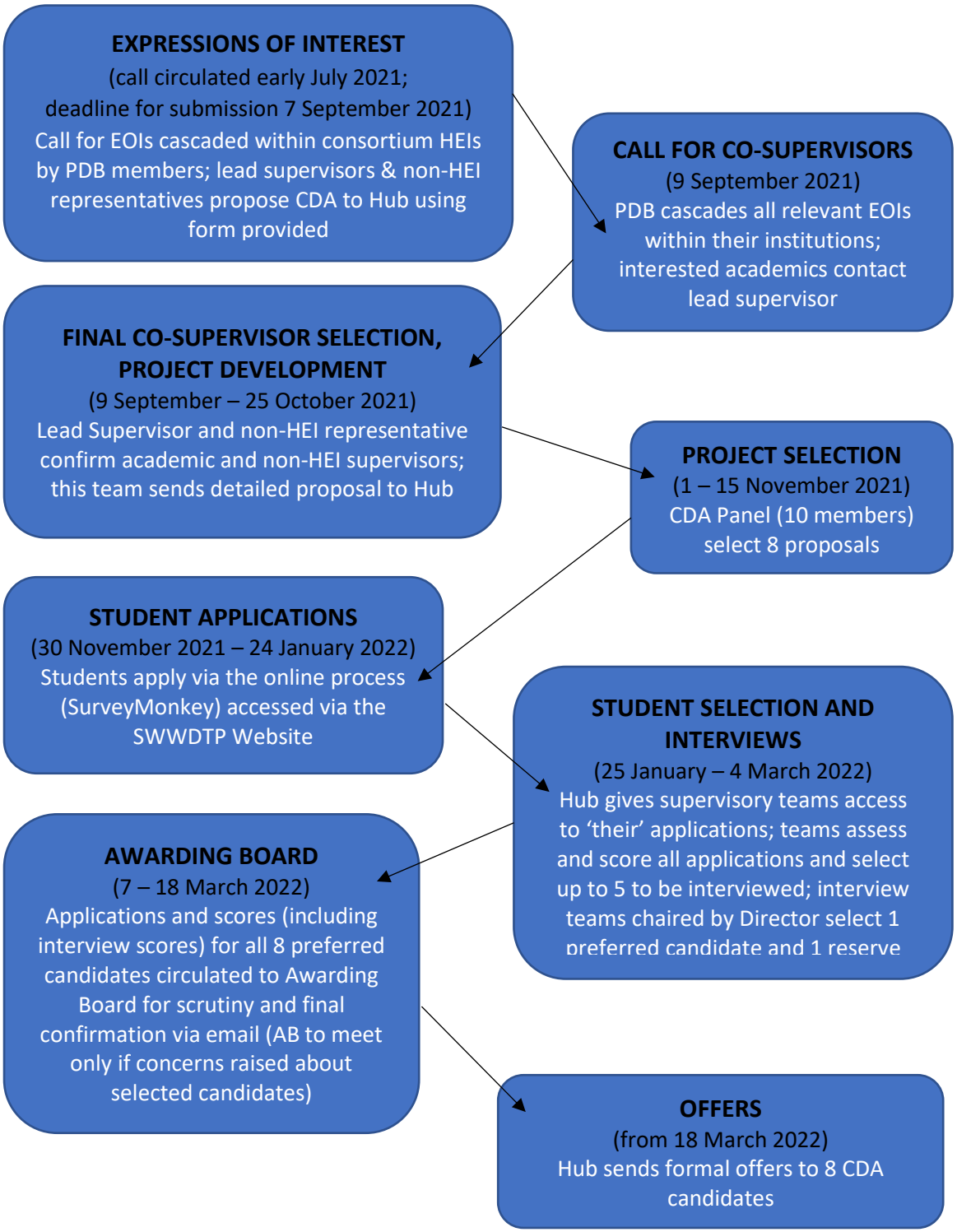
SWW DTP2 CDA Recruitment Process and Criteria 2021-2022



A. Process Description

SWW DTP2 will offer eight Collaborative Doctoral Award studentships for intake in 2022.

