraduate training by building on the considerable strengths that exist across the social science community. ESRC DTPs are designed to:

- enhance the capabilities of doctoral candidates
- develop a world-class, highly skilled workforce for the UK.

The ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines ([ESRC postgraduate training and development guidelines – UKRI](#)) set out our expectations for the content and delivery of postgraduate training funded by ESRC through our network of DTPs.

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate excellence in the delivery of conceptual, general research and specialist training, and set out how the DTP fits within their research organisations (ROs) strategy for doctoral training provision and how the doctoral training strategy fits within the RO's overall vision and goals, particularly their strategy for social science research.

ROs will have flexibility in the content, structure, and delivery of training as well as in the use of studentship funding. This flexibility allows ROs to be innovative in the training they offer, such as encouraging interdisciplinary approaches and being more responsive to student needs.

Applicants should provide evidence and demonstrate excellence in the following areas:

- working in partnership
- content and delivery of training:
 - conceptual, general and specialist research training
 - research in practice
 - capacity building in priority areas
 - collaborative studentships and international engagement
 - development needs analysis
 - supervision
- equality, diversity, and inclusion
- delivery, management, and governance
- allocation of studentships.
- assessment process and procedures

All proposals to the DTP call will undergo external peer review before being considered by a specially convened panel.

Each proposal will be sent to a minimum of six reviewers, across a range of disciplines, for expert comment. Reviewers will be chosen from a specially constituted Peer Review College, whose role is to provide an assessment on the quality of postgraduate provision and the supporting research and administration environment to inform the second stage of the assessment process which will be undertaken by the panel.

Peer reviewers will be expected to provide an independent assessment for each individual proposal allocated to them.

Applicants will be offered an opportunity to respond to anonymised reviewer comments, which will then be sent to two members of the panel along with the proposal and reviewer comments for consideration.

Only those proposals of a sufficient high level will progress to the panel stage.

The panel will independently assess the proposals informed by the peer reviewers' assessments and through the interview of the DTP Director and up to three members of their team. They will assign the final grades and make funding recommendations to ESRC.

Conflict of interest

ESRC aims to ensure that proposals are not forwarded to you for review where there is an obvious conflict of interest, with institutional conflicts of interest considered when applications are allocated to reviewers.

For information please note the following:

- reviewers should not assess proposals with which they have a conflict of interest with the applicant(s) or any of the Research Organisation(s) comprising the DTP. Please notify the office if you have been allocated a proposal with which you have a conflict of interest.
- if you are a named DTP Director or Co-Investigator on a DTP application, or have been heavily involved in the writing of a bid.

If you feel you may have a potential conflict of interest, please contact pgtframework@esrc.ukri.org

Confidentiality

As a reviewer, you are not allowed to disclose to outsiders any information concerning application documents or evaluations, nor are you allowed to use this confidential information to your own benefit or anyone else's benefit or disadvantage. In addition, you may not reveal to outsiders that you are assessing the postgraduate training plans of particular research organisations.

In order to ensure a fully independent assessment of applications, reviewers should note that they **must not** discuss their comments with other members of the Peer Review College. If reviewers have any questions regarding procedural details or more specific questions on the grading criteria they are asked to contact the ESRC directly.

Once the assessment has been completed, you are required to destroy/delete all of the proposal documents and any copies made of them. Confidentiality must also be maintained after the assessment process has been completed.

Deadlines

We appreciate you have a busy schedule however a timely response would really be appreciated. If the deadline for comments is not feasible, please contact pgtframework@esrc.ukri.org as soon as possible as we might be able to agree a suitable date.

If you are unable to review the proposal, please decline the Je-S invite as soon as possible to enable the team to select an alternative reviewer.

Timetable for assessment

Proposals, including supporting documents, will be sent to reviewers in the week commencing 6 March 2023. Reviewers will be allocated approximately 3 applications to

review. Written comments and grades must be completed using the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submissions System (Je-S) by **Thursday 6 April 2023**. Earlier return of assessments would also be welcome.

Reviewer comments will be anonymised and sent to applicants for response, applicants will have a deadline of 5 May 2023 to supply their response to the comments. Responses received after this may not be sent to the panel for consideration.

The panel will review all of the documentation and will meet on the 26 - 29 June 2023 to agree which DTPs will be accredited. Decisions will be communicated to all applicants and reviewers in August 2023 with the first cohort of students starting in October 2024.

