

Call for Studentship Proposals October 2021 Entry

06/05/2020



Changes for 2021

- All Studentship Applications to be made via the online form (goes live 1st July 2020)
- Research costs over £9,600 will not be considered
- Clarification of the policy on match-funded Studentships
- Supervisors of match-funded Studentships will be allowed to nominate up to one reserve candidate
- Clarification that applicant quality is the primary metric considered in making awards
- Statement of expertise of the Supervisor in the area of the studentship project required, and research outputs attributable to the Primary Supervisor in the same area to be listed
- Project-specific text for Twitter-feed requested
- Conform that Supervisors may not submit a project proposal this round if they were awarded an ARIES studentship in the preceding year.

Primary Supervisors should complete the **online form**.

Due to the limitations of Microsoft Forms, you will not be able to edit your submission once sent. We recommended **keeping a copy using the separate indicative form supplied in Word format**, so you can revise and re-submit the online form if necessary. Please do not submit the indicative form.

Online form opens: 1st July 2020

Deadline for submission to Institutional Sift Panel (to be added by the institute): _____

Deadline for final submission to ARIES (via online form): Friday 11th September 2020

Project and candidate selection criteria

The Sift Panels will consider the following criteria in making their selection:

A. Proposals must **fall within the NERC remit**. Projects should also fit within at least one of the **five ARIES Research Themes** (see <https://www.aries-dtp.ac.uk/work-with-us/aries-research-themes/>). Projects at the borders between NERC science and that of other Research Councils are welcome. These latter proposals should, where appropriate, be submitted for **joint funding** through one of our collaborative funding schemes; currently these exist with the BBSRC Norwich Research Park (NRP) and ESRC South East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) DTPs. Separate announcements will be made in due course.

B. The following criteria, which are **equally weighted**, are used to score the project:

1. Excellence of the Scientific Experience

- The Supervisor has excellent expertise and experience **in the topic of the research project**, and this is complemented, where appropriate, by that of the Supervisory team
- The student will be engaged in rewarding and relevant research that will provide them with a **first class research experience**

- The student will be able to demonstrate a level of **independence and originality**, to test ideas and hypotheses, and to make a contribution to learning that would be potentially worthy of publication
- A high-quality research environment exists that will support the student on all levels (i.e. intellectually and practically)

2. Suitability, Feasibility and Quality of the Project

- The project should be **well-suited to a PhD**. It must provide opportunities for intellectual challenge, whilst having a clear expectation that objectives can reasonably be met by a student at postgraduate level
- The proposal should have **clearly articulated aims**, with a methodology that is well defined and **scientifically rigorous**
- The project is feasible within the given **financial and time constraints**
- Risks to the project are identified, and **robust contingency plans described** that would allow the student to successfully conclude a programme of doctoral level research in the event of delays or failure of the original work plan

3. Excellence of Scientific Training

- Proposals should demonstrate a high level of commitment to excellence in provision of **appropriate and necessary research training** by the Supervisory team and their research groupings
- Training offered should lead to the development of **advanced research skills**, and not necessarily only within the narrower focus of the project (i.e. they should also be **multidisciplinary**)
- Good prospects for **employability** identified

C. The advertisement should be compelling and intelligible to potential applicants, and meet all stated requirements. The proposal may otherwise be rejected, or returned for amendment before the submission by the final deadline date above.

Final selection

Final acceptance of projects submitted by Institutional Sift Panels is made by the ARIES Studentship Selection Panel, which reserves the right to reject proposals or return them for amendment, and to apply strategic criteria as outlined below. The decision of the Panel is final.

Match-funding and CASE Awards

ARIES awards Studentships primarily on the basis of **applicant excellence** (with some variances described below), and offers are made in accordance with the rank-ordered list provided to the ARIES Strategy Board by the Studentship Selection Panel.

ARIES has a target of 35% CASE awards and a second target of 70% of awards to be either CASE or Collaborative. Where candidates are equally (or very closely) ranked then the Panel may give priority to the candidate of a CASE or Collaborative project in order to maintain these targets.

Where 50% match-funding is offered from a source *external*¹ to the HEI of registration, and where this is confirmed in writing prior to the autumn ARIES Strategy Board (28th September 2020), then the Studentship will be advertised as a 'funded opportunity'. In this instance, nominees are not ranked and, if deemed 'appointable' by the Selection Panel, will be offered an award. A reserve candidate (one only) may also be nominated, should the first nominee withdraw or decline an award

¹ Examples of eligible match funding include 50% DTP + 50% non-HEI Host; 32.5% DTP + 17.5% HEI Host + 50% external non-HEI partner. An HEI Host may **not** offer more than 17.5% co-funding (i.e. the mandatory 35% HEI co-funding applied to the 50% match funded by the DTP). Please contact the ARIES DTP inbox to discuss.

prior to the NERC Universal Acceptance Date (usually the third Wednesday in March), and provided that the reserve candidate is also deemed 'appointable' by the Selection Panel.

The Strategy Board will limit the number of such match-funded opportunities advertised. If 50% match-funding is confirmed *after* the Strategy Board, but ahead of the nomination deadline (4th February 2021), then the nominee will be ranked with all other candidates, but the Panel may take a strategic view on promoting their selection. No reserve nominee will be considered in this case.

ARIES Studentships

ARIES studentships include tuition fees and a stipend at standard NERC rates for 3.5 years (except as discussed below), and an amount towards research costs (see below).

Candidates from Numerical Disciplines

ARIES wishes to encourage applications from students with high level numerical skills, but no prior degree-level exposure to environmental sciences. We therefore operate a scheme whereby 3 months of additional stipend are awarded to qualifying applicants (see <https://www.aries-dtp.ac.uk/supervisors/additional-funding/>). These PGRs must take advanced-level courses in their chosen branch of environmental sciences in the first 3 – 9 months of study.

For a project to be eligible for this, Supervisors **must indicate in their project advertisement** that applicants with numerate degrees would be acceptable (e.g. Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Engineering). Supervisors will be asked to indicate candidates they believe to be eligible at the nomination stage. The Studentship Selection Panel will assess these nominations, and may select up to three awardees for the additional award.

Research Costs

ARIES allows for a **notional average** of £8,000 of research costs per studentship. The actual costs required must be **fully justified** using the ARIES DTP Research Costs Form. Requests for funding above the notional value will be considered, but Sift Panels are required to limit the average request from their institute to £8,000. Individual requests above £9,600 will not be considered. Costs that the Strategy Board considers excessive, unnecessary or insufficiently justified may also be disallowed.

The [NERC Specific DTP2 Terms and conditions](#) state that "Research Organisations must ensure that adequate facilities and resources are made available", and there is an expectation that hosting institutions will provide 'standard' computer facilities to PhD students. The DTP may, in exceptional circumstances, consider requests for the purchase of computer equipment where adequately justified on the basis of student need and/or research-specific requirements.

In addition to the above, the DTP also holds central funds of £2,500 available to each student for their attendance at conferences and external training events (conditions will apply).

ARIES Joint Studentships

Separate guidance will be supplied, and a similar submission procedure will be used. ARIES is the lead DTP for both the ARIES-SeNSS and ARIES-NRPDTP Joint Studentship schemes for students starting in 2021.

Supporting Documents

All information on how to submit your supporting documents and relevant forms can be found on the [ARIES website](#).