

SGSAH Information Session

Applying for an SGSAH Doctoral Studentship

Professor Stuart Piertney
Dr Masha Shaw
Dr Ruth Banks
Mrs Dawn Foster
Mrs Ann-Marie Johnston



Session Overview

- 14:00 Application Overview
- 14:30 Training Section
- 15:00 Impact Section
- 15:30 Ethics Section
- 16:00 Next steps
- 16:05 Q&A
- 16:30 Close

Application Overview

Professor Stuart Piertney
Dean for Postgraduate Research

Welcome and Session Overview

What we will cover:

What you need to know about applying
to the University of Aberdeen for
nomination to the Scottish Graduate
School of Arts and Humanities (SGSAH)
Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)
Student-led Open Competition

GO BEYOND BOUNDARIES

SGSAH DTP



Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities

Applicants can apply to any of the following subject areas:

Archaeology

Divinity, History, Philosophy and
Art History

Language, Literature,
Music and Visual
Culture

Law

SGSAH DTP

Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities



SGSAH strongly encourages applications within their 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

What SGSAH Studentships offer

- Fully funded PhD studentship with a stipend of around £19,237 pa plus fees

Who can apply

- To be eligible you must have been accepted onto an eligible PhD Programme and be nominated by the University
- International candidates are eligible to apply (capped at 30%)

How to apply

Stage 1:

- **Before** submitting an application ensure you have discussed your application with proposed supervisory team
- **Apply** for an eligible PhD programme by **Friday, 29th November 2024**
- **Submit** a Scholarship application by **Friday, 6th December 2024**

How to apply

Stage 2:

Those selected by the University of Aberdeen for nomination will proceed to Stage 2 of the application process and will be required to submit an application to the SGSAH by **14 February 2025**.

Summary of application form

- **Qualifications or relevant professional experience**
 - Weight: 12% of total mark
- **Research Proposal**
 - Weight: 28% of total mark
- **Preparedness for doctoral level study and your proposed project**
 - Weight: 20% of total mark
- **Training needs and Skills Development Plan**
 - Weight: 20% of total mark

What does the Board want to know?



Right project



Right candidate



Right team



Right location



Right funder



Right plan

Assessment criteria

Qualifications OR relevant professional experience (12%)

The relevant professional experience section should only be completed where:

- 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.

Quality of Research proposal, Knowledge Exchange, Public Engagement and Impact (28%)

- Research questions should be clear and demonstrate a comprehensive awareness of the research context and the contribution the proposed project will make to the field.
- Identify a clear gap in existing knowledge and why this gap needs addressing
- Methods should be appropriate and feasible in the timescale
- What is the potential for knowledge exchange, public engagement and/or impact? Plans should be feasible within the timescales
- Identify any ethical/safety issues and how they will be addressed

Preparedness for research (20%)

Evidence preparedness for research through either:

Previous relevant study (e.g. the relevance of undergraduate and Masters programme dissertation topics; specific advanced methodological or skills training; proficiency in required language or technical skills; relevant work-based learning experience

OR

Previous relevant professional experience (e.g. work experience in a relevant field equivalent to Masters study; specific methodological training and/or experience etc.);

AND

Demonstrate an awareness of the training required to successfully complete the project and identify available training (SGSAH and wider)

Institutional Statement (practicalities)

Comprises details of supervisory team and key publications, short boxes (eg on interdisciplinarity, ethics etc), and longer statements:

Supervisory Arrangements and Research Training Environment
(800 words, 20%)

Training and Skills Development Plan (500 words max, 20%)

Nominated candidates will need to complete the SGSAH online application form and upload the Institutional Statement (IS).

Supervisors of successful candidates **must** attend or have already attended a SGSAH Supervisor's Induction Workshop. Please reserve a place via the SGSAH website prior to the nomination being submitted and hold the date in your diary.

Institutional Statement (purpose)

- The statement should demonstrate that the institution offers an excellent fit for the nominated candidate and the research project.
 - ✓ the relevance and fit of the proposal with the proposed supervisory team in its entirety;
 - ✓ the relevance and fit of the research environment; and
 - ✓ the nature of training and level of support to be provided to the student by the supervisory institution(s).
- Applications are assessed out of 50. There are 10 marks for Supervisory Expertise and Research Environment, and 10 for 'Student's Training Needs and the Institution's Proposed Plans and Provision'. That's 40% of the total and the Institutional Statement features heavily in their assessment.

Supervisory expertise

(With Research Environment):

800 Words

10 Marks/50

Why us?

