



NINE DTP Action for Equality Studentships **AforE Competition**

NINE DTP is committed to recruiting candidates with novel ideas and a passion for their research area. Our aim is to create a diverse and inclusive postgraduate community which can come together to tackle big societal issues and produce world-class research that seeks to improve the lives of peoples and societies around the world. Crucially, we are a training partnership and our objective is to train excellent early career social science researchers from all backgrounds.

We value diversity within our partnership and believe that this diversity enriches our PGR community, the experiences of our doctoral candidates, and our research culture. It further enhances the quality of the research produced within our community, and the social scientists we support. NINE DTP is therefore committed to a policy of enhanced action to support those groups who have traditionally been under-represented within our research environment.

NINE DTP recognises that we need to take positive action to foster a more inclusive and diverse postgraduate research community, and therefore launched our 'Action for Equality' agenda in 2020. As part of this agenda, we are particularly keen to encourage and support UK-domiciled Black or Asian-heritage individuals (including those with a mixed ethnic background) within the NINE DTP studentship competition. We are therefore pleased to offer a number of initiatives designed to encourage and support applicants from these specific under-represented backgrounds in applying for UKRI funding with NINE DTP. This includes the introduction of our studentship competition – the NINE Action for Equality (AforE) competition.

The following document details the positive actions NINE DTP are taking to support candidates from these under-represented groups, including:

1. Support pre-application
2. Pathway-level actions
3. The NINE AforE competition

Part 1 / Pre-Application Support

Pre-application support

Candidates who meet the Action for Equality studentship criteria (see below) may request a meeting with the DTP Director during the Autumn term. As Chair of both the NINE DTP and AforE Studentship Committees, the Director can meet with candidates individually (or in small groups if demand is high) to provide additional advice and guidance on creating and presenting a competitive application in our PhD funding competition. Candidates need not take up the opportunity if they do not wish to, but should they wish to seek this additional support they should contact the DTP Administrative team in Durham who will look to arrange the meeting (contact.nine@durham.ac.uk).

Further, should candidates wish, we can work to put them in contact with current award holders, or academics, from Black-British and British Asian backgrounds for an informal discussion with the candidate around their application.

Part 2 / Pathway competition

In order to encourage nominations, and promote passage through the competition, nominations for candidates eligible for the AforE scheme may be submitted above the pathway quota during the pathway phase of the studentship competition i.e. pathways may submit any number of nominations from applicants eligible for this scheme (noting the remit and eligibility criteria for the scheme below).

Part 3 / NINE DTP Action for Equality Studentships (AforE)

NINE DTP are pleased to announce that UK-domiciled candidates from Black British, British Asian, or mixed Black or Asian heritage, may be submitted to the AforE competition alongside the NINE DTP Studentship competition.

The AforE competition is run according to the same guidelines and procedures of the NINE Studentship competition, with eligible candidates being submitted to both the NINE DTP studentship competition and the AforE scheme via the same initial process.

Entry to the scheme requires no additional work from either supervisor or applicant. The Supervisor only need indicate eligibility of the candidate for the scheme on the front page of the NINE DTP nomination form.

PROCESS

1. Applicants submit the standard documentation required by the NINE studentship committee.
2. Supervisors should complete the nomination process as they would for any NINE applicant; however, they should indicate on the front of the nomination form if the candidate is also eligible for the AforE scheme.
3. The candidate should then be submitted by the department to the pathway. The pathway will review, score and rank the candidate with all NINE applicants.

4. Once the pathway has indicated a candidate eligible for the AforE studentships is of sufficient quality, the candidate will be entered into the AforE competition, whilst also remaining active in the NINE Studentship Competition.
5. The AforE selection panel will award 2 AforE studentships to the highest scoring eligible candidates across all institutions and pathways. All remaining candidates will continue to be competitive within the main NINE Studentship Competition.

ELIGIBILITY

1. To be eligible for the AforE schemes, the candidates must be of the following backgrounds:
 - a. Black British
 - b. British Asian
 - c. UK domiciled candidates of mixed Black or Asian heritage
2. All AforE applicants should be eligible for the NINE DTP Studentship competition, and submitting an application via a suitable pathway and institution.
3. Awards may be made for all DTP ward-types i.e. awards may be made for PhD (3.5), Masters and PhD (4.5), or PhD with Methods training (4) scholarships.
4. The awards can be issued to candidates from any and all pathways; however, the candidate must be eligible to submit an application to that pathway (i.e. they must be submitting via an eligible pathway, department and institution).
5. Awards granted in the North East may be for either full or part-time study, as per the NINE Studentship competition.

FAQS

1. Could candidacy to the AforE scheme impact / harm my chances of receiving a scholarship via the main NINE DTP Studentship competition?

No, absolutely not; rather, the scheme provides an additional opportunity to secure funding. Admittance into the additional competition can only increase the chances of the applicant receiving support.

2. Are the timelines for both competitions the same?

All dates and deadlines will be identical to those of the main competition, with one exception. The AforE Studentship Committee meeting will meet and select the successful AforE candidates in advance of the main studentship competition, allowing the successful candidates to be identified and all other candidates to be suitably considered in the NINE DTP Studentship competition.

3. Are there any requirements / expectations around the nature of the project? For example, does the project need to be related to race / ethnicity, or any aspect of minority ethnic experience / study?

No, absolutely not. Candidates for the AforE scheme may submit applications related to any area of the Economic and Social Research Council remit.

4. Do you need to be resident in the UK to be eligible for the AforE scheme?

No; however, you do need to meet the requirements of a home fee paying student.

5. Can an applicant be considered for an AforE award if they need to complete a Masters / PGCert before starting the PhD

Yes, absolutely. Awards may be made for all DTP award types, including the Masters and PhD and Methods and PhD routes.

6. Can AforE awards be granted to cross-council or collaborative applicants?

Yes; AforE studentships can be awarded to collaborative or non-collaborative projects, and can be cross-council in nature.

Part 4 / Further Information

42. 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 – Catherine Hayes: catherine.hayes@sunderland.ac.uk
- Teesside – Anthony Lloyd: anthony.lloyd@tees.ac.uk
- Ulster University – Conor Murray: c.murray4@ulster.ac.uk

Part 5 / Authorisation & Version Control

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