



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

South, West
& Wales
Doctoral
Training
Partnership

SWW DTP2 Recruitment Process FAQs 2021-2022

This document applies to all applicants, whether via the 'Student-Led' route or the 'CDA route'. We have tried to address as many of the FAQs under the following headings as we can, and we hope that it proves useful to you:

The Awards
The Studentship
Eligibility
The Application
Questions Specific to Student-Led Applications
Questions Specific to Collaborative Doctoral Award Applications

The Awards

What is the difference between a Student-Led award and a Collaborative Doctoral Award?

- A Student-Led award is one in which the project is created by the student. The student puts forward a research proposal as part of the application. The student identifies a home institution supervisor and consortium co-supervisor (the home institution supervisor can advise on potential suitable co-supervisors).
- A Collaborative Doctoral Award is one in which the project is developed and supervised by consortium academics and a member of a partner organisation. There is nevertheless scope for the student to shape the project to respond to the student's interests and experience. How the student proposes to shape the project forms part of the student's application.

Can I apply for both the Student-Led and Collaborative Doctoral Award competitions?

- Yes, you may submit an application in both the Student-Led and the CDA competition, but the projects must be distinct from one another. If you are subsequently selected to undertake a CDA project, you will need to choose which application to proceed with. It is not permissible to have an application in both competitions once the CDA applicant selection stage has been completed.
- If you wish to submit an application to both competitions, please ensure that you have completed two separate and distinct applications within the SWW DTP application system, one Student-Led Scholarship Application and one CDA Scholarship Application.

The Studentship

Do SWW DTP2 studentships cover fees or stipends or both?

- SWW DTP2 studentships entitle UK doctoral students to a tuition fee award of £4,500 per annum at 2021-22 rates (or part-time equivalent). Applicants ordinarily resident in the UK who are awarded a studentship will receive from the AHRC a maintenance award of £15,609 per annum at 2021-22 rates (or part-time equivalent). UKRI will announce rates for 2022-23 entry in January 2022. They are likely to be slightly higher than the figures quoted above as they tend to rise with inflation.

What if I'm an overseas student rather than a UK student? Can I apply? What level of support do I get?

- Applicants who are not UK nationals are eligible to apply for both SWW DTP2 award types (Student-Led and CDA). Overseas / international students will receive awards covering both fees and stipend *at the same level as UK students* (see above).
- International student fees for PhDs are significantly higher than those payable by UK students. Each consortium member determines how it manages the difference between its home student and international student tuition fees. Please check the relevant funding pages of your chosen home institution for its policy on how it manages this difference. Most consortium members waive the difference for DTP students.

What if I'm from the EU?

- EU nationals are now regarded as international students and are therefore liable for international student PhD tuition fees. All international students are eligible to receive the full maintenance stipend.

What other financial support is available to holders of SWW DTP2 studentships?

- In addition to the fees and stipends noted above, studentship holders benefit from additional DTP funding opportunities to support their training, professional development, and research costs. Application processes for such funds are covered in the annual induction processes for studentship holders in October of each year.

How long does an SWW DTP2 studentship last?

- An SWW DTP2 studentship lasts three years eight months (or part-time equivalent).

Can an SWW DTP2 studentship be extended beyond three years eight months (or part-time equivalent)?

- Yes, but only in very specific circumstances. Once the studentship has begun, a studentship holder may apply to extend their studentship for up to four months (making a total studentship of up to four years), *either:*
 - (a) to take up an ad hoc placement opportunity that is not planned or expected but that becomes available during the studentship, that cannot not be completed without an extension, and that would be beneficial to the student's development, *or*
 - (b) to facilitate a project that from the outset requires a research timeline of longer than three years and eight months due to the exceptional academic requirements of the research.

Can I take up full-time employment while holding an SWW DTP studentship?

- No. Students in full-time employment during their PhD are not eligible for a studentship.
- Anyone awarded a studentship who wishes to take up a temporary full-time job before completion of the PhD will need to make an application to SWW DTP2 to suspend the studentship.

Can I take up part-time employment while holding an SWW DTP studentship?

- Yes, but you must register as a part-time student. Part-time work on your PhD should not be less than 50% of fulltime.

Eligibility

I am a mature student. Is a PhD right for me?

- Students of any age are invited to apply for all our awards. This includes mature students or those who have taken a break from academic study since their Master's degree. We also consider applications from mature students with relevant professional experience or knowledge even if they do not hold an MA (see below).