Timetable:

Peer Review Workshop	31 January 2023
Proposals and supporting documents sent to reviewers	Week commencing 6 March 2023
Deadline for Peer Review comments and grades	6 April 2023
Deadline for applicant response to comments	5 May 2023
Commissioning Panel meeting	26, 27, 28, 29 June 2023
Communicate decisions	August 2023

Peer Review form on Je-S

You will be invited to undertake your review through the research councils Joint Electronic Submissions System (Je-S). You will be asked to complete a brief section on your knowledge of the applicant and to allocate a grade on a number of categories.

You will then be asked to allocate an overall grade for the proposal and provide detailed comments in support of this grade. Please ensure that your overall grade reflects your written comments.

Please refer to the **Je-S Helptext for reviewers** for further guidance regarding the Je-S system and the general peer review process: ([Je-S Handbook \(rcuk.ac.uk\)](http://rcuk.ac.uk)).

The review criteria for this competition (detailed below) should also be used to help inform the grading of, and detailed comments relating to the proposal.

Reviewer Guidance

The guidance notes for reviewers should be read in conjunction with the call specification at [ESRC Doctoral Training Partnerships: 2024 – UKRI](#) and the [Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022](#) (hereafter known as the Guidelines 2022). Reviewers should particularly note the following information regarding eligibility.

Eligibility

Applications are invited from UK-based ROs that are eligible to apply for research council funding for research and have the infrastructure in place to deliver high quality doctoral training.

There is no limit on the number of ROs which can be involved in consortia arrangements; however, each RO can only be a part of one DTP proposal. All DTP proposals must be multidisciplinary, single discipline or narrowly focused DTPs are not eligible to apply.

The ESRC will scrutinise each proposal to ensure that the eligibility criteria are met. However, peer reviewers are also asked to be vigilant about eligibility and to raise any queries they have about aspects of individual proposals with the office.

If you have any doubts regarding eligibility, please contact:
pgtframework@esrc.ukri.org

Assessment of proposals

Peer reviewers will be asked to review all of the information provided within the proposal, however, should note that the main detail of each proposal will be found in the following documentation:

- **Case for support** – a structured narrative addressing the criteria set out in the call specification and the Guidelines 2022. The case for support will include three supporting annexes as follows:
 - **Annex 1 – Research Environment:** applicants must provide evidence of the quality of the research environment they will provide for students for each discipline/subject included in the proposal. This could include outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) (metrics for output, environment, and impact), supervisory capacity, completion rates, major grant funding or centres of excellence as well as other indicators that applicants consider demonstrate the quality of the research environment.
 - **Annex 2 – Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) plan:** should detail how the partnership will address EDI considerations, capture diversity data, support career progression, provide support systems to protect students' physical and mental health and how the approaches will be developed over the lifetime of the DTP.
 - **Annex 3 – Cohort size justification and allocation of studentships:** to provide a justification of the specific cohort size being requested and how the partnership will support the cohort. This should also include details of any co-funding arrangements (if relevant). The internal allocation processes should be detailed.
- **CV (for the proposed Director, Deputy Director and Training Lead)** – each proposal will include a CV for the proposed director, deputy director and training lead.
- **Justification of Resources** – A statement providing a breakdown and justification of the costs requested for the development of training and placements infrastructure
- **Additional information for collaborative bids (if applicable)** – proposals that include two or more ROs must provide additional information regarding the partnership, its history, the governance structure for the arrangement and how the partnership will develop over the five-year accreditation period.

- **Letters of support from collaborating organisations** – each collaborating organisation must provide a letter of support detailing the organisation’s commitment, the alignment with the organisation(s) strategy and their contribution towards an appropriate management structure for the DTP.
- **Project Partner Letter of support (if applicable)** – Each project partner must provide a letter of support confirming the level of support specific to this proposal. Project Partner details are only required where the applicant has secured a substantial commitment from a non-academic organisation that will form part of the consortia bid for the delivery of training.

Please note that we did not request letters of support from organisations that would support placement opportunities.

Assessment Criteria

The primary role of the peer review college is to determine how well the proposals for DTP status meet the requirements set out in the call specification and the Guidelines 2022.

