

Supplementary Information for Pathway Directors and Pathway Leads

Annual Studentship Competition

This document provides technical and procedural information for Pathway Directors and Pathway Leads regarding their role in the NINE DTP studentship competition. This document will primarily be of interest to Pathway Directors and Pathway Leads, and the administrators working with them to support the studentship competition. It is being posted on the NINE DTP website to ensure transparency about the decision-making process, but for most questions prospective supervisors and students are advised to consult the general ‘Policies and Procedures – Annual Studentship Competition’ document for the studentship competition.

# Part 1 / What is a Pathway?

The grant from the ESRC that funds NINE DTP identifies 18 training pathways. Because a department or school’s right to participate in a pathway is dependent on the REF outcome for the Unit of Assessment with which it is associated, only specific departments/schools at specific universities are permitted to support students in a pathway. Four of the pathways operate across just two of the NINE DTP universities; one operates across all seven; the rest operate across between three and six, depending on the specific pathway. The table on the next page lists the departments and schools that participate in each pathway. Further information on the focus of each pathway can be found on the ‘[Pathways’](https://www.ninedtp.ac.uk/our-pathways/) page of the NINE DTP website.

To coordinate their training and ascertain that it is at a standard expected by the ESRC, students must be enrolled at a department/school that is within a pathway, and their primary supervisor (and, if the university mandates it, their secondary supervisor as well) must be in that same department/school. Students seeking to study at a NINE DTP institution on a NINE DTP studentship can apply to only one pathway.

The *Pathway Lead* is the member of academic staff at an institution who coordinates that institution’s participation in the pathway. Typically, this person is also PGR Director for one of the departments/schools that contributes to the pathway. Each pathway selects one of its pathway leads to serve as *Pathway Director*, who has overall responsibility for coordinating the pathway leads.

Pathway leads and directors are encouraged to take a proactive role in designing, implementing, and promoting relevant training activities at and across their institutions. However, this document is concerned solely with their roles in facilitating the studentship competition.

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

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|  | **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 |  |  |

# Part 2 / Pathways and the Nomination Review Process

Although pathway leads and directors should be available for consulting with prospective students and supervisors, PGR directors, and PGR administrators about the studentship process, this section focuses on the formal role of pathway leads and directors in assessing nominations.

Prior to the submission deadline, the PGR administrators in each of the departments/schools contributing to a pathway will have been collating electronic application files for each potential nominee. For each nominee, the PGR administrator will produce a single PDF file containing the nomination form, all attachments (c.v., transcripts, etc.), and the student’s university application. These will be transmitted to the Pathway Director no later than Monday 10th February 2025. From this point forward, no amendments to any nominee’s files will be permitted. The Pathway Director is then responsible for organising the review of applications received by the deadline.

NINE DTP does not wish to be prescriptive about how pathways manage the review of applications. However, pathways should abide by the following principles:

* + Pathways must use the **ESRC scoring scheme** (outlined in Appendix 3 of the ‘Policies & Procedures - Annual Studentship Competition’document) to rank applications
  + The review process must be **transparent and fair** to all applicants
  + Each application must be reviewed and scored by a **minimum of 2 reviewers**
  + Reviewers **should not score applications by candidates they are supervising** (in these cases, an alternative reviewer should be found)
  + The pathway should submit **the best applications** to the DTP competition, irrespective of institution
  + Pathways should submit only applications that are of the **required quality** to be competitive (i.e. usually scoring >76%)
  + It is expected that the pathway leads will have a **meeting – either in-person or online** – chaired by the Pathway Director, to select the candidates to be forwarded on to the Studentship Committee. If the NINE DTP office is notified in advance when this meeting will occur they will attempt to ensure that a member of the NINE DTP is on-call via Teams to respond to any procedural questions that may occur over the course of the meeting.

