



Policies & Procedures

Annual Studentships Competition

The Northern Ireland and North East (NINE) Doctoral Training Partnership is an ESRC-funded consortium of seven universities delivering postgraduate social science training in Northern Ireland and the Northeast of England. It comprises of Durham University (DU), Newcastle University (NU), Northumbria University (UNN), Teesside University (TU), University of Sunderland (SU), Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU).

All awards will be subject to the rules of the [UKRI](#) and [ESRC](#), and supervisors and pathway leads should familiarise themselves with the guidance.

Summary of updates for the 2024/25 competition

1. Additional notes regarding new steers and ring-fenced studentships.
2. New pathway information for each institution.
3. Information on new award lengths and integrated placements.
4. Expanded guidance regarding the personal statement.

Part 1 / Policy

ALLOCATION PRINCIPLES

1. The ESRC NINE DTP runs a **combined annual studentship competition** to recruit and select postgraduate students of the very highest calibre to study at Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Teesside, Sunderland, Queen's, or Ulster universities. NINE DTP operates an **open competition for the awarding of studentships, which is centred on the quality of candidates and their proposed research**, alongside a linked **Action for Equality** initiative to award two full scholarships to specific under-represented groups.
2. NINE DTP's **studentship competition has been designed to be as open and transparent as possible**, with academic staff from across accredited Pathways actively encouraged to engage and support the process in a variety of capacities. Furthermore, in support of NINE DTP's emphasis on quality and transparency, all decisions around which students are funded are based on **clear and agreed assessment criteria** (see Appendix 3).

AVAILABLE AWARDS

3. NINE DTP awards around 50-55 **fully-funded postgraduate studentships per year, across 18 disciplinary and interdisciplinary pathways**.

4. NINE DTP awards two fully-funded postgraduate studentships via our Action for Equality scheme. These awards may be awarded to candidates of any pathway, for any award type available, and for any institution within the partnership. The process for the Action for Equality Scheme is embedded within the standard NINE Studentship competition and follows the same assessment criteria and timeline.

TYPES OF AWARDS AVAILABLE

5. A range of studentships can be applied for (in line with the host institution regulations), including:
 - a) **3.5 Year Studentships** for students who have already completed, or will have completed by the commencement of their PhD, a Masters that included 60 credits or more of core research methods training.
 - b) **4 Year Studentships** for students who have completed, or will have completed by the commencement of their PhD, a Masters in a relevant discipline, but who have not completed or will not successfully complete 60 credits or more of core research methods training. Students selected for these awards will also be registered on and required to complete a 60-credit Research Training Certificate during their first year of study, and they receive an additional six (6) months funding in support of this.
 - c) **4.5 Year Studentships** for students who are yet to commence a Masters degree. This programme of study includes one year for obtaining a research training Masters degree in addition to 3.5 for obtaining the PhD. Training undertaken in the Masters year must conform to ESRC PGR training requirements, in line with the ESRC learning objectives.
 - d) **5.5 Year Studentships** for students needing to undertake a research training Masters and a language-training Masters. This type of award is available only to students funded to undertake research on the Language-Based Areas Studies (LBAS) pathway.

Each of the four award packages incorporates time for an integrated 3-month placement as well as doctoral (and, where applicable, pre-doctoral) studies. Students who fail to undertake a three-month placement will have their funding award reduced by three months.

For all award packages, the thesis submission deadline is the same as that for the end of funding. Candidates who do not submit by this deadline may incur continuation fees, depending on the policies of their home university. Conversely, students who submit in advance of this deadline may forfeit funding support for any time remaining in their funding package after thesis submission.

Please note: the DTP does not encourage applications from candidates who are already registered on a PhD programme of study.

6. **Part-time equivalents to the above studentships are available across all accredited pathways.** Part-time studentships are provided for 7 years in duration (for doctoral study), funded at 50% of the full-time rate. Where a part-time award-holder needs to also complete a research training Masters degree a further two years funding will be provided for this prior to the commencement of the PhD. Should a part-time candidate be successful the NINE DTP will consult with the successful candidate and their host Pathway to ensure the appropriate arrangements are in place to support their studies and that they comply with the ESRC's employment requirements affecting part-time award-holders.