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest (form circulated early July 2021, submission deadline 7 September 2021)

- A lead academic, working collaboratively with a non-HEI organisation (or more than one if there is a strong case for this), will submit to the SWW DTP2 Hub (swwdtp-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk) an expression of interest that details the proposed CDA research area and *either* (a) an outline of the research expertise sought from a co-supervisor *or* (b) the name and affiliation of a proposed academic co-supervisor from within the Consortium. A form will be provided for this (see Appendix A).
- If the project has previously been submitted for a previous SWW DTP2 CDA competition with a co-supervisor but was not selected for advertisement the same full supervisory team may be submitted at this stage. However, if the lead supervisor wishes SWW DTP to help identify a new co-supervisor, Stage 2 below should be followed.
- Any non-HEI party to a CDA proposal will be contacted by the SWW DTP2 Training and Collaboration Facilitator to discuss possible engagement and collaboration opportunities beyond CDAs.
- Non-HEIs should note that by agreeing to co-supervise a PhD student they become formal partners of SWW DTP2 and need to ensure both regularity of supervision (usually at least 2 meetings with the student per academic term, or as agreed with the rest of the supervisory team) and continuity (e.g. finding a replacement if the original supervisor should leave the non-HEI). If the PhD student is working for the non-HEI, it will need to put in place appropriate mentoring and support for that work. This can be discussed with the SWW DTP2 Hub in advance.

Stage 2: Call for Co-supervisors (9 September 2021)

- Those proposals seeking a co-supervisor will be distributed by the SWW DTP2 Hub to Programme Delivery Board representatives for them to cascade within SWW DTP2 member institutions via email. Any academic interested in the co-supervisor role should email the named contacts directly to discuss the project.

Stage 3: Final Selection of Co-supervisor, Development and Submission of Full Proposals (9 September – 25 October 2021)

- On the basis of discussions held with interested parties regarding the direction of the project, the non-HEI organisation and academic supervisor will choose an appropriate academic co-supervisor and select a third supervisor from within the non-HEI partner oversee the project. This will be based on their experience in relation to the requirements of the non-HEI organisation, the expertise required to supervise the proposed project and to support the student both in completing that particular project and in enhancing their employment-related skills and training.
- The co-supervisor should *not* come from the same SWW DTP2 institution as the lead supervisor except in the very rare case that appropriate academic expertise is available *only* within that institution and nowhere else within the SWW DTP2 Consortium. If you think this applies to your project, please discuss this with the Director before submitting the full proposal.
- The academic and non-HEI supervisors collaboratively develop outline projects for submission to

swwdtp-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk.

- No project will be accepted if it was not submitted in Stage 1.
- The non-HEI supervisor should ensure that the studentship and proposed area of research contribute substantively to their organisational objectives; HEI supervisors should ensure that the proposal is driven by academic originality and is suitable for PhD study.
- The outline CDA proposal (of no more than 1,500 words in total) should be structured using the following questions/sections:

    1. What is the project about?
    2. Why is this a *doctoral* project?
    3. What are the likely research questions?
    4. What are the relevant research contexts?
    5. What approach(es) and methodology/methodologies are proposed?
    6. What scope might applicants have for modifying or adapting the proposal to suit their individual original input?
    7. How will the student be trained and how will the training and collaboration with the non-HEI be of use to their academic and/or career prospects?
    8. Additional Information (if necessary).

- There is no form for the CDA proposal but to simplify comparison it is requested that submissions are structured using the sections/questions above.

Stage 4: Selection of Projects (1 – 15 November 2021)