What do the supervisors bring to the project & how to the complement one another (in terms of knowledge, methodologies, or other skills?)

How will supervision be managed? How does this provide the 'best possible' support?

(Cross-institutional arrangements: if so, how; if not, implicitly, why not?)

How are the supervisors (taking career stage in mind) engaged as active researchers demonstrating 'significant and ongoing expertise'?

Key: show this is the best team for this student and this project.

Don't be shy!

Research Environment

With Supervisory Expertise:

800 Words

10 Marks/50

Why the University of Aberdeen?

- How does the project fit with expertise, priorities, clusters in the HEIs?
- What will the student engage with (Research Centres, Disciplinary activities, etc)?
- What about specialist libraries, collections, spaces, and equipment?
- What about engagement, impact, KE?
- Describe how the student will engage with the research environment & how that environment will 'add value' to the project.

Be specific!

Training and Skills Development Plan

500 Words

10 marks in criteria for 'Student Training Needs and Institutional Provision'

What are the specific training needs of the student for the project?

Have the future career aspirations of the applicant been condiered?

How will these needs be fulfilled and by whom over the doctoral programme?
(Eg by HEIs., SGSAH, etc)

Will this leave the candidate in the strongest possible position to complete the project and progress afterwards?

Don't be generic!

SGSAH DTP Open Competition: Training and Skills Development

04 November 2024

Dr Masha Shaw
Postgraduate Research School



SGSAH training framework: key aspects

- A blend of core and bespoke opportunities
 - Applications should particularly capitalise on **bespoke**
- Welcomes collaboration, diversity and interdisciplinarity
 - Applications should **consider** and spotlight these aspects
- Supports career aspirations
 - Applications must show that applicant's **wider career goals** have been considered and there is a plan in place to achieve them

Four pillars of the SGSAH doctoral training programme

- **Foundation: Professional Researcher**
 - Core research management skills, e.g., Research ethics and integrity
 - Delivered by home HEI; mandatory
- **Core: Leadership Programme**
 - Developmental course that equips students to become ethical leaders and influencers in any career path
 - Includes training on Grant writing, Publishing, Wellbeing etc.
- **Specialist: Discipline+ Catalysts**
 - Cutting edge methodological and thematic training that supports disciplinary advancement
 - Doctoral researchers must participate in at least one Catalyst event annually
- **Partnership: Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hubs**
 - Builds links between HEIs and wider society
 - Doctoral researchers must participate in one Hub event annually

The first two pillars are less relevant for the application as they are fully mandatory*. The last two pillars must be reflected in the application: relevant Catalysts and Hubs identified, and relevancy demonstrated. Showing an applicant's potential contribution to Catalysts and Hubs is advantageous for the application.

*Though ok to mention if their importance is clearly articulated and information is specific.

Additional training opportunities

It would be advantageous for applications to draw on these training opportunities, as they are bespoke and therefore better justify the choice of the SGSAH as a funder.

Individual

- Supports individual training and development needs
- There are six schemes available:
 - Doctoral Internship/Artist in Residence
 - Visiting Doctoral Researcher
 - Specialist Training
 - Language Learning
 - Knowledge Exchange and Impact
 - Conference attendance

Collective: Cohort Development Funding

- Doctoral researchers' collaboration
 - Design and delivery of inter/disciplinary, generic and careers-focused events
 - Funding up to £2500 available
- Examples of recent events
 - Writing for an Interdisciplinary Audience
 - How to run a successful virtual event

Training sections of the application

- Training needs should include **new** skills for both the **current project** and **student's future** career aspirations.
 - New **>= build on** and **extend** existing skills.
 - What **new** skills will applicant need to develop to successfully complete their research project?
 - What skills will applicant seek to develop for their **wider** professional development?
- Training needs should demonstrate relevance to SGSAH **beyond** the core programme.
 - What **other** SGSAH opportunities will benefit your project and professional development? (see previous slide for examples)
- Training needs should demonstrate relevance to **home** HEI and **other** HEIs or organisations that will be of benefit to the applicant.

Top Tip: Strong alignment

- **SGSAH** and **Home HEI** opportunities are brought together to demonstrate the **rounded support**.
- Student's and supervisors' training sections must be **constructed collectively***.

*Supervisors' training section is usually more detailed.

AHRC Open Panel Feedback 2024:

“It was evident where applicants had worked closely with supervisor/ supervision team.”

“Compelling alignment between project, candidates' aptitude and training needs, supervisory expertise, and institutional context.”

