



ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development

Guidelines 2009

FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF DOCTORAL TRAINING
CENTRES AND DOCTORAL TRAINING UNITS





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Chief Executive's Foreword



I am pleased to be writing this foreword to the 2009 ESRC's *Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines*. These *Guidelines* aim to ensure that the ESRC continues to promote excellence in postgraduate training provision, ensuring that the very best training is delivered to students from right across the social science research base.

The *Guidelines* mark an exciting and important development in the way in which we organise our postgraduate training. After an extensive consultation with the academic community and our other stakeholders, the ESRC has decided to move beyond outlet and course based accreditation to one based at an institutional level. Our postgraduate training strategy will now be delivered through a new national network of Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) and Doctoral Training Units (DTUs). It is our intention that this new network will draw upon the considerable strengths that already exist in the provision of postgraduate training right across the social science community. The DTC and DTU network will seek to draw together expertise and good practice from within institutions and where possible ensure that this is fully exploited through the development of collaborative arrangements between Universities.

The structure and content of training has also changed. We have introduced a wider range of PhD training packages, which take us beyond our standard +3 and 1+3 models. There are now more opportunities for 2+2 and 2+3 models and the option for a four year integrated PhD programme. We judge that this more flexible portfolio of training packages will more readily meet the particular requirements of specific disciplines or cross-disciplinary research areas and also satisfy the individual needs of students, marrying the delivery of training closer to actual use.

In terms of content, we remain firmly committed to ensure students are exposed to training in both quantitative and qualitative research methods but have strengthened the emphasis on embedding transferable

skills development much more directly into PhD programmes. This will do more to prepare students, not just for a possible career in the academic sector; but also for work in the broader economy.

Unlike in previous editions, these *Guidelines* do not, however, set out any detailed requirements for discipline and subject specific training. Whilst the ESRC continues to see the fundamental importance of discipline and subject specific training, we believe that institutions themselves are best placed to design such training rather than conforming to a set of pre-defined requirements. We hope that this will act as a spur to promote greater innovation, enabling institutions to create new or re-fashion existing high quality training provision rooted in their research strengths. I believe it will also open up exciting opportunities for interdisciplinary training both across the social sciences and also at the boundaries with other scientific traditions.

It is our belief that the revised *Guidelines* therefore provide a flexible framework in which to develop and exploit the very best postgraduate training available across the social science community. In establishing the DTC and DTU network in partnership with institutions, the UK will be able to sustain the long term health of the UK social science base and retain its future reputation amongst the global leaders in social and economic research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Diamond', written in a cursive style.

Professor Ian Diamond FBA, FRSE, AcSS
Chief Executive, ESRC

SECTION A

Introduction and Purpose of the Guidelines

About these Guidelines

These *Guidelines* set down how the ESRC Framework for Postgraduate Training and Development should be applied within institutions. They give the details behind:

- the expectations for Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) and Doctoral Training Units (DTUs)
- the training content expected to be in place or in development within accredited Centres and Units, indicating the core requirements across training in research methods, transferable skills and subject-specific* areas of training and
- the criteria that will be used for assessing bids for DTCs and DTUs.

The requirements specified in these *Guidelines* will apply:

- from September 2009 for applications for ESRC DTC/DTU accreditation
- from October 2011 for new ESRC studentships.

The Broad Context: ESRC Strategy for the Social Sciences

The ESRC's overall mission is to:

- promote and support world-class research and related postgraduate training in the social sciences
- advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists who meet the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the UK, the effectiveness of public services and policy and the quality of life, and
- provide advice on, disseminate knowledge about and promote public understanding of, the social sciences.

In its *Strategic Plan 2009-2014* the ESRC reiterates its core commitment to scientific excellence, which is seen as an

* Subject-specific is used to denote training in the subject matter, whether disciplinary training or training in interdisciplinary areas of enquiry.

essential precursor for maximising both the academic and the broader economic and societal impact of research and training. The Plan emphasises how the continued long term development of a world class social science research base is essential to sustained delivery of excellence and to ensuring impact.

The ESRC will continue to maintain the long-term health of the UK social science research base primarily through its postgraduate training framework. This will involve a commitment to investing in excellent new research capacity across all social science disciplines. It will also call for strategic investment for those particular disciplines or fields where there is the most pressing need to strengthen or expand existing research capabilities. The ESRC has conducted a major demographic review of the social sciences and, informed by the evidence provided by this and other studies, identified a number of disciplines where there is a need to develop new research capacity. These are: Language Based Area Studies, Economics, Education, Management and Business Studies, Social Work and Empirical Studies in Law.

In addition to identifying particular disciplines requiring new research capacity, the ESRC has also identified a skills deficit in quantitative research methods – at both a basic and advanced level – across the social science base and is working in collaboration with a number of stakeholders to address this. These areas will remain priorities for funding through the new DTC and DTU network and the ESRC will welcome applications that seek to address the imbalance in these areas through new and innovative postgraduate training provision as well as through the supply of undergraduates able to make full use of postgraduate training in these areas.

The ESRC *Strategic Plan* also places a strong emphasis on innovation in research and training, and on the need to foster purposeful interdisciplinarity to address what are increasingly complex, and multi-faceted research questions. The ESRC has identified seven interdisciplinary challenges facing social science:

- global economic performance, policy and management
- health and wellbeing
- understanding individual behaviour
- new technology, innovation and skills

- environment, energy and resilience
- security, conflict and justice
- social diversity and population dynamics.

Alongside a commitment to the continued development of core disciplines, the Framework has been designed to enable greater interdisciplinarity. It is intended that this will allow the DTC and DTU network to help address these major interdisciplinary challenges and more generally provide an opportunity to develop innovative training provision which cuts across disciplines and works at the boundaries with other scientific traditions. Institutions will be expected to indicate how their own research and training strengths align with the ESRC's own challenges. The ESRC will also welcome innovative interdisciplinary programmes which lie beyond these challenges.

The ESRC will also continue to make major strategic investments in high quality data resources to provide valuable new evidence to inform research on complex social and economic questions. This includes the development of world leading longitudinal studies such as the *Understanding Society Survey* and the *2012 Birth Cohort Study*. The ESRC would encourage institutions to ensure that training programmes expose students to the potential of using these data resources to inform doctoral research.

The Framework has also been designed to support the ESRC's key strategic ambition to strengthen the impact of its research and training beyond the social science community. The transfer of skilled people between sectors is one of the most potent mechanisms for maximising impact. The Framework therefore places considerable emphasis on the deeper embedding of transferable (employable) skills development into training and also offers a more flexible range of opportunities for forging partnerships with public, private and third sector organisations. The ESRC is looking to institutions to clearly indicate how they will integrate transferable skills training into their doctoral programmes and is looking for novel ways through which 'people flow' initiatives for postgraduate students may further enhance their transferable skills.

