

SCOTTISH
GRADUATE
SCHOOL FOR
ARTS &
HUMANITIES
Sgoil Ceumnachaidh na h-Alba airson
Ealain agus Daonnachdan

**SGSAH Doctoral Training Partnership
Collaborative Doctoral Awards Competition
2025**

GUIDANCE



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

This document may be subject to revision. Please ensure you are using the most current edition of guidance before submission. Version 2025/1. (October 2024)

Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 SGSAH DTP CDA Timeline	1
2. Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA)	2
2.1 What we do	2
2.2 Partner Organisations.....	2
3. SGSAH Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)	2
3.1 What is the SGSAH DTP?.....	2
3.2 Eligibility	3
3.3 Aims of the SGSAH DTP	3
4. SGSAH DTP Doctoral Training and Development Framework	5
4.1 What is the SGSAH DTP Training & Development Framework?.....	5
4.2 Pillars of the DTP	5
5. Further Opportunities	7
5.1 Individual.....	7
5.2 Collective.....	7
6. Collaborative Doctoral Awards Scheme Guidance	8
6.1 What is a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA)?.....	8
6.2 Benefits of a CDA	8
6.3 Advice from Reviewers.....	8
7. CDA Nominated Doctoral Candidates Guidance	15
7.1 Requirements.....	15
7.2 Eligibility	15
Appendix 1: SGSAH CDA Application 2025.....	19
Appendix 2: SGSAH AHRC CDA Nominated Doctoral Candidate	25
Appendix 3: Assessment criteria for SGSAH AHRC DTP CDA.....	30
Appendix 4: Frequently Asked Questions	34

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

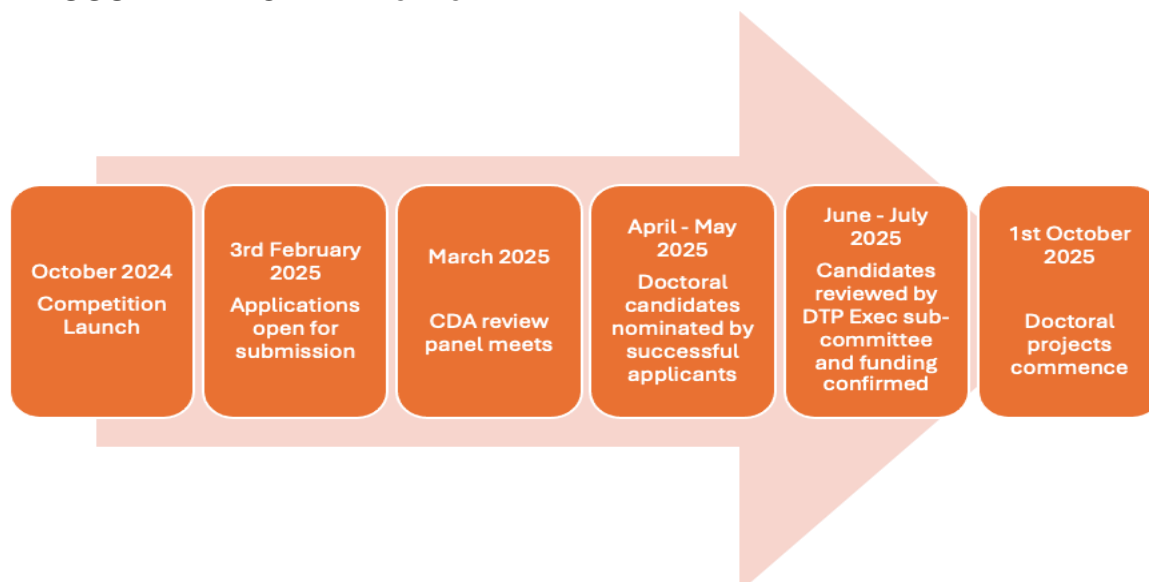
This document provides guidance to support submissions for a SGSAH AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA) for 2025/26. Please read carefully in advance of completing the application.

Process for 2025/26:

- Submission of full application by the lead supervisor between 3 February 2025 and 12 noon GMT 14 February 2025.
- CDA Review Panel selection of approximately 12 applications for provisional award of doctoral funding April 2025.
- Successful applications to nominate and recruit a suitably qualified doctoral candidate to undertake the project before final confirmation of funding.

Please note funding is subject to confirmation of an appropriately qualified doctoral candidate. Exceptionally, a candidate may be attached to the full application. Nominated doctoral candidates will submit a completed Nominated Doctoral Candidate form to SGSAH by 17 June 2025 (an earlier deadline of 23 April 2025 is set for successful applications which have an attached candidate). A sub-committee of the SGSAH Executive will review nominations to confirm that nominated candidates meet the required criteria.

1.2 SGSAH DTP CDA Timeline



2. Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA)

2.1 What we do

The Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme funds studentship projects that are developed in collaboration with external organisations across creative, heritage, third and business sectors. SGSAH's CDA scheme sits within the wider SGSAH AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership with funding provided by the AHRC.

2.2 Partner Organisations

Organisations across public, private and third sectors based anywhere in the UK are eligible to apply as part of a Collaborative Doctoral Award. University museums and galleries or organisations that are deemed to be a spin-off or are supported by an HEI are eligible as project partners, providing that the project is not a collaboration with the parent institution. Students are fully funded to undertake their PhD, including time spent within the partner organisation. This is integral to completion of the project and is not an optional extra or internship.

As part of their commitment to the awards partners are required to: -

- Contribute £500 each year of the project (i.e., £1,750 in total) towards costs. In exceptional circumstances, SGSAH may consider applications from organisations that are unable to meet this cost.
- Be fully engaged in the project as an active participant for the entire duration of the PhD (3.5 years full-time or 7 years part-time).
- Host and support the PhD candidate within their organisation for a period of 6 -18 months, depending on project requirements. Duration and pattern of attendance within the host organisation will be dependent on the individual project and should be agreed by all parties at the outset.
- Nominate a member of staff to work with the student over the course of the PhD project and provide with them with appropriate desk/workspace and resources in line with standard staff arrangements and as required by the project.
- Nominate a member of staff to attend CDA supervisory training.
- Engage in at least three formal meetings with the PhD student and academic supervisors each year.
- Attend annual SGSAH partnership PhD gatherings, which bring doctoral researchers, partners and academics together as a cohort.

