# Green text on a white background University of Stirling logo

**University of Stirling SGSAH**

 **Doctoral Landscape Award:**

**Collaborative Doctoral Award**

**2026 GUIDANCE**



# Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

Welcome to the CDA strand of the University of Stirling’s SGSAH (Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities) Doctoral Landscape Award open competition for 2026. This document provides guidance for applicants.

Our prestigious 3½ year CDA studentship will offer a funded doctoral researcher:

* Fully funded PhD studentship with an annual stipend (£20,780 in 2025-26) plus fees.
* Partnership with a non-academic organisation, 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 Skills Development Spokes: *Concepts and Critiques, Empirical Enquiry, and Creative Practice*.
* Connection and collaboration with organisations across the creative, cultural, heritage and third sectors through our Knowledge Exchange Hubs.
* An Individual Training Allowance (ITA) equivalent to 6 months of funding to pursue bespoke training activities, career development goals, and/or additional funded research time. Fundable activities might include internships, research visits to international Higher Education Institutions, fieldwork, specialist training, language learning, and associated costs.
* 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.

Process for 2025/26:

* Deadline for submission of full application by the lead supervisor is 7 November 2025
* By early December, Faculty DLA Review Panel will review, rank, and approve 1 application to proceed to the student recruitment phase.
* Successful lead supervisor must recruit and nominate a suitably qualified doctoral candidate to undertake the project before final confirmation of funding.
* Student nomination form to be sent to Faculty DLA panel by 15 January 2026 (if they have an attached candidate) or 9 March 2026 (if they must recruit a candidate).
* March 31: Student award to be announced.

**Please note** funding is subject to confirmation of an appropriately qualified doctoral candidate. Exceptionally, a candidate may be attached to the full application. The Faculty DLA panel will review the nomination to confirm that nominated candidate meets the required criteria.

1.2 University of Stirling DLA CDA Timeline

LATE SEPTEMBER 2025 Competition Launch

7 NOVEMBER 2025 Deadline for submission of full application by lead supervisor

LATE NOVEMBER 2025 Faculty DLA Panel to review and score applications

BY EARLY DECEMBER 2025 CDA award announced and studentship advertised

15 JANUARY 2026 Deadline for submission of Nominated Candidate form if the successful project has an attached student. If it does not, supervisors should lead the recruitment process in this period, identifying top candidate plus 1 reserve

9 MARCH 2026 Deadline for submission of Nominated Candidate forms (top + reserve) for successful projects without attached students

16 MARCH 2026 Faculty DLA panel will meet to confirm CDA nomination.

31 MARCH 2026 Award announced.

1 MAY 2026 Deadline for awardee to make official application to UoS PhD programme

# **2. Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA)**

## 2.1 What is a Collaborative Doctoral Award?

CDAs are intended to encourage and develop collaboration between the University of Stirling 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 supervisors at and outwith the University of Stirling 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.

## **2.2** 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. Please consult the latest version of the [University of Stirling Postgraduate Code of Practice](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/student-academic-and-corporate-services/academic-registry/policy-and-procedure/code-of-practice-research-degrees/) for guidance.

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.

## **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. Providing that the project is not a collaboration with *solely* the partner institution, university museums and galleries or organisations that are deemed to be a spin-off or are supported by the University of Stirling are eligible as project partners. 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 (between 3.5-4 years full-time or 7-8 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.

# 3. SGSAH Doctoral Landscape Award (DLA)

## 3.1 What is the SGSAH Doctoral Landscape Award?

Seven Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) across Scotland are offering AHRC Doctoral Landscape Award (DLA) PhD studentships in the Arts & Humanities, for start dates in October 2026. The HEIs offering awards are the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews, Stirling and Strathclyde.

It is planned that SGSAH will be the home of the AHRC Doctoral Landscape Award Hub, which will offer collective doctoral training and development activities to the funded cohort of DLA PhD studentship holders, sometimes in partnership with broader communities of Arts & Humanities doctoral researchers across [all 17 of SGSAH’s member HEIs](https://www.sgsah.ac.uk/about/members/). More details of the projected training are detailed below, in order to assist applicants in developing their training and development plans.