Pathway Directors will be provided with an Excel spreadsheet which will record the scores from each reviewer for each application and calculate an overall percentage and rank. All candidates should be scored and ranked in a single ranking (‘1’ for the top candidate, ‘2’ for the second, etc.). Because these rank-order scores figure into the overall scoring at the studentship competition level, tied scores (e.g. a joint-third) are not permitted.

Pathways may opt for different models of review procedure, which will enable them to respond to the need to assess applications across (sub‐)disciplinary differences within pathways, differences in pathway size, and number of applications and review loads. Two examples of suggested models are as follows:

### For pathways involving 3 or more institutions

* + All Pathway Leads read and score all applications except those from their own institution. This means that all applications will receive a minimum of two scores.
  + Scores are then aggregated to produce a ranked list
  + The Pathway Leads may then moderate the scores if this is required (allowing them to identify and moderate markers who are consistently high or low, for example)
  + The Pathway Leads agree on the applications that will be submitted to the DTP competition as well as their ranked order
  + The Pathway Director (or nominated administrator) submit the agreed nominations and associated paperwork (full application for each successful applicant at this stage as a pdf file, plus ranked list on Excel spreadsheet) to the DTP competition ([contact.nine@durham.ac.uk](mailto:contact.nine@durham.ac.uk)

### For Pathways involving 2 institutions and/or in which there is a need for wider reviewer expertise

* + Four of the pathways (Anthropology, Language Based Area Studies, Linguistics, and Sport & Society) involve only 2 institutions. One simple model in these cases is for both academic leads to read and score all applicationsand agree to a ranked list (as detailed in bullet points 2‐5 under A). Alternatively, where the number of applications to pathways is high, or there is a need for greater diversity on the review team, an additional reviewer from each institution may be added.
  + Some pathways cover divergent subject areas in which specialist review may be required to ensure the pathway selection process is fair and transparent. In these cases, additional reviewers from each institution may be added in order to ensure the review process is free from bias towards one sub‐disciplinary area. For example, although the Anthropology Pathway consists of only two institutions it might decide that a balance of evolutionary and social anthropologists is required to ensure fair review and that the two-person panel consisting of a single pathway lead and pathway director does not cover adequate breadth. To this end, it could bring on an extra panelist from each institution, from the ‘other’ side of the discipline, resulting in every application being read and scored by these 4 reviewers (2 evolutionary anthropologists and 2 social anthropologists). Candidates who are able to convince non‐specialists at Pathway level that their application ranks highly are likely to be in a strong position for scrutiny at NINE DTP Competition level.
  + In each of these cases, a ranked list, moderation and submission procedure should be adopted as detailed in bullet points 2‐5 under A (above).

Pathway directors must submit their files and rankings to the DTP office ([contact.nine@durham.ac.uk](mailto:contact.nine@durham.ac.uk)) by 1600 hrs Tuesday 25 February 2025. At that point, the formal role of pathways and pathway directors in the studentship selection process concludes, as the competition proceeds to the Studentship Committee phase.

### Part 3 / Number of Nominations per Pathway

For each pathway the starting point for calculating the number of students who may be nominated is a quota that has been set according to the number of institutions participating in each pathway (with the four interdisciplinary pathways all getting a standard quota of 6 nominations). Quota follow in the table below:

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| **Pathway** | **Quota** | **Pathway** | **Quota** |
| **Anthropology** | 4 | **Psychology** | 12 |
| **Criminology, Prisons & Policing** | 12 | **Sociology, Social Policy and Social**  **Work** | 14 |
| **Economic and Social History** | 8 | **Sport & Society** | 4 |
| **Education** | 8 | **Children, Youth & Families** | 6 |
| **Environmental Planning** | 6 | **Conflict, Security & Justice** | 6 |
| **Human Geography** | 8 | **Environment, Climate & Sustainability** | 6 |
| **Language-Based Area Studies** | 4 | **Health, Well-being & Society** | 6 |
| **Law** | 10 |  |  |
| **Linguistics** | 4 |  |  |
| **Management, Business and**  **Economics** | 10 |  |  |
| **Politics and International Relations** | 6 |  |  |