The ESRC is committed to widening participation in postgraduate research training by looking to ensure that the possibilities for postgraduate study are open to a broad pool of talented undergraduate students.

The ESRC will seek to work closely with institutions in opening up opportunities for postgraduate training and a career in research.

ESRC Framework for Postgraduate Training and Development: A Strategy for Delivering Excellence

The ESRC plays a lead role in promoting excellence in the development and delivery of postgraduate training provision across the social science research base. In this role the ESRC will commit to:

- drive forward and improve national standards in delivering flexible, innovative, high quality postgraduate training, and to develop research and training strengths amongst staff
- sustain the long-term health and strength of the social science research base by attracting the brightest and best potential researchers into social science research
- widen participation in social science postgraduate training and encourage a broader set of graduates to consider training for a career in research
- support the best subject-specific training and encourage both innovative and purposeful interdisciplinary training, particularly where it addresses the capacity needs of the social science challenges set out in the *ESRC Strategic Plan 2009-2014*
- ensure the provision of high quality integrated core provision in research skills and research methods training as well as subject specific training to enable students to undertake their research and to enter the job market successfully
- develop flexible and imaginative methods of training provision and delivery
- promote within institutions flexible mechanisms for organisational use of studentship funding.

To achieve these objectives the ESRC will create a new national training infrastructure through the establishment of a network of institutional and consortium-level DTCs and DTUs. The network will replace the current arrangements for delivering postgraduate training through 'recognised' training outlets (departments, schools and faculties) and individually 'recognised' training courses.

SECTION A

This national network of accredited DTCs and DTUs will help to:

- promote the development of more coherent institution – and consortium-wide core training programmes
- deliver truly excellent postgraduate training across a significant range of social science disciplines and areas of interdisciplinary enquiry
- move towards more flexible postgraduate training platforms, through the formation of training pathways and the allocation of a range of training routes for postgraduate students.

The Framework aims to build on the considerable strengths that exist across the UK social science research base in postgraduate training provision, and to encourage institutions to harness the expertise they have to achieve excellence.

The aim, through greater flexibility, is to remove the barriers to further innovation in social science postgraduate training. In so doing the Framework will help to promote the more effective horizontal integration of good practice in core skills and methods training within and across institutions, and the deeper vertical integration of such skills and methods training with subject-specific training.

Purpose of the Guidelines

These *Guidelines* represent an evolution from previous editions of *Postgraduate Training Guidelines* but continue to build upon much good practice that is already evident across the social science community. They continue to place great emphasis on the need for all doctoral students in the social sciences to receive high quality training both to enable them to carry out their doctoral research project and to equip them to pursue other activities subsequently. The *Guidelines* also recognise the importance of a rounded training and development experience for research students that promotes their integration within excellent and broad reaching research environments so they may develop the skill set required of highly effective researchers.

They re-emphasise the importance of training in a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and in transferable skills, in addition to more substantive subject-specific training, to ensure that future social science researchers are equipped to:

- undertake cutting edge research within or outside academia
- engage with relevant stakeholders in the process of devising and shaping their research
- communicate their findings effectively to a wide range of audiences.

The *Guidelines* indicate the requirements that institutions will need to meet to provide:

- high quality core training across all areas – research methods training; the development of generic research and transferable skills; and subject-specific training, and
- advanced training in areas appropriate for the needs of the researcher.

The ESRC is concerned with training excellent researchers able to apply their knowledge, higher-level skills and understanding to real world challenges either as a professional researcher in the social science academe or within the broader economy. As such there is an expectation that the training and development provided to social science postgraduate researchers within DTCs and DTUs will go above and beyond these minimum requirements and draw upon the strengths within or across individual institutions. As such the ESRC will only accredit the very best training provision in the UK that can provide excellent training and demonstrate the capacity to nurture and develop talented social science researchers.

The sections that follow cover the following:

- **SECTION B** – an overview of the ESRC Framework for Postgraduate Training and Development, including the ESRC's expectations for DTCs and DTUs
- **SECTION C** – the training content expected to be in place or in development within accredited Centres and Units, indicating the core and advanced training requirements for social science researchers
- **SECTION D** – the criteria against which applications for DTC or DTU status will be competitively assessed to make them eligible for ESRC funding and the application process that institutions will be required to follow.

SECTION B

ESRC Framework for Postgraduate Training and Development

Introduction: Establishing a National Infrastructure for Social Science Training and Development

As part of its commitment to excellence the ESRC is introducing a new framework for the accreditation of high quality postgraduate training and development that enables the UK to support and develop world class researchers.

With the Framework the ESRC is seeking to realise a national training infrastructure for social science doctoral training in the UK through the creation of a network of national Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) and Doctoral Training Units (DTUs). Collectively these will provide excellent training provision right across the social science base, including high quality interdisciplinary provision to address key social and economic challenges.

A key feature of the network will be greater collaboration between institutions in the delivery of core training, and in the opening up of access to advanced training with the aim of creating a co-ordinated network of advanced training in the UK. This will build upon well established foundations and informal arrangements already in place.

Once in place the ESRC will work closely with successful DTCs and DTUs to consolidate and strengthen the network by identifying links and developing a means for DTCs and DTUs to share and exchange information about training available across the UK.

ESRC Doctoral Training Centres and Doctoral Training Units

The introduction of DTCs and DTUs is designed to provide a platform for eligible institutions to organise provision for excellent postgraduate training. It is expected that both Centres and Units will sit within strong social science research environments that offer a critical mass of

such research and postgraduate activity so as to ensure that the very best training provision is made available from across the social science community.

Institutional Level Accreditation

The introduction of institutional level accreditation is designed to help facilitate the development of more coherent institution – and consortium-wide core training programmes in, for example, research methods and transferable skills. Whilst the ESRC recognises the essential need to promote the core strengths of individual disciplines it is also hoped that institutional level accreditation will further serve to support the identification and development of positive synergies between disciplines and further trends towards purposeful interdisciplinarity research and training.

Institutional accreditation will also help open up advanced training at an institution – and consortium – wide level, building upon the good practice of some institutions where flexible training programmes or pathways have been developed between departments, schools and faculties to support the specific core or advanced training needs of individual students.

Eligibility for DTC or DTU accreditation

All UK based research organisations that are eligible to receive Research Council funding for research, and have the infrastructure in place to deliver doctoral training will be eligible to submit an application.

Institutions within Northern Ireland are eligible to apply for ESRC accreditation for postgraduate training and development. They will not be eligible to receive a quota of ESRC studentships and will only be able to apply for strategic (ie project linked) or partnership focused studentship awards (ie CASE). Students registering for other PhD studies in Northern Ireland universities must apply for support to the Department for Employment and Learning.