3. SGSAH Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)

3.1 What is the SGSAH DTP?

The CDA scheme sits within the SGSAH DTP. The SGSAH DTP is the programme in Scotland that delivers the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Doctoral Training Partnership. There are 10 AHRC DTPs across the UK. DTPs

support doctoral studentships across the breadth of the AHRC's subject remit and provide innovative training environments for doctoral-level research.

The SGSAH DTP supports all disciplines in the arts and humanities. Doctoral students awarded a SGSAH DTP CDA studentship will join a cohort of approximately 60 other doctoral researchers. Approximately 12 doctoral researchers will be engaged in CDA projects per year.

3.2 Eligibility

Ten HEIs across Scotland are eligible to submit to SGSAH AHRC DTP CDA applications. The Lead Supervisor from the HEI makes the CDA application submission. Eligible HEIs are:

[Glasgow School of Art](#)
[Royal Conservatoire of Scotland](#)
[University of Aberdeen](#)
[University of Dundee](#)
[University of Edinburgh](#)

[University of Glasgow](#)
[University of St Andrews](#)
[University of Stirling](#)
[University of Strathclyde](#)
[University of the Highlands & Islands](#)

Alongside the 10 HEI DTP members, we have over 160 organisations engaged in partnership working with SGSAH, helping us to plan and deliver training, internships, residencies, placements and workshops.



3.3 Aims of the SGSAH DTP

The SGSAH DTP aims to work together to nurture and inspire a future generation of enlightened leaders committed to generating and mobilising new insights across scholarly, professional and public communities. Our doctoral graduates will become capable, caring, ethical and reflective professionals. They will be alert to their influence and impact as knowledge makers, co-creators and connectors and guided in their actions by what we stand for: Respect, Integrity, Creativity, and Collaboration. They will be champions for arts and humanities research, demonstrating through their work the value of arts and humanities to society, industry and other disciplines.

Our DTP-funded PhD projects will be markers of excellence and originality, enabled by environments where excellent research is supported and conducted.

Our prestigious 3½ year CDA studentships offers our funded doctoral researchers:

- Fully funded PhD studentships with an annual stipend of approx. £20,300 plus fees.
- Partnership with a non-academic organisation and cross-institutional supervisory team where beneficial, including a minimum of six months working within the non-academic organisation.
- Access to additional funding to cover travel requirements e.g., between partner organisations.
- A core programme with fundamental training activities which will support students to develop their skills as a future research leader.
- Access to advanced inter/disciplinary training for our doctoral researchers through our innovative Discipline+ Catalysts.
- Connection and collaboration with organisations across the creative, cultural, heritage and third sectors through our Knowledge Exchange Hubs.
- Extra funds to extend the students' studies to gain additional skills through training and internships.
- Opportunities for travel abroad to carry out research and fieldwork.
- Opportunities to be a Visiting Doctoral Researcher at an international Higher Education Institute.
- Access to the richness of Scotland's research expertise and collections.
- The chance to join an engaged and committed cohort of doctoral researchers working across the full range of arts and humanities disciplines.
- Opportunities to lead the development of networks and funded training events across Scotland.
- Membership of SGSAH, a partnership of 17 HEIs in Scotland supporting more than 1,750 doctoral researchers across the arts and humanities.

Strategic Themes and Priority Areas

SGSAH funds PhDs across the full range of disciplinary areas supported by the AHRC. SGSAH has designated the following strategic themes and priority areas:

- Modern Languages
- Celtic Languages and Studies
- Creative Industries/Economies
- Cultural and Heritage Studies
- Environmental Humanities
- Equalities, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice within arts and humanities contexts

There is no ringfenced funding for these strategic themes and priority areas, and applicants can apply in any subject area. However, we strongly encourage applications within our strategic themes and priority areas, and for applicants to indicate if their applications fall within one or more of them.

4. SGSAH DTP Doctoral Training and Development Framework

4.1 What is the SGSAH DTP Training & Development Framework?

All our AHRC-funded doctoral researchers participate in core training and can enhance this through a wide range of other training opportunities. The SGSAH DTP Training & Development Framework is an inclusive and flexible blend of core and bespoke opportunities cutting across and connecting disciplinary, methodological, academic and external contexts. It recognises the increased diversification of doctoral approaches in the arts and humanities and acknowledges multiple and diverse skills required to be a successful researcher.



“I’ve been given opportunities to run events, learn languages, think about my future career and meet a great support network of friends. It makes you feel part of a larger community.”
(*Doctoral Researcher, DTP*)

4.2 Pillars of the DTP

There are four pillars which run throughout our Doctoral Training Programme. These are Foundation, Core, Specialist and Partnership.

- **Foundation: Professional Researcher** consists of courses foundational to the development of the professional researcher. Normally delivered through the home HEI, completion is mandatory. Content includes: planning and managing research; research ethics, integrity, values and behaviour; intellectual property and copyright; data management; and communications.

- **Core: Leadership Programme** is a developmental course that will equip our DTP doctoral researchers to become ethical leaders and influencers in whatever career path they choose. Topics covered include: equality & diversity, wellbeing, communication, fellowships, grant writing, career pathways, and publishing. Running through the Leadership Programme is our annual Summer School, which offers over 40 workshops delivered by our members over three days. As the core offer of our doctoral partnership and the mechanism through which we facilitate a peer community, participation is a requirement.
- **Specialist: Discipline+ Catalysts** support the pursuit of knowledge and advancement of disciplines through regular methodological and thematic training at the leading edges of arts and humanities. Our Catalysts also drive cross and interdisciplinary collaborations with the sciences and social sciences and support student-led events funded through Cohort Development Funding. Doctoral researchers on the CDA pathway must participate in at least one Catalyst event annually.
- **Partnership: Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hubs** SGSAH launched three KE Hubs in 2019: Citizenship, Culture and Ethics Hub, Creative Economies Hub and Heritage Hub, supported by key partners such as the BBC, the V&A, the British Council, and the Scottish Parliament. These deliver industry-focused events, internships and work-based learning within a UK and international context. Doctoral researchers on the CDA pathway must participate in at least one Hub event annually.



5. Further Opportunities

In addition to our four key training pillars, we present further opportunities for individual and collective training.

