SEDarc DTP Studentship competition: Guidelines for supervisors

What is SEDarc?

The South East Doctoral Training Arc (SEDarc) is a partnership of six leading UK universities - Royal Holloway, University of London; University of Kent; Kingston University; University of Reading; University of Surrey; and University of Sussex. SEDarc is one of the 14 ESRC Doctoral Training Partnerships.

SEDarc at a glance

Strong focus on digital, data & quantitative skills	Strong focus on employability	Innovative thesis format
• 200 hours per year of subject-specific training and wider professional development for *all* • ring-fenced scholarships for advanced data skills, advanced quantitative methods and interdisciplinary projects	• 3-month funded placements • Research in Practice programme	• research project achievable in 2.75 years • + a reflection on training journey, placement and knowledge exchange activities • + data management plan and project management plan

SEDarc's vision is to develop world-class social science researchers from all backgrounds who thrive in challenge-led, collaborative, and interdisciplinary contexts. It offers a transformative approach to PhD studies, one that combines cutting-edge doctoral training, a job placement outside academia, and an individual research project based in one of five interdisciplinary, challenge-led *pathways*:

- Living Sustainably
- Healthy, Thriving Communities
- Inclusive Economic Growth
- Secure, Effective and Trusted Organisations
- Transformative Technologies for Society

Please see SEDarc website, Pathways Page for further information on these themes. SEDarc projects must speak primarily to one pathway.

The following *subjects* at Royal Holloway are eligible to participate in the competition:

Subject	Department
Business and Management	Business and Management
Cyber Security	Information Security
Economics	Economics
Geography and Environmental Studies	Geography
Criminology	Law and Criminology
Politics and International Relations	Politics, International Relations, and Philosophy
Psychology	Psychology

STUDENTSHIPS

Studentships include stipend at the standard [UKRI rate](#) (plus £2,000 London Allowance) and UK rate tuition fees on a full-time or part-time basis (paid at 50% of full-time rates):

- 3.5 year studentship (including 3 months funding for a job placement)
- 1 + 3.5 years for an integrated Masters + PhD programme (including 3 months funding for a job placement)

Student are expected to undertake a funded *three-month placement,* which can be completed flexibly (part-time or in several blocks). If the placement is not undertaken, the scholarship will be reduced to 3.25 years.

Supplementary funds are available through the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG). This allowance is intended to be used to pay for expenses directly related to students' PhD research (such as attending conferences, UK or overseas fieldwork, language training, etc.). Students can apply for these funds throughout their PhD programme. There are no individual allowances, but most students are granted no more than £3,000 over the lifetime of their award, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

International students are eligible to apply, but only 30% of SEDarc studentships may be awarded to international applicants. Note that the studentship does not cover flights, visa, or health surcharge costs.

Tuition fees at home rates are covered by SEDarc studentships. Successful international applicants receive a tuition fee waiver from their institution to cover the difference between home and international fees. Similarly for 1+3.5 applicants, the difference between Masters and PhD tuition fees is also waived by the institution.

There are up to 39 awards available each year across the whole consortium. Of these 39 awards, up to 3 will be ring-fenced for home students from certain Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic groups as part to SEDarc's commitment to principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The eligibility criteria for these ring-fenced studentships are available on the [SEDarc website](#).

Further, SEDarc is committed to awarding high-quality projects for *four priority areas:*
- Advanced data skills (for projects using very large datasets or big data methods)
- Advanced quantitative methods
- Interdisciplinary collaboration with researchers outside of the social sciences
- Substantive collaboration with non-academic partner

** NB students who have already started their PhD are not eligible for a SEDarc studentship.

Masters and PhD

Students can apply for funding to study for a *Masters and PhD* (1+3.5 award) or a *PhD alone* (+3.5). 1+3.5 awards are available to applicants who do not hold a masters degree in social sciences, except where an additional MSc can be justified in the discipline of Economics.

Students applying for a 1+3.5 award can choose from the following compliant Royal Holloway Masters programmes:
- MSc Clinical Psychology (Psychology department)
- MSc Economics (Economics department)
- MSc Global Futures (Geography department)
- MSc Elections, Campaigns, and Democracy (Politics & International Relations department)
- MSc Media, Power, & Public Affairs (Politics & International Relations department)

APPLICATION PROCESS

In the first instance, students apply to their PhD programme of choice, in the academic department of their choice, and are interviewed by that department. If approved by their department, they are asked to complete a SEDarc application form by the internal RHUL deadline (posted on this website). They also need to apply for a PhD place via RHUL's regular Applicant Portal by the same deadline. The submitted applications are reviewed by an interdisciplinary panel at the institutional level, after which the highest-ranked applications are forwarded to the external SEDarc review panel.