I have caring responsibilities. Can I still apply?

- Absolutely! We have many students who have caring commitments. Supervisors and the SWW DTP2 administration try to offer as much flexibility as possible. Doctoral work is often intrinsically more flexible than taught courses.

I've already begun my doctorate. Am I eligible for an SWW DTP2 studentship?

- Yes, providing that, at the start of the studentship, you will have at least 50% of the period of funding remaining (excluding any 'writing up' year or part-time equivalent).

I already have a PhD. Can I apply for an SWW DTP2 studentship for a new PhD project?

- Yes. If you have a good reason for undertaking another PhD and you have a strong project, you are eligible to apply for an SWW DTP2 studentship.

Do I need to have work experience in a relevant field?

- Not necessarily. Normally, we expect applicants to have, or be studying for, a Master's degree or similar postgraduate qualification. However, if you do not already have experience of formal postgraduate study, and you can demonstrate evidence of sustained experience specifically relevant to your proposed research topic and/or methodology that could be considered equivalent to Master's study, then you will be eligible and competitive.

The Application

Do I need a Master's degree to apply for an SWW DTP2 studentship?

- To be eligible to apply for an SWW DTP2 studentship you will normally have, or be studying for, a Master's degree or similar postgraduate qualification. If you do not have experience of formal postgraduate study, you are eligible only if you can demonstrate evidence of sustained experience beyond your undergraduate degree that is specifically relevant to your proposed research topic and/or methodology, and which can be considered equivalent to Master's study.

Do I need to make an application to my intended home institution as well as for an SWW DTP2 studentship?

- Yes. By making an application to SWW DTP2 you are applying for a studentship only. You will still need to make a separate application to your intended lead home institution for a place on your PhD programme of choice.

Do I need to meet the course requirements of my intended home institution?

- Yes. You should also have met all the course requirements of your home institution before the start date of your SWW DTP2 studentship. The offer of a studentship does not bypass the home institution's requirements.

Do I need to wait for the outcome of my SWW DTP2 application before applying to my intended home institution?

- No. You can and should apply before then. Note that if awarded a studentship, you must ensure that you have a confirmed place at your choice of home institution by the start of the award.

I am already studying (e.g. for a Master's) at an SWW DTP2 institution. Can I stay at the same institution for my SWW DTP2 studentship?

- Yes. We have no intrinsic objection to your continuing in the same Department, University, etc. as before in your university career. However, as with any applicant, we would advise you to look across the whole SWW DTP2 consortium for the best supervisory team to support your project. Remember that SWW DTP2 students are almost always supervised by two academics from different institutions within the Consortium.

What criteria will be used to assess my application?

- Your application will be assessed using the following criteria:
 - Quality of the research project proposal;
 - Experience and aptitude for PhD study;
 - Suitability of supervision;
 - SWW DTP2 alignment (considering the training offered, activities and placements supported, inter-institutional and inter-disciplinary research communities beyond home universities, opportunities for engagement with organisations beyond HEIs)

What should I put in the 'Bibliography' part of my application?

- The bibliography that you are asked to provide should contain *only* references to works cited in abbreviated format in your research project proposal. It is not meant to be a means of judging whether you have read everything in your field.

How many references do I need to provide?

- None. We do not require you to include references in your SWW-DTP application. Your home institution will require references, however, so please be sure to provide them in your application for a place at your intended home institution as per the requirements of that institution.

How do I submit my SWW DTP2 application?

- Applications for an SWW DTP2 studentship must be completed online, via the link on the SWW DTP website when the competition opens: <https://www.sww-ahdtp.ac.uk/>

When does the application process open and close?

- The application process opens on Tuesday, 30 November 2021 and closes at 23.59 on Monday, 24 January 2022. Extensions will not be permitted.

What happens if I am offered a studentship with the SWW DTP2?

- After the assessment period, you will be notified by email if you have been offered an award. You will then need to confirm whether you wish to accept or decline the offer. If you accept, we will send you a formal award letter which provides key details of the studentship.

What happens if I am not offered a studentship with the SWW DTP2?

- Successful applicants sometimes decline their awards for a variety of good reasons. As SWW DTP2 routinely receives substantially more applications worthy of funding than it can support, all applications deemed fundable are ranked. If a studentship offer is declined, SWW DTP will contact the individual next in rank order with an offer of a studentship. For this reason, offers may be made as late as August 2022. You may apply again as long as you meet the eligibility criteria for an SWW DTP award as published in that round.