**\*\*\*Please note that some details of the Hub activity may change, pending confirmation of Hub funding from the AHRC. Any changes will be clearly flagged via the SGSAH website.\*\*\***

3.2 The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Purpose

The Doctoral Landscape Award (DLA) Hub for Scotland, delivered through the Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities (SGSAH), will provide an innovative, inclusive and responsive doctoral training and development platform for Arts and Humanities students. Building on the successful foundations of two previous AHRC Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTP1 and DTP2), the DLA Hub will enhance the doctoral experience and further extend its relevance and impact at local, national, and global levels.

The Hub will support cohorts of world-class doctoral researchers to contribute meaningfully across academic, creative, public, and professional spheres. It will:

* Provide cohort-responsive training that complements institutional provision and promotes academic excellence.
* Offer interdisciplinary, methodological and creative development through three skills development spokes: *Concepts and Critiques, Empirical Enquiry*, and *Creative Practice*.
* Strengthen knowledge exchange (KE) by sustaining and developing internships and collaborative partnerships, including engagement with the existing KE Hubs (Heritage, Creative Economies, Citizenship & Policy).
* Embed equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) to ensure accessibility and equity of opportunity.
* Leverage existing national resources and infrastructure to enable a seamless transition from the Doctoral Training Partnership 2 (which the DLA succeeds) and through SGSAH and member HEIs sustain a world-class Arts & Humanities doctoral training environment in Scotland.

3.3 The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Training and Development Overview

The DLA Hub training offer is projected to comprise of three key and mandatory components, each complementing and enhancing the offer in individual HEIs, leveraging collaboration within the DLA Hub and through the wider SGSAH consortium. The components are:

1. **Cohort Leadership Programme**: the opportunity to come together as a cohort group to foster collaboration, benefit from sector-leading A&H training from academics across Hub HEIs and build networks.
2. **Specialised A&H Training:** academic training will be arranged along three broad conceptual and methodological ‘spokes’: Concepts and Critiques (ideas, concepts, theories and framework); Empirical Enquiry (methodologies, including archival research, digital humanities, and social research); and Creative Practice (all forms of creative practice as research, creative methodologies and engagements with creative industries).
3. **Knowledge Exchange**: building on the strong KE relationships that SGSAH has built up over a decade, the Hub will offer training opportunities for students to develop skills, build networks, deliver impact, and understand related sectors, and for organisations to benefit from skilled doctoral researchers through SGSAH’s successful internship programme. Researchers will be supported to demonstrate the value of A&H to society, industry, and other disciplines.



3.4 The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Cohort Leadership Programme

The Cohort Leadership Programme will bring the whole cohort together across HEIs and disciplinary areas, which is essential for leadership, development and networking. A stepped training and development programme will be delivered by a range of in-person, hybrid and online events, including short sessions, day-long and residential events. The Cohort Leadership Programme will build thematically through successive years, with combinations of year specific and multi-year activity, the latter cascading experience across cohorts. These will be delivered through a three-step framework:

* **Year 1 GETTING STARTED: inducting students to the Hub and enabling them to embark on their PhD**

The centrepiece will include a residential event held early in the academic year, introducing Year 1 students to the Hub and its full range of training activities, providing cohort-building opportunities, and discussing training needs and priorities. Student representatives from Years 2 and 3 will be invited to speak about their experience of the Hub (or, in Year 1, from existing DTP2 students) and of using Hub funding to develop student-led cohort activities. This induction will complement a broader SGSAH Welcome event, which highlights the wider opportunities available to all doctoral researchers in Scotland through SGSAH, supported by the Scottish Funding Council and extending to SGSAH’s full HEI membership.

* **Year 2-3 RESEARCH WITH IMPACT: focuses on honing the skills to deliver the core PhD research and realise wider societal benefits**

All cohorts will come together for a residential event timed as part of the broader SGSAH Summer School, enabling wider networking opportunities across DLA cohorts and beyond. Topics covered will include three-minute thesis presentations, research internships, knowledge exchange and other opportunities. Year 2 and 3 students will share their research and KE activities via posters, stands, and short presentations.