Selection panel assessment criteria:
1. Fit to themes (20%, esp. the potential to develop or extend themes; bring novel perspectives)
2. Proposed research (40%, incl. coherent research plan, novelty, impact and benefit of research, place in the literature; with reference to applicant's personal statement and supervisor's statement)
3. Student quality (40%, incl. fit and preparation for postgraduate study, research aspirations and future career goals; with reference to applicant's personal statement and supervisor's statement)

Supervisor eligibility

The primary supervisor has to be based in one of the participating departments listed above. One of the two supervisors (either primary or secondary) has to be experienced, i.e. having previously supervised two or more students to completion. Additional supervisors/advisors (e.g. from other institutions, other departments across RHUL, or from a collaborative partners) are allowed and can be mentioned on the application form in the supervisor's statement.

Training requirements for supervisors

SEDarc requires all primary supervisors to undertake 4 types of supervisory training *before awards are made* (typically at the end of March). These courses need to be undertaken within the last 3 years.

1. *DTP specific training* - a short video on SEDarc specific requirements, training programme for PhD students, placement options, etc. is provided by the SEDarc DTP. Access link will be emailed to all primary supervisors for the nominated (i.e. shortlisted by RHUL) applications.

The other 3 courses are provided by each institution. Royal Holloway provides the following courses:

2. *EDI training* - there are four self-enrolment Moodle courses on EDI that are mandatory for all RHUL staff. Please follow this link for more information.

3. *Research Ethics and Integrity training*. There are several options that would satisfy this requirement.
   a. Ethics at Royal Holloway course. Please email Laura.Christie@rhul.ac.uk if you have any queries on the modules themselves and to get a certificate of completion.
   b. Discipline-specific research ethics training. If you choose this option, the training should have been completed within the last 3 years, and you should be able to provide evidence of completion.

4. *Effective supervision training* **-** Supervisor training course is a self-enrolment Moodle course, similar to other courses above. To complete the course, you need to self-enrol first to be able to mark all video and reading activity as done. This course explores the role of the Doctoral School and the researcher journey from a process perspective, including the researcher lifecycle and where to find information on registration to completion, funding, Ethics, UKVI, and professional development. Each section contains a mix of information with links to further support alongside screencasts to walk you through the different information available to you on the microsite. When you have finished looking through the sections please take the quiz. An 80% result or more means you can download a completion certificate to use as evidence of undertaking Supervisor training.

 It is important to save the proof of completion for the three RHUL courses (points 2-4 above) for compliance checks. We will be able to retrieve the confirmation from Moodle if needed, but **for the Ethics course please send the proof of completion to esrcdtp@rhul.ac.uk**. RHUL courses need to be taken before the award date at the latest and ideally at the application stage. Note that while it is recommended that second (and third) supervisors complete this training as well, SEDarc requirements only apply for primary supervisors.

SEDarc-FUNDED PhD PROGRAMME

Thesis format

Students are expected to submit a new style of PhD thesis, which demonstrates competencies acquired from the general and specialist skills training. The PhD thesis must include:
(a) an independent research project (should be feasible to complete in about 2.75 years to give students time to work on the sections below)
(b) a section on project management
(c) a data management plan
(d) a chapter on knowledge exchange, perhaps reflecting learning from the placement (e.g policy report, industry solution, accessible science communication)
(e) reflections in appropriate chapters as to how the training journey influenced the research
(f) archiving of study materials, data, and reproducible analysis code (as appropriate) on the Open Science Framework.