ACCREDITED PATHWAYS

7. Studentships can be held in the following accredited Pathways within the ESRC disciplinary remit:

Pathway	Durham	Newcastle	Queen's	Ulster	Northumbria	Teesside	Sunderland
Anthropology	Department of Anthropology		School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics				
Criminology, Prisons & Policing	Department of Sociology		School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work	School of Sociology and Applied Social Studies. School of Criminology, Politics and Social Policy	Criminology, Sociology & Policing	School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Law	School of Social Sciences
Economic & Social History	Department of History	Newcastle University Business School	Queen's Business School		History		
Education	School of Education	School of Education, Communication and Language Science	School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work	School of Education			
Environmental Planning		School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape Centre for Rural Economy	School of the Natural Built Environment		Architecture and Built Environment		
Human Geography	Department of Geography	School of Geography, Politics & Sociology	School of the Natural Built Environment		Geography & Environmental Sciences		
Language Based Area Studies	School of Government and International Affairs	School of Modern Languages					
Law	Durham Law School	Newcastle University Law School	School of Law	School of Law	Law		
Linguistics		School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences. School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics. School of Modern Languages	School of Arts, English and Languages				
Management, Business and Economics	Durham University Business School	Newcastle University Business School	Queen's Business School	Ulster University Business School	Newcastle Business School		
Politics & International Studies	School of Government & International Affairs	School of Geography, Politics and Sociology	School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics	Politics and International Studies			

Psychology	Department of Psychology	School of Psychology	School of Psychology	School of Psychology	Psychology	School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Law	
Sociology, Social Policy, and Social Work	Department of Sociology	School of Geography, Politics and Sociology	School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work	School of Sociology and Applied Social Studies.	Criminology, Sociology & Policing	School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Law	School of Social Sciences
		Public Health Science Institute		School of Criminology, Politics and Social Policy	Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing		
Sport & Society	Sport and Exercise Sciences				Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation		

Interdisciplinary Pathways

Pathway	Durham	Newcastle	Queen's	Ulster	Northumbria	Teesside	Sunderland
Children, Youth & Families	Department of Sociology School of Education Department of Geography	School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences. School of Geography, Politics & Sociology School of Law Population Health Sciences Institute	School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work			School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Law	
Conflict, Security & Justice	School of Government & International Affairs Department of Geography Durham Law School	School of Geography, Politics & Sociology Newcastle University Law School		School of Criminology, politics, and social Policy	Psychology		
Environment, Climate & Sustainability	Department of Geography Department of Anthropology Durham Law School Modern Languages and Linguistics Durham University Business School	School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape Centre for Rural Economy School of Geography, Politics & Sociology School of Modern Languages Newcastle University Law School	School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics		Geography & Environmental Sciences	School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Law	
Health, Well-being & Society	Department of Anthropology Department of Sociology Department of Geography	School of Geography, Politics & Sociology Population Health Sciences Institute School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape Centre for Rural Economy	School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work	School of Sociology and Applied Social Studies	Nursing Midwifery and Health		

STEERED AWARDS

8. The ESRC has provided the following steers to the NINE DTP for awards across its partner institutions:
- Three (3) awards to be **cross-council** (interdisciplinary e.g. NERC, EPSRC, MRC, AHRC). These are for interdisciplinary projects (e.g. those that cross the social science/arts or social science/science boundaries) submitted through a NINE DTP pathway, but with a supervisor and opportunities for training from a disciplinary area associated with one of the other research councils. Strong proposals will be demonstrably interdisciplinary, with evidence of training in social science research methods **and** appropriate research methodologies used in the non-social science discipline. An example might be a project on environmental economics, submitted through the NINE Management, Business and Economics pathway, but with an additional supervisor from a Physical Geography department that is part of a NERC DTP training pathway. There is no requirement for funding from other Research Councils since these awards will be funded through NINE DTP.
 - Two (2) awards for projects using **advanced quantitative methods**. These are for projects that require and utilise training at a level over and above the basic generic and subject-specific methods requirements for that discipline.
 - Three (3) awards for projects centred on **data skills**. The focus of this steer is developing researchers with the skills to fully exploit the increasing volumes of large and complex data for research purposes. Steered studentships can use qualitative or quantitative approaches and should provide the opportunity for students to develop advanced data skills throughout their studentship.

Pathways may submit any number of steered awards **in addition to** their allocated quota. Further details on the substantive focus of each steer and criteria for qualification may be found in Part 1 of the 'Supplementary Information for Pathways' document.

COLLABORATIVE AWARDS

9. **Collaborative studentships are defined as doctoral research that directly involves and engages with non-academic partner organisations outside of the University sector**, including businesses, industry, government departments and agencies, charities, the NHS, local authorities and think-tanks. The **collaboration will make a distinct contribution to both the student and the partner organisation, generating both intellectual and practical benefits/outcomes**. Collaborating partners can be national, regional, or local organisations and based in any geographic location and should provide some or all of the following forms of support to the student:
- Substantive and sustained project supervision and support;
 - Placement and work shadowing opportunities;
 - Specific training and development provision;
 - Access to research facilities and equipment; and
 - Office space and other resources.
10. The ESRC does not require collaborative partners to make a direct financial contribution towards collaborative studentships; however, such contributions are strongly encouraged and will demonstrate the partner's commitment to the collaboration. Partners may wish to consider providing dedicated financial support towards the costs of the award-holder's research, such as travel, specialist equipment and other related expenses. **NINE DTP is particularly keen to encourage and consider collaborative studentship nominations that involve financial contributions** that can part-fund a studentship, such as meeting up to 50% of the total costs of the award. Collaborative partners could be approached to provide the difference between Home and International tuition fee rates if and where appropriate.