* **Year 3-4 TRANSITIONS BEYOND THE PHD: in the final two years, the Cohort Leadership Programme pivots to focus on future careers and outputs within and beyond academia**

Events in Years 3 and 4 will cement networking; support planning for postdoctoral career pathways, both academic and non-academic; prepare for submission, examination and any post-examination corrections; focus on outputs (including publishing) from the thesis and creative practice; introduce postdoctoral networks and opportunities; and facilitate alumni connections.

These proposals build on high-quality events developed under DTP2, adapted to the changed nature, scale and resourcing of the cohort, and aligned with sectoral policy such as the UKRI New Deal for Postgraduate Research.

3.5 The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Skills Development Training

In addition to core training for the entire cohort, the Hub will also offer specific grounding in Arts & Humanities research skills. This offer will complement the disciplinary expertise and individual training plans developed and delivered within HEIs. It will be structured via three ‘Spokes’, allowing the Hub to respond to cohort needs while maintaining consistency and promoting awareness of the full scale and scope of A&H research. The ‘Spokes’ are:

* **Concepts and Critiques**: training focused on the ideas, methods, concepts, and frameworks that underpin research. This element of the programme will hone researchers’ ability to work confidently, fluidly, and in a cross-disciplinary manner.
* **Empirical Enquiry**: training to develop the cutting-edge skills necessary for data gathering for A&H research, whether through archival enquiry, working with images and objects, through surveys or interviews, or quantification, within ethical frameworks.
* **Creative Practice:** training exploringall forms of creative practice as research and creative methodologies, including writing, composing and performing arts within creative industry contexts.

Training events will often straddle more than one spoke and/or discipline; where events are grounded in a particular discipline they will be designed to benefit students from beyond that discipline. All disciplinary areas hosting DLA students will be involved in developing events, and the Hub will provide funding to enable students to co-develop training events with staff. Students will be required to attend at least one ‘spoke’ training event each year and encouraged to participate in more.

Events will be delivered through a combination of online and face-to-face activities, ensuring that training is accessible and inclusive to students with different needs and in different geographical locations.

The continuing training activities delivered [by SGSAH’s 11 Discipline+ Catalysts](https://www.sgsah.ac.uk/e_t/dp/) will be double-badged so that they also appear in the programme of training linked to the Spokes.

The SGSAH Summer School is a well-established flagship for A&H training in Scotland, available to any A&H PhD researcher in member HEIs and delivered through a blend of online and face-to-face training. SGSAH intends to continue the Summer School, incorporating aspects of the current DTP2 Discipline+ Catalysts and Knowledge Exchange Hubs, and adding the Skills Development Training Spokes. Spring into Methods, SGSAH’s collaboration with SGSSS, will also continue to offer innovative methodological training beyond disciplinary boundaries and beyond A&H.

3.6 The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Knowledge Exchange and Impact

Knowledge Exchange (KE) and Impact will form a key strand of the Hub training offer. SGSAH’s three [KE Hubs (Citizenship, Culture and Ethics; Creative Economies; Heritage)](https://www.sgsah.ac.uk/partners/ke-hubs/) offer routes into collaboration with external partners from public, private and third sector organisations, including via research internships and the artist residencies programme. This training will act as a springboard for collaboration with key national institutions and stakeholders, including SGSAH’s ten core partners (e.g. BBC Scotland, Creative Scotland, National Museums Scotland, National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Parliament), and with research centres and institutes in HEIs across Scotland.

DLA PhD researchers will attend at least one KE and Impact event per year, benefitting from insights and expertise drawn from A&H stakeholders across Scotland to co-create and translate their research into impact, societal engagement and employability.

3.7 The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Responsive Model

From the point of studentship awards, HEIs will offer the Hub an initial assessment of their students’ training needs aligned to the three Skills Development Training Spokes, KE and Impact activity and Cohort Leadership Programme. The Year 1 induction and Year 2/3 events will then allow a more detailed dialogue between the Hub leadership and the cohorts, enabling students to co-develop the training offer in relation to their needs.

Subject areas hosting DLA students will contribute to Skills Development Training, ensuring a close alignment to DLA student needs, while also extending responses to those needs across the cohort and the wider Scottish HE landscape.