Contributing to National Capacity Building Priorities

The defining feature of a DTC will be its ability to deliver a comprehensive and coherent package of training that makes a substantial and significant contribution to national capacity-building priorities. These may be in specific disciplines or national shortage areas where the Council is

looking to strengthen capacity as part of its strategy to support the long-term health and strength of the social science research base. They might equally be in the interdisciplinary research challenges identified by the Council in its new *Strategic Plan*.

DTUs will also play a crucial role in sustaining the long-term quality and strength of the social science research base by concentrating on those areas where they have particularly strong training provision. This might also include provision that addresses national shortage areas or ESRC research challenges.

Once the DTC and DTU network is in place, the ESRC will look to identify and link together training provision that addresses and contributes to the interdisciplinary challenges for social science identified in the ESRC *Strategic Plan 2009-2014*. This will form part of a broader strategy to integrate and develop synergies between research, infrastructure and training investment within each challenge area.

Environment for Research Training

It is expected that both DTCs and DTUs will be embedded in an environment which offers research of world-class or international standing and provides a focus for excellence in research training. A typical DTC will provide a high quality and coherent postgraduate training infrastructure across a broad range of social science disciplines. It will be able to offer high quality core and advanced training that moves beyond the thresholds set out in these and earlier *Guidelines*.

Exceptionally, some institutions may be able to offer a breadth of social science training and development activity focused around one key discipline area but incorporating a broad spectrum of social science methods and approaches. These will be eligible for DTC status if they are able to demonstrate the same levels of research excellence, critical mass of postgraduate research activity and high quality training provision as that expected of a more 'conventional' DTC.

The key difference between a DTC and a DTU is that DTUs will not be expected to provide training across such a wide range of social science disciplines, but will concentrate on those areas where they have particularly strong training provision embedded within a high quality, research intensive environment. As a consequence, the vast

majority of DTUs will be made up of a smaller cluster of disciplines. Exceptionally, a DTU might provide training focused around one discipline area, if it can be demonstrated that the provision meets the same quality thresholds as other DTUs and is located within an excellent research environment.

Number of DTCs and DTUs supported

It is currently anticipated that around 20 to 25 DTCs will be established. The exact number supported will be dependent upon the quality and configuration of applications received and will be consistent with the number of quota studentships available. There will be no restrictions on the number of DTUs that will be created under the Framework. The actual number of DTUs will depend upon the quality of training on offer and its organisation within or across institutions.

Encouraging Graduates to 'Aim Even Higher'

The ESRC aims to ensure that the most talented undergraduate students are attracted to postgraduate training and a career in research, whatever their background and regardless of where they undertook their first degree. The ESRC plans to introduce a summer vacation bursary scheme to enable undergraduate students to gain first-hand experience of research and an insight into a research career. The ESRC would like to encourage institutions to think imaginatively and address in their applications how they can contribute to this agenda as a DTC or DTU and promote postgraduate research to a diverse base of talented graduate students across the UK.

Collaboration

The ESRC *Strategic Plan 2009-2014* highlights our wish to encourage collaborative relationships within the social sciences and in working with the other Research Councils. This includes collaboration in research and training, as well as international projects and with business, government or third sector organisations.

Collaboration in the Organisation and Management of DTCs and DTUs

Within the Framework the ESRC considers that effective collaboration between institutions may help to optimise the exploitation of the very best postgraduate training across the social science base. Such collaboration may

include the shared design and delivery of core and/or advanced training, joint supervision of studentships or improved access to broader facilities and resources which support a PhD programme.

There is no limit on the number of institutions that may form part of a collaborative DTC or DTU proposal. The collaborative proposal does need to demonstrate that the partnership is meaningful and coherent, and that it is demonstrably enhancing the quality of training provision within the partnering institutions and making it available to a broader population of postgraduate students. Successful collaborative DTCs will be rewarded with additional quota studentship awards.

Evolving Collaborations

Whilst it is anticipated that collaborative DTCs and DTUs will be an important feature of the network from its inception, it is acknowledged that it may take time for collaborative arrangements to evolve fully and for partnerships to be consolidated or ultimately extended. Inter-institutional bids will need to provide 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 mature over the initial five year accreditation period. This should include plans for monitoring the success of the collaborative arrangements.

Collaboration between DTCs and DTUs

Through the introduction of the Framework the ESRC is seeking to act strategically to reduce duplication and generate a more integrated approach to training. One aspect of this is the promotion of collaborative relationships between Centres and Units in the delivery of advanced training. Both DTCs and DTUs will be expected to demonstrate their commitment to exploring opportunities for collaborative advanced training at a regional and/or national level.

Doctoral Training Centres in particular will be expected to open up advanced short courses, workshops and master classes and deliver them in a form which is suitable for participation by postgraduates from outside the host institution(s). The detailed arrangements in place to support access to this training will be for individual DTCs and DTUs to organise. It is anticipated that this will be underpinned by a charging model which will reimburse

a DTC that opens up and provides broader access to their advanced training courses. The ESRC will provide guidance on how this might operate and will look to provide a small number of bursaries for students within the DTC and DTU network to access advanced training for short courses that are only available outside the students' own DTC or DTU.

Collaboration with Government, Business and Third Sector Organisations

The ESRC is committed to forming strong partnerships with key stakeholders in the government, business and third sectors to help maximise the impact of its investment in research and training. It is hoped that the new framework will enable institutions to expand opportunities for doctoral researchers to work with other stakeholders through deepening existing partnerships with business, government or third-sector organisations. Institutions will be expected to set out their provision and expertise in collaborative training activities including CASE within their application. The ESRC is inviting applicants for DTCs to think imaginatively about collaborative training opportunities as a means to further enhance and embed general research and transferable skills training within the doctorate.

Allocation of Studentship Awards

Each DTC will receive an annual quota of studentships. The quota allocation will be set for five years from 2011, with a review point after three years. The quota allocation will include a broad strategic steer. This will direct some quota studentships onto particularly high quality single-discipline or interdisciplinary training pathways to help address the Council's key capacity building priorities and to align with the challenges set out in the *Strategic Plan*. The steer may also state where studentships should *not* be allocated, as a result of training provision failing to meet the standards set out in the *Guidelines*. There will be enough flexibility to allow some awards to be allocated directly by the host institution(s) to meet their own local capacity building needs or in areas where demand from high quality students is great. This will be subject to ESRC terms and conditions. As well as receiving a quota allocation, DTCs will also be able to participate in the Council's studentship competitions and host awards funded through research grants.

DTUs will not receive a quota allocation of studentships. Instead, they will be eligible to apply for studentships through the ESRC's Council open studentship competitions as well as host studentships attached to research grants.