However, the core criteria upon which a collaboration will be reviewed will be in relation to the quality of the collaboration (e.g. opportunities for knowledge exchange, data sharing, access to networks, expert advice, project support and the mutual benefits of the working relationship), and not any financial considerations. **A proposed collaborative studentship that fails to meet these criteria may receive a lower mark from the studentship panel than an equivalent non-collaborative proposal.**

11. All collaborative studentships must be **underpinned by a formal written agreement with the collaborative**

partner regarding access, intellectual property and any financial contributions.

POSITIVE ACTION IN RELATION TO UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS (ACTION FOR EQUALITY COMPETITION)

12. Pathways may submit any number of candidates of UK-domiciled Black British, British Asian and mixed heritage Black or Asian backgrounds **in addition to** their allocated quota, irrespective of pathway or studentship structure.
13. NINE DTP will offer additional information sessions during the competition to provide additional guidance and support to British minority ethnic individuals. We also encourage potential supervisors to advertise this opportunity through their networks to increase reach to underrepresented groups.
14. Any UK-domiciled candidate from Black British, British Asian, or mixed Black or Asian heritage may be submitted to the Action for Equality Studentship scheme alongside the NINE DTP studentship competition. Applicants and their nominating supervisors should review the Action for Equality scheme guidelines available from <https://www.ninedtp.ac.uk/afore-studentships/>.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

15. NINE DTP's studentships provide successful applicants with the following financial support:
 - a) Payment of tuition fees for home candidates, and a contribution of the UKRI tuition fee rate to all international students (set at £4,712 in 2023-24); please see the section on Eligibility below (points 20-25 specifically) for more information;
 - b) A **tax-free maintenance grant** set at the RCUK's national rate;
 - c) Access to **Research Training Support** funding; and
16. Additionally, applicants may apply for contributions towards funding for **international fieldwork and difficult language training**, which must be applied for by award-holders following the commencement of their studies. The need for these supplementary allowances must be highlighted in a candidate's research proposal, and linked to the candidate's planned methodology and fieldwork plans. All overseas fieldwork costs must be used in accordance with the ESRC guidelines, and we ask applicants and supervisors to recognise that the DTP are not able to fund fieldwork in any country to which the FCDO advise against travel. Pathways, departments and supervisors should investigate and consider the feasibility of travel to the suggested location in advance of nominating a candidate for funding and submitting the candidate to the NINE DTP studentship committee. Please further note that funds for overseas fieldwork are limited. Award-holders may apply for funds from the DTP for up to £7,500 to support overseas fieldwork; should the fieldwork cost more than £7,500 the candidate will need to find additional sources of funding to cover costs. We therefore encourage supervisors and candidates to work to ensure any projected fieldwork plans are economically feasible.
17. Further support is available as well to assist students with meeting the extra costs of an Overseas Institutional Visit (up to £4,000 for a visit lasting up to 13 weeks) or a Placement (up to £1,500 for a placement lasting up to 3 months). Unlike international fieldwork and difficult language training, the need for access to these funds does not need to be highlighted in a candidate's research proposal.
18. All maintenance grants are paid to award-holders in advance on either a quarterly or monthly basis by their host institution's relevant Finance Office.

COMMENCEMENT OF AWARDS

19. All awards made by NINE DTP during this studentship competition will **commence at the start of the 2024-25 academic year (October 2024)**, unless there are exceptional circumstances affecting a successful candidate, which should be raised with NINE DTP following the issuing of the candidate's official award notification.

20. **Studentships cannot normally be deferred** or started before 01 October 2024.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

21. NINE DTP's studentships are available to both Home and International students. This is in line with the ESRC student eligibility criteria, as detailed in the [ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide](#)

22. Eligibility rules for defining eligibility for Home or International studentships are defined in Appendix 1.

Research Organisations bear full responsible for appropriately identifying the correct fee and eligibility status for their candidates.

All NINE DTP studentships will be awarded at the full UKRI studentship rate, comprising tuition fee, stipend and additional research funding at the established UKRI studentship rate. For candidates who qualify as Home students, the award will cover all tuition fee costs. For International students, only the home fee level can be claimed from the training grant or other UKRI funding.

23. Only 30% of all studentships awarded can be awarded to International Students. This cap applies to each cohort (not including associated or integrated studentships).

The difference between the home and international fee rates may be met with contributions from the institution, co-funding partners on collaborative awards, or from the candidates directly. Generally, NINE DTP member institutions will cover this difference for their incoming students who fall within the 30% cap. On the NINE DTP nomination form supervisors of prospective international students must acknowledge that they have considered the limits and options for funding international students and discussed them with their department / school / candidate.

