

BBSRC/NERC DTPs

Joint DTP Studentship Proposals

October 2021 Entry

15/06/2020



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 Sift Panel (word form): 17th August 2020

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

Proposals will be considered for suitability as a Joint Studentship by representatives of both DTPs before confirmation by the ARIES Strategy Board.

Primary supervisors may only submit one project, but they may also submit project proposals to the general ARIES studentship round.

The BBSRC Norwich Research Park Biosciences DTP (NRPDTP) and the NERC Advanced Research and Innovation in Environmental Sciences (ARIES) DTP will sponsor one Joint Studentship per annum.

Studentships

Studentships will be led and funded either by the NRPDTP or by the ARIES DTP on an annual rotation. For 2021 the studentship is ARIES-led.

- The merit of the project will be determined by the ARIES selection process.
- Projects should build on the strengths of both DTPs, be within the remit of both Research Councils, and fall within the research areas of both DTPs (see Appendix).
- The cross-DTP collaboration must be clearly defined and justified under the “Supplementary Project Description” section.

Funding

The period of study, level of funding (including RTSG), and terms and conditions will be commensurate with those of ARIES.

Supervisors

- For ARIES-led projects the Primary Supervisor may be from any ARIES host organisation (including UEA) and the collaborating Co-supervisor must be an NRPDTP eligible supervisor.
- Primary Supervisors must meet the eligibility requirements of ARIES.
- It is expected that the Supervisory team reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the research with the aim of building new, or strengthened, research networks.

Advertising

- Following approval by the ARIES Strategy Board Joint Studentships will be advertised under the banner of both DTPs (using appropriate logos from BBSRC, NERC and the DTPs).
- A maximum of three Joint Studentships will be advertised each year.
- Any relevant eligibility or funding information pertinent to the project as a Joint Studentship will be included in the adverts.

Interviews

- Candidates will be interviewed by the ARIES Interview Panel, with a representative of the NRPDTP (not the supervisor/co-supervisor) participating in the process.

Offers

- Offer letters will make clear that the Studentship is a joint Studentship and will have both Research Council/DTP logos.
- The length of the Studentship and the value (including RTSG) will be stated.

Training

- The student will follow the induction and training, learning and development programme of ARIES.
- The supervisory team and training managers will be expected to ensure that the student has the relevant information for the training programmes of both DTPs and is guided to make appropriate training choices to enhance their skills and professional development.

Cohort based training

- The student will undertake the cohort-based training of ARIES.
- The student will be expected to take part in **at least one cohort activity of the NRPDTP**.
- The student will give at least one presentation to the NRPDTP, in a cohort session, to make the joint nature of the Studentship meaningful and to cross-communicate with students from the other DTP.

Internship

- Opportunities may exist to undertake an optional internship or placement; PIPS is not a mandatory requirement of NERC DTPs.

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 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

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.

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).

Supporting Documents

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