5.1 Individual

Skills development allows doctoral researchers to apply for funding to support individual training and development needs. Funding streams include:

- Doctoral Internship/Artist in Residence including international placements (three months' additional stipend for fully funded students, with travel and accommodation as required.)
- Visiting Doctoral Researcher, normally international (travel, accommodation and bench fee where required for up to six months.)
- Specialist training (course costs/fees, travel and accommodation and additional stipend where appropriate.)
- Language learning (additional stipend to cover time, with funding to cover course costs.)
- Knowledge Exchange & Impact: available to support collaborative research approaches and dissemination of findings.
- Conference attendance: to facilitate presentation research at national and international conferences.

It's a great opportunity to explore career options outside of academia and experience something different from PhD research.

5.2 Collective

Cohort Development Funding (CDF): up to £2,500 is available for doctoral researchers to apply for to collaborate on designing and managing the delivery of inter/disciplinary, generic, careers-focused events. Recent workshops and events supported via CDF include:

- Folklore in the Landscape
- Unlearning and Relearning: Exploring and Contributing to Decolonial Methodologies
- Scottish Epistemology Early Careers Researchers Pre-Read Workshop
- Podcasting Your PhD
- Transgender: International/ Intersectional
- Blogging Bootcamp

6. Collaborative Doctoral Awards Scheme Guidance

6.1 What is a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA)?

CDAs are intended to encourage and develop collaboration between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and non-HEI organisations and businesses.

Collaborative research studentships provide opportunities for doctoral students to gain first-hand professional experience beyond the university environment. Support provided by both HEI and non-HEI supervisors enhances the employability skills and training a research student gains during their studentship. It is important that the collaboration adds value to the doctoral researcher's experience and that they are afforded real opportunities to develop career enhancing skills in addition to an academic qualification.

6.2 Benefits of a CDA

One of the main aims of the Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme is to offer doctoral researchers enhanced benefits to their research, experience, training and skills development. Different skills will be offered, with varying contributions to be made by the HEI and non-HEI organisations and supervisors. The student will have the experience and challenge of working with two sets of supervisors, colleagues and working environments. A good collaborative partnership and project will be one that sets up the framework so a doctoral student can undertake the research with all the necessary support and resources readily available and procedures in place to monitor and manage the project. Careful planning, clear lines of communication and an understanding of requirements and responsibilities by all parties should help to minimise any issues that may arise.

The studentships also encourage the establishment of longer-term links between the partners that can bring benefits to both, providing access to resources and materials, knowledge and expertise that may not otherwise have been available and also providing social, cultural and economic benefits to wider society.

6.3 Advice from Reviewers

Advice and feedback from CDA Panel Reviewers from their assessment of previous applications includes:

- Applications were either very strong in the collaborative aspect but lacked academic rigour, or vice versa.
- Questions asked under supervisory fit were not always addressed.
- Statements from supervisory teams such as 'world leading' were not evidenced.
- Some applications did not fully address how the student would be managed.
- The strength of the partnership (between external organisation, HEI and PhD researcher) should be emphasised whilst also addressing how the proposed project is of PhD level in scale and rigour.

- The industry partner should be situated at the core of CDA applications, as a central element of the partnership project.

6.4 Guidance for Applicants

The following information is intended to support applicants in the completion of the application form. Applicants are advised to read it carefully.

1. Partnership Information

All CDA projects should have at least two academic supervisors and one partner supervisor. Where the academic supervisory team is drawn from across two HEIs, careful thought and planning will be required to manage multiple partnerships. Contact details for the partner organisation would normally be the proposed partner supervisor. In some instances, there may be more than two academic supervisors and/or more than one partner organisation. Where this is the case, further details should be added as necessary.

2. Partner Organisation (300 Words)

Summary of the partner organisation(s) core activity/business and capacity to undertake partnership and support a doctoral project. Partner organisation(s) can come from any sector and be located anywhere in the UK. We are looking for a concise summary of the partner's core activity/business, as panel reviewers may not be familiar with their work. Please use this section to demonstrate organisational capacity to support a project at the doctoral scale. You may wish to include staffing numbers, organisational structure, operational longevity etc.

3. Title of Doctoral Project

4. Research Summary (100 words)

Summary of the proposed research project that will be comprehensible to non-specialists and suitable for PR and communication purposes.

5. Research Proposal (1000 words)

We are seeking original, innovative, cogent and coherent proposals that fall clearly within the domain of arts and humanities research and which are feasible within 3½ years full time, or 7 years part time. This section should describe the research proposal and include:

- Research Question(s)/ problem. Academic impact should be clearly stated with demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application.

- Research context, methods and sources, originality, innovation and contribution to knowledge. Methodology should be demonstrably appropriate with proposal well-grounded in current research literature and/or practice.
- Knowledge Exchange, Public Engagement & Impact. Proposal should also demonstrate plans to ensure project benefits can be transferred, exploited or exchanged within and beyond immediate partnerships. We use the UKRI definition of impact, which also includes public engagement. UKRI offers useful examples of impact on its [website](#).

6. Benefits to partner (200 words)

CDAs must demonstrate clear benefits to partners and must be delivered through genuine partnership. We encourage applicants to work closely together to ensure that the project will be of genuine value and that the partner's requirements are understood, addressed and feasible.

7. Benefits to HEI (200 words)

How the partnership will deliver benefits to the HEI, and/or to a particular unit, School or research configuration. Please demonstrate how the proposal aligns with the HEI's/School's/Unit's partnership strategy/research priorities. What will the student/ project/partnership add to the HEI's research environment, critical capacity etc? Where the project builds on an existing collaborative relationship between any or all of the members of the proposed partnership, outline how the project will further develop these.

8. Supervision Arrangements

We are seeking factual information about the supervisory team. The supervisory team refers to the academic supervisors and a supervisor appointed from the partner organisation. There should be at least two academic supervisors, one of whom should be designated the Lead Supervisor. Where the project involves cross-HEI supervision, the Lead Supervisor should be located at the lead-HEI, i.e., the HEI from which the doctoral candidate will graduate.

To ensure the doctoral researcher will receive excellent, relevant support, we invite each academic supervisor to include up to 6 relevant research outputs. 'Outputs' refers to publications, practice-based research including performances, exhibitions, compositions, etc. This requirement is indicative and not intended to discourage early career researchers (ECR) from acting as Lead, Co- or Secondary supervisors. SGSAH welcomes and supports the development of ECRs through its DTP programme, however all supervisors should be on contracts for at least as long as the duration of the PhD being supported ECRs listing less than 6 relevant outputs will not be disadvantaged by the review process.