- CDA proposals will be assessed by a panel of CDA Reviewers from across the Consortium – i.e. academics who have experience in CDAs but are not listed as a potential supervisor for any of the projects.
- The panel will consist of one member from each SWW DTP2 institution, the Director to chair. Each institution should nominate a minimum of one panel member who has agreed to take part in the process, but to help with gender balance, discipline spread, and flexibility, it would be helpful if two or three panel members could be nominated from which the Hub would select one.
- The Panel will use the **B1 Project Proposal Assessment Criteria** (see below). Panel members should read proposals in the light of these criteria, and may come to the meeting with proposed scores, but these are *aides-mémoire* only: the Panel Chair (the Director) will record an agreed score for each proposal in each category after initial discussion. The selection of suitable projects need not slavishly follow the ranking of these scores: they are for guidance, and discussion may yield priorities that vary slightly from what the numerical scores might appear to suggest. Where a proposal scores highly but is not selected, or where one scores relatively low but is selected, a note of the reasons will be included in the record of the meeting.
- CDA proposals will be made available to the CDA panel on or shortly after 2nd November.
- The CDA panel will meet before 24 November to select 8 projects for advertisement.
- The 8 CDA projects selected by the panel are therefore guaranteed to be funded, providing a strong enough candidate is found to undertake them.
- CDA proposals not selected can be revised and entered in the competition the following year.
- Supervisors should note that many more proposals are usually submitted than can be funded, and not all even of those that score well against the criteria can be put forward for advertisement. The CDA Panel will use its broad judgement to assess the relative merits of proposals.

Stage 5: Student Applications (30 November 2021 – 24 January 2022)

- Projects will be advertised on the SWW DTP2 website from 30 November, the same day that the student-led competition opens.
- Interested applicants will be instructed to email the named contact(s) – usually the lead supervisor – to discuss the project before developing an application to be considered by the supervisory team. This will be made clear on the website and via the online application system. Supervisors should therefore expect to engage with a number of potential applicants.
- The submission deadline for the application will be the same as for the student-led competition.
- Applicants may submit applications to both the CDA competition and the student-led competition, but the projects must be distinct from one another. Two separate applications must be submitted in this case.
- Note that while the student-led competition for 2021-2022 will NOT require references and will instead include a supervisor's supporting statement, this is not appropriate for the CDA process so applications for the CDAs WILL require one (ideally academic) reference.
- Eligibility and terms and conditions are governed by the AHRC Training Grant Guide to which applicants will be alerted.
- Applicants must also apply to the home institution for a place on the relevant programme of study. If an applicant is offered an award, they must accept the offer of a place on the programme of study at their home university and register on the programme of study for which they applied before the studentship commences. It is not necessary for the applicant to have a place confirmed by the home institution at the time they submit their application or at the time they are interviewed but it is advisable to make the application to the home institution in good time. Supervisors should advise applicants accordingly.

Stage 6: Student Selection and Interviews (24 January – 4 March 2022) – Supervisory Team

- The Hub will make accessible to the CDA supervisory teams the applications received for the corresponding CDA system as soon as possible after applications close.
- The supervisory team (i.e. the two HEI supervisors and the non-HEI supervisor) will assess the applications received using the **B2 Applicant Assessment Criteria** (see below), each team member scoring each candidate in each category. The team will send the scores to the Interview Chair (the Director) together with a list of those they wish to invite for interview.
- The team will normally invite for online interview up to 5 applicants, and normally only those who achieve an *overall* score of 4.0 or above out of a maximum of 5.0 (averaged from the *overall* scores of the three members of the supervisory team).
- No candidate whose application diverges substantially from the project approved by the CDA Panel may be interviewed and the supervisory team should be conscious of this when making their selection. If such a candidate is interviewed and provisionally offered a studentship, the Awarding Board has the discretion NOT to confirm that award. The interviewing panel should only interview those whose applications properly 'fit' the proposal.
- The Hub will assist in setting up interviews (e.g. providing Zoom links, advising of the Director's availability, setting up a central spreadsheet for timings, scoring, etc.), but communications with applicants (invitations and emails re outcomes) are the responsibility of the lead supervisor, with the exception of the formal offer at the end of the process, which will be issued by the Hub.
- The supervisory team will interview shortlisted applicants even if there is only one eligible candidate. The Director will chair the interviews to ensure parity of process.
- All interviewers, including the Chair, should score each candidate according to the criteria in **B2/#5**

below. No candidate selected for a studentship (or as a reserve candidate) should normally have an average interview score below 4.0 (the average of all panel members' interview scores).