The assessment criteria detailed below are to be used when reviewing the proposal(s). Please use the free text ‘Feedback for Applicant’ section of the review form to comment on each of the following:

Working in partnership

Partnerships are encouraged to represent a consortia of academic organisations to optimise the breadth and depth of training available to students. ESRC also encourages partnerships to include smaller institutions, with what might be discipline-specific centres of excellence to use the strengths of regional partners to build connections in local communities and to support them to deliver the ESRC objectives.

Reviewers are asked to consider if the bid demonstrates evidence of the following:

- the vision and strategy for the partnership
- how the partnership will deliver their goals
- justification for the structure and size of the partnership
- evidence and justification to demonstrate the strengths and areas of excellence that the partners bring to the Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)
- how the partnership will grow and mature collaborations over the funding period
- evidence of linkage to institutional strategies and resources

Reviewers are asked to indicate the grade in which they have allocated to this section using the grading structure 0 to 6.

Points to consider:

Single Research Organisation applications may also be submitted and reviewers are asked to comment on the justification for the approach taken by the applicant.

Reviewers are asked to comment on the proposed spread of partners, including the inclusion of single discipline or narrowly focussed centres of excellence where relevant. Has the applicant justified the inclusion of the selected partners?

The ESRC would expect consortia bids for DTP status to ensure that their strategy and vision is as one and not a summary of the separate institutional strategies. Reviewers are advised to raise any concerns they have about the coherence of individual DTP strategies.

ESRC acknowledges that it may take time for new collaborative arrangements to evolve fully and for partnerships to be consolidated or extended. Reviewers should consider whether consortia bids have provided demonstrable evidence of initial collaborative activity in the delivery of training provision and set out a clear strategy for how the collaboration will grow and deliver their goals over the five-year accreditation period.

Non-academic organisations, such as those from business, civil-society, and public sector research establishments, may also form part of consortia bids, in agreement with the lead research organisation submitting the proposal. They would be expected to contribute resources (cash or in kind) for the delivery of training and access for studentships. Reviewers are asked to determine whether the added value of their inclusion has been demonstrated.

Content and delivery of training

ESRC expects partnerships to provide an excellent postgraduate training environment and deliver leading edge social science research training which is student centred and responsive to their prior experience and subject area.

The Guidelines 2022 detail how partnerships will be expected to provide conceptual, general, specialist and research in practice training.

Reviewers are asked to consider if the bid includes evidence on the quality of the research environment they can provide and demonstrates how the applicants will meet the following requirements:

Conceptual, general and specialist research training

- how they will meet our expectations for the delivery of core conceptual, general and specialist research training within the DTP
- evidence of the partnerships strengths in providing this training
- their approach to developing new training
- evidence of the quality of the research environment, at a disciplinary or subject area level
- examples of where the partnership would make specialist training available beyond their DTP.

Points to consider:

The Guidelines 2022 stress the importance of avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach that will require structural and cultural change within research organisations and these elements should be addressed in the bid.

How training provision is delivered must be student-centred and flexible but ESRC continues to place a strong emphasis on providing broad-based social science research training that equips researchers with the knowledge and skills to manage a successful research career and/or to contribute to society in other ways. All students are expected to understand the breadth of social science methods and make informed choices about their

research design (current and future), but these outcomes can be demonstrated in a variety of ways including prior training and professional experience.

Partnerships can bid for up to £150,000 to support the development of new training content and delivery approaches, and reviewers are asked to look at the justification for the costs requested and consider how this funding is being utilised.

Applicants have been asked to provide a one page annex for each discipline/subject area which evidence the quality of the research environment that they will provide for students. This could include outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) (metrics for output, environment, and impact), supervisory capacity, completion rates, major grant funding or centres of excellence and other indicators that applicants consider demonstrate the quality of the research environment. Reviewers should consider whether there is robust evidence for each of the institutions delivering training in the subject area.

Where the partnership is seeking to use the DTP to grow capacity in new research areas, the rationale for this must be detailed in the bid.

Research in practice

The aim of Research in Practice is to develop students' transferrable skills and provide practical opportunities to apply their theoretical knowledge and methodological skills in different contexts including placement opportunities.

In their bids, DTPs will need to set out how they will embed research in practice as a core component of the doctoral experience for all ESRC funded students.

We are not mandating placements as part of Research in Practice but do expect by the time of the mid-term review in autumn 2026 that DTPs can demonstrate the majority of students in the first two cohorts will be undertaking a placement as part of their studentship.