Normally, doctoral supervisors supervise no more than 6 FTE doctoral researchers. Where a proposed supervisor will be supervising more than 6 FTE, a compelling mitigating rationale must be provided.

Supervisor details from the partner organisation should include any relevant experience in relation to supervising or collaborating on research projects, relevant publications (if applicable), previous or current partnership-working with HEIs, mentoring doctoral interns etc.

9. Supervisory expertise and research training environment (800 words)

We seek demonstrable and persuasive evidence that the supervisory arrangements offer the PhD student the best training environment possible and one which meets the needs of the project. The key purpose of CDAs, in distinction to the open DTP pathway, is that they should provide opportunities for the doctoral researcher to gain first-hand professional experience outside the university environment and offer enhanced employment-related skills and training. A key, fundable criteria for a CDA is: could this project happen without the engagement of and contributions from the partner organisation? If the project could be undertaken without the partner's active involvement, it is not a CDA.

In this section: -

- Describe why this is the right supervisory team. What expertise does this particular team bring to this project, and what is the added value offered by this partnership which demonstrates that it is a collaborative doctoral project. What role will each supervisor, including the supervisor from the partner organisation, play in ensuring the doctoral researcher and their project are supported?
- Outline the value of the partnership, and why the partner organisation is essential to the success of the project (i.e., it could not be undertaken without their input.)
- Describe how the research environment and partnership will support the doctoral researcher and the project. What necessary and potentially unique resources are available to the doctoral researcher across the HEI and partner organisation e.g., non-public collections and archives, placement experience, equipment etc. and how are these essential to the successful completion of the project? Why is the partner organisation essential to the success of the project, i.e., why could this not be undertaken without their input? What is the 'added value' offered by this partnership, which demonstrates that it is a collaborative doctoral project?
- Consider enhanced training and skills development that the doctoral researcher will benefit from across the partnership (i.e., training beyond that offered to non-CDA doctoral students as a matter of course.) This training may not be directly related to the PhD project but is likely to enhance the doctoral researcher's employability skills.

- Review partnership arrangements that will be put in place to support the doctoral researcher in developing enhanced employment-related skills. What professional experiences will be provided via the partner? Please note that there is an expectation that the doctoral researcher will spend at least six months and up to 18 months hosted by the partner organisation.

10. Project Management (300 words)

CDAs are complex to manage, given that they require the development of trusted and sustainable relationships across organisations and typically involve more people in their delivery and management than other types of PhD projects. In this section, we seek evidence of clear project management, risk mitigation and contingency planning. Please outline:

- How the project will be managed and resourced, and what supervisory arrangements will be in place, including meetings and communications.
- How the partner supervisor be supported and where an ECR is a member of the supervisory team, how they will be mentored.
- How the student's time in the partner organisation will be managed (e.g., inductions, office space, mentoring, etc.)?
- Agreed milestones and how these will be measured, with consideration of how the team of supervisors and student will be assured of adequate progress.
- How any concerns or disputes which might arise over the duration of the project will be managed, including contingency plans in the event of the supervisor leaving the partner organisation, or the partner organisation no longer being able to support the project.

11. Partnership Agreement (200 words)

A key challenge for CDA projects concerns intellectual property rights. Whilst we do not expect you to have a formal Partnership Agreement in place in advance of being awarded the funding, we do want to know how such an agreement will be produced, and what it is likely to cover. Please note, SGSAH will require Partnership Agreements for its CDA projects to be in place by December 2025.

If you do not wish to use the partnership agreement template provided within the SGSAH Memorandum of Agreement, please indicate the processes by which a formal partnership agreement between partners will be put in place and summarise the anticipated key elements of this agreement (e.g., intellectual property ownership, financial contributions, confidentiality clauses etc.).

12. Ethics and Research Integrity (300 words)

Any project funded by SGSAH DTP must be ethical. In this section you should identify any ethical or safety issues attached to this research project or to the associated impact plans and how these will be addressed. Please consider this

carefully as any project, including its impact plans, which is considered not to have addressed ethical issues will be deemed to be not fundable. Please note that Ethics and Research Integrity is not scored within the competition process, but it is important that this section of the form is given due consideration in order to indicate the proposal's feasibility.

13. Studentship Recruitment (200 words)

We need to be confident that the projects selected for funding can recruit excellent candidates. Please use this section to:

- Demonstrate your assessment of the likely pool of applicants for this project and how you intend to reach them. Consideration of how many students might be interested, and how will your partnership attract them to the award. Detail of how your recruitment will take into account Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles.
- Summarise how you will advertise the studentship and recruit the student to ensure the best doctoral candidate nomination is made. The recruitment process should be transparent and fair to ensure the best student is nominated. Where the review panel has serious concerns about recruitment plans, the project will be deemed to be un-fundable.

Doctoral Candidates must meet excellence criteria as below:

- Hold at least a 2:1 undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline.
- Have completed, or on course to complete a Masters Degree in a relevant discipline/ and/or demonstrate equivalent, relevant professional experience.
- Be able to demonstrate preparedness for the proposed, specific collaborative doctoral project.
- They must also have undertaken, with the full supervisory team, an assessment of their existing skills and skills needs.

In some cases, the project may have been initiated and developed with a proposed doctoral candidate, as appropriate to their very particular skills set and expertise. In such cases, it would not be appropriate to advertise the studentship. Where a student is attached, applicants should indicate this by writing "Nominated Doctoral Candidate already in place".

Please note:

- Nominated candidates will be required to complete and submit to SGS AH the Nominated Doctoral Candidate form by 23 April 2025 to SGS AH. See Appendix 2.
- Nominated candidates must have been accepted onto the PhD programme of the lead HEI.

- Before funding is confirmed, a sub-committee of SGSAH Executive will review the nominated doctoral candidates and confirm that they meet the excellence criteria. Please be advised that where a nominated candidate is not felt to meet these criteria, funding will not be awarded. If you are not able to recruit and nominate a strong candidate, to avoid disappointment of all concerned, you are strongly advised to withdraw your application. You are also advised to inform the candidate that they are the 'nominated candidate' rather than having the funding confirmed, in case the sub-committee of the SGSAH committee is not able to endorse the nominated candidate.