“Weaker applications did not show evidence of existing relationships or that they had collaborated closely with supervisors/supervision teams on their applications.”

Top Tip: Tailored training provision

Tailored not just to research project but to the applicant's previous experience and future career aspirations.

AHRC Open Panel Feedback 2024:

“Applicants had folded their previous experience into their training plans and needs.”

“Clearly identified and articulated gap in research with joined up solution and knowledge exchange/ public engagement/impact plans appropriate to the nature and scope of the project.”

“Training needs were often the weakest section. Lack of clarity what benefits the candidate would gain from university and SGSAH.”

Top Tip: Specific details

Applications should name specific courses/events/opportunities and show how they would be beneficial for both the project and student.

AHRC Open Panel Feedback 2024:

“Clear training plans with properly articulated timelines.”

“Some training plans are too broad. Preferable to have a year-by-year approach showing bespoke offer.”

“Unfeasible training plans.”

Postgraduate Research College: Resources and Opportunities*

- Postgraduate Research College

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/pgrs/>

- Optional Courses and Resources

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/pgrs/training-development/optional-courses-and-resources-917.php>

- Events and Opportunities

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/pgrs/training-development/events-and-competitions-397.php>

*Please email pgrs-training@abdn.ac.uk to enquire about specific courses as information on the website might be out-of-date.

What assessors look for in training sections

- ***Thorough*** assessment of training requirements
- ***Feasible*** training and development plan
- ***Sufficient*** infrastructure in place for the applicant to complete their research project and pursue their career aspirations

Thank you!

Questions about training? pgrs-training@abdn.ac.uk

GO BEYOND BOUNDARIES

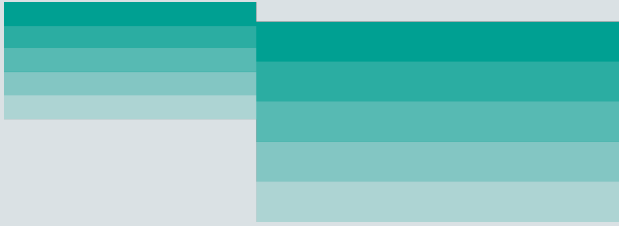
SGSAH Student Information Session 2024

Dr Ruth Banks

Research Impact Manager

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SCOTTISH 
GRADUATE 
SCHOOL FOR 
ARTS & 
HUMANITIES 

Sgoil Ceumnachaidh na h-Alba airson
Ealain agus Daonnachdan

Today's session will cover:

- Feedback from 2024 applications
- What makes a strong application
- Role of impact & knowledge exchange in a strong application
- How planning for SMART impact can strengthen your application

Feedback from 2024 applications

- After the 2024 AHRC DTP review process, reviewers were invited to respond to a series of questions
- Features of strong/higher-ranked applications and advice for future applicants
- This feedback can be used to assist applications for 2025 and can be accessed on the SGSAH page here: [Media_1118521_smxx.pdf](#)

What makes a strong application?

- Be clear about the **gap in research** that your project aims to fill.
- Think about who might be affected your research.
- **Explain the reasoning** for your approaches to knowledge exchange and wider dissemination, otherwise they feel ‘tacked on.’
- Make an effort to **communicate to a more general** review panel rather than highly specialised. Avoid using jargon.



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Impact = benefit

Role of impact & KE in an application

Higher ranking proposals

- **Evidence of existing partnerships** regarding KE/ impact, as this shows clear trajectory of engagement i.e. having a 'backstory'.
- **Clearly identified and articulated gap** in research with **joined up** solution and knowledge exchange/ public engagement/ impact **plans appropriate to the nature and scope** of the project.
- Compelling alignment between project, candidates' aptitude and **training needs**, supervisory expertise, and **institutional context**.



Lower ranking proposals

- Weaker applications – **no evidence of existing relationships** or that they had collaborated closely with supervisors/supervision teams on their applications.
- Could be stronger on contribution to knowledge.
- Research questions were **out of date/ not current**.
- Impact plans were **vague**.



Planning for SMART impact

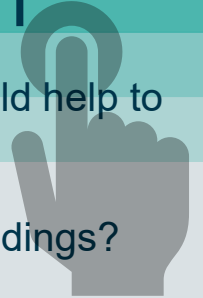
- **Academic Impact** is the demonstrable contribution to your disciplinary area.

Economic and Societal Impact is the demonstrable contribution to society and the economy.