Flexibility in the Use of Studentship Funding

Doctoral Training Centres will have greater flexibility in the use of studentship funding, subject to ESRC terms and conditions. This includes flexibility to:

- fund any type of studentship using the flexible part of their allocation. This means that as well as 'standard' studentships, CASE awards and collaborative awards with other Research Councils or agencies can be supported. An institution's ability to do this will be subject to their provision for hosting and supervising collaborative studentships being assessed as satisfactory. As such applicants will need to set out their expertise and approach to collaborative awards in their application. Doctoral Training Centres that meet these requirements will also be able to support short-term internships in public, private and third sector organisations as part of a PhD programme
- part-fund studentships. This means that institutions can add their own funding to support studentships or secure co-funding from public, private or third sector sources as long as more than 50 per cent of the funding for the studentship comes from the ESRC allocation. This will provide a leverage function, helping to increase the volume of studentships
- increase stipend levels above the minimum level to help recruit/retain students in national shortage areas. This may, for example, be particularly important in the recruitment of mature students, common in practice based disciplines where there is a recognised need to strengthen research capacity.

Structure and Delivery of Training

The Framework is designed to facilitate flexibility in the delivery and timing of the training provided to postgraduate students. Both DTUs and DTCs will be able to determine the point at which training will be delivered, depending on the researcher's particular needs. This focuses attention on the achievement of outcomes rather than structures of delivery.

Flexibility in Training Structures

To facilitate this the ESRC has introduced further flexibility in the structure of training to create a more flexible portfolio of three, four and even five-year postgraduate training platforms, which include:

- **+3 programme** – funding for a three year PhD programme (this assumes that the majority of the core training requirements set down by the ESRC's Council have already been met, the focus during the PhD being largely on more advanced training)
- **1+3 programme** – support for an integrated research training masters, which will deliver the majority of core training requirements
- **2+2 programme** – funding to cover an extended masters, followed by a shorter PhD programme
- **+4 programme** – up to four years funding for a PhD (this assumes that core training requirements along with advanced training will be satisfied during the course of the programme)
- **2+3 programme** – funding for extended masters training that may be required for specialist training, such as the learning of difficult foreign languages. This also caters for interdisciplinary programmes that may demand more substantive and methodological training before the transition to a PhD programme.

This more flexible portfolio of postgraduate training platforms allows programmes to be married to the particular needs of individual disciplines and interdisciplinary subject areas, as well as to the needs of individual researchers. The ESRC does not see this list of flexible structures as exclusive. It is expected that institutions will have the mechanisms in place to promote appropriate integration of the training for both full-time and part-time students.

It is not expected that institutions will significantly change their patterns of delivery where existing practices work well (eg 1+3 models). It is expected that institutions will know and be able to demonstrate where training pathways might benefit from moving away from the existing 'one size fits all' approach in order to offer more flexible opportunities to postgraduate students. The new accreditation regime allows institutions to make these changes immediately or to develop plans to phase them in over time.

Flexibility in the Delivery of Training

The introduction of training throughout the PhD programme also creates greater flexibility in the timing of training delivery. Rather than being frontloaded into a master's year, it can now be spread out across the PhD programme, matching delivery more closely to actual needs. Where DTCs and DTUs favour the introduction of a four-year programme for specific courses, the institution will be expected to have robust progression procedures in place to assess formally individual students within the first two years of the four-year programme.

Within this more flexible context, institutions may also increase the amount of subject-based training very early on in any postgraduate programme or spread it out across the programme. This may encourage institutions to create modular programmes that can be delivered either wholly or separately.

Flexible Modes of Delivery

The ESRC particularly wishes to encourage innovative approaches to the delivery of training programmes within or between institutions. This can include a wide variety of approaches ranging from the creation of online training materials through to distributed delivery of lectures using Access Grid Nodes and similar e-technologies.

Part-time Students

The ESRC continues to be committed to supporting part-time students at postgraduate level. In a departure from the 'recognition' approach the ESRC will not award separate accreditation for part-time provision. Instead, DTCs and DTUs will be required to set out how their strategy and provision for postgraduate training meets the needs and circumstances of part-time students.

Collaborative Awards with Business, Government and Third Sector Organisations

The Framework will promote more flexible approaches to promoting impact beyond the academic community. The ESRC will no longer provide separate accreditation for hosting CASE studentship awards. Institutions will instead be expected to set out in their application how their training provision is shaped and extended to meet the particular needs of students engaged in collaborative doctoral research.

The annual CASE competition will continue and be open to both DTCs and DTUs. In addition, DTCs will have the opportunity and flexibility to fund CASE awards directly as well as to co-fund studentships in partnership with business, government and third-sector organisations in new and imaginative ways.

Professional Doctorates

The ESRC does not fund Professional Doctorate (PD) programmes and therefore institutions will not be accredited for discrete PD training pathways as part of their training portfolio.

Recycling

The Framework will also allow greater flexibility to recycle studentships. This means that when an ESRC student leaves early or fails to progress during the course of their studies, that funding can be used to recruit a new student rather than being returned to the ESRC. Recycling will apply to all quota and project-led studentships including CASE. It will exclude competition studentships which are awarded on the basis of the quality of the individual student. Doctoral Training Centres will have the flexibility to recycle awards as part of their quota allocation and both DTCs and DTUs will have the flexibility to recycle remaining funding for project-led studentships. In all cases institutions will be expected to meet the balance of the full cost of the studentship.

Content of Training

These *Guidelines* focus on those elements of core training, covering research skills, transferable skills development and research methods. They move away from prescribing core subject-specific training requirements though it should be stressed that these are still deemed an absolutely essential part of the ESRC's Framework for Postgraduate Training and Development. It will now be the responsibility of each HEI to determine the substantive content of subject specific training, associated with their own training pathways drawing upon areas of particular strengths. Details of the ESRC's expectations for training are covered in the next section of the *Guidelines*.

SECTION C

Expectations for Research Training

Introduction: Broadly Based Social Science Research Training

The ESRC places emphasis on the provision of broadly based social science research training that equips researchers with the skills to manage a successful research career, or to contribute to the broader economy in other ways. It is expected that this will include formal training as well as opportunities for research students to integrate with established researchers and benefit from a rich and diverse research training environment.

This section provides details of the expectations for the content of postgraduate training – including core and advanced training – within ESRC Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) and Doctoral Training Units (DTUs). This includes:

Core Research Skills Training for Social Scientists – including a compulsory foundation in a broad range of social science research methods as well as basic research and transferable skills that all students in the social sciences are expected to obtain. The *Guidelines* indicate the learning outcomes in these areas that all ESRC funded students are expected to demonstrate or acquire during the course of their study.

Core Subject-Specific Training – including the compulsory elements associated with the particular discipline or interdisciplinary training pathway on offer. The level and intensity of this core training may differ from subject to subject. In the area of research methods for example compulsory training in Economics may include a range of high-level quantitative tools and techniques which would not be considered to be core training within other areas of social science. Similarly, in social anthropology it may include sophisticated qualitative techniques that would not be a uniformly required element for all social scientists. This compulsory core is not restricted to research methods and applies also to subject knowledge or theoretical training which is deemed to be a core element of individual training pathways.