24. Candidates awarded part-time studentships are required to commit at least 50% of their standard working week to their postgraduate studies and are not permitted to hold employment for more than 50% of the time whilst studying. As noted in Paragraph 6, NINE DTP will liaise closely with all part-time award-holders to ensure their package of support is most appropriate to their needs and individual circumstances.

25. Pathways must ensure they are aware of these eligibility rules and ensure they have reviewed their nominees against the requirements. The NINE DTP will perform light-touch checks on eligibility decisions, and may approach pathways or departments for further information if necessary; however, it should be noted that the Research Organisation bears sole responsibility for conducting all eligibility checks.

26. Candidates who hold a doctoral degree, hold an award from or are financially supported by another organisation, or who have undertaken more than one year full-time PhD study, or part-time equivalent, will not be eligible for an award. The DTP does not encourage applications from students who are already registered on a PhD programme.

27. NINE DTP will not normally offer a studentship to a student who has previously received funding to do three years of doctoral-level studies. Students who have already received government funding for Master's-level training may normally apply for a 3.5 studentship.

JOINT SUPERVISION

28. The ESRC NINE DTP is **committed to supporting students who are jointly supervised by academic colleagues at more than 1 NINE DTP institution**. Jointly-supervised nominations require selection of a Pathway, and a host partner institution is required, which is where the candidate will be registered and their tuition fees charged. Where a successful candidate is benefitting from a mixed supervisory team they will be allocated two (2) supervisors from their host institution, with the academic colleague based in the other institution registered as their third supervisor.

29. Co-supervisors of NINE DTP award-holders registered at other NINE DTP institutions should be given workload credit in accordance with workload models or similar in their own departments. In return, all NINE DTP PhDs (or at least the proportion that reflects the supervisor contribution to their training and supervision) are returnable in REF submissions of both institutions.

Some UKRI DTPs *require* cross-institutional supervision. While NINE DTP does not require this, we do seek to encourage it to: i) pool expertise and ensure our award-holders are supervised by the most qualified team; ii) build capacity and spread good practice; iii) build collaboration within training pathways; iv) build research networks that might also be generative of other research collaborations. Inclusion in REF PhD completion data is an incentive for departments to allocate workload credit to support these activities. In addition, applications to the NINE DTP Studentship Competition can be strengthened, and thus score more highly, where supervisors have sought to fill possible gaps in supervisory expertise by engaging with colleagues in another institution.

Part 2 / Process

SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

30. **Candidates wishing to apply for a studentship must complete the relevant institution's online postgraduate application form and submit all other supporting documentation by the date detailed in the competition timetable (see Appendix 2 for a full timeline of the competition).**
31. **Candidates must complete a [NINE DTP Equal Opportunities Monitoring form](#) online and insert the code number on to their nomination form before submission.**
32. The research proposal is to be included within the main application form. This should not be longer than 2,000 words in length (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography / reference list). **If a proposal exceeds this maximum length of 2,000 words it will not be considered.**
33. Candidates must provide/attach the following additional paperwork to their online application forms:
- Current CV [maximum 2 pages]
 - Two letters of reference
 - Full transcripts of their previous qualifications obtained to date
 - A signed copy of the NINE DTP Consent Form
 - Personal statement elaborating on aspects of the candidate's background and suitability for the proposed studentship, beyond what is evident on the CV
34. Candidates should avoid nominating referees who are named as their potential supervisors in their application; however, if this is not possible a justification of their use as a referee should be provided within the body of the reference.

NOMINATING CANDIDATES

35. The number of nominations Pathways can submit is demand managed by the ESRC NINE DTP. The aim of this approach is to better manage the administrative requirements of the competition, and to reward and incentivise ESRC grant success and REF performance.
36. The number of standard NINE DTP studentship nominations that Pathways can put forward will be capped; however, nominations for steered (data skills, advanced quantitative methods and cross-Council) or collaborative awards, as well as nominations for British candidates of Black, Asian or mixed Black or Asian heritage are not limited by the demand management arrangements. Pathways are free to nominate as many steered, collaborative, or British candidates of Black, Asian or mixed Black or Asian heritage nominations as

they wish.

