

Economic and Social Research Council


PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESRC POSTGRADUATE TRAINING FRAMEWORK




Professor Kevin Lee (ESRC Training and Development Board)




ESRC: Our Role

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- § To promote and support, by any means, high quality basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training in the social sciences
 - § To advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists who meet the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the UK, the effectiveness of public services and policy and the quality of life
 - § To provide advice on, and disseminate knowledge and promote public understanding of the social sciences


ESRC: Strategic Role in Postgraduate Training and Research Career Development

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- § Key strategic role in seeking to maintain the long term health of a world class social science research base.
 - § Focus in very much on excellence through the provision of high quality postgraduate training and structured development opportunities at all stages of the research career trajectory
 - § Investment of over £250m in the last five years, making the Council the largest single funder of social science doctoral training within the UK.
 - § Funding around 3,000 studentships at any one time alongside more than 150 fellowships per annum and a variety of other development opportunities


Background: The current postgraduate framework

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- § Supports a national network of accredited training outlets (departments, schools, faculties) and individual accredited masters courses.
 - § Accreditation or 'recognition' of outlets and courses based on *Postgraduate Training Guidelines* which set core and subject specific training quality benchmarks.
 - § ESRC students can only be hosted within recognised outlets and be registered on recognised courses.
 - § ESRC studentships allocated to outlets through quota system (around 450 awards per year) and secured through open studentship competitions (roughly 250-300 awards per year) and on research grants and centres (approx 50 awards per annum)


Review of the current framework

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- § To sustain commitment to excellence the Council's Training and Development Board has recently conducted a major review programme
 - § **Key Findings:**
 - § Current framework had done much to raise the quality of postgraduate training provision across the UK social science community
 - § In order to sustain the drive for excellence there is now a need to build on these strong foundations and refresh the current framework
 - § Emphasis on greater flexibility to harness and develop innovation and good practice across the social science community.


Responding to the review evidence

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- § **Delivery of training:** introduction of national network of ‘recognised’ Doctoral Training Centres and Doctoral Training Units, to replace outlet and course recognition
 - § **Content of training:** fundamental revision of the *Postgraduate Training Guidelines* with a stronger focus on core training provision alongside increased flexibility to develop discipline specific and interdisciplinary training pathways
 - § **Structure of training:** introduction of more flexible 3,4 and exceptionally 5 year postgraduate training pathways. Enable institutions to ‘recycle’ studentship funding rather than returning remaining monies to ESRC


Doctoral Training Centres and Doctoral Training Units: a new way to deliver excellence

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- § Based on the review evidence, the current proposals are to create a national network of major Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) and smaller Doctoral Training Units (DTUs)
 - § It is anticipated that there will be around 25 DTCs and a potentially larger network of DTUs
 - § The network of DTCs and DTUs will be created through a competitive peer reviewed process


DTCs: key features

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light blue, and dark blue.
- § Hosted in a major centre of excellence in social science research and training
 - § Embedded within a first rate research environment offering world leading or internationally excellent research across a broad range social science disciplines
 - § Can offer high quality and coherent postgraduate training infrastructure across a broad range of social science disciplines.
 - § Can offer training provision that extends beyond the core training requirements set out in the revised Postgraduate Training Guidelines (e.g. advanced methodological training, advanced transferable skills development)
 - § Will support the development of the Council's broader strategic objectives, particularly to build new research capacity in key national shortage areas and in substantive research areas identified in the ESRC Strategic Plan


DTUs: key features

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- § As with DTCs, essential to maintaining excellence in postgraduate training across the UK social science community
 - § Embedded within a first rate research environment offering world leading or internationally excellent research and offering high quality and coherent postgraduate training infrastructure
 - § **Key difference** the **breadth** and **depth** of social science research and training infrastructure.
 - § DTU expected to provide training across a smaller number of social science disciplines located within a high quality research environment.


DTC and DTUs: Organisation

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- § DTCs and DTUs can assume a variety of organisational forms.
 - § Single institution – where the research and training infrastructure across the social sciences is strong enough to support a DTC.
 - § Collaborative – where more than one institution collaborate to provide the strength and depth of social science research and training excellence to create a DTC
 - § ‘Interdisciplinary’ – where an institution or collaborating institutions have a strong focus on high quality interdisciplinary research and training

Interdisciplinary, Knowledge Transfer and Impact

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- § Greater flexibility will support key Council commitment to promoting inter-disciplinarity.
 - § DTCs and DTUs will be expected to offer innovative, interdisciplinary training pathways, particularly where they reflect substantive research priorities identified in ESRC's Strategic Plan
 - § The Council also committed to maximising KT and Impact. DTCs will be able to fund CASE studentships.
 - § Enhanced flexibility in the use of studentship funding will also enable more innovative opportunities to co-fund studentships with public, private and third sector organisations

Implementing the Framework

A vertical bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.

§ The national network of DTCs and DTUs will be set up through a competitive, peer reviewed application process, that will commence at the end of 2009

§ ***Key provisional dates***


- Call for applications – October 2009
- ESRC Training and Development Board agrees DTU/DTC network and quota allocations – July 2010
- Council approves decisions on–October 2010
- Institutions informed of outcome – November 2010
- Students start under revised framework- October 2011

ESRC Fellowship Opportunities

- 
- A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of several colored segments: orange, yellow, light green, light blue, and dark blue.
- n Portfolio of Fellowship Opportunities aimed at building research capacity across the academic life course
 - n **Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme** – early career stage, improving retention of trained people who wish to pursue academic careers
 - n **Mid-Career Development Scheme** – opportunity for established researchers to take their research in a new direction/to a new level
 - n **Professorial Fellowship Scheme** – to enable UK’s top social scientists to carry out work of the highest international quality. Also, role in contributing to the development of research capacity


Other Strategic Initiatives/Investments

Strategic Initiatives in Priority Areas




n Including: Advanced Quantitative Methods; Economics; Education; Language Based Area Studies; Management and Business Studies; Social Work; Socio-legal Studies

Capacity Building Clusters



n Four in Business Research and Engagement, two in Third Sector (third currently being commissioned) - build new generation of researchers with higher level skills and commitment to apply and disperse research knowledge for wider economic and societal impact.

Researcher Development Initiative



n Round 4– Summer 2009 – part of a robust training infrastructure supporting activities at all stages of research career