

SWWDTP2 Recruitment Process FAQs 2024-2025

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

Supporting Access to PhD Study

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 apply to 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 SWWDTP application system, one Student-Led Scholarship Application and one CDA Scholarship Application.

The Studentship

Do SWWDTP2 studentships cover fees, stipends, or both?

- SWWDTP2 studentships entitle UK doctoral students to a tuition fee award of £4,786 per annum at 2024-25 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 £19,237 per annum at 2024-25 rates (or part-time equivalent). UKRI will announce rates for 2025-26 entry in January 2025.

What if I am an international 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 SWWDTP2 award types (Student-Led and CDA). 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.
- International research travel and placement activities must be compliant with the terms of your visa. The international office at your prospective home institution should be able to offer advice on this.
- Please ensure you are aware of any additional costs that coming to the UK as an international student may involve – these costs are not covered by the studentship. The international office at your prospective home institution should be able to offer further information on additional costs that may be incurred.

What if I am 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.

How long does an SWWDTP2 studentship last?

- An SWWDTP2 studentship lasts three years eight months (or part-time equivalent).

Can an SWWDTP2 studentship be extended beyond three years eight months (or part-time equivalent)?

- Yes, but only in 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 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.

Eligibility

I have already begun my doctorate. Am I eligible for an SWWDTP2 studentship?

- If you have already commenced doctoral study, you may apply for funding for the remainder of your study, *providing that*, at the start of the SWWDTP2 award on 1st October 2025, you would have at least 1 year 10 months, or part time equivalent (50% of the standard funding period) remaining of your study period. Should you be applying to move to a different institution to complete your doctoral work, the 50% rule outlined applies from the start of your PhD studies at the original institution.

I already have a PhD. Can I apply for an SWWDTP2 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 a Master's degree to apply for an SWWDTP2 studentship?

- To be eligible to apply for an SWWDTP2 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 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.

Supporting Access to PhD Study

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

- Students of any age are encouraged 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?

- Yes. We have many students who have caring commitments. Supervisors and the SWWDTP2 administration offer as much flexibility as possible and additional support as detailed below. Doctoral work is often intrinsically more flexible than taught courses. Please ensure you refer to your intended home institution for guidance on the expected minimum study hours in any given period.

I have access needs – will an SWWDTP studentship be feasible for me?

- The SWWDTP provides value-adding opportunities to its studentship holders. Wherever possible, we provide these opportunities via a hybrid or online model to enable the widest access possible. We organise a small number of events each year where in-person attendance is required. We give significant advance notice of these events and provide additional support (see below) to assist with attendance for those with access needs.

What other financial support is available to holders of SWWDTP2 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. Other funding may be available through the DTP to support those with additional access needs such as Disability Support Allowance, childcare/caring costs to enable attendance at training events and to undertake placements outside of normal working hours, and travel and accommodation expenses where access needs necessitate additional support. Application processes for such funds are covered in the annual induction processes for studentship holders in October of each year.

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

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

Can I take up full-time employment while holding an SWWDTP 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.

Do you provide application support?

- The SWWDTP provides an initial 'Demystifying the SWWDTP' online session shortly after the application system opens which is open to all and designed to help applicants from all backgrounds understand how to navigate aspects of the process such as:
 - Finding a potential supervisor and making a connection with them.
 - Getting feedback on your application - who can help.

- o Getting information from your proposed home institution and contacting current students there.
- o Advice for those who have been out of formal education for some time, and who now wish to return to university to undertake a PhD.
- o How to align your research proposal with the opportunities provided by the SWWDTP.

In addition to the above, we will offer specific support to those facing barriers to access, which will be publicised via our website and social media channels

- The DTP will also offer an online Q & A session in December/January, before the application system closes, which will be open to all.

The Application

Do I need to make an application to my intended home institution as well as for an SWWDTP2 studentship?

- Yes. By making an application to SWWDTP2 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 intended home institution before the start date of your SWWDTP2 studentship. The offer of a studentship does not bypass the home institution's requirements.

Do I need to wait for the outcome of my SWWDTP2 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 on 1st October 2025.

I am already studying (e.g. for a Master's) at an SWWDTP2 institution. Can I stay at the same institution for my SWWDTP2 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 SWWDTP2 consortium for the best supervisory team to support your project. Remember that SWWDTP2 students are almost always supervised by two academics from different institutions within the Consortium, so you will need to find a co-supervisor from a different institution.

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 SWWDTP2 application. Your intended 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 SWWDTP2 application?

- Applications for an SWWDTP2 studentship must be completed online, via the link on the SWWDTP website when the competition opens: <https://www.sww-ahdtp.ac.uk/>

When does the application process open and close?

- The application process opens at 00.01am on Monday, 25 November 2024 and closes at 23.59 on Monday, 20 January 2025. Extensions will not be permitted.

What happens if I am offered a studentship with the SWWDTP2?

- 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 SWWDTP2?

- Successful applicants sometimes decline their awards for a variety of good reasons. As SWWDTP2 routinely receives more applications worthy of funding than it can support, all applications deemed fundable are ranked. If a studentship offer is declined, SWWDTP 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 2025.

Questions Specific to Student-Led Applications

How can I find supervisors for my SWWDTP2 research project?

- SWWDTP2 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.
- You can also start looking for potential supervisors via our website:
<https://www.sww-ahdtp.ac.uk/prospective-students/apply/find-a-supervisor/>

Can my two nominated supervisors come from the same SWWDTP2 institution?

- The norm for SWWDTP2 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, in rare circumstances, 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, you must provide evidence for this in the relevant section of the application.

- If SWWDTP reviewers believe that appropriate co-supervision is available elsewhere in the Consortium and that single-institution supervision is not sufficiently justified, **your application will be disqualified.**
- It is **not** sufficient justification to say that you have already begun a PhD within a single institution and wish to retain the team with which you have been working so far.

Can I apply to be supervised by three supervisors?

- Student-led projects normally involve a team of two supervisors. In exceptional circumstances a student-led 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 CDA students are supervised by a team of three supervisors (two from consortium universities, and one from a partner institution).

Does my project have to be interdisciplinary to secure SWWDTP2 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. SWWDTP2 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 Friday, 4 April 2025.
- All Student-Led applications deemed fundable will have been ranked by the Awarding Board prior to the announcement of funding awards. Such applicants will be placed on the reserve list and informed of this. Successful applicants sometimes decline their awards for a variety of good reasons. If a studentship offer is declined, SWWDTP will contact the individual next in rank order on the reserve list with an offer of a studentship. For this reason, offers may be made as late as August 2025.

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 interests and expertise. However, please bear in mind that the project will need to remain within the broad outlines set down by the supervisory team.

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 between 27 January and 27 February 2025. The interviews are conversations to discuss how the student might shape the project. Successful 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 Friday, 4 April 2025.