SGSAH will maintain [Cohort Development Fund](https://www.sgsah.ac.uk/current/funding/cdf/) opportunities for student-led training opportunities to be designed and delivered. These opportunities will align with and be promoted through the Skills Development Training Spokes and KE Hubs.

**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.

**4.1Partnership Information**

All CDA projects should have at least two University of Stirling academic supervisors and one partner supervisor. 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.

* 1. **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.

* 1. **Title of Doctoral Project**
	2. **Research Summary (100 words)**

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

* 1. **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 the programme length. 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](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/delivering-economic-impact/).
	+ Length of Programme. A new feature of the DLA is that all awardees will have access to an Individual Training Allowance (ITA) worth 6 months of funding. They may use this in a variety of ways, including for the funding of internships, international visiting doctoral positions, language learning, fieldwork, etc. In some cases, the best use of this resource might be to provide additional funded research time beyond the baseline 42-month period of the studentship. Such a use should be for academic reasons only, and be scoped into the project from the outset. If you anticipate that the project might require up to an additional 6 months of funded research time, please indicate so and explain why here. Do note that such a use of the ITA will restrict funds for other training opportunities.
	1. **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 (for both partner and student).

* 1. **Benefits to the University of Stirling(200 words)**

How the partnership will deliver benefits to the University of Stirling and/or to a particular subject, Division, or research configuration. Please demonstrate how the proposal aligns with the University’s/Subject’s/Division’s partnership strategy/research priorities. What will the student/project/partnership add to the University of Stirling’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. You may wish to consult the [University’s Strategic Priority: Research page](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/strategic-plan/research/) for guidance.

* 1. **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.

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 DLA 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.

* 1. **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 the CDA, in distinction to the student-led DLA 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? 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.
	1. **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.
	1. **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. Partnership Agreements for CDA projects should be in place by December 2026.

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.).

**4.12 Ethics and Research Integrity (300 words)**

Any project funded by the SGSAH Doctoral Landscape Award 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 unfundable.

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. You can find details of the University of Stirling’s Research and Ethics policy and procedure [here](https://www.stir.ac.uk/research/research-ethics-and-integrity/).

* 1. **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 candidate forms must be submitted as follows:
	+ If the successful project had a candidate attached, 4pm GMT on 15 January 2026;
	+ If the successful project had to recruit a candidate, by 4pm, GMT 9 March 2026.

This submission should be made via webform on the Faculty of Arts and Humanities SGSAH web page. A .doc version of the nominated candidate form is also available for download on there and attached to this guidance. The nominated candidate should first draft their text on this template, and then cut and paste the material into the web form by the deadline See Appendix 2.

* Before funding is confirmed, the Faculty DLA panel will review the nominated doctoral candidate 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 the 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.
* After their nomination has been confirmed by the Faculty panel in March, nominated candidates must apply to and receive an offer from the relevant Stirling PhD programme by no later than 1 May 2026.
	1. **Confirmation of supervisory requirements**

Please ensure that your proposed team meets the supervisory training requirements set by the University of Stirling and/or SGSAH, 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:

* Proposed supervisor from the partner organisation.
	1. **Submitting the application**

Lead Supervisors can submit the full application by 4pm on 7 November 2025 via the web form on the University of Stirling’s SGSAH website. Late applications will only be considered where there is evidenced breakdown in the University of Stirling’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.

* 1. **What happens next**

All applications submitted to the CDA scheme will be reviewed by a Faculty DLA Panel comprised of academic colleagues drawn from across the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. The Faculty DLA Panel will recommend 1 application to be awarded funding subject to recruitment of a qualified doctoral candidate. We expect to be able to advise outcomes by early December 2025. The successful applicant 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 4pm, GMT 15 January 2026. Recruited doctoral candidates should be put forward by 4pm, GMT 9 March 2026. Nominations will then be reviewed and approved by the Faculty DLA panel. Outcomes should be announced by March 31, 2026. Approved candidates will commence doctoral study on 1 Oct 2026.

# 5. CDA Nominated Doctoral Candidate Guidance

## 5.1 Requirements

Applications to be submitted by **4pm,** GMT 15 January 2026 (for attached doctoral candidates) or **4pm, GMT** 9 March 2026 (for recruited doctoral candidates). Late submissions will not be accepted.