14. Confirmation of supervisory requirements

SGSAH has minimum requirements for the supervisory teams of its funded doctoral researchers. These can be found [here](#). Please ensure that your proposed team meets these minimum requirements otherwise your application will be deemed ineligible.

Signatures and Confirmations: application must be:

- Signed by Lead supervisor

Confirmation provided that the application is supported by:

- SGSAH Executive member of the lead HEI
- Proposed supervisor from the partner organisation.

15. Submitting the application

Lead Supervisors can submit the full application between 3 – 14 February 2025 via the CDA submission platform. Late applications will only be considered where there is evidenced breakdown in SGSAH's operational systems and where such systemic failures have made submission by the deadline impossible. Please note that we will not accept late applications where there has been failure at the applicant's end (e.g., failure of internet connection). For this reason, we strongly advise applicants to complete the application process at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline.

16. What happens next

All applications submitted to the CDA scheme will be reviewed by a CDA Panel comprised of academic colleagues drawn from across the DTP members and colleagues drawn from across a range of partner organisations. The CDA Panel will recommend to the DTP Executive committee approximately 12 applications to be awarded funding subject to recruitment of a qualified doctoral candidate. We expect to be able to advise HEIs of the outcome in April 2025. Applications which are successful should then implement their recruitment process, as outlined in their application. Nominated doctoral candidates who are already attached to the project should be put forward by 23 April 2025. Recruited doctoral candidates should be put forward by 17 June 2025. Nominations will then be reviewed and

approved by the Executive. Candidates originally attached to projects will be notified mid-May 2025, candidates recruited after projects have been awarded will be notified by July 2025. Approved candidates will commence doctoral study on 1 Oct 2025.

7. CDA Nominated Doctoral Candidates Guidance

7.1 Requirements

Applications to be submitted by noon, 23 April 2025 (for attached doctoral candidates) or 17 June 2025 (for recruited doctoral candidates). Late submissions will not be accepted.

Please include:

- Confirmation of your offer on the Doctoral Programme from your lead HEI.
- Full transcript of your qualifications in English (and where necessary a certified translation should be provided).

7.2 Eligibility

From 2021 onwards, the AHRC via SGSAH is offering awards to PhD researchers from the world (UK, the EU and International). All funded PhD students, whether UK or International will be eligible for a full award – both a stipend to support living costs, and fees at the HEIs' UK rate.

To be classed as a Home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have settled status, or
- Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have indefinite leave to remain or enter

If a candidate does not meet the criteria above, they would be classed as an International student.

SGSAH can award up to a maximum of 30% of awards in total each year to International students (including those from EU nations). SGSAH cannot cover International fees set by HEIs and so applicants should seek information from their lead HEI as to whether they will be required to fund the difference between Home and International fee status, or if the HEI is able to waive the difference.

7.3 Guidance for Applicants

1. Qualifications

We expect candidates to have completed or to be studying towards a Postgraduate Masters qualification in a relevant subject. If you are not in this position, you must use the 'Relevant professional experience' section to provide evidence that the training and development you have received is equivalent to

that obtained through a Masters course in a relevant subject and, therefore, prepares you to continue to doctoral study.

2. Non-standard and/or unclassified qualifications

We recognise that some applicants will have completed degrees which are non-standard or unclassified (i.e., Pass/Fail only) or, for contextual reasons, an Ordinary rather than an Honours Degree. Where this is the case, you should still complete the qualifications section and invite your Lead Supervisor to confirm the quality of the work by making reference to the examiner's report (e.g., excellent and publishable; strong and of near-publishable standard).

3. Relevant professional experience (300 words maximum)

This section is intended to provide a level playing field for applicants with unrelated or no Masters qualifications but who have demonstrably relevant professional experience. It should only be completed by candidates who:

- Do not have and are not studying towards a Masters degree or equivalent.
- Are returning to Masters study after a considerable break in higher education.
- Have gained a Masters degree more than five years previously.
- Have a Masters degree that is not in a relevant subject.
- **AND** you have significant professional experience, which is relevant to your research proposal.

Whilst we do not wish to discriminate against applicants who may not previously have had the opportunity to study at postgraduate level, you should be aware that a doctoral degree is rigorous training at the highest academic level. If you are completing this section, you should provide evidence that any training and development you have received is equivalent to that obtained through a Masters course and therefore prepares you to continue to doctoral study.

4. Preparedness for proposed doctoral project (300 words maximum)

Please demonstrate how your previous study (Undergraduate / Masters) and / or professional experience have prepared you for this particular doctoral project. This might include reference to your UG and Masters programmes of study and your dissertation topics, specific and appropriate methodological training and/or expertise (e.g., proficiency in a relevant language, particular IT skills etc.), work-based learning or employment in a relevant occupation, etc.

5. Training needs and SGSAH DTP (300 words maximum)

However well-prepared applicants may be to undertake their proposed research, it is expected that they will develop new skills during their programme of study.

- With your supervisory team, please indicate your training needs. What skills will you need to develop to ensure that you are able to complete this research project successfully? (Your project is likely to build on and extend existing skills and will be project specific.)
- What skills do you seek to develop for professional development purposes?
- How will you meet the needs and develop the skills noted above? What resources and/or opportunities will you access across your CDA partnership, and from the SGSAAH DTP Programme beyond the core requirement?

6. SGSAAH Requirements

All SGSAAH DTP funded doctoral researchers are required to participate in core training elements provided by SGSAAH. Key mechanisms for delivery of this training include Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hubs and Disciplinary+ Catalysts. You will become a member of at least one KE Hub, and as a CDA doctoral researcher, you may also wish to join a Discipline+ Catalyst. See further information [here](#).

7. Stuart Hall Foundation Fellowships

Scotland's two national graduate schools (Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities: SGSAAH and the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science: SGSSS) are working in partnership with the [Stuart Hall Foundation](#) to offer up to six Stuart Hall Fellowships starting in October 2025.

Both SGSAAH and SGSSS are committed to the public function of education and to addressing the barriers which exist to accessing higher education. The Fellowships, inspired by the life and work of Professor Stuart Hall and his research legacy in the areas of race, ethnicity, cultural and structural inequalities, will provide opportunities for students from non-traditional and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Fellowship applications are sought from candidates from non-traditional or disadvantaged backgrounds who are under-represented at graduate level in the Arts and Humanities and the Social Sciences in Scotland, and with a preference for those whose planned research aligns broadly with one of Stuart Hall's many areas of interest: cultural studies, race, ethnicity and inequalities. Applicants can apply through SGSAAH and SGSSS's DTP Open, CDA or ARCS Studentship Competitions, with selected successful candidates invited to apply for a Stuart Hall Foundation (SHF) Fellowship.