37. It should be noted that applications with a minimal collaborative element may score lower than if submitted as a standard application, so candidates and their supervisors should ensure that collaborative applications can clearly evidence that the collaboration is substantive, and makes significant contribution to the research proposed.
38. UK-domiciled candidates from Black British, British Asian, or mixed Black or Asian heritage may be submitted to the Action for Equality competition as well as the main NINE DTP studentship competition. Nominating supervisors should indicate the candidate's eligibility for additional consideration in the Action for Equality competition on the nomination form.
39. Owing to the UKRI cap on the number of awards that can be made to International candidates, pathways may only submit a maximum of either two International candidates, or 30% of the total number of nominations submitted, whichever is greater. For the purposes of clarity, the 30% cap relates to the full number of nominations submitted, including those submitted above quota.
40. The caps on the numbers of standard nominations that Pathways can submit will be communicated via the Pathway leaders.
41. **All Pathways must submit the applications they wish to nominate for consideration for awards electronically to contact.nine@durham.ac.uk by the deadline as noted in Appendix 2** (see Appendix 2 for a full timeline of the competition).
42. The **NINE DTP's Postgraduate Studentship Nomination Form** must be completed by Pathways for each applicant put forward and the following documents attached to it (documents should be submitted as a single combined PDF):
 - a) Online University application form;
 - b) Current CV (maximum 2 pages);
 - c) Letter of Support from Collaborative Partner (if nominated for a Collaborative Studentship);
 - d) Two (2) letters of reference;
 - e) Full transcripts of qualifications obtained to date;
 - f) A signed copy of the NINE DTP Consent Form; failure to submit this form will mean that the DTP cannot review your application;
 - g) Personal statement elaborating on aspects of the candidate's background and suitability for the proposed studentship, beyond what is evident on the CV

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

43. Throughout the assessment process, all eligible candidates are **assessed and graded against the NINE DTP's Studentship Assessment Scheme**, which is outlined in Appendix 3. All Pathways should study this Scheme carefully and are strongly encouraged to adopt it when conducting their own internal selection processes.
44. Eligible nominations received by the NINE DTP will be reviewed and assessed in the following two stages:
 - **Stage 1 / Pathway-level competition**
 - **Stage 2 / Studentships Committee (NINE DTP Directors, Deputy Directors, Academic Leads and External Reviewers)**

MAKING AWARDS TO SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

45. Following the meeting of the NINE DTP Studentship Panel, NINE DTP will process and issue award notifications to **successful candidates**, whilst also informing the Pathways of the status of **all other candidates**, which includes candidates placed on the reserve list and those that have not been successful. Feedback will not be provided by the Panel directly to students and will only be available through prospective supervisors.

46. Prior to the issuing of award notifications to successful candidates, an **internal memorandum will be circulated to all Pathways confirming the candidates that have been successful and those on the reserve list**. If there are any specific issues and/or questions affecting candidates following the deliberations of the Studentships Panel, these will be followed-up in the run-up to the issuing of this internal memorandum and any further contact with the candidates.
47. Please **note that final studentship offers made to successful candidates may be different to the type/duration of award originally sought by their host Pathway**. During the assessment process specific attention is given to the duration of funding to be provided to ensure each successful candidate is provided with the optimal package of support for their training and research. Specifically, NINE DTP focuses on the past training of 3.5 year studentships and the past training and future needs of nominations for 4 Year studentships, who are seeking additional funding to complete a Research Methods Certificate.
48. In cases **where a successful candidate decides not to accept the offer of a NINE DTP studentship, the next highest-ranked candidate on the reserve list will be contacted and made an offer of an award**. Where a Pathway is aware that a nominated candidate has decided to withdraw from the competition it should be reported to the NINE DTP immediately to ensure such decisions are communicated and appropriate action taken.
49. **The decisions regarding awards and the issuing of results will take place by the date noted in appendix 2**. (See Appendix 2 for a full timeline of competition). Students will normally be expected to respond within 3 weeks.
50. Following the announcement of the competition's results and the subsequent final confirmation of candidates in receipt of funding, de-briefing sessions will be held in all institutions to consider the outcomes of the process and relevant academic and operational issues arising.

Part 3 / Further Information

51. If students or staff need any further information about the ESRC NINE DTP's annual studentship competition please contact their local contact:
- **Durham - Katy Roberts / Rebecca Nash: contact.nine@durham.ac.uk**
 - **Newcastle - Sarah Rylance: ninedtp.admin@ncl.ac.uk**
 - **Northumbria – Andrea Percival: andrea.percival@northumbria.ac.uk**
 - **Queen's University Belfast – Naomi Harland: nine.admin@qub.ac.uk**
 - **Sunderland – John Fulton: john.fulton@sunderland.ac.uk**
 - **Teesside – Anthony Lloyd: anthony.lloyd@tees.ac.uk**
 - **Ulster University – Conor Murray: c.murray4@ulster.ac.uk**

Part 4 / Authorisation & Version Control

Author:	NINE DTP Director Philip Steinberg
Version:	6
Changes from last version:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of the new steers given by ESRC for studentships, as well as the addition of personal statements to the process and pathways changed
Date Policy Last Approved:	September 2023
Date of Next Review:	Summer 2024

Appendix 1: Eligibility¹

Please note: the following criteria apply to all UKRI Studentships

To be classed as a Home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have settled status, or
- Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirement) or,
- Have indefinite leave to remain or enter

UK National

The UK includes the United Kingdom and Islands (i.e. the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).

