

Economic and Social Research Council


LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN RESEARCH COUNCIL PRACTICE




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Developments in ESRC Practice

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- 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.
- § Strategy – Impact through Skilled People
 - § Investment in Training
 - § Postgraduate Training Framework
 - § Collaboration across HEIs
 - § Knowledge Exchange and Impact
 - § Enhanced Flexibility


Strategy – Impact through Skilled People

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- § Health of social science research base as well as contributing to a competitive, knowledge based UK economy
 - § Focus on excellence in Postgraduate Training
 - § Enhancing opportunities for Knowledge Exchange and Impact
 - § Targeted initiatives to tackle skills deficits – Quantitative Social Science
 - § Flexible provision for doctoral training – adapted to individual student needs
 - § Harmonisation with other RC approaches wherever feasible


Investment in Postgraduate Training

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- § Studentship Funding in 2009/10 was £42m
 - § Investment of over £250m in the last five years, making the Council the largest single funder of social science doctoral training within the UK.
 - § Around 2,800 students supported at any one time


A National Postgraduate Training infrastructure

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- § The revised Framework has been developed after a major review programme involving consultation with a wide array of social scientists and other stakeholders.
 - § Proposals tested and further refined after a major series of regional ‘town meetings’ in early 2009. Final approval of proposals by ESRC Council in April 2009
 - § New arrangements seek to build upon the considerable strengths that already exist in postgraduate training provision right across the UK social science research


ESRC Postgraduate Training Framework

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- § Founded on the creation of a national network of accredited Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) and smaller Doctoral Training Units (DTUs)
 - § Accreditation will be at the ‘institutional level’
 - § Network - up to 25 DTCs and an unlimited number of DTUs to ensure that excellence is captured from right across the sector
 - § DTCs – quota allocation with a strategic steer
 - § Both DTCs and DTUs – access competition and project-linked awards.


Collaboration Across DTC/DTU Network

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- § DTCs and DTUs can assume a variety of organisational forms -
 - § Single institution – bringing together the research training infrastructure across the social sciences to support a DTC
 - § Collaborative – different models - where two or more institutions work together to create a stronger social science research training environment
 - § Also looking to DTCs to open up advanced and specialist training–
 - § Enable students outside the DTC to access specialist training
 - § Facilitate regional and national provision of specialist courses


Enhancing Knowledge Transfer and Impact

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- § Current opportunities at doctoral stage - CASE and Student Internships
 - § Student Internships co-funded with 30 plus non-academic partners in 2009/10
 - § Enhanced flexibility in the use of studentship funding - opportunities to co-fund studentships with public, private and third sector organisations
 - § Also looking to create more flexible and adaptable workforce - by expanding and integrating transferable skills development into postgraduate training
 - § Number of other opportunities for people flow at different career stages

Greater Flexibility

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- § The Framework will create greater flexibility for DTCs or DTUs to:
 - § determine *when* subject specific and core training should be delivered along any training pathway
 - § utilise a more flexible range of 3,4 and 5 year funding models
 - § Recycle funding allocated for specific studentship awards
 - § DTCs – greater flexibility in the use of their funding allocation – akin to DTG model – to:
 - § Allocate some funding to build capacity aligned to institutional strategic priorities
 - § tailor funding to meet individual student needs
 - § Utilise funding to co-fund studentships e.g interdisciplinary studentships using other Research Council funding or collaborative studentships with non-academic partners.

Implementing the Framework – Key dates

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- Call for applications – 1 September 2009
 - Closing date – 11 March 2010
 - Peer review - April-May 2010
 - Institutions informed of accreditation outcome – End July/August 2010
 - DTCs informed of quota allocation – October 2010
 - Students start under revised framework- October 2011