Reviewers are asked to consider if the applicants provide information and evidence on the following:

- the strategy for how the DTP will deliver a suite of options that are open to all ESRC funded students
- evidence on how the DTP will draw on existing connections, how funding will be utilised to create new connections and a clear plan on how the placement offer will be scaled up for all cohorts
- clear details on the infrastructure needed to underpin the delivery of these options
- details on how the research in practice element will link up with the development needs analysis process and how the DTP will identify the needs of the students and ensure the suite of options available is appropriate.

Points to consider:

Research in Practice is the broad ambition to have a suite of options to develop students' abilities, tailored through the Development Needs Analysis (DNA) process according to a students previous experience, goals and development needs.

This should not only include placements and the [Guidelines 2022](#) set out a number of examples of what we would expect to see included in the suite of options.

Reviewers are asked to review the range of development opportunities included in the bid and consider how they recognise and promote the diversity of careers open to students, recognise the diversity of the student body and place an emphasis on experiential, immersive and reflexive learning opportunities.

Partnerships can bid for up to £40,000 per year to support the cost of administering research in practice. Reviewers are asked to look at the justification for the costs requested and consider how this funding is being utilised.

Applicants may already have a range of potential placement partners in scope as part of the research in practice element, but there is no requirement to provide details or confirmation of these partnerships as part of the bid application.

Capacity building in priority areas

The [ESRC review of the PhD in the social sciences](#) highlighted the continuing need for ESRC to develop capacity in data skills, advanced quantitative methods (AQM) training and the importance of supporting interdisciplinary research which spans research council boundaries. A number of studentships per year will be allocated strategically by ESRC to reward strength in these priority areas.

Additional awards will also be allocated to support the inclusion of single discipline or narrowly focused centres of excellence and the extent to which they are embedded within inclusive partnerships.

Reviewers are asked to consider if the applicants have provided:

- evidence of the strengths that the partnership has in the priority areas
- details on how the partnership will support studentships in the priority areas.

Points to consider:

In order to allocate these additional studentships, our expectation is that partnerships will already have strong foundations in these steered areas that is evidenced within the bid. Applicants need to also demonstrate how they will implement this training across the partnership.

Collaborative studentships and international engagement

ESRC is keen to positively encourage collaborations between public, private and civil society sector organisations to help maximise the wider impact of our training investments and to increase opportunities for doctoral students to work with external stakeholders,

With the increased emphasis on providing research in practice placements, we do not want to lose the benefits collaborative studentships bring and have set a target that at least 15% of the studentships we fund should be collaborative with non-academic organisations in the public, private or civil-society sectors.

We are also keen to support researchers to develop the capability to operate in a global context. Therefore, we will continue to provide support for overseas fieldwork for doctoral students and provide extensions to allow time for difficult language training.

We will also provide funding for overseas institutional visits (OIVs) of up to three months to undertake specialist research training and to develop collaborative links.

Reviewers are asked to consider if the bid demonstrates evidence of the following:

- the partnerships commitment to develop collaborative agreements with non-academic partnerships
- details on the international aspects of the training provision, including how this offering would be developed by the partnership over the lifecourse of the award.
- their commitment to meet the target and how they will achieve it.

Points to consider:

Although ESRC is not prescriptive about the type of collaboration, our expectation is that this must include substantive knowledge exchange and not just one way engagement so that both the student and the collaborating organisation benefits from the collaborative activity being undertaken.

Collaborative studentships can also include a placement as part of the opportunity.

Development needs analysis

Development needs analysis (DNA) is fundamental to achieving more flexible and responsive doctoral training. Students should benefit from a tailored DNA experience that allows for specific training needs, learning outcomes and research in practice elements to be clearly defined.

Applicants must describe the processes they will put in place to meet our expectations for development needs assessments including how they will engage with supervisors to ensure that they are aware of the different training opportunities.

Reviewers are asked to consider if the applicants have provided:

- their strategy for meeting ESRC expectations in relation to DNA, including how they will engage students and supervisors
- evidence of how a consistent approach will be managed across the DTP
- details on how the partnership will evaluate and share their approach to DNA exercises across the network.

Points to consider:

Reviewers are asked to consider whether the applicant's approach to the DNA process meets the ESRC expectations for a more holistic process to allow a bespoke student experience to be created.

Does the applicant set out how they will ensure consistency across the partners to ensure all students have the same opportunities?

Reviewers are also asked to comment on the applicants plans to continuously review and identify training gaps within their DTP and how these gaps would be addressed.