Applicants for DTCs and DTUs are invited to set out their subject specific training provision drawing upon the strengths of their particular institution or institutions.

Advanced Training – relating to training that goes beyond what is considered to be core to an individual training pathway but is deemed necessary for students as their studies develop. Institutions will need to demonstrate how this training will be made available as appropriate.

Training Pathways

With the Framework the ESRC is inviting institutions to describe their subject-specific training within and across a range of pathways that meet the requirements of these *Guidelines*. In this context, 'training pathway' can be defined as the broad training a student will receive during the course of their PhD including the programme of core training that will equip them to conduct the research element of their doctorate and prepare them for their future career. Institutions or consortia bids will need to indicate how the key elements of 'core' training will be integrated throughout an individual programme of study.

Training Outcomes

The *Guidelines* are focused on outcomes and achievements in learning, rather than on structures and processes. Institutions, therefore, have the flexibility to develop provision to fit their own situation and strengths, provided it delivers the outcomes required.

The overall goal of the training will be the development of fully trained and competent social science researchers, who have:

- a competent understanding of the debates within disciplines that inform their field of study
- a general overview of the philosophy of research methods and how this informs research design, the methods chosen, the means of analysis and the representation and presentation of information and data
- an ability to understand and use a range of research techniques appropriate to their subject area, and who are conversant and sympathetic to approaches used by other social scientists
- an ability to integrate what they have learned in addressing research in ways that are characteristic of an experienced highly effective researcher

- an appreciation of the potential use and impact of their research within and beyond academia
- an ability to engage with relevant users at all points in the research process, from devising and shaping research questions through to informing users' efforts to improve practice, and
- an ability to communicate their research findings effectively to a wide range of audiences.

Responding Flexibly to Training Needs

The Framework provides the opportunity for research students to benefit from formal training that is structured and delivered according to individual need. This requires institutions to understand and support the requirements of research students in relation to *core* training and to create training pathways appropriate to the needs presented.

It is expected that DTCs and DTUs will have adequate systems in place to work with students in order to help identify, prioritise, review and assess their training needs throughout the course of their studies. This is required to ensure that training provided is meeting the needs of the student and to take account of skills acquired before and during the course of postgraduate study. The ESRC does *not* expect students to receive training in particular skills or topics where they can already clearly demonstrate proficiency through prior learning.

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The ESRC, along with the other Research Councils, is committed to the implementation of the 2008 *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*. It is expected that ESRC provision for postgraduate training and development within DTCs and DTUs will reflect the principles of the Concordat for postgraduate researchers from the outset of their research training.

Core Research Skills Training for Social Scientists

Core Research Methods Training

Within the Framework the ESRC is continuing to place a clear emphasis on the importance of core training in research methods to enable all social scientists to understand and use essential qualitative and quantitative techniques.

The *Guidelines* indicate the core skills and proficiency in the application of research methods that all students in the social sciences are expected to acquire during their studies. The focus is on attaining basic skills and abilities in a range of both quantitative and qualitative tools and techniques which find common application across the social sciences, the broader science base and a wide range of users, and an understanding of how to combine them through mixed methods. These are set out at **Annex I** to this document.

All of the learning outcomes should be attained by the end of the doctorate. DTCs and DTUs are encouraged to utilise the flexibility permitted in the revised framework to deliver core skills and methods training in a way which most usefully reflects student need.

There may well be other more specialist methods training in addition which institutions view as core to specific areas of study. These would need to be additional to the requirements set out in **Annex I**. Both DTCs and DTUs will be expected to determine the compulsory subject specific methods training associated with their own particular training pathways.

Core Researcher Development Skills

The ESRC considers the provision of researcher development skills as an integral part of a broadly based training programme. This incorporates generic research skills, as well as transferable skills training. The *Guidelines* indicate the expectations for training in these areas. This is set out at **Annex II**.

It is increasingly being recognised, across the full academic research base, that research students need to combine the specific skills required to complete their doctoral work with a portfolio of more broadly based skills that will equip them with the flexibility to manage their future career, whether that be within academia or in the broader economy. This is officially acknowledged in the current Research Councils *Joint Statement of the Skills Training Requirements for Research Students* and through the Councils additional funding provision for transferable skills training ('Roberts funding').

The Research Councils along with other key stakeholders are in the process of reviewing this Statement. The aim is to create a Researcher Development Framework (RDF) setting out the key skills and attributes that postgraduate students and early career researchers should be expected to attain during the period of postgraduate study and in the process of becoming an independent researcher and/or research leader to work within or beyond the academic sector. The RDF will be published by spring 2010.

With the Framework the ESRC is placing considerable emphasis on the deeper embedding of general research and transferable skills into substantive research training. It will be the responsibility of institutions and collaborations to indicate clearly how they will integrate the acquisition of these skills into their doctoral programmes and/or through enhanced opportunities for experiential learning.

The ESRC encourages the development of new and innovative activity in transferable skills training, and is looking to both DTCs and DTUs to present novel ways through which 'people exchange' initiatives may provide experiential learning experiences to assist doctoral students with further enhancing their transferable skills. This may include internship opportunities in government, business or third sector organisations.

Core Subject Specific Training

As indicated earlier in these *Guidelines*, core subject specific training refers to compulsory training within a subject area. It remains a fundamental element of training for social science researchers.

It will be the responsibility of institutions to determine the substantive content of such training across clearly defined discipline and interdisciplinary training pathways. This will ensure that research students are appropriately prepared to develop in areas relevant to the demands of the discipline or substantive research field.

As part of core subject specific training students should be made aware of the breadth of the field of enquiry, the range of constituent specialisms and the resulting spread of research paradigms and theoretical positions. Students should also emerge from their doctoral programme with an appreciation of the way social science research is embedded in policy and practice.

The aim is to ensure that students:

- are well informed of the latest thinking and ideas in their field of enquiry – including subject knowledge, theoretical positions and research methods – from a range of perspectives
- appreciate the basis on which the knowledge in the field has been derived
- are able to use this knowledge to make a reasoned defence of the theoretical traditions and research techniques that they ultimately may have chosen (or rejected) during their research.

On completion of the training, the student should be equipped with knowledge required to undertake further independent research at the frontier of the field or take up employment in policy or practice communities that exploit such knowledge.

With the new Framework institutions are encouraged to ensure that there is effective horizontal integration of training across the institution or institutions, through identifying and building upon synergies where they exist, as well as effective vertical integration of training to provide a deeper knowledge deemed to be core for an individual's particular research subject or field of enquiry.

Interdisciplinary and Multi-disciplinary Research Training

The Framework has been designed to offer the opportunity for greater interdisciplinarity. Students working in interdisciplinary areas will need to develop knowledge of, and experience in, a wide range of methodological approaches and may also need to immerse themselves in new substantive areas of subject specific training. These particular needs of students pursuing interdisciplinary research must therefore be accommodated in research training pathways.