** NB Students must submit their thesis during their funded period and by the funding end date.
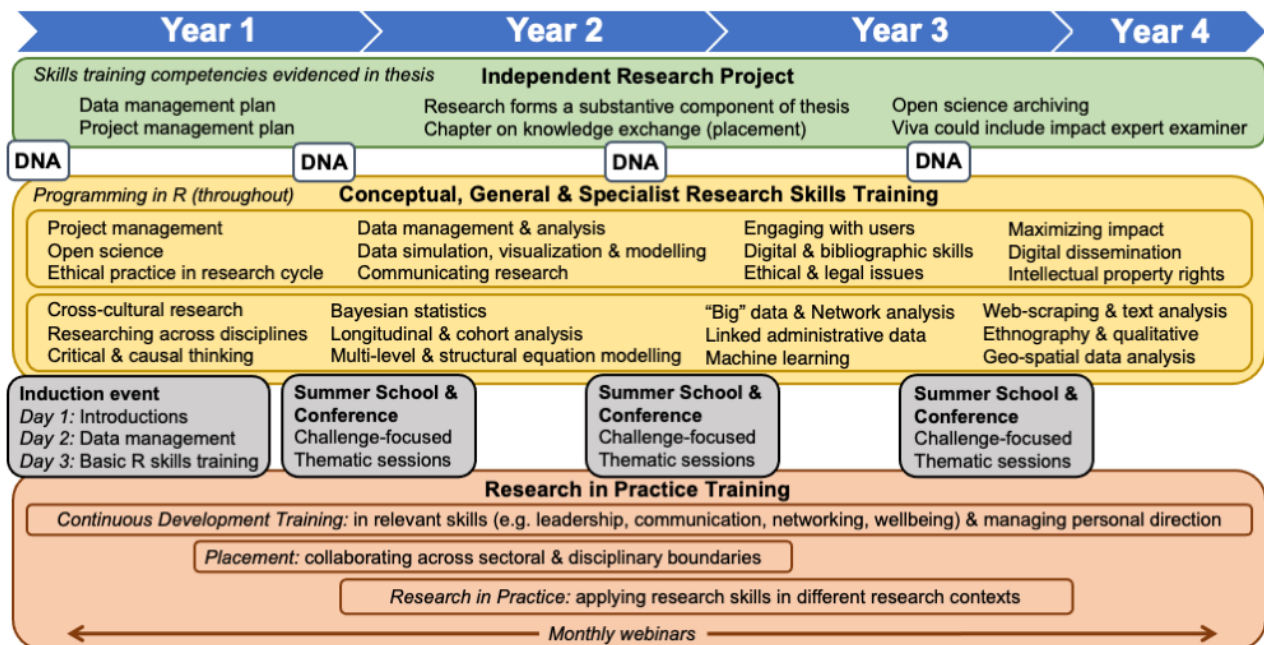
Placements

The SEDarc Deputy Director of Training and the Placement Officer (located at the University of Surrey) will work collaboratively with industry partners, supervisors and students for the placement experience. Placements partners can be from the public, private or academic sectors. Forty partners have made commitment to engage with SEDarc so far; however, students are encouraged to source their own placement so that it best serves their career goals.

Total duration of the placements is 3 months (if full-time). It can be spread out to a longer duration for part-time and flexible arrangements. Supervisors need to maintain contact with students while they are on placements to provide guidance and support.

Student training

The starting point for the training provision is a rigorous, evidence-based *development needs analysis (DNA)* undertaken at the point of application and reviewed annually.

(a) Applicants fill in a mini-DNA as part of the application process (the DNA is not assessed by the selection panel, but it might be used to decide whether the candidate should go for a 3.5 vs 1+3.5 scholarship).
(b) Following acceptance of a studentship, each newly-recruited student will complete a bespoke DNA drawn up collaboratively between the student and their supervisory team. Bespoke training pathways for individual students will be built through DNAs in Years 1, 2 & 3.

Students are required to undertake 200 hours per year (50 hours of lectures + self-study) of subject-specific training and wider professional development to enhance career prospects. SEDarc provides the following types of training:

(a) Conceptual skills (obtained through masters education, previous research or work experience)
(b) General research skills
   - delivered across the DTP, during induction week and summer school, 40 contact hours
   - required to be taken by all SEDarc students in the first year of PhD
   - includes project management and ethics, data management and analysis (incl. introduction to R and data visualisation in R), research design and methods of data collection (incl. qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research design), digital and bibliographical skills
(c) Specialist skills (bespoke for individual research needs)
   - starts in the second year of PhD, 40 contact hours
   - In-depth qualitative and quantitative methods training
   - students can choose the courses that fit their needs; can substitute with other training if DTP does not provide for specific needs;
(d) Research in practice skills
   - 10 hours of lectures yearly, delivered by the DTP, during induction week and summer school
   - Webinars on building a CV, leadership, positioning, cross-cultural working, work-life balance, career presentations, etc.
   - Support to find and manage placement

Students will be required to maintain a record of their training that will help them reflect on the training that they have acquired, and to identify any follow-on needs and skills gaps.

Supervisors with DTP-funded students will need to formally evaluate their own skills needs (e.g. programming) and will be expected to complete modules within the training programme as necessary to enhance their skills.

Got a question?
For administrative queries email esrcdtp@royalholloway.ac.uk, for other queries email SEDarc institutional lead Ija Trapeznikova (Ija.Trapeznikova@rhul.ac.uk).