Please include:

* Full transcript of your qualifications in English (and where necessary a certified translation should be provided).
* Two academic or professional letters of reference.

## 5.2 Eligibility

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.

While international students are eligible to apply for a DLA studentship, please be aware that the AHRC studentship only covers **home** fees. In 2026, the University of Stirling will require any international awardee to pay the difference between the home and international fees (in 2025, home PhD tuition fees in Arts & Humanities were £5,006 and international PhD tuition fees were £19,500). Funding will not be available from the AHRC beyond the home fee level already covered.

Please note that for visa purposes, international awardees will have to demonstrate that they can pay the difference in fees.

**5.3 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.

1. **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).

1. **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** who have significant professional experience, which is relevant to their 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.

1. **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.

1. **Individual Training Allowance (ITA) and Engagement with the DLA Cohort Training DLA (400 words maximum)**

All awards include a 3.5-year studentship and an additional 6 months of funding that will form an Individual Training Allowance (ITA). You may choose how to use the ITA to maximize your particular research, training, and/or professional needs. Applicants may opt to extend their funded research period and/or fund specific activities, such as fieldwork, internships, visiting doctoral positions and associated costs, etc.

In this section, we want you to detail and explain your plans both for using your ITA and for engaging with the DLA Cohort Training Programme. We understand that plans can change, and applicants will not automatically be locked into programmes they submit at the point of application. However, it is essential that candidates have considered their specific training needs.

SGSAH will require all DLA-funded students to:

* complete foundation training as required by the lead HEI
* complete our DLA Cohort Leadership Programme consisting of an induction, one residential event for each full-time year of study, a symposium in year two and our annual Summer Schools
* be a member of and participate in at least one Skills Development Spoke event and one KE Hub event per annum.

You should meet with your supervisor and discuss what training options might work best for you. Would your programme benefit from fieldwork, language learning, a visit to an international university, or additional funded research time? Why? Check the appropriate box and then describe your plans. The more specific you can be here, the better; do name any prospective partners or activities that you have in mind.

Additional research time can be requested, but do note that using the ITA for this purpose means you will have less funds to allocate for other ITA activities. Further funded research time should only be requested here for specific academic reasons, not simply as a backup in case the thesis is not ready for submission in 3.5 years. All doctoral projects should be carefully designed for submission within their requested programme length, whatever the length.

1. **SGSAH Requirements**

All SGSAH DLA 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 the Skills Development Spokes. You will become a member of at least one KE Hub, and as a CDA doctoral researcher, you may also wish to join a Skills Development Spoke.

# Appendix 1: University of Stirling SGSAH CDA Application 2026

**Partnership Information**

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

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| --- |
| 1. **Partner Organisation(s) (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.*  |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Title of Doctoral Project:**
 |

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| --- |
| 1. **Research Summary (100 words)**

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

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **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*
* *Length of Programme. If this project is likely to require additional funded research time via the awardee’s Individual Training Allowance (up to 6 months) beyond the baseline 42-month length period of the studentship, please explain why here.*
 |

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| 1. **Benefits to partner (200 words)**

*A CDA must demonstrate clear benefits to the partner. Please explain:* * How the proposed research project 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
 |

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| 1. **Benefits to the University of Stirling(200 words)**

*Summary of:* * Strategic alignment between partners
* Added value to Stirling’s research environment
* Benefits and potential further developments
 |

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| --- |
| 1. **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** Name:              Email:             Subject/Division:                                     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:           Email:             Subject/Division:                                     ECR (within six years of their first academic appointment): Yes/No  Supervision allocation (please indicate) 25%  □ 20%  □ 50%  □   Total Number of students supervising currently (as FTE):  Up to six most relevant research outputs:   |
| **Academic Supervisor 3 (if required)** Name:Subject/Division:         Email:             ECR (within six years of their first academic appointment): Yes/No  Supervision allocation (please indicate) 20%  □    Up to six most relevant research outputs:   |
| **Partner Supervisor**  Name:     Email: Organisation:                                           Position: Relevant experience:      |

|  |
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| 1. **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*
 |