Questions Specific to Student-Led Applications

How can I find supervisors for my SWW DTP2 research project?

- SWW DTP2 recommends discussing with your proposed home institution supervisor who would be an ideal co-supervisor. You are advised to work with **both** your intended supervisors to develop your application, for their combined input will be extremely important.

Can my two nominated supervisors come from the same SWW DTP2 institution?

- The norm for SWW DTP2 funding is cross-institutional supervision. In other words, supervision is almost always provided by two supervisors from different institutions. If appropriate supervision of this kind is available within the Consortium, we will not normally permit single-institution supervision.
- However, we are aware that expertise in certain disciplines is occasionally concentrated in one place and that – exceptionally – there is no academically viable alternative to single-institution supervision. If you believe your project to fall within this limited group, please indicate this in the dedicated section of the application form and supply the additional information requested.
- If SWW DTP reviewers believe that appropriate co-supervision is available elsewhere in the consortium and that single-institution supervision is not justified, they are instructed to award the minimum score for the ‘supervision’ section of their report, which will significantly reduce your chances of being offered a studentship. It is therefore extremely important to be sure that this is essential and to justify it carefully.
- Note that it is not sufficient justification to say that you have already begun a PhD within a single HEI and wish to retain the team with which you have been working so far.

Can I apply to be supervised by three supervisors?

- In exceptional circumstances a project may require a third supervisor – this is rare, so please do not request one unless there is a clear need and rationale. A third supervisor may be based in the home institution or in the co-supervisory institution or in a third institution within the Consortium. Home supervisors and co-supervisors are normally from different institutions (see above). No supervisor may be based outside the Consortium.
- Please do not request a third supervisor merely because you have already begun a PhD at a Consortium member institution and wish to retain both members of that supervision team. If reviewers believe that this is the principal rationale, they are likely to award a low score for the ‘supervision’ section of their report, which will reduce your chances of success.
- Note that CDAs are supervised by three supervisors (two from consortium universities, and one from a partner institution).

Does my project have to be interdisciplinary to secure SWW DTP2 funding?

- No. We support single-discipline and interdisciplinary research. Both are important and we do not have an intrinsic preference for one over the other.

Can my project be interdisciplinary with a subject outside the Arts and Humanities?

- Yes. SWW DTP2 welcomes and encourages interdisciplinary applications that reach beyond the boundaries of the Arts and Humanities. However, the approach and methodologies must be primarily situated within the Arts and Humanities, and the home supervisor and programme of PhD study must be based in at least one of the Arts and Humanities subject areas that we cover.

What about creative/practice-based applications?

- Creative output can be produced, or practice undertaken, as an integral part of a research process. The AHRC expects this to be accompanied by some form of documentation of the research process, as well as some form of textual analysis or explanation to support its position and demonstrate critical reflection. Creativity and/or practice that do not involve such processes are therefore not eligible for a studentship. For research to be considered practice-led, your own practice must be an integral part of the proposed project, and the creative and/or performative aspects of the research should be made explicit. The research carried out should bring about enhancements in knowledge and understanding in the discipline, or in related disciplinary areas.
- You should explore your lead institution's websites for creative/practice-based PhDs – they have a wealth of information that will help shape such a project.

Will there be an interview?

- No. There is no interview for the Student-Led applications.

When will I hear the result of my application?

- Results of successful Student-Led applications will be communicated on Wednesday, 31 March 2022.
- All Student-Led applications deemed fundable will have been ranked by the Awarding Board prior to the announcement of funding awards. Successful applicants sometimes decline their awards for a variety of good reasons. If a studentship offer is declined, SWW DTP will contact the individual next in rank order with an offer of a studentship. For this reason, offers may be made as late as August 2022.

Questions specific to Collaborative Doctoral Award Applications

Is the outlined CDA PhD project rigidly pre-determined or is there flexibility for me to shape it myself?

- There is plenty of opportunity for you to shape the project, both during the application process and during the PhD itself. Applicants are invited to suggest ways in which they might shape the project to suit their particular interests and expertise.

Will there be an interview?

- Yes. Applicants who meet the assessment criteria will be invited to interview with the CDA project's supervisory team. Interviews will take place during February of the application cycle. The interviews are conversations to discuss how the student might shape the project. Applicants are then invited to submit a revised proposal in early March.

When will I hear the results of my application

- Results of successful CDA applications will be announced on Wednesday, 31 March 2022.