- Normally one preferred candidate and one reserve will be selected.
- The preferred candidates should be informed by the lead supervisor that they have been chosen for an award but must be explicitly told that the award is not guaranteed at this stage: it is contingent on approval from the Awarding Board.
- If the preferred candidate declines, the reserve candidate becomes the new preferred candidate and is contacted in the same way. If the reserve candidate declines, then the interview panel may propose a third or even fourth candidate provided that their scores match the requirements above.
- If a project fails to recruit any suitable students at any part of Stage 6, then the studentship will be transferred to the student-led competition and the CDA will be abandoned.

Stage 7: Awarding Board (7 – 18 March 2022)

- No offer will be made unless the application is deemed of sufficient academic quality by the Awarding Board, which will also review whether the selected candidate's proposal conforms sufficiently to the project agreed for advertisement. If the Board determines that there is too significant a variance, then it may ask to see the reserve candidates' files for purposes of comparison.
- During the period assigned to this Stage, AB members will be asked to review the preferred candidates. They will be given access to (a) the original proposals by the supervisory teams, (b) the preferred candidates' applications, (c) the application scores for ALL applicants, and (d) the interview scores for all candidates interviewed.
- AB members will be asked to approve the selections. Any member who has doubts or queries about the suitability of one or more candidates should quickly inform the Director who will attempt to clarify by email but, if necessary, will convene an online meeting of AB to discuss.
- Online votes by AB may be taken if the Chair feels that there is uncertainty.
- If AB rejects a preferred candidate after a vote, it will be given the application from the reserve candidate (if there is one) and asked whether that candidate can be approved. If not, then that CDA will not proceed, and the studentship will be allocated to the student-led competition.
- Once AB has approved the choices, formal offers will be sent to candidates by the Hub.

B: Assessment Criteria

Each of the criteria below is assessed by a score out of five. Descriptors are given for the integers on that scale, but grades of 4.5, 3.5 etc. are also available if a reviewer believes that an application falls between two descriptors for that criterion.

B1. Project Proposal Assessment Criteria (Stage 4)

1. Quality of the research project proposal:

Criteria: A research project proposal that

a) clearly articulates a research question or questions of acknowledged significance to the appropriate discipline(s)
b) identifies research resources that merit further study and are accessible for research
c) outlines an appropriate methodology
d) demonstrates an awareness of the research context surrounding such a question or questions, resources and methodology
e) can be completed within the time period prescribed by the AHRC.

Assessors will be looking for a clearly articulated research project, a coherent and well thought-out plan for doctoral study, and a good awareness of the place of the research within the current field.

Grade	Descriptor
5	A proposal of exceptional quality and promise
4	An excellent proposal, very high quality
3	A very good proposal with potential but not articulated as clearly as it might be
2	A good proposal but not a priority for funding
1	Insufficiently strong, not fundable

2. The experience and expertise of the supervisors:

Criterion: A supervisory team which has the experience and expertise required to supervise the proposed project and support the student in such a way that they successfully complete a doctoral thesis on that particular project and enhance their employment-related skills and training.

Assessors should consider the experience and expertise across the full supervisory team both in the area to be supervised and, for HEI supervisors only, in terms of relevant previous doctorates supervised (supervisors do not have to have supervised a CDA project previously but one of the HEI supervisors must have experience of working with non-HEI organizations and an understanding of their research needs); the commitment to work collaboratively with all parties within the supervisory team; and how the combination of support from both HEI supervisors and non-HEI supervisor will enhance the employment-related skills and training that a research student gains during the course of their award. It is expected that the three different supervisors will bring complementary skills to the task of supervision.

Grade	Descriptor
5	Exceptional, showing outstanding experience and expertise
4	Excellent, showing a high degree of experience and expertise
3	Very good, showing clear experience and expertise

2	Good, showing some experience and expertise
1	Weak, showing little experience and expertise

3. The project's relevance to the non-HEI organisation's priorities and objectives:

Criterion: A project that contributes substantively to the organisational priorities and objectives of the host non-HEI organisation.

Assessors should consider the extent to which the proposed studentship project represents a real research collaboration beneficial and relevant to non-HEI organisation, academics, and student.