S	Specific	Make your goal specific and narrow for more effective planning	
M	Measurable	Make sure your goal and progress are measurable	
A	Achievable	Make sure you can reasonably accomplish your goal within a certain time frame	
R	Relevant	Your goal should align with your values and long-term objectives	
T	Time-based	Set a realistic but ambitious end date to clarify task prioritization and increase motivation	

How planning for SMART impact can strengthen your application

- What is happening now – or not happening – that you think your research findings could help to change? This could be in your research field or in the wider world.
- Who might be interested in your research? Who could be affected by your research findings?
- How would you let these groups or communities know about your research ? How might they benefit?
- How will you engage with these groups or communities? How can working with these communities help your research? Would your project benefit from planned knowledge exchange activities?
- How would you demonstrate/evidence any changes resulting from your research findings, bearing in mind that you will be able to apply for funding to develop impact?



The dimensions of SMART impact

- **Who:** Who is affected by the research? Who experiences the impact (benefit)?
- **What:** What is the intended outcome? What types of impact can be generated?
- **When:** When does the impact occur?
- **How:** How do you know impact has occurred? Who is best able to provide evidence of the impact?

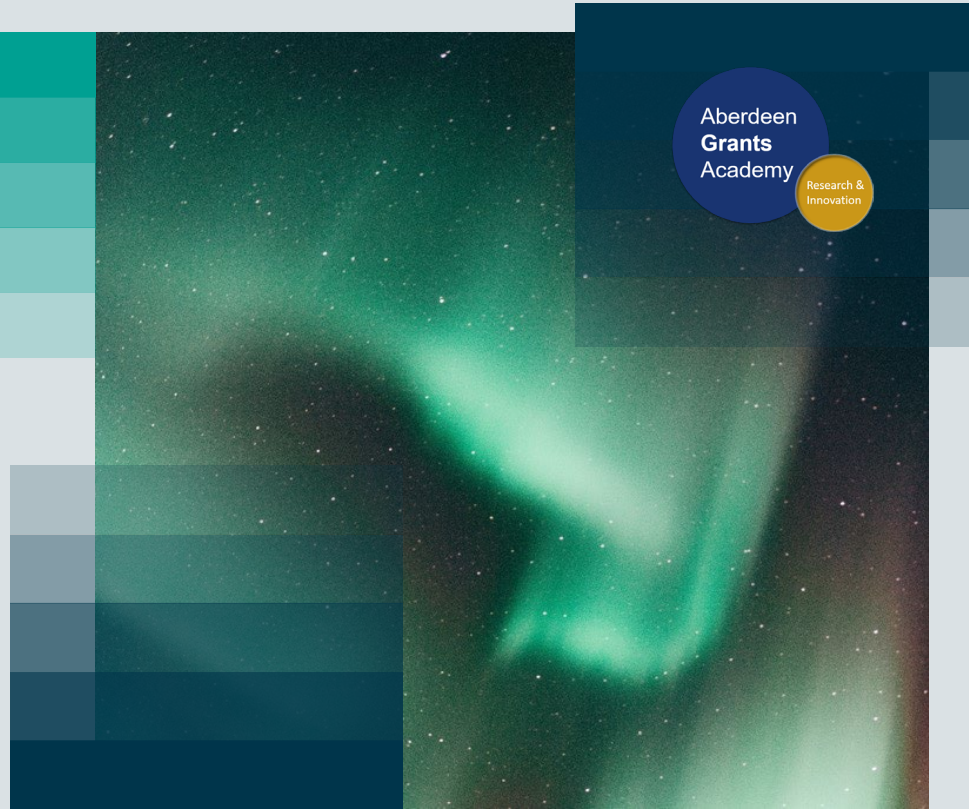
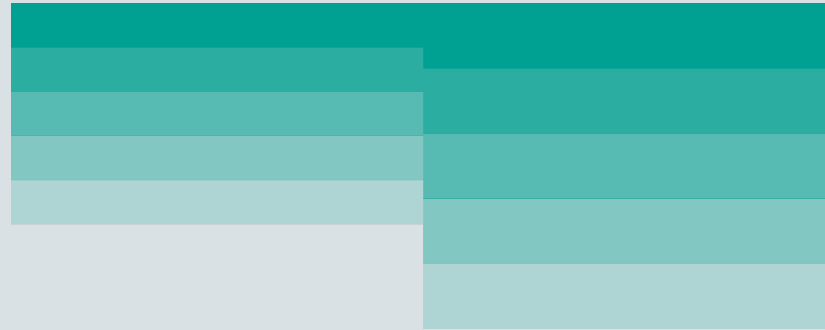
Thanks for listening