However, quota can be adjusted according to *three* factors:

1. **Steers and Action for Equality:** Because the DTP is required to make a certain number of awards to students who meet each of the ESRC steers, any candidate who qualifies for one of the four steers (Cross-Council, Advanced Quantitative, Data Management, or Collaborative Research) may be nominated *above* the quota. Because the DTP is eager to appoint students from Black British, British Asian, or Mixed backgrounds, students who qualify for the Action for Equality programme also may be nominated above quota.
2. **Maximum Number of Nominees:** Notwithstanding the above point, no pathway may submit a total number of nominations that exceeds its quota by more than 100%. In other words, if a pathway has a quota of 6 it can potentially submit a total of 12 nominations, if 6 of these are qualified nominees who meet a steer or AfE criteria, but its total number of nominees cannot exceed 12 under any circumstances.
3. **International Student Cap**: No more than 50% of a pathway’s nominees may be international fee paying. In the final award stage, the DTP is limited to only 30% of the awardees being international fee paying, however this cap is set at 50% at the pathway stage to allow pathways with several outstanding international applicants to nominate them if they wish. The 50% cap is based on the *actual* number of nominees, not the quota. If a pathway is nominating an odd number of students, it must round down to calculate the number of students who can be international (e.g. if a pathway is nominating 9 students, a maximum of 4 can be international).

As an example, Pathway A has a quota of 4. The pathway has received nominations from 9 qualified candidates, who have been ranked in the following (descending) order:

* Candidate 1: Home student who doesn’t meet a steer
* Candidate 2: Home student who meets the Quantitative and Data steers
* Candidate 3: International student proposing a collaborative project (and thus meets the collaborative steer)
* Candidate 4: International student who doesn’t meet a steer
* Candidate 5: Home student who qualifies for Action for Equality
* Candidate 6: International student who doesn’t meet a steer
* Candidate 7: International student who doesn’t meet a steer
* Candidate 8: International student who meets the Data steer
* Candidate 9: Home student who doesn’t meet a steer

Because the pathway has a quota of 4, the absolute maximum whom they would be allowed to nominate would be 8 students (so long as 4 of these 8 qualify for a steer or AfE). If they nominate their top 8, they’d be nominating 4 who don’t meet a steer (Candidates 1, 4, 6, and 7) and 4 who meet a steer (Candidates 2, 3, 5, and 8). So far, this looks perfect (except for Candidate 9, who won’t be advanced to the final panel). However, if they were to nominate these 8, they’d be nominating 5 international students, and with 8 total nominees, only 4 of the 8 (50%) may be international. The pathway couldn’t simply pass over Candidate 8 (an international student) and nominate Candidate 9 (a home student) because then, although there then would be only 4 international students, there would be only three candidates who meet a steer, and this would limit the pathway to going only 3 over quota. So, in effect the pathway is limited to nominating just 7 students, no more than 3 of whom may be international. Presumably, this would be candidates 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9, and then either 6 (because they’re the highest ranked remaining international student to fill their maximum of 3 internationals) or 8 (because, although they’re a lower-ranked international student, the pathway might calculate that their chance of receiving an award could be better due to their meeting a steer). Selecting Candidate 8 might make sense if their file is only slightly weaker than Candidate 6, but if there’s a big gap in quality then probably Candidate 6 would make more sense. Whatever conclusion the pathway reaches, they should submit their nominees on a ranking of 1 through 7, ignoring the two candidates whose files are not getting forwarded on to the Studentship Committee.

**Part 4 / Authorisation & Version Control**

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| **Author:** | NINE DTP Director Philip Steinberg |
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| **Changes from last version:** | Deletion of much material not directly relevant to pathway leads and directors (this now appears on the main guidance document)  Expanded example of pathway allocation of studentships |
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