Grade	Descriptor
5	Exceptional, showing outstanding relevance
4	Excellent, showing a high degree of relevance
3	Very good, showing clear relevance
2	Good, showing some relevance
1	Weak, showing little relevance

4. The skills that will be developed by the student and the enhancement to their employability

Criterion: A project that enables the student to develop skills and enhance their employability during the course of their work.

Assessors should consider the extent to which the student is afforded real opportunities to develop career-enhancing skills in addition to an academic qualification.

Grade	Descriptor
5	Exceptional evidence of skills to be developed and enhancement to employability
4	Excellent evidence of skills to be developed and enhancement to employability
3	Very good evidence of skills to be developed and enhancement to employability
2	Good evidence of skills to be developed and enhancement to employability
1	Little evidence of skills to be developed and enhancement to employability

5. The commitment of the non-HEI organisation to access to training, facilities, and expertise

Criterion: A project where the non-HEI organisation is committed to provide access to relevant training, facilities, and expertise.

Assessors should consider the extent to which access to relevant training, facilities, expertise and networks appropriate to the project is to be provided to the student by the non-HEI organisation. A good collaborative partnership and project will be one that sets up the framework so the student can undertake the research with all the necessary support and resources readily available and procedures in place to monitor and manage the project.

Grade	Descriptor
5	Exceptional, showing outstanding commitment
4	Excellent, showing a high degree of commitment
3	Very good, showing a clear degree of commitment
2	Good, showing some degree of commitment
1	Little evidence of commitment

6. Overall score

After consideration of the project against the criteria, reviewers are asked to provide an overall grade. This is not a calculated score: reviewers should arrive at a holistic view of the project after considering the individual elements. There is no prescribed weighting between the elements.

Grade	Descriptor
5	An exceptional project, a high priority for funding
4	An excellent project, a priority for funding
3	A very good project, should be funded if possible
2	A good project, but not a priority for funding
1	A weak project that should not be funded

B2: Applicant Assessment Criteria (Stage 6)

Categories 1-4 here are used to score written applications in order to shortlist applicants for interview. The fifth category is used to score interview performance. A studentship will normally only be offered when a score of at least 4.0 or more is achieved in both 'overall' and 'interview' categories.

1. Preparedness or promise for doctoral research:

Criterion: Aptitude for advanced academic research in the discipline(s) central to the proposed research project which may be evidenced by current or completed performance in an under-graduate degree and research preparation master's programme and/or another form of preparation or training for research.

Grade	Descriptor
5	Exceptional, showing outstanding aptitude for doctoral research
4	Excellent, showing a high degree of aptitude for doctoral research
3	Very good, showing clear aptitude for doctoral research
2	Good, showing some aptitude for doctoral research
1	Weak, showing little aptitude for doctoral research

2. The student's "fit" to the project and capacity to develop skills and enhance employability:

Criterion: Suitability of the student to the project, capacity to develop skills / enhance employability.

Grade	Descriptor
5	Exceptional, showing outstanding "fit" and potential for development
4	Excellent, showing a high degree of "fit" and potential for development
3	Very good, showing clear "fit" and potential for development
2	Good, showing some elements of "fit" and potential for development
1	Weak, showing poor "fit" and potential for development

3. SWW DTP Alignment:

Criteria: An awareness of and engagement with:

a) the benefits offered by supervisory arrangements consisting of a non-HEI supervisor and two HEI supervisors (usually across two Consortium institutions)

b) the project-related, personal and professional development opportunities of SWW DTP2's training provisions

c) the research development scope offered by SWW DTP2's approach to partnerships

d) the thematic research environment and enabling methods.

Grade	Descriptor
5	Exceptional alignment with the aims and ethos of SWW DTP2
4	Excellent alignment with the aims and ethos of SWW DTP2
3	Very good alignment with the aims and ethos of SWW DTP2
2	Good alignment with the aims and ethos of SWW DTP2
1	Weak alignment with the aims and ethos of SWW DTP2

4. Overall score

After consideration of the project against the stipulated criteria, reviewers are asked to provide an overall grade. This is not a calculated score: reviewers have the freedom to arrive at a holistic view of the project after considering the individual elements. There is no prescribed weighting between the elements.