Each Graduate School will award up to three Stuart Hall Foundation Fellowships, which will be attached to funded studentships (covering fees, stipend and a research training grant). The Fellowship can be held within disciplines across the social sciences, arts and humanities at selected Scottish HEIs (Higher Education Institutes) which form part of the relevant Graduate School.

Recipients of these Fellowships will benefit from access to the [Stuart Hall Foundation Scholars and Fellows network programme](#), which includes regular events and opportunities to develop their career and research profile. Applicants who fall into the descriptor for the Fellowships are invited to indicate their interest in the Fellowships on the application form via Survey Monkey Apply. If applicants are successful in receiving a studentship offer, they will then be invited to make a further application for a Stuart Hall Fellowship.

Contact details for SGSAH: enquiries@sgsah.ac.uk

Appendix 1: SGSAH CDA Application 2025

Collaborative Doctoral Award Application Form for 2025

Partnership Information

Lead-HEI (higher education institution at which the PhD student will be registered):

Collaborating HEI(s):

Partner organisation (Where there is more than one collaborating partner, please provide additional details):

1. Partner Organisations (300 words)

Summary of Partner Organisation(s) core activity/business and capacity to undertake this partnership/host a PhD student for the length of the project.

2. Title of Doctoral Project:

3. Research Summary (100 words)

Summary of the proposed research project that will be comprehensible to non-specialists and suitable for PR and communication channels.

4. Research Proposal (1,000 words)

Summary of:

- *Research question(s)/problem*
- *Research context, methods and sources, originality/innovation and contribution to knowledge*
- *Knowledge Exchange, Public Engagement & Impact*

5. Benefits to partner (200 words)

A CDA must demonstrate clear benefits to the partner. Summary of

- *How the research project as conceived contributes to delivery of the partner organisation's strategic goals*
- *How the project fits with the partner's priorities and needs*
- *How the project will benefit the partner*

6. Benefits to HEI (200 words)

Summary of:

- *Strategic alignment between partners*
- *Added value to the HEI's research environment*
- *Benefits and potential further developments*

7. Supervision Arrangements

Each proposal must be supported by at least two academic supervisors designated as Primary/Lead Supervisor, Co-supervisors and/or Secondary Supervisor.

Lead Supervisor (must come from the lead-HEI)

Name:

Institution:

Email:

Discipline:

ECR (within six years of their first academic appointment): Yes/No

Supervision allocation (please indicate)

75%

60%

50%

Total number of doctoral researchers supervising currently (as FTE):

Up to six most relevant research outputs:

Academic Supervisor 2

Name:

Institution:

Email:

Discipline:

ECR (within six years of their first academic appointment): Yes/No

Supervision allocation (please indicate)

25%

40%

50%

Total Number of students supervising currently (as FTE):

Up to six most relevant research outputs:

Partner Supervisor

Name:

Email:

Organisation:

Position:

Relevant experience:

8. Supervisory expertise, research training environment and benefits to student (800 words)

Summary of:

- *Strengths of the supervisory team for this project*
- *Value of the partnership*
- *Research environment and partnership and how it will support doctoral researcher and the project*
- *Training and skills development*

9. Project Management (300 words)

Project plan including summary of:

- *How the project and supervisory team will be managed and supported*
- *Measures and milestones*
- *Management and contingency planning*

10. Partnership Agreement (200 words)

Summary of:

- *Processes by which a formal partnership agreement will be put in place*
- *Anticipated key elements of the agreement.*

11. Ethics and Research Integrity (300 words)

Please identify any ethical or safety issues attached to this research project and/or its impact plans and how these will be addressed. Please add a link to your lead HEI's Ethics and/or Research Integrity policy.

12. Studentship Recruitment (200 words)

Summary of:

- *Assessment of the likely pool of applicants for this project and how you intend to reach it.*
- *How you will advertise the studentship and recruit the student to ensure the best doctoral candidate nomination is made.*

14. Confirmation of supervisory requirements

One member of the proposed academic supervisors has previously supervised at least one doctoral candidate to successful completion.

All academic supervisors have completed supervisory training for new supervisors before commencement of the studentship.

All academic supervisors have completed an Updating Workshop/Briefing session in the past four years.

SGSAH Supervisors' Induction: *All supervisors must attend a SGSAH CDA Supervisors' Induction. SGSAH will contact successful teams with the dates in due course.*

Appendix 2: SGSAH AHRC CDA Nominated Doctoral Candidate

SGSAH AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award Nominated Doctoral Candidate

CDA Nominated Doctoral Candidates should submit this form via the online application system alongside a confirmation of their offer of a place on the Doctoral Programme from their lead-HEI, and a full transcript of qualifications in English (and where necessary a certified translation should be provided) by 12pm BST, 23 April 2025 (for attached doctoral candidates) or 17 June 2025 (for recruited doctoral candidates). Late submissions will not be accepted.

Nominated Doctoral Candidates

Name
Email
Permanent Address
Correspondence Address if different

1. Residency Eligibility

Please indicate whether you are classified by your HEI as a home or international student.

2. PhD Programme of Study

Institution at which you will be registered (the lead institution) and which has confirmed your place on the PhD Programme.	
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Research proposal title: Partner Organisation:

2. Qualifications

University or College	Dates of award	Degree/Diploma	Main subjects	Grade, Class or GPA

Qualifications pending

University or College	Anticipated date of award	Degree/Diploma	Main subjects

3. Non-standard and/or unclassified qualifications

Lead Supervisor to confirm quality of the work by making reference to the examiner's report. Please see application guidance.

4. Relevant professional experience (300 words maximum)

Provide evidence that you are prepared for doctoral study only if:

- *You do not have and are not studying towards a Masters degree or equivalent*
- *or are returning to Masters study after a considerable break in higher education*
- *or gained a Masters degree more than five years previously*
- *or if your Masters degree is not in a relevant subject*
- *AND you have significant professional experience, which is relevant to your research proposal.*

5. Preparedness for proposed doctoral project (300 words maximum)

Summary of how you have prepared for this doctoral project, i.e.