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| --- |
| 1. **Project Management (300 words)**

*Project plan including summery of:* * *How the project and supervisory team will be managed and supported*
* *Measures and milestones*
* *Management and contingency planning*
 |

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| --- |
| 1. **Partnership Agreement (200 words)**

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

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| 1. **Ethics and 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. You can find details of the University of Stirling’s Research and Ethics policy and procedure* [*here*](https://www.stir.ac.uk/research/research-ethics-and-integrity/)*.* |

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| --- |
| 1. **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.*
 |

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| 1. **Confirmation of supervisory requirements**

One member of the proposed supervisory team has previously supervised at least one doctoral candidate to successful completion*.*□ All supervisors have completed the supervisory training required for their career stage (as either early career, new to Stirling, or experienced supervisors). □  |

**Appendix 2: SGSAH AHRC CDA Nominated Doctoral Candidate**

CDA Nominated Doctoral Candidates should submit this form via the online application system. Two letters of reference and a full transcript of qualifications in English (and where necessary a certified translation should be provided) should be forwarded to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Postgraduate Research team at: FAH-PGR@stir.ac.uk. If you were attached to original CDA application, your form should be submitted by 4pm GMT on 15 January 2026; if you were recruited for the studentship in spring 2026, your form must be submitted by 4pm GMT on 9 March 2026. If you are not sure which of these deadlines applies to you, check with your supervisor.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

Nominated Doctoral Candidate

|  |
| --- |
| Name   |
| Email   |
| Permanent Address      |
| Correspondence Address if different     |

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| --- |
| 1. **Residency Eligibility**

If the information you provide is inaccurate and results in a change of your fee status at the point of admission, we reserve the right to withdraw any offer made.□ I am a UK national AND will have been ordinarily resident in the UK for three years as of 1st October 2026□ I am an EU, EEA, or Swiss national resident in the UK having obtained pre-settled/settled status AND will have been ordinarily resident in the UK for three years as of 1st October 2026 (please provide immigration share code and your date of birth) □ I am a non-EU national and have settled status in the UK and will have been ordinarily resident in the UK for three years as of 1st October 2026 (please provide documentary evidence of your immigration status in the UK)□ None of the above (I am an international student) |

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| **PhD Programme of Study** Research proposal title:  Partner Organisation:  |

1. **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**  |
|    |   |   |   |
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| 1. **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.*  |

|  |
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| 1. **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.*
 |

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| 1. **Preparedness to Undertake Doctoral Study and Complete a PhD (300 words maximum).**

*Please explain how your academic and/or professional experience has prepared you to undertake this particular doctoral project, and to complete a project of this length within the designated time frame. You may wish to refer to:* 1. *topic(s) and length of successfully-completed dissertations and modules;*
2. *specific and appropriate methodological training and/or expertise (e.g. proficiency in a relevant language, particular IT skills etc.);*
3. *work-based learning or employment in a relevant occupation, etc.;*
4. *notable achievements, either academic (prizes, conference presentations, publications) or non-academic (professional or personal accomplishments, overcoming barriers, etc)*
 |

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| 1. **Individual Training Allowance (ITA) and Engagement with the DLA Cohort Training (400 words)**

*All awards include a 3.5 year studentship and an additional 6 months of funding that will form an Individual Training Allowance that can be to either extend your study period/and or pursue bespoke training opportunities necessary for the completion of your research project and professional goals. In this section, we want to hear how you plan to use your ITA, and how you will engage with the cohort-wide training opportunities offered by the DLA Hub and the University.* *First, check one of the following boxes:* My project requires (Drop-down options):* A 3.5 year studentship + 6 months of additional funded research
* A 3.5 year studentship + 3 months of additional funded research + additional activity (fieldwork, internship, visiting research placement, + associated costs) equivalent to 3 months of funding
* A 3.5 year studentship + additional activity (fieldwork, internship, visiting research placement, + associated costs) equivalent to 6 months of funding
* A 3.5 year studentship + other (explain)

Now, please tell us more about your plans. * Why have you chosen to use your ITA in this way? Why is your chosen combination of additional funded research time and/or additional activity necessary to the successful completion of your project and to your professional development goals? What kinds of activity will you use your funding to pursue?
* How will you contribute to the life of the Hub, and how will the three components of the Hub training offer be relevant to your project?