In terms of residency requirements for UK nationals, for courses starting from 1 August 2021, candidates will continue to be eligible for home fee status as long as:

- they were living in the EEA or Switzerland on 31 December 2020, and have lived in the EEA, Switzerland, the UK or Gibraltar for at least the last 3 years before starting a course in the UK
- have lived continuously in the EEA, Switzerland, the UK or Gibraltar between 31 December 2020 and the start of the course
- the course starts before 1 January 2028

Eligibility on these grounds will only be available for courses starting up to seven years from the last day of the transition period (i.e. on 31 December 2027 at the latest).

Children of UK nationals will also be eligible for support on the same terms, even if they are not themselves UK nationals, as long as both the UK national and the child meet the conditions listed above.

This is following the announcement made by <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-nationals-in-the-eea-and-switzerland-access-to-higher-education-and-19-further-education>.

The above residency requirements will not apply to Irish nationals living in the UK and Ireland whose right to study and to access benefits and services will be preserved on a reciprocal basis for UK and Irish nationals under the Common Travel Area arrangement.

It will also not apply to those EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals benefitting from Citizens' Rights under the EU Withdrawal Agreement, EEA EFTA Separation Agreement or Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement respectively.

Temporary absence

A UK national may have spent an extended period living outside the UK, either for study or employment and still be eligible for home fee status. Candidates in these circumstances are required to show that they have maintained a relevant connection with their home country and therefore claim that the absence was temporary. 'Temporary' does not depend solely on the length of absence.

EU Settlement Scheme

EU, EEA or Swiss citizens can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living in the UK after 30 June 2021. If successful, applicants will get either settled or pre-settled status.

¹ Applicants for the Action for Equality scheme need to meet all of the standard eligibility requirements, but must also be UK-domiciled candidates from Black British, British Asian or mixed Black or Asian Heritage.

Settled status

Applicants will usually get settled status if they:

- started living in the UK by 31 December 2020
- lived in the UK for a continuous 5-year period (known as 'continuous residence')

Five years' continuous residence means that for 5 years in a row they have been in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for at least 6 months in any 12-month period. The exceptions are:

- one period of up to 12 months for an important reason (for example, childbirth, serious illness, study, vocational training or an overseas work posting)
- compulsory military service of any length
- time spent abroad as a Crown servant, or as the family member of a Crown servant
- time spent abroad in the armed forces, or as the family member of someone in the armed forces

If they have settled status, they can spend up to 5 years in a row outside the UK without losing that status. If they are a Swiss citizen, they and their family members can spend up to 4 years in a row outside the UK without losing their settled status.

Pre-settled status

If applicants do not have 5 years' continuous residence when they apply to the EU settlement scheme, they will usually get pre-settled status. They must have started living in the UK by 31 December 2020.

Those with pre-settled status will qualify as a home student if they have 3 years residency in the UK/EEA/Gibraltar/Switzerland immediately before the start of their course.

It is then possible to apply to change this to settled status once they have got 5 years' continuous residence. They must do this before the pre-settled status expires. They can stay in the UK for a further 5 years from the date they get pre-settled status.

If they have pre-settled status, they can spend up to 2 years in a row outside the UK without losing their status. They will need to maintain their continuous residence if they want to qualify for settled status.

Indefinite leave to remain (ILR) or Indefinite leave to enter (ILE)

Indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILR) are types of immigration status.

It is possible to continue to live in the UK without applying to the EU Settlement Scheme if they have indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK. However, if they choose to apply (and meet all the other conditions), they will get 'indefinite leave to remain under the EU Settlement Scheme' - also known as settled status.

They can spend up to 2 years in a row outside the UK without losing their indefinite leave to enter or remain status.

International Student

If a candidate does not meet the criteria above, they would be classed as an International student.

Appendix 2 / Timetable

Date(s)	Activity/Milestone
Monday 22 January 2024 (1600hrs)	Application deadline to the Institution's Department or School
Monday 12 February 2024 (1600hrs)	Deadline for departments / schools to submit nominations to prospective Pathways
Tuesday 13 February to Friday 23 February 2024	Pathways conduct cross-institutional review of all nominations and select candidates to put forward to the final Studentship panel
Monday 26 February 2024 (1600hrs)	Nominations submitted by Pathways to the NINE DTP. (All nominations to be sent using the ESRC Postgraduate Studentship Nomination Form to contact.nine@durham.ac.uk)
Tuesday 27 February 2024	Nominations sent to Studentship Committee for review. (NINE DTP Academic Leads and 4 or 5 external reviewers).
Wednesday 28 February to Wednesday 20 March 2024	Nominations reviewed by the Studentship Committee.
Thursday 21 March 2024	Submission of Studentship Committee scores to the DTP Manager.
Tuesday 26 March 2024	NINE DTP Studentships Committee convenes to review and confirm nominations. Candidates will be informed of the outcomes of the competition in the weeks that follow.