Supervision

Supervisors play a critical role throughout the doctoral experience, and we want to support and promote high quality supervision through our DTPs. It is essential that supervisors are engaged with the DTP to ensure that the student gets the most out of their ESRC studentship and the range of opportunities available to them.

Reviewers are asked to consider whether applicants have:

- formal systems in place for monitoring performance of supervisors and identifying training and professional development needs
- a clear strategy for communicating and engaging with supervisors to ensure that they are fully engaged with the aims and objectives of the DTP
- evidence of the professional development opportunities available for supervisors and how the DTP will encourage members of staff to join supervisory teams.

Points to consider:

ESRC expectations on supervision are included within the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022. Reviewers are asked to consider the capacity of the research organisation(s) to supervise postgraduate students across the subject areas included in the bid. Reviewers are also asked to highlight any unusual or unconvincing arrangements for the supervision of postgraduate students. In addition, reviewers may also wish to highlight in their comments any examples of particularly good practice in this area.

Reviewers are also asked to look at the DTP policy on training and development of supervisors to ensure that the partnerships will support the supervisors ongoing professional development, whether this be for new or inexperienced supervisors, or those who are more experienced.

Reviewers are asked to indicate the grade in which they have allocated to this section using the grading structure 0 to 6.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

ESRC is committed to increasing the diversity of our student population and ensuring that we provide an inclusive and supportive environment for all. ESRC DTPs are expected to take a leading role in promoting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and should act as a beacon for EDI within the research and training community.

Reviewers are asked to consider whether applicants have provided:

- a clear equality, diversity, and inclusion plan to support the participation of all doctoral candidates from all backgrounds, including how they will embed EDI principles at all levels and in all aspects of research and training practice within the DTP
- evidence of support systems in place to protect doctoral candidates' physical and mental health and wellbeing

- confirmation that all institutions within the partnership will have procedures in place that allow them to capture EDI data on all applicants, for each stage of the recruitment process, from the outset of the DTP.

Reviewers are asked to indicate the grade in which they have allocated to this section using the grading structure 0 to 6.

Points to consider:

Reviewers are asked to comment on how EDI will be embedded across the DTP and whether applicants have set out how they will develop, monitor and adapt their approach over the course of the accreditation period.

Where under-representation or inequality has been identified as occurring, UKRI expects the DTP to implement appropriate measures to achieve inclusivity and diversity.

ESRC also want to collect socio-economic data based on the measures set out by the [Social Mobility Commission](#) as part of the wider EDI data collection and reviewers are asked to highlight where applicants do not have procedures in place to collect this information.

Delivery, management, and governance

ESRC is looking for applicants to articulate how the DTP will be managed and organised in order to ensure delivery of excellent postgraduate provision and that quality standards are maintained and developed.

Reviewers are asked to consider if the bid demonstrates:

- evidence on how the DTP will be governed and managed, including the details on the resourcing of the DTP
- evidence that the governance arrangements for the management of the DTP will enable effective decision-making, robust oversight of the partnership and monitoring of progress against deliverables
- how the DTP will engage with all relevant stakeholders
- how the structure of training will be responsive to the needs of the discipline whilst facilitating opportunities for interdisciplinary engagement
- how they will ensure students benefit from being part of a cohort beyond their immediate department
- succession planning for key roles within the DTP
- how they will respond in an agile manner to new training needs
- arrangements for ensuring good practice are shared among the partners
- evidence of support from all institutional partners

Reviewers are asked to indicate the grade in which they have allocated to this section using the grading structure 0 to 6.

Points to consider:

Reviewers are asked to highlight where proposals do not set out a clear management structure for the DTP and there does not appear to be a coherent plan in place detailing how the management structure may develop over the five-year accreditation period.

Reviewers are also asked to highlight where proposals do not provide detail on how they will respond in an agile manner to new training needs and how they will work across the partnership and the wider network to ensure good practice is shared.

Allocation of studentships

Funding is available to support up to 500 studentships per year, for five consecutive cohorts. We want to ensure that all DTPs have a viable cohort of ESRC funded students and that they have the supervisory capacity and infrastructure required to support the number of students requested. Currently, the overall allocation of studentships across the DTPs ranges between 28 to 45.