[ tick box] My supervisor has approved my plans for the ITA and for engaging with the Hub.  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Plagiarism and generative AI**[Tick box] This application constitutes my own original work. I understand that if any plagiarism is detected in the review process, my application may be withdrawn from consideration. [Tick box] In producing my application, I have not used generative AI[Tick box] I have used generative AI in the preparation of my proposal, but only in the terms permissible within UKRI’s [*Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Application Preparation and Assessment*](https://www.ukri.org/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-application-and-assessment-policy/use-of-generative-artificial-intelligence-in-application-preparation-and-assessment/)policy. If you ticked the box above, please describe your use of AI below. In what sections, and for what functions, have you used it? How have you mitigated against the risks of AI use explained in the policy? [300 words maximum] |

**8.SGSAH Requirements**

*All SGSAH DLA 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 the Skills Development Spokes.*

|  |
| --- |
| **You must be a member of at least one Knowledge Exchange 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 DLA Spoke. Please indicate which of the following three you would best fit the project:**Concepts and Critiques   □ Empirical Enquiry   □ Creation and Practice    □  |

**Data Sharing and Storage**

□ I consent to the sharing of aggregated anonymised Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) information with the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH)/DLA Hub to enable them to identify inequality gaps, inform strategic planning and to create an inclusive research environment. This data will not be used to identify individuals.

□ I consent to the sharing of individual details, including title, email address, and research summary, with the SGSAH/DLA Hub. This information will be used to help deliver essential services and comply with funding requirements including delivery of training, network building, and showcasing doctoral research.

Applications from nominees not in receipt of funding will be destroyed by 1st October 2026. Applications from nominees in receipt of funding will be retained for the duration of the studentship. This application may be read by up to twelve reviewers.

**Appendix 3: Assessment criteria for SGSAH AHRC DLA CDA**

Applications submitted to the SGSAH DLA competition can be of a very high standard and the competition for limited funding is intense. The University of Stirling will award one CDA in 2026 to an application 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. Total marks available for award are 24.

1. **Quality of Research Proposal**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Band** | **Mark** | **Description** |
| **A** | 87 |  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. If additional funded research time has been requested, it has compellingly justified. Any ethical/safety issues have been identified and appropriately addressed. The proposal is compelling. |
| **B** | 65 |  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 programme timescale. Any ethical/safety issues have been identified and appropriately addressed. A good case is made for the proposal. |
| **C** | 43 | 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** | 21 | 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** | 65 | 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. 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.Resources available across the University of Stirling 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.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. The research fits well with the expertise and/or priorities of the University of Stirling and partner organisation(s). The benefits to the partner organisation are extremely convincing.  |
| **B** | 4 | 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 University of Stirling 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.  |
| **C** | 3 | 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.  |
| **D** | 21 | 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. The supervisory team does not fulfil the supervisory training requirements in all of its components. The partnership and collaboration offer no clear benefits to the doctoral researcher or to the partner organisation. |

**4. Project Management and Partnership Agreement**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | 65 | 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.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 in place where required. The process for implementing a Partnership Agreement is adequate.  |
| **D** | 21 | 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 inadequate. |

**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 University of Stirling 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 PhD research project. The typical programme duration is 3 ½ years F/T (or 7 P/T), but an additional funded research period of up to six months may be built into the project is there are compelling academic reasons for extension. The studentship 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 a Faculty SGSAH panel composed of the Divisional PGR Directors and the Faculty SGSAH lead.

**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?**

The University of Stirling aims to award one Collaborative Doctoral Award per 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 University of Stirling will assign two academic supervisors to the project. The student will undertake the project with the support of the supervisors. Training will be provided 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 (typically 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 the University of Stirling?**

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, the University of Stirling 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 University of Stirling during this time, and students will be entitled to access ongoing supervision and support from academic staff.

**Does the University of Stirling provide any funding towards the Collaborative Doctoral Awards?**

The University of Stirling pays 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.