Appendix 3 / ESRC NINE DTP Studentship Assessment Scheme

MARKING SCHEME

Description	Percentage	Grade	Sections Marked Out of 30	Sections Marked Out of 40
Very Strong	>80%	A*	26-30	33-40
Strong	70 to 80%	A	22-25	28-32
Fair	60-69%	B	18-21	24-27
Poor	<60%	C	0-17	0-23

SCORING PROFILES

Award Type	Background, References & Qualifications	Research Proposal	Supervisory-Fit & Research Environment	Collaboration
4.5 & 5.5 Studentships (and masters + doctoral only part-time nominations)	40	30	30	N/A
3.5, 4 Studentships (and doctoral only part-time nominations)	30	40	30	N/A
4.5 & 5.5 Collaborative Studentships (and masters + doctoral only part-time nominations)	40	30	30	30
3.5, 4 Collaborative Studentships (and doctoral only part-time nominations)	30	40	30	30

All scores are pro-rata'ed to be out of 100 when collated.

Please note that overall scores are considered such that applicants with scores of over 80 are considered fundable and under 75 are not. Scores of 76 – 80 are considered borderline.

MARKING CRITERIA

Section	Criteria & Guidance
Background & Testimonials	<p>This section includes the qualifications and references of candidates and reviewers should focus on the candidate's potential to successfully complete their planned research. At least a good 2:1 is required at undergraduate level is expected from conventional candidates. A good Masters degree and/or significant relevant profession experience should also be recognised and can be used to show a positive academic/intellectual trajectory, particularly for candidates from non-traditional academic backgrounds. The CV and personal statement can also evidence an applicant's potential.</p> <p>For candidates applying for 3.5 or 4 year studentships, reviewers should examine previous qualifications to see if they are suitable for the candidate's project. They should focus carefully on the extent to which the references support the applicant. A strong reference will focus on the particular abilities of the candidate that make them most suited for postgraduate research and should support them unreservedly. A weak reference will indicate significant problems or provide 'stock' or general replies that add no value to the nomination.</p> <p>For candidates applying for 4.5 or 5.5 year studentships, reviewers use the same criteria as above, but appreciate that they will need to focus on the potential of the candidate because they are at an earlier stage of their career.</p>

Section	Criteria & Guidance
Research Proposal	<p>Nominations should very clearly outline, articulate and explain the research questions, the relevant supporting body of research in the discipline, and the methodology that will be adopted, together with the relevance and potential impact of the research.</p> <p>Candidates and their supervisors should ensure the research proposed is feasible both in relation to the limits of the funding available from the DTP and the duration of study.</p> <p>In advance of submitting the proposal we recommend that candidates and their supervisors cost their proposals to ensure that UK fieldwork and RTSG costs (RTSG is £750 over 4 years gives them £3,000 per student across their PhD) can be delivered within the funds available if necessary; further, if the candidate is seeking Overseas Fieldwork or Difficult Language training, they should similarly ensure that the research can be delivered within the financial restrictions of the grant i.e. with a contribution of up to £7,500 from NINE DTP. Supervisors and pathway leads should recognise that the DTP is unable to support students with any funds (including stipend and fees) at any location to which the FCDO advise against travel. We would generally not encourage applications from candidates whose fieldwork includes travel to locations to which the FCDO advise against travel if that travel advice is unlikely to change. Furthermore, we would encourage all supervisors and applicants to recognise that they may need to make contingency plans to ensure that the PhD can be completed even if the fieldwork needs to be significantly altered owing to FCDO travel advice.</p> <p>For candidates applying for 3.5 or 4 year studentships, a strong application will have a well-defined proposal and researchable questions or hypotheses, and the candidate will have identified relevant sources, outlined and justified an appropriate methodology, shown an awareness of the potential use of the research, and will have a feasible timetable for completing the research within three and a half years (for full- time candidates). The proposal should normally build on and complement the candidate's CV and background.</p> <p>Reviewers should consider if the research is likely to raise ethical or safety issues, which may mean that the research cannot be approved. Furthermore, Reviewers should give particular attention to any articulation of the potential impact and knowledge exchange arising from the research.</p> <p>For candidates applying for 4.5 or 5.5 year studentships, the emphasis is on the potential of the research area that the candidate intends to develop during their Masters degree and subsequent PhD, and how this relates to their background and experience. Reviewers may consider why the candidate has chosen to complete a PhD and what they seek to gain from it. A strong application will demonstrate an interest in and understanding of the proposed research area, its importance and wider context and the possible methodology and timescale. A weak application would be poorly focused with little appreciation of the research area, robust methodology and timescale.</p>