Reviewers are asked to consider whether the proposal demonstrates:

- rationale for the number of studentships requested, including details on how the DTP will support the cohort
- supervisory capacity and infrastructure required to support the number of students requested
- details of co-funding arrangements (if applicable)
- evidence to demonstrate strengths in priority areas (data skills, advanced quantitative methods, interdisciplinary research, and administrative data)
- evidence of inclusive partnerships with single discipline or narrowly focused centres of excellence
- details on the internal allocation process for the partnership.

Reviewers are asked to indicate the grade in which they have allocated to this section using the grading structure 0 to 6.

Points to consider:

The allocation of studentships will be devolved to the DTPs. To ensure an applicant's potential is the primary criterion, we expect the majority of studentships to be allocated through a fair and transparent open competition, not based on internal quotas. As such, applicants must set out how they will run the allocation process and reviewers are asked to highlight where bids do not indicate a clear, fair and transparent process for selecting students.

Whilst co-funding of studentships is not a requirement of funding, we strongly encourage DTPs to secure co-funding opportunities.

Final grade and comments

All reviewers are asked to allocate a final, overall grade for the bid, taking into account comments and grades for each of the sections above using the grading structure 0 to 6.

These comments should draw out the main strengths or weaknesses of the proposal. They should also highlight in more detail the most imaginative, innovative, and unique aspects of the proposal.

Where interdisciplinarity has been emphasised, reviewers are asked to comment on how appropriate and relevant this is. Reviewers are also asked to note that interdisciplinarity is not a mandatory requirement and when other outstanding provision routed in single discipline training is provided reviewers should highlight this in their grade and comments.

For consortia bids reviewers are asked to consider if there is evidence that the collaboration is built upon strong foundations and is appropriate, viable and sustainable. For new collaborations reviewers are asked to comment on the potential for future development.

Please ensure that your comments address all of the criteria identified above and that your final grade reflects the weighting of these criteria identified in the appendices attached to these guidance notes. Whilst we don't stipulate the length of the comments provided, these should provide sufficient detail to support and justify the grade given and will be used (unattributed) as feedback to applicants. Applicants will be given the opportunity to respond to reviewer comments prior to the Commissioning Panel.

If reviewers wish to make confidential comments (either to the ESRC or the Panel Chair), please do so in the 'comments' box and mark them as confidential.

Grading Scale

You are invited to indicate your overall judgement of the merit of the proposal which meets all the assessment criteria and provides full and consistent evidence and justification using the following scale:

Grade recommended	Brief reason for grade
6	<p>Outstanding</p> <p>The proposal is outstanding in terms of its potential merit in the delivery of world class postgraduate training provision and fit to assessment criteria for this call. The proposal exceeds the minimum expectations required to facilitate the provision of high-quality training (as specified in the ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022).</p>
5	<p>Excellent</p> <p>The proposal is excellent in terms of its potential merit in the delivery of world class postgraduate training provision and fit to the assessment criteria for this call. The proposal fully meets the minimum expectations required to facilitate the provision of high-quality training (as specified in the ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022).</p>
4	<p>Good</p> <p>The proposal is important in terms of its potential merit in the delivery of world class postgraduate training provision and fit to the assessment criteria for this call. The proposal meets the minimum expectations required to facilitate the provision of high-quality training (as specified in the ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022).</p>
3	<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>The proposal has significant potential in the delivery of world class postgraduate training provision, however, is not of a consistently high quality and does not fully address the assessment criteria for this call. The proposal does not meet all of the expectations required to facilitate the provision of high-quality training (as specified</p>

	in the ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022).
2	Fair/Some Weaknesses The proposal is worthy of support but is of lesser quality or urgency than more highly rated proposals. The proposal does not meet all of the expectations required to facilitate the provision of high-quality training (as specified in the ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022).
1	Poor The proposal is flawed in its approach to world class postgraduate training provision, or otherwise judged not worth pursuing; or, though possibly having sound objectives, the development and delivery of postgraduate training provision appears to be defective and therefore fails to meet the assessment criteria for this call. The proposal does not meet any of the expectations required to facilitate the provision of high-quality training (as specified in the ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2022).
0	Unable to assess

Further information

- Call specification and further information for the call is available here: [ESRC Doctoral Training Partnerships: 2024 – UKRI](#)
- [Further guidance for reviewers is available via the peer review section of the website](#)
- Information about ESRC Data Policy can be found [here](#)
- For queries relating to the Peer Review process please email: pgtframework@esrc.ukri.org