- *reference to your UG and Masters programmes of study and your dissertation topics, specific and appropriate methodological training and/or expertise*
- *work-based learning or employment in a relevant occupation, etc*

6. Training needs and SGSAH DTP (300 words maximum)

Summary of:

- Training needs
- Professional development purposes
- Methodology for meeting needs and developing skills noted above
- Resources and/or opportunities will you access beyond the core requirement

7. Environmental Impact Assessment

As part of SGSAH's ['Green/Graduate Strategy & Operations Plan'](#) we have committed to reducing the environmental impact of doctoral research in the arts and humanities, including sustainable travel practices, conference attendance, and fieldwork activities. To ensure the sustainability of doctoral research projects applicants are asked to confirm that they will undertake appropriate measures to reduce the impact of their research activities. Successful applicants will be supported through guidance and training.

[tick box] I confirm that as part of my annual progress review (year 1 full-time; year 1 or 2 part-time) I will identify measures to ensure the sustainability of my doctoral research activities.

8. SGSAH Requirements

All SGSAH DTP funded doctoral researchers are required to participate in core training elements provided by SGSAH. Key mechanisms for delivery of this training include Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hubs and Disciplinary+ Catalysts. Information about these can be found in the Guidance.

You must be a member of at least one KE Hub. Please indicate which KE Hub(s) you will join:

Citizenship, Culture and Ethics

Creative Economies

Heritage

As a CDA doctoral researcher, you may also wish to be a member of a Disciplinary+ Catalyst. Please indicate which Catalyst(s) you wish to join:

Archaeology and Classics

Creative Arts and Design

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cultural and Museum Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| History | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Law | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Linguistics | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Media, Comms, Film & TV | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Modern Languages | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Celtic Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Theology, Divinity & Religion | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Data storage: Anonymised, limited special characteristic data (such as disability, ethnicity, other health data) will be collected and retained by SGSAH in order to fulfil our contractual obligations to our funder, the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Applications from nominees not in receipt of funding will be destroyed by 1 October 2025. Applications from nominees in receipt of funding will be retained for the duration of the studentship. This application may be read by up to eighteen reviewers.

Appendix 3: Assessment criteria for SGSAH AHRC DTP CDA

Nominations submitted to the SGSAH DTP competition can be of a very high standard and the competition for limited funding is intense. We seek to make approximately 12 CDA awards in 2025 to applications deemed to be of excellent quality. We have developed a set of criteria to help us to make difficult decisions in a transparent way.

In essence, the questions we ask are:

- Why this research project?
- Why this partnership?
- Why this supervisory team?
- Are the right structures and mechanisms in place to support the timely submission of an excellent thesis?
- Have ethical issues been adequately identified and addressed?
- Is a clear recruitment process in place?

Marks are organised into broad bands A-D. Reviewers are asked to allocate precise marks within each band (SGSAH staff will assess qualifications). Total marks available for award are 24.

1. Quality of Research Proposal

Band	Mark	Description
A	8 7	An exceptional proposal in all of its components. Research questions are clear/cogent, and the proposal demonstrates a comprehensive awareness of the research context and the contribution that the project will make to the field and partner organisation. A clear gap in existing knowledge has been identified and a compelling case made for the significance of addressing this gap. The proposal is original and innovative, the methods are appropriate, and the project is feasible within the timescale of 3½ years. Any ethical/safety issues have been identified and appropriately addressed. The proposal is compelling.
B	6 5	A strong proposal with clear and cogent research questions and a sense of the contribution that the research will make, combined with appropriate methods. The research is likely to be feasible within the timescale of 3 ½ years. Any ethical/safety issues have been identified and appropriately addressed. A good case is made for the proposal.
C	4 3	A solid proposal with researchable questions, appropriately identified sources and an appropriate methodology. There is some awareness of its intellectual importance. The research

		may be feasible within the period of supervised study. Any ethical/safety issues have been identified and appropriately addressed.
D	2 1	A proposal with serious shortcomings in one or more of its aspects.

2. Knowledge Exchange, Dissemination, Impact

Band	Mark	Description
A	4	An entirely persuasive case has been made for the potential for knowledge exchange, public engagement and/or impact with realistic plans for delivery.
B	3	There is a good case for the potential for knowledge exchange, public engagement and/or impact together with a delivery plan.
C	2	There will be indications of awareness of the potential for knowledge exchange, public engagement and/ or impact activity but the proposal may lack realistic plans for implementation.
D	1	No indications of awareness of the project's potential for knowledge exchange, public engagement and/ or impact activity.

3. Supervisory Expertise, Research Environment, Partnership Engagement and Benefits

Band	Mark	Description
A	6 5	<p>Supervision arrangements represent an excellent fit with the proposed research. The supervisory team, in its totality, will be able to provide the student with the best possible support available, and is internationally excellent. The supervisory team is likely to offer complementary areas of expertise, at the level of knowledge/discipline, methodologies, and other appropriate skills (e.g., impact and KE experience), demonstrating the ability to develop the doctoral researchers' skills and professional competence. All members of the academic supervisory team are active researchers, demonstrating significant and ongoing expertise in the required field(s), as appropriate to their career stage.</p> <p>The research environment to be provided for the doctoral candidate is demonstrably excellent in all of its components and there is clear capacity to manage and successfully deliver the proposed project.</p> <p>Resources available across the HEI(s) and partner organisation(s) are essential to the successful completion of the PhD, e.g., collections, spaces or equipment, and the nominated applicant will be able to access the resources.</p>

		<p>There is demonstrably excellent ‘added value’ for the doctoral researcher being co-supervised by this particular partnership in terms of enhanced employability skills, and the involvement of the partner organisation(s) is essential to the successful delivery of the project.</p> <p>The research fits well with the expertise and/or priorities of the supervising HEI(s) and partner organisation(s).</p> <p>The benefits to the partner organisation are extremely convincing.</p>
B	4	<p>Supervision arrangements represent a strong fit with the proposed research. There is a strong research environment, with the full supervisory team and partnership able to offer good support, and the environment across the HEI(s) and partner organisation(s) providing access to necessary resources. There is evidence of existing or emerging capacity in the proposed research area and there is likely to be considerable benefit/ ‘added value’ to the doctoral researcher from the partnership arrangement. The involvement of the partner organisation(s) is useful but not essential. The benefits to the partner organisation are strong.</p>
C	3	<p>Supervision arrangements are adequate, with supervisors having some experience in the subject area but there are some questions about the fit between the full supervisory team and proposed research. There is adequate fit between the resource needs of the project and the research environment, including the partnership organisation(s). The ‘added value’ to the doctoral researcher is minimal and benefits to the partner organisation are adequate.</p>
D	2 1	<p>There are some strengths but there are also clear weaknesses in terms of supervisory fit and research environment. There are concerns around the capacity of the team and the environment to support the proposed project.</p> <p>The supervisory team does not fulfil the supervisory training requirements in all of its components.</p> <p>The partnership and collaboration offer no clear benefits to the doctoral researcher or to the partner organisation.</p>