Advanced Training

The ESRC considers advanced training to be an essential element of broadly based research training, so as to serve specialist and continuing needs. In the *Guidelines* advanced training refers to training that is additional to *core* training within an individual pathway.

Some *advanced* training will be discipline or subject specific (eg specialist training in econometric modelling), whilst other training may have a wider application (eg statistical analysis techniques). What constitutes *advanced* training will differ between discipline areas. A method or theory considered to be advanced in one area of social science, may be deemed to be core to another. For example game theory would form part of the core training in Economics, but might be considered advanced training for a social scientist working in another area.

It is expected that institutions will have provision for meeting continuous development needs in order to ensure that students gain the highest level of competence.

Institutions will have the discretion to determine the nature and scale of the advanced training they are able to offer to students within the institution or collaboration, as well as to students outside of the DTC or DTU. It is anticipated that not all DTUs will have the capacity to provide more advanced training. It is important that DTUs demonstrate a clear and coherent strategy for sourcing such training from regional or national provision; this might

take the form of collaborative agreements with a DTC or may include provision funded through the ESRC Researcher Development Initiative, the National Centre for Research Methods or other regional or national provision.

Preparation for International Research

Developing researchers who have the capability to operate in a global context is an important consideration for the ESRC. The ESRC provides support for overseas fieldwork for doctoral students and provides extensions to awards (excluding 2+3 awards) to allow time for language training. It also sponsors overseas institutional visits of up to three months to undertake specialist research training and to develop collaborative links.

Institutions are encouraged to highlight the international aspects of their programmes in their submissions for accreditation, drawing particular attention to aspects of their provision that develop the cultural and methodological skills required of social science with an international dimension.

SECTION D

Criteria for ESRC Doctoral Training Centres and Units

Introduction: The Criteria for Doctoral Training Centres and Units

One of the main objectives of the Framework is to allow institutions to pursue their own strategies and demonstrate their own expertise in the context of doctoral training. As a consequence, the ESRC is looking for applications to set out how a DTC or DTU would be embedded with the institution(s) strategy for the development of the social sciences as a whole as well as its ability to support national building capacity needs identified by the ESRC through doctoral training.

The ESRC will look for evidence of the following in assessing applications for DTCs and DTUs:

Institutional/Consortia Strategy and Vision

- a coherent strategy for promoting and developing social science research and postgraduate research training
- how an ESRC DTC/DTU would form an integral part of the host institution(s) future strategy for social science research and postgraduate training, with a clear illustration of how it would contribute to particular institutional priorities
- how the institution/collaboration will contribute to the ESRC's strategic objectives, including how the DTC/DTU will help support capacity building in key national shortage areas identified by the Council, or substantive social science challenges set out in the ESRC *Strategic Plan 2009–2014*. Also, how the institution/collaboration will seek to widen participation in postgraduate study amongst a diverse graduate base

- how the institution/collaboration will use the flexibility of DTC/DTU status to provide either single-disciplinary or a mix of single-disciplinary and interdisciplinary training pathways that are coherently integrated with core training provision.

Environment for Postgraduate Training and Development

- a high quality and coherent infrastructure for the delivery of core and advanced postgraduate training
- a strong social science research environment
- a track record of promoting innovative, diverse or interdisciplinary research across the social sciences and, where appropriate, at the interfaces with other areas of the science base (particularly relevant for DTC applications)
- a strong and active community of postgraduate research students across the social sciences and evidence of how they are encouraged to integrate with the research environment
- high quality supervisory arrangements across the institution for all social science postgraduate students, and high quality supervisory capacity across the areas forming part of the DTC/DTU
- satisfactory ESRC submission rates.

Content of Postgraduate Training

- high quality core training provision, including evidence that training provision will exceed the requirements set out in these *Guidelines*
- high quality subject specific provision across disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary training pathways included in the DTC/DTU
- high quality advanced training in areas of strength and details of how such training will be opened up to students outside the host institution(s) (particularly relevant for DTC applications)
- a clear and coherent strategy for sourcing more advanced or specialist training that is not available within the host institution (particularly relevant for DTU applications).

Organisation, Management and Monitoring

- a clear strategy and effective mechanisms for the allocation of ESRC studentship funding (beyond that set down in the strategic steer) that meets the institution/consortia's capacity building priorities (DTC applications)
- robust student selection and allocation methods, and explicit criteria and processes for the termination of awards
- effective processes in place to monitor and formally assess students' progress in line with QAA guidelines, and support students with developing their skills and pursuing their research project and other research activities successfully
- robust methods for establishing a student's prior learning and for identifying, reviewing and assessing training needs throughout the period of study.

Collaborative DTCs and DTUs

- where collaborative arrangements are in place, evidence that the collaboration is built upon strong foundations and is appropriate, viable and sustainable.

Building upon Established Standards

When institutions make a submission for ESRC accreditation, they are reminded that doctoral training needs to meet national requirements for the quality and standards of academic awards, particularly the precepts of Section I of the QAA Code of Practice, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and the relevant QAA subject benchmark statements.

In particular, institutions are expected to demonstrate how they address the following areas.

Facilities

At the outset of their research training, students should be given a clear indication of the basic facilities available for their use. The ESRC suggests that these should include:

- access to appropriate space to work, including a designated desk should it be required
- access to telephone, fax and photocopying facilities
- computing, email and internet access
- laboratory and technical support, where appropriate
- appropriate library facilities and information services
- opportunities to meet and network with other students and researchers, and
- support for training opportunities and for attendance at conferences and other relevant events.

The ESRC expects institutions to ensure that disabled students have all possible access to courses and programmes of study. This is linked with the duties of the Disability Discrimination Act, which include the duty to anticipate the learning needs of disabled students within all aspects of curricular provision, including lectures, field trips, exams and placements. Such anticipation is likely to include flexible arrangements for access to resources, physical access to facilities, and the provision of, and access to, specialist resources such as computer software and library materials. It also means that the ESRC recognises that institutions will need to approach all requirements in these *Guidelines* with sufficient flexibility to meet the needs and capacities of disabled students.

High Quality Supervision

The ESRC expects institutions to ensure that all postgraduate students have access to the highest quality supervision and that procedures are in place to ensure consistent effective provision. The ESRC would normally expect supervisory arrangements to be put in place at the outset of a studentship regardless of the training structure or pathway followed.

The ESRC encourages dual supervision, or supervisory panels, particularly where the student is engaged in interdisciplinary research or research involving collaboration between an academic department and an outside organisation, where meetings of all the partners in the award may be necessary from time to time. New or inexperienced supervisors should always be partnered and mentored by an experienced co-supervisor.