- Contact the impact team: impact@abdn.ac.uk

Useful resources:

- [I want to learn more about impact | Fast Track Impact](#)
- [5 ways to fast track the impact of your PhD](#)
- [A Guide to “Impact” in Research – PhDLife Blog](#)

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SGSAH Information Session - Ethics Input

SGSAH Information Session

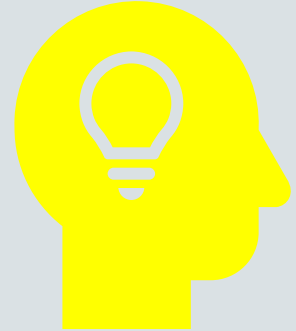
- **Ethics and Research Integrity (300 words)**

*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.*

(*Section 3, [University of Aberdeen Research Governance Handbook](#))

Think about your project

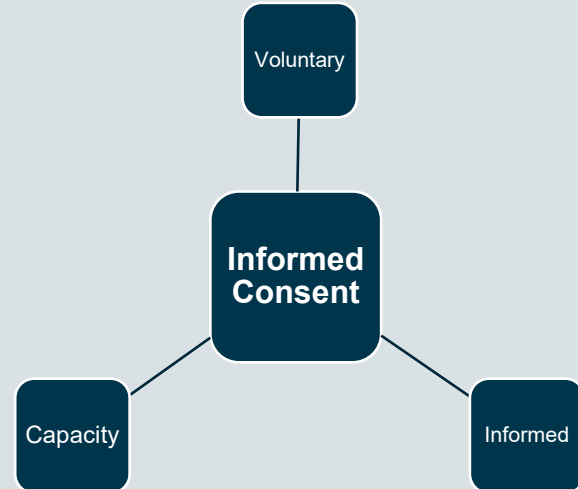
- Topic
- Methodology
- Minimise risk, avoid harm
- Data Collection, Confidentiality, Data Security
- Legal Compliance
- Transparency



Potential ethical concerns

Where research involves:

- **Human participants**
 - Methodologies
 - Informed consent
 - Recruitment processes
 - Financial incentives
 - Existing relationships
 - Organisational gatekeepers
 - External ethical approval?



Special Consideration

- ! Vulnerable participants, including children or those who lack capacity to give consent
- ! Research into sensitive topics or involving [special category data](#)
- ! Covert research

Potential ethical concerns

Where research involves:

- **Personal Data** (Information about a living individual, which allows you to identify who they are either from that information alone or in conjunction with other available information.)
 - General Data Protection Regulation (UK) and UK Data Protection Act (2018)
 - Use of personal data must comply with the above, whether it is primary data obtained directly from your research activity, or secondary data obtained from another source.
 - Further advice – Data Protection Officer, Jody Mckenzie (dpa@abn.ac.uk)

Potential ethical concerns

Where research involves:

- **Human remains**

- Museums Association – [Code of Ethics for Museums](#)
- Historic Environment Scotland – [The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology](#)
- British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology - [Our Codes of Conduct – BABAO](#)



Potential ethical concerns

Where research involves:

- **Possibility of harm** to researchers (or research participants) or the University as an institution (e.g. reputational damage)
- **Possibility of harm to others not directly involved in the research**

Potential ethical concerns

Where research involves:

- Potential impact on the **natural environment**
- Use of **historical artefacts or cultural objects**
- **Conflicts of interest in research – University’s [Code of Practice](#)**
- Where research activity might involve the sharing of data or confidential information **beyond the initial consent given** (e.g. using secondary data)

Potential safety concerns

Where research involves:

- Risk of harm to health, physical injury or psychological harm to participants or the researcher
 - Location hazards
 - Activity hazards
 - [Risk assessment](#)
- Travel outwith the UK
 - [University Policy on Overseas Travel](#)
 - [Overseas travel risk assessment](#)
- [Safeguarding](#) risks
 - Safeguarding in Research & Innovation – [Code of Practice](#)
 - Safeguarding – [Overview](#)
 - Safeguarding plan - [Template](#)



Mandatory Training

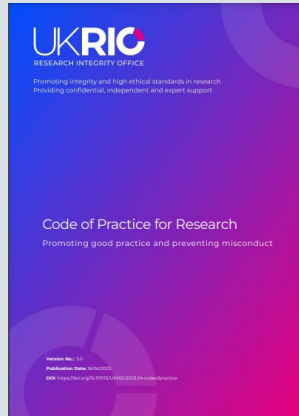
Mandatory online training courses (MyAberdeen)