Section	Criteria & Guidance
Supervisory-Fit & Research Environment	<p>Nominations need to address the research strengths of their host Pathway’s discipline and those of their proposed supervisory team – including reference to publications, grants and other related research outputs – and their suitability to the student and their research project. Pathways should outline how the candidate will or has obtained the key research and disciplinary training needed by them to successfully complete research within 3 and a half years (for full-time award-holders).</p> <p>If the candidate has completed the required core research methods training this should be confirmed, but, if not, this aspect must be dealt with in more detail.</p> <p>A strong nomination will give due consideration to the research strengths and environment of the Pathway and of the candidate’s supervisory team – including research centres or special facilities or research projects – that make it appropriate for the Pathway and the supervisory team to host the candidate. The quality of the supervisory team is important, but so too is the fit of the candidate, their project and the supervisor team’s research and previous track-record of PhD supervision. A strong nomination will be where supervisory teams have the necessary expertise and demonstrate an active contribution to the disciplinary area. In a weak application the supervisory team will not be expert in the disciplinary area and/or the Pathway does not constitute the suitable environment in which to host the research proposed.</p> <p>Reviewers should check that the previous research training of the candidate is suitable for their proposed research and consider if there are any weaknesses or limitations to the support on offer to successfully completed the planned research within three years (for full-time award-holders).</p> <p>In detailing how the supervisor and institution will support the training needs of the candidate, supervisors should consider not only masters-level training, but further the personal, professional and researcher development courses and training the candidate will require to complete their thesis, and develop the kind of personal and professional qualities to pursue future career goals or research opportunities.</p> <p>Generic department / school / Pathway statements regarding general facilities available to the student will be considered much weaker than statements tailored to the specific needs of the student and the research project.</p>
Collaboration	<p>The name of the collaborator, a contact for the collaborative partner, a statement indicating the collaborative partner’s support for the project, including their contribution to it both in terms of the substantive research and the financial and in-kind aspects of the project, must be provided. The Pathway will also provide a statement of what is entailed in the collaborative element of the nomination and what it adds to the candidate’s research from an academic perspective.</p> <p>A strong collaboration will provide significant added value to the academic research project, placement experience, access to source materials or novel access to research opportunities. A strong collaboration will also be able to provide evidence of existing engagement by the applicant with the partner organisation. There will be evidence of clear complementarities between the research and the partner’s activities, and this can be used <u>to demonstrate the potential impact of the research, but there will also be a very strong</u></p>

Section

Criteria & Guidance

academic motivation for the project. There will be evidence of substantive and sustained engagement with the project and support for the applicant by the partner organisation.

A weak collaboration will add little to the candidate's planned research and will make a limited academic contribution. A weak collaboration will also provide little evidence of prior engagement by the applicant with the partner organisations. The collaboration will be considered weak if there is little evidence of substantive and sustained engagement by the partner organisation with either the research project or with supervision of the applicant. Where this is negligible, the collaboration should be **scored as 0**. Collaboration consistently solely of a placement with no other evidence of engagement should be considered weak and **scored at 0 as there will be a lack of evidence that the collaboration is truly embedded and contributes to the academic aims of the studentship.**

Specific emphasis and recognition should be given to the **potential impact and knowledge exchange** opportunities arising from the collaboration. A strong nomination will be aware of these considerations and articulate potential pathways to impact, which the award-holder will be following during the course of studies.

Appendix 4 / NINE DTP Demand Management

Disciplinary Pathways will be able to submit the following number of nominations for un-steered studentships:

Pathway	Quota
Anthropology	4
Criminology, Prisons & Policing	12
Economic and Social History	8
Education	8
Environmental Planning	6
Human Geography	8
Language-Based Area Studies	4
Law	10
Linguistics	4
Management, Business and Economics	10
Politics and International Relations	6
Psychology	12
Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work	14
Sport & Society	4

The four Interdisciplinary pathways – **Children, Youth & Families**; **Conflict, Security & Justice**; **Environment, Climate & Sustainability**; and **Health, Well-being & Society** – may each submit 6 nominations.

There is no upper limit on the number that a pathway may submit for a steer (i.e. interdisciplinary, data skills or advanced quantitative methods), a collaborative studentship, or for the Action for Equality competition, but Pathway Directors will be asked to provide assurance that those submitted in addition to the quota are of comparable quality.

Pathways may only submit a maximum of two, or 30%, of *all* nominations for non-home fee paying applicants (i.e. international applicants); non-home fee paying applicants may not be submitted over the 30% quota owing to an alignment with a steer.

The only exception to this rule is in the area of Economics (applications where Economics, and not Management or Business, would be seen as the primary discipline), where up to 50% of the full number of nominations submitted can be for non-UK fee paying candidates.

Pathways should only submit students they consider will be competitive in the final studentship panel stage. Pathways will not be penalised for future years should they choose not to submit up to their quota in any given year.