The expectations of both supervisors and students should be clearly set out in institutional or departmental codes of practice, and in internal quality control mechanisms; these should be reviewed regularly and students and supervisors should be aware of the procedures in place. The ESRC will expect institutions to describe what formal systems are in place for monitoring the performance of supervisors, for identifying their training and professional development needs, and for ensuring that these are met.

Ethical Review of Doctoral Research/ Governance of Good Research Conduct

The revised ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (FRE) sets out ESRC's approach, aims and methods in ethical evaluation and conduct of research, including doctorate level research. It is expected that institutions will have appropriate procedures in place for reviewing doctoral research projects. Whilst the same high ethical standards are expected of doctoral research this process might be appropriately managed through light touch review in the majority of cases, though research involving more than minimal risk may need a full ethical review.

More generally institutions are expected to ensure that students are not exposed to undue risk in conducting their research. As part of this institutions should be aware of the *RCUK Policy and Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct*.

Submission Rate

The ESRC will continue to monitor annually the aggregate submission rate for all ESRC research students in each institution. This is done on the basis of statistics provided by institutions on the submission dates for ESRC research

students. Institutions that fall below a 60 per cent submission rate will be vulnerable to having a sanction placed which will make them ineligible to host or receive ESRC research studentships for the following one or two years. The submission threshold is currently four years from the start of the award for full time students, and seven years for part-time students. The assessment process for DTCs and DTUs will make use of the most recent submission rate data for ESRC students.

Applications for ESRC accreditation

Timescale

Institutions will be invited to apply for accreditation on a five year cycle that comprises both a major and an interim accreditation exercise. All institutions must apply to the major exercise and successful applications for both DTCs and DTUs will be accredited for the duration of the five year cycle (subject to monitoring requirements).

The interim exercise will take place two years into the five year cycle. This will provide an opportunity for institutions that have not previously attained DTU status the chance to gain accreditation. In these instances, accreditation will be for the remainder of the five year cycle and for new studentships from 2013. New applications for DTC accreditation will not be considered as part of the interim exercise.

Applications to ESRC competitions, as well as those attached to ESRC grants, will be accepted only from institutions that hold ESRC DTC or DTU status for studentships that will commence from October 2011.

Application Form

Applications for DTC and DTU status must be submitted via the Joint Electronic Submission System (Je-S). Applications and application guidance will be made available via the ESRC Website six months before applications are due.

Types of Applications

Applications can be made for either a DTC or a DTU (ie not for both). If an institution or institutions are unsuccessful in achieving DTC status, they will automatically be considered for DTU status.

Assessment of Applications

Applications will be subject to a two-stage peer-review process. Applications will initially be assessed by members of a specially constituted referee college with the final decisions on the accreditation of DTCs and DTUs resting with the ESRC committee responsible for postgraduate training and development.

Conditional or Partial Acceptance

The ESRC on occasion may decide to award conditional DTC or DTU status to an institution or collaboration. This will mean that the institution(s) may host ESRC studentships in the next academic year; however, the continuation of DTC/DTU status beyond this point would be subject to an explanation of how the conditions applied to their accredited status had been met. Only when the ESRC is satisfied that the conditions have been met will continued accreditation be confirmed.

As part of the review process, the ESRC will be seeking to identify where training provision is exceptionally strong and where elements of the provision fail to meet quality thresholds. Where the latter is the case, the ESRC may decide to apply conditions to a DTC or DTU award and not accredit part of the provision set out in the application. If this is the case, successful DTCs will not be allowed to allocate ESRC funding to those areas, and both DTCs and DTUs will not be allowed to submit competition applications, or have studentships linked to grants, which draw upon that training.

More information is available in ESRC Terms and Conditions for DTCs and DTUs.

Changes to provision

The ESRC encourages institutions to improve and develop their provision continually. In particular, it would not wish institutions to hold back from implementing plans for innovative developments in their provision once accreditation has been obtained. Given the focus of the *Guidelines* is on the outcomes of research training, whilst these remain unchanged, DTCs and DTUs can update and evolve their training provision, whilst maintaining standards in their core and/or advanced training, without immediate reference back to ESRC.

Any changes to provision will be monitored via the reporting procedures put in place for DTCs and DTUs. From time to time it may be appropriate for DTCs and DTUs to inform ESRC of changes outside of the reporting cycle but it is anticipated that this would occur only in exceptional circumstances.

Monitoring by the ESRC

The ESRC has supplemented its research training accreditation by undertaking visits to a number of institutions each year. These visits will continue within the Framework though the exact structure of these visits may vary for DTCs and DTUs, depending on the final configuration of the network.

In addition, DTCs will be required to submit annual reports setting out how they have met the core capacity building objectives of the Centre and summarising the allocation of funding during the previous year.

Information about ESRC Studentship Competitions

Further details on ESRC studentship competitions and other training and development opportunities are available on www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk

ANNEX I

Expectations for Core Research Methods Training

Training Outcomes

As a result of their training in research methods, students will be expected to acquire the following skills and to be able to apply them:

- comprehension of basic principles of research design and strategy, including an understanding of how to formulate researchable problems and an appreciation of alternative approaches to research
- competence in understanding and applying a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and tools including mixed methods approaches
- capabilities for managing research, including managing data, and conducting and disseminating research in a way that is consistent with both professional practice and the normal principles of research ethics
- understanding the significance of alternative epistemological positions that provide the context for theory construction, research design, and the selection of appropriate analytical techniques.

Principles of Research Design

Students must be able to develop and demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the connection between research questions or hypotheses and the tools required to address them, as well as to gain practical experience of applying those tools.

Students need to be able to set out and demonstrate their understanding of these issues in the course of their postgraduate research training.

Data Collection and Analysis

Students must acquire a basic understanding of the potential and pitfalls of the range of methods of data

collection used in the social sciences. The ESRC is not prescribing what this should include but expects that students will be exposed to a breadth of approaches, tools and techniques.

Students must also be able to gain direct practical experience of analysing data, using a range of tools, including appropriate computer packages. By the end of their doctoral training, students should be able to demonstrate, through practical application, appropriate uses of primary and secondary sources of statistics, and, more particularly, proficiency in the analysis of research data. As part of this they must be able to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the analysis in terms of the effects of contextual factors on the collection and meaning of the evidence.

Students are expected to acquire, during the course of their postgraduate study, more advanced levels of competence in quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (including data analysis techniques that are appropriate for survey and aggregate data analysis or for specific experimental, quasi-experimental or evaluation methods), depending on the subject area or discipline. Students should also have an understanding and appreciation of how to combine quantitative and qualitative techniques through mixed method approaches.

Use of Research Methods – Exploiting Regional or National Provision

Whilst a rich and varied range of methods may be available to students locally, there may be certain specialist methodological tools and techniques which need to be sourced from elsewhere. The ESRC has played a lead role in the development of quantitative and qualitative methods and in mainstreaming these methods across the social science community. The ESRC funded *National Centre for Research Methods and Researcher Development Initiative* provide high quality, leading edge research methods training that is available across the UK. It is expected that all students should be aware of such provision and supported in their efforts to attend specific training courses.