- [Research Ethics & Governance](#) (3 modules)
- [Research Integrity](#) (6 modules)

Other Sources of Information



Code of Practice for Research: Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct



Guidance from Professional Associations

Discipline / Topic	Association and Guidance Document
Accountancy	European Accounting Association
Anthropology	Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth Association of Professional Sociologists for Good Practice Checked website for Anthropology: Code of Conduct
Archaeology	The Association of Human Remains in Archaeology (Association of Archaeologists)
Biological Anthropology & Forensic Anthropology	British Association for Biological Anthropology and Forensic Anthropology Checked website for Biological Anthropology: Code of Conduct
Computing Science	Association for Computing Machinery: Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
Countering	British Association for Countering & Psychotherapy: Ethical and Professional Standards Association of Professional Sociologists for Good Practice
Contemporary	British Society of Criminology: Statement of Ethics for Researchers in the Field of Criminology Royal Criminal Justice Society
Economics	European Economic Association American Economic Association
Education	British Educational Research Association: Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research Checked website for Educational Research: Code of Ethics
Engineering	Joint Statement of Ethical Principles: Royal Academy of Engineering and the Engineering Council
Geography	American Association of Geographers: Statement on Professional Ethics
History	Code of Ethics: Society of the UK: Ethical Guidelines
Internet / Social Media Research	Association of Internet Researchers: Ethical Guidelines Checked website for Internet Research: Code of Ethics
Law (non legal)	Social Legal Studies Association: Statement of Principles of Ethical Research
Management	Academy of Management: Code of Ethics
Mathematics	American Mathematical Society: Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct
Politics	Ethical Guidelines: Guidelines for Good Professional Conduct by BPSA
Psychology	British Psychological Society: Ethics Guidelines Checked website for Psychology: Code of Ethics
Real Estate	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors: Rules of Conduct
Social Research	Social Research Association: Ethical Guidelines
Sociology	The British Sociological Association: Statement of Ethical Principles Checked website for Sociology: Code of Ethics
Third Sector Research	Society's Third Sector Research Forum (TSRF): Guide to good practice Checked website for Third Sector Research: Code of Ethics
Visual Research	UK Society for Research Methods Review: Paper Review Ethics: Ethical Issues in Visual Research by BPSA

Good research resource hub – UKRI

The screenshot shows the UKRI website's 'Good research resource hub'. It features a navigation bar with links like 'Apply for funding', 'Manage your award', and 'What we do'. A search bar is present in the top right. Below the navigation, there are buttons for 'Accept your offer', 'Get your funding', 'UKRI terms and conditions', 'Request a change', and 'Report your outcomes'. The main content area includes a breadcrumb trail 'Home > Manage your award > Good research resource hub', a heading 'Good research resource hub', and a paragraph explaining the hub's purpose: 'We want to foster a research and innovation system where diverse and dynamic people and ideas can thrive. This research resource hub brings together policies, standards and guidance to support researchers, innovators and organisations, nurturing an inclusive research and innovation environment.' Below this, there are sections for 'Ethics and integrity', 'Ethical research and innovation', 'Research integrity', 'Human participants in research', 'Research with children and young people', 'Involving animals in research', and 'Research in emergencies', each with a brief description of the resources available.

Next steps

Ann-Marie Johnston

Next Steps – Stage 1 Internal application

29 Nov 2024	Deadline for PhD Application and Studentship application
6 Dec 2024	Deadline for Studentship application
w/c 16 Dec 2024	Internal Review Panels
20 Dec 2024	Outcome of application for nomination
20 Dec 2024 – 10 Jan 2025	Redrafting of application
20 Dec 2023 – 10 Jan 2024	Drafting Institutional Statement of Support
15 Jan 2025	Supervisor Workshop Q&A
18-28 Jan 2025	Final Edits of Application and ISS
1 Feb 2025	Internal sign off on application and ISS

Next Steps – Stage 2 SGSAH Application

1-14 February 2025	SGSAH electronic application system will open
14 February 2025	Application Deadline
Mid-April	Outcome

SGSAH online process involves:

- Completing the electronic application form
- Uploading one single pdf of your academic transcripts
- Uploading the pdf Institutional Statement of Support
- Uploading confirming of your offer of a PhD place from the University of Aberdeen

Applications will be reviewed by a Panel of disciplinary reviewers and final decisions are made by the SGSAH DTP Executive Committee.

Any Questions?