4. Project Management and Partnership Agreement

A	6 5	<p>A robust and comprehensive management and contingency plan is in place, with different roles and expectations clearly identified. Excellent support for members of the supervisory team is in place where required.</p>
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		The process for implementing a Partnership Agreement is clear and the summary content of the Partnership Plan is detailed and seems robust and appropriate.
B	4	A clear management and contingency plan is in place, though some detail could be stronger. Different roles and expectations are clearly identified. Good support for members of the supervisory team is in place where required. The process for implementing a Partnership Agreement is clear and the summary content of the Partnership Plan is detailed and seems robust and appropriate.
C	3	An adequate management and contingency plan is in place, though some details are lacking. Different roles and expectations are minimally identified. There is some support for members of the supervisory team is in place where required. The process for implementing a Partnership Agreement is adequate.
D	2 1	The proposed management and/or contingency plans raise concerns about the management and delivery of the project. Support for supervisors, where required, is lacking. The process for implementing a Partnership Agreement is adequate.

5. Studentship Recruitment

A clear recruitment process is in place, or a student is attached.	Yes		Fundable
There is no clear recruitment process in place.	No		Un-fundable

Appendix 4: Frequently Asked Questions

What is a PhD?

A PhD is the highest academic award offered by universities. In order to undertake a PhD, a student must normally complete an undergraduate degree and a master's degree. The duration of a PhD is normally 3.5 years full-time or 7 years part-time, at the end of which a thesis containing new knowledge will be produced. Candidates who are awarded a PhD may use the title 'Doctor'. PhD students are also referred to as doctoral researchers.

The SGSAH AHRC-funded programme is highly competitive. The rigorous application and selection process will ensure excellent PhD candidates.

What are Collaborative Doctoral Awards?

Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs) provide funding for PhD-level research projects which are developed in partnership between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and non-HEI organisations or businesses. The funding is awarded to the HEI and the student receives a stipend.

What will participating in a Collaborative Doctoral Award mean in practice for my organisation?

Partner organisations are expected to nominate a member of staff to work with the student over the course of the 3.5-year PhD research project (or 7 years part-time). This should include the student working on the project within the organisation for at least six months and up to 18 months. Exact duration and pattern of attendance (full-time/part-time/flexible) within the host organisation will be dependent on the individual project and agreed by all parties at the outset.

Students should be provided with appropriate desk/workspace and resources in line with standard staff arrangements. Students are fully funded to undertake their PhD, including the time spent within the partner organisation. This period should be integral to the completion of the project and is not an optional extra or internship.

How are the Collaborative Doctoral Awards funded?

Funding decisions will be made by panels coordinated by SGSAH. SGSAH receives funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to support doctoral training (i.e., PhD level research) in Scottish HEIs.

Do organisational partners provide any funding towards the Collaborative Doctoral Awards?

Organisational partners are expected to contribute £500 in each year of the project (i.e., £1,750 in total) towards student costs. In exceptional circumstances, SGSAH may consider applications from organisations that are unable to meet this cost.

How many Collaborative Doctoral Awards will be made each year?

Approximately 12 CDAs will be funded each year.

Who is involved in a Collaborative Doctoral Award?

The partner should assign a member of staff to act as the organisational supervisor for the project. The HEI should assign one or more academic supervisors to the project. The student will undertake the project with the support of the supervisors. SGSAH will oversee the CDAs at national level and annual meetings for all parties. SGSAH will also provide training for academic and organisational partner supervisors.

What are the benefits of Collaborative Doctoral Awards for organisational partners?

- Added value
- Enhanced Creative development and output
- Improved quality
- Increased capacity
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Increased profile
- Increased turnover/sales/visitor numbers
- New audiences or customer bases
- New ideas and innovation
- New knowledge and skills
- New networks/contacts
- New products, processes or services
- Potential to attract additional funding
- Press/media coverage
- Prototype development
- Skills development for employees
- Skills sharing and improved employer relations

What are the time commitments for organisational partners participating in Collaborative Doctoral Awards?

Partners commit to being fully engaged in the project as an active participant for the entire duration of the PhD (3.5 years full-time or 7 years part-time). Partners must have the capacity to host and support the PhD student within their organisation for a period of 6-18 months, depending on the requirements of the project. Partners should be involved in at least three formal meetings with the PhD student and academic supervisors each year, and attend annual SGSAH CDA Gatherings, which will bring participating students, partners and academics together as a cohort.

Who can be an organisational partner for a Collaborative Doctoral Award?

Organisations across the public, private and third sectors based anywhere in the UK are eligible to apply as part of a Collaborative Doctoral Award.

What are the outputs of a Collaborative Doctoral Award?

The student will produce a PhD thesis containing new knowledge and undertake tasks agreed by the organisational partner in order to deliver a specific project related to the partner's area of work.

What do Collaborative Doctoral Awards mean in practice for participating HEIs?

The main differences between a CDA and a standard PhD is that CDAs will include a non-HEI partner in a co-supervisory role, and students will be expected to spend 6-18 months working within the host organisation as part of their research.

As part of the application process, HEIs should agree ongoing communication arrangements, which embed the partners in the supervisory process. This should include regular meetings (at least three per year) between all parties to the CDA.

The period of work within the host organisation forms part of the core work towards the PhD. In administrative terms, this means that tuition fees will be payable to the HEI during this time, and students will be entitled to access ongoing supervision and support from academic staff.

Do HEIs provide any funding towards the Collaborative Doctoral Awards?

HEIs pay a third of each PhD as part of the SGSAH Memorandum of Agreement. They are not expected to contribute any additional funding towards the CDAs.