The Use of Datasets – Exploiting Existing Data Resources

The ESRC invests over £15 million a year in the creation, maintenance and dissemination of datasets. These range from quantitative and qualitative data generated from ESRC funded research projects through to very large and complex cross sectional and longitudinal datasets such as the *Understanding Society Study* and the *2012 Birth Cohort Study*. In addition, the ESRC acquires a wide variety of data from other sources including many important surveys generated by government departments and the Office for National Statistics. All these data make up one of the most comprehensive data infrastructures available to social scientists anywhere across the world. The data are available through the *Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS)* based jointly at the Universities of Essex and Manchester.

The ESRC is keen to ensure that this rich and high quality data infrastructure is fully exploited. It would therefore encourage institutions to ensure that training programmes expose students to the potential of using these data. This could be done in a number of ways. Firstly, by using particular data sources as a means of demonstrating the application of specific research methods. This sort of integration during formal training could constitute part of core training or more advanced training. Secondly, students could be encouraged to exploit the potential of using these data for secondary analysis during their doctoral programme, particularly as an alternative to, or in combination with, primary data collection.

Depositing New Data

Where doctoral research will result in the creation of new datasets, students should be encouraged to offer them for deposit in the ESDS collection.



ANNEX II

Expectations for Core Researcher Development Skills Training

General Research Skills

Bibliographic and Computing Skills

Institutions will be expected to include training for all students in certain basic skills. With particular reference to the student's own research, this training is likely to cover:

- the identification and use of library resources
- other bibliographic sources and methods
- techniques for preparing literature reviews, and keeping up to date with the literature
- preparing a personal research bibliography
- research management, including word processing and other basic computing skills such as spreadsheets and database management
- web-based research techniques (general web searching, and specific training in using web-based social science indices), and
- procedures for the evaluation of research, including refereeing and the preparation of book reviews.

Teaching and Other Work Experience

Students undertaking teaching or other employment-related responsibilities should receive appropriate training and support. The training provided should be indicated in proposals for DTC or DTU accreditation. It is beneficial to research students if they can obtain teaching experience, for example with seminar groups, or any other work that helps develop personal and professional skills. This might include internship opportunities with government, business or third sector organisations. The ESRC recommends that opportunities to gain any work experience should be accredited where appropriate.

Language Skills

The ESRC believes that the opportunity for training in a second language is desirable for research students, particularly where there is a perceived need within the

student's research project. Proposals for DTC or DTU accreditation should set out provision for language training for those students that require it.

Ethical and Legal Issues

The ESRC expects issues relating to ethics, confidentiality and legality to be explicitly and systematically addressed as an integral and embedded part of core training provision. Furthermore the ESRC expects that supervisors will have access to specialist training in this area so as to be equipped to assist students in acquiring the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to respect, consider and attend to the rights of other researchers and research participants.

The revised ESRC *Framework for Research Ethics* (FRE) sets out ESRC's approach, aims and methods in ethical evaluation and conduct of research, including doctorate level research. It is expected that research students will be made aware of this document as well as local ethics review requirements as part of their core training.

Skills for Engaging with Users and For Maximising the Impact of Research

Students should be made aware of the potential for societal and economic impact of their research and be equipped with the relevant skills to engage and exchange knowledge with users in the process of devising and shaping their research.

In order to achieve this, the ESRC expects institutions to offer training as appropriate that will enable postgraduate students to:

- identify potential benefits and beneficiaries of their research from the outset, and throughout the lifecycle of their project/research
- develop the skills required for effective co-production of knowledge
- develop entrepreneurship and enterprise skills
- develop skills that foster the better use of research outputs in policy making
- acquire skills that help and enable outreach and public dialogue, both throughout the research process and as part of the dissemination process.

Exploitation of Research and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

Students should be made aware, as an integral part of their research training, of the possibilities and problems of

academic or commercial exploitation of their own research activities, as well as the research activities of others. This should include an understanding of their institution's intellectual property policy as well as relevant training.

Transferable Skills

Communication, Networking and Dissemination Skills

Students should be strongly encouraged to develop skills to communicate their research, promote themselves and build up a network around their research. The development of communication and networking skills should form an embedded part of their overall programme of research training including presenting their work to both academic colleagues and non-academic users, and to build networks with others including researchers and. They should have opportunities to attend and contribute to seminars, workshops and conferences. They should also be given the opportunity to circulate papers to interested individuals and groups.

An early introduction should be given to the essential skills of writing, presentation and dissemination, although the development of these skills will continue throughout the student's studies. Opportunities should also be given for students to develop these skills for a non-academic audience such as writing for or speaking to the media, general public and government bodies.

The development of skills around co-production of research, public engagement and enterprise skills (see General Research Skills) can play an important role in helping postgraduate students to raise their profile and to disseminate their knowledge to wider audiences.

Leadership, Research Management and Relationship Management Skills

The ESRC expects that students will be encouraged to acquire skills to help manage their research project effectively including leadership skills, project and time management, relationship management, and skills to manage the resources available to them to conduct their research. These may be acquired through formal learning, through the experience of conducting and completing their own research and through opportunities for experiential learning (eg through managing their own Research Training

Support Grant (RTSG), or by undertaking an internship opportunity).

Students should receive training that extends beyond project management to encompass research leaderships skills and a sophisticated understanding of the life cycle of the research process from the initial idea for a research question, through the development of a research proposal that may attract funding, to the archiving of data and, where appropriate, the completion of end-of-award reports to research sponsors.

Personal and Career Development

The ESRC expects research students to be encouraged to proactively engage in their own personal development and career direction, in accordance with the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*. Institutions are encouraged to formalise personal development activity where appropriate, however, at a minimum level students should be encouraged to develop a training plan in discussion with their supervisor(s) to develop an awareness of their career aspirations, personal attributes and skills and to plan to address gaps in knowledge.

Students should be encouraged to reflect upon and actively manage their own career direction and to engage with a range of activities that will help develop useful skills and knowledge for different possible career paths. Institutions are required to make students aware of relevant support for career development learning, especially that provided by the institution's central support services, and their entitlements in respect of such provision.

National Training Provision

In addition to generic and transferable training available within the institution or through a consortium arrangement, the ESRC expects that research students will be made aware of external sources of support for career development and transferable skills especially that provided by the Research Councils and other national organisations that champion the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers. Institutions should commit to developing the potential of postgraduate researchers and to encourage students to take advantage of specific support provided by organisations like Vitae, which builds on the work and activities of the previous UKGrad Programme.



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The ESRC is an independent organisation, established by Royal Charter in 1965, and funded mainly by the Government.

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