Grade	Descriptor
5	An exceptional application, a high priority for funding
4	An excellent application, a priority for funding
3	A very good application, should be funded if possible
2	A good application, but not a priority for funding
1	A weak application that should not be funded

5. Interview

Those candidates who are interviewed should be assigned a fifth score, specifically focused on their performance in interview. It is well known that candidates who are "good on paper" sometimes disappoint when interviewed, and also that candidates whose "on paper" promise is adequate but not spectacular may be much more convincing in person. Others, of course, perform equally well "on paper" and in person. This score should focus exclusively on the quality of the applicant's responses to questions during the interview.

Grade	Descriptor
5	An outstanding interview, exceptionally responsive, alert, quick-witted, detailed, and well-informed
4	An excellent interview, highly responsive etc. but leaving room for improvement
3	A very good interview, clearly responsive, etc. but not always convincing
2	A good interview, able to respond but sometimes without detail or unpersuasively
1	A weak interview, inadequate responses, gaps, and silences

Appendix A: EOI Form

See next pages.

SWW DTP2 Collaborative Doctoral Awards 2021-2022

Expression of Interest Process and Form

Please complete the form below and return it as an email attachment saved as your name and academic institution to swwdtp-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk no later than 5 pm on Tuesday 7 September 2021.

SWW DTP2 welcomes expressions of interest for its Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) scheme for entry in autumn 2022. CDAs are doctoral studentship projects developed by Consortium academics working in collaboration with an organisation outside higher education. The supervisory team for CDA students consists of two academics (each from *different* Consortium member institutions) and a member of a non-HEI organisation. More than one non-HEI may be involved, but only one non-HEI supervisor will be appointed. CDAs provide PhD students with a unique opportunity to work closely not only with academics but also with experienced professionals in cultural spheres beyond the 'academy'. Students can bring a greater range of perspectives to bear on their PhD project, and enhance the practical skills and training needed to make the most of their studentship.

- The purposes of this form are twofold: first, it allows the DTP to gauge the level and range of interest in the CDA competition and resource its selection processes; second, it may help in identifying an academic co-supervisor, with whom the lead supervisor and a non-HEI organisation will create a detailed proposal. It is the detailed proposal, and NOT this form, that will be assessed by the CDA panel to determine which projects go forward.
- If you have already identified a co-supervisor, there is a space below (box 1) to ensure this proposal is not circulated, but if not, if you are seeking the DTP's help in identifying a collaborator, we will send this form to the whole Consortium.
- If a proposal was submitted to a previous SWW DTP2 competition but was not selected for advertisement, you may submit the same full supervisory team at this stage (fill in box 2 below and indicate that this is a re-submission in box 3). However, if you wish to change the supervisory team and seek a co-supervisor via the current process, this can also be indicated in box 3 below.
- Please note that any non-HEI party to a CDA proposal will be contacted by the SWW DTP2 Training and Collaboration Facilitator to discuss engagement and collaboration opportunities beyond CDAs. SWW DTP2 appreciates your cooperation with these discussions.

OUTLINE INFORMATION FOR E.O.I.

Type your text in the relevant sections and expand as necessary.

Lead Academic:

- *Name*
- *Position (job title)*
- *Department/School*
- *Institution*
- *Email address*:

Name of non-HEI organisation involved in proposed CDA:

Name and email address of non-HEI contact:

Will this contact also be acting as non-HEI supervisor? **YES / NO**

Title of proposed CDA research topic (up to 30 words):

Field(s) of study (e.g. Cultural History, Media Arts, Archaeology, Linguistics, etc.):

Description of proposed CDA research area (up to 300 words):

(Only if you are seeking the DTP's help in identifying a co-supervisor) *Areas of research expertise sought from a co-supervisor (up to 200 words)*:

1. Have you already identified a co-supervisor?	**YES / NO**
2. If so, please give their details here and we will NOT circulate this EOI within the Consortium.	**Name:** **Institution:** **Email:**
3. If a detailed proposal has previously been submitted to this competition in a substantially similar form, are you looking for DTP support in finding a new co-supervisor? (If the team has not changed, please give the original co-supervisor's details in box 2 above)	**YES / NO**