

Recruitment Procedure

17/04/2023



Advertising Allocation for non-HEI Hosting Partners

We allocate a quota of studentship advertisements to non-HEI hosting partners according to the ratio of [NERC income/DTP membership] as shown in Table 1¹

Table 1: advertising quota: non-HEI hosting partners

Partner	NERC income (£millions)*	NERC income (% of total)	DTPs in which organisation is involved**	NERC income/DTP involvement	Advertising Quota
BAS	29.15	30.25	5	6.05	3
BGS	15.28	15.86	8	1.98	1
BTO	0.13	0.13	1	0.13	1
CEH	32.24	33.46	9	3.72	2
EI	0.01	0.01	1	0.01	1
IoZ	0.55	0.57	3	0.19	1
JIC	0.34	0.35	1	0.35	1
MBA	1.90	1.97	2	0.99	1
PML	16.75	17.38	2	8.69	3

* from Scopus, ISI, NERC GOTW and Partner finance offices provided for ARIES bid, 2018

** number of NERC DTPs in which organisation is a member

Advertisement Allocation for HEI Partners

We allocate a quota of studentship advertisements to non-HEI hosting partners according to the ratio of [NERC income/DTP membership] as shown in Table 2¹

Table 2: advertising quota: HEI hosting partners

Partner	NERC income ***	NERC income (% of total)	Quota by notional schools	Quota by NERC income	Advertising Quota
UEA	17.01	62.99	6	19	25
UoE	2.90	10.72	2	3	5
UoK	0.00	0	2	0	2
UoP	5.84	19.25	4	6	10
RHUL	1.56	7.03	2	2	4

***NERC income from GoTW 13 December 2022 "Active NERC Research Grants for Schools in ARIES"

¹ Calculations for quotas are based on the assumption of awarding 20 studentships in 2024. Any change in this will be reflected proportionally.

Call for Studentship Proposals

In May 2023 a call for proposals will be made. Institutional Sift panels have the responsibility of selecting studentship proposals up to the quota allocated and coordinating submission of these to the DTP using the online studentship proposal form. Detailed instructions will be issued each year with the ARIES Call for Studentship Proposals.

Advertisement

Each HEI is responsible for advertising studentships for which it will act as the Registering University, including those hosted at a non-HEI. The ARIES Office will coordinate advertising of all proposals on the ARIES website, and through social media.

Match-funded Opportunities

Studentship proposals that have confirmed 50% match-funding at point of submission to ARIES will be advertised as such and candidates will be prioritised so long as they are ranked in the top 2/3 of our applicants following the DTP interview (see 'Funding Priorities' below). We recognise that not all funding from external sources may be confirmed at this stage. Match-funding is welcomed at any time but securing match-funding prior to **7 March 2024** will mean the candidate is eligible for prioritisation in this manner. If a PI is seeking match-funding that may be confirmed at a later date, we ask that this is indicated on the proposal form.

Applications

Applications will be made to the University of Registration for individual projects that have been approved for advertising by ARIES. Primary supervisors will be informed by support staff at the University of Registration when they have an applicant. Local support staff will also advise of applicants' eligibility for NERC funding.

Candidates may apply for **up to three** ARIES projects each year. Swapping of candidates between projects is not permitted. If a supervisor feels that an applicant would be better suited to an alternative project, they may contact the applicant and encourage them to apply to the alternative project, **but only prior to the advertised application deadline**.

Following nomination, candidates will be contacted to provide application documents.

Nominations

- For studentships within the main ARIES competition for funding, primary supervisors may select **one** candidate for nomination for interview by the ARIES DTP Interview Panels.
- For studentships with confirmed 50% match-funding (advertised as 'funded opportunities'), primary supervisors may select **two** candidates for nomination for interview by the ARIES DTP Interview Panels. Preferred candidates should be clearly identified.

Nominations should only be made after an interview process where candidates are interviewed by more than one person - members of the supervisory team should be involved with the

interview process and we especially encourage the inclusion of case and collaborative project partners in the interview process. Supervisors should refer to the [ARIES Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

Nominations should be submitted to the ARIES Office (aries.dtp@uea.ac.uk), using the ARIES Candidate Nomination Form. Supervisors will be contacted to nominate a reserve candidate should the first-choice candidate withdraw their application five or more working days before the DTP interviews.

Following nomination, we will contact the candidate to send us their application documents.

ARIES interviews

All nominated candidates will be interviewed by an ARIES panel, chaired by a member of the Strategy Board, plus at least three panellists. Where a conflict of interest arises, a panellist will recuse themselves. At least two different ARIES partners will be represented on each panel and panels will be broadly thematic in composition.

Scoring must be consistent across panels such that a ranked list of all ARIES candidates in a particular year can be reliably produced. ARIES interviews will therefore follow a standardised protocol, and all panels will use the same interview assessment forms and scoring system. Standardised questions will be made available, although ARIES does not wish the use of these to stymie discussion during the interviews. To aid cross-panel comparison each panel will normally interview a minimum of 5 candidates and in addition, a 'roving panellist' will attend interviews in every panel, to assess parity of experience and marking.

Selection of candidates for funding

The Chair of the ARIES Candidate Selection Panel will receive the collated candidate scores, comments and rankings as compiled by the ARIES Office, and will produce a proposal of the primary metric from which funding thresholds are determined, for agreement by the Studentship Panel. Scores across interview panels will be examined for inconsistencies. Reports from the panel Chairs will be paramount in determining the quality of the candidates interviewed by a particular panel (and hence whether the scores provided are comparable to other panels').

All interview scores, comments, and rankings will be provided to the ARIES Studentship Panel before a meeting to be held shortly after the interview day(s). This Panel shall be composed of the Director, the Head of Equality and Diversity, Interview Panel Chairs, and Strategy Board members with an interest in the process. The Studentship Panel will consider all of the available data and agree a final ranked list of candidates, based solely on the excellence of those candidates. Any candidates that have received equal or near-equal scores will be discussed individually to ensure that the ranked list accurately reflects the most suitable candidates. Within this group the panel may take strategic and financial considerations, and considerations relating to the [ARIES Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) into account.

The studentship panel will determine a threshold in the ranked list below which candidates are not deemed of sufficient excellence for ARIES funding.

Funding Priorities

Funding will be allocated according to the following priorities:

- 1) studentships with confirmed 50% match-funding (for candidates in the top 2/3 of the ranking)
- 2) according to candidate ranking as agreed by the Studentship Panel taking the following into account:
 - a. only 30% of students in each cohort may be international
 - b. 35% of studentships awarded will be CASE²
 - c. 70% of studentships awarded will be collaborative³

Each year one NERC-ESRC student and one NERC-BBSRC will be recruited, with 50% funding from ARIES and 50% funding from SeNSS/NRPDTP. Recruitment under this scheme is described in the Joint Studentship Recruitment documents.

The decision of the ARIES Studentship Panel is final.

The ARIES Secretariat will issue studentship offers (and rejections) in accordance with the outcomes of the Studentship Panel meeting, liaising with supervisors and local support staff at partners as appropriate.

Supervisors should note that projects funded by ARIES must not be substantially changed without specific permission from the Strategy Board.

Equality and diversity in the ARIES recruitment process

The ARIES Doctoral Training Partnership is committed to equality, diversity, widening participation and inclusion in its work with students, supervisors and partners; and in its interaction with the research community and beyond. Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with equal opportunities to flourish and succeed in an environment which enables them to do so.

This commitment is made with specific reference to a person's age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, race, religious belief & non-belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The public sector equality duty gives public bodies legal responsibilities to take proactive measures to address equality, to help us to tackle and address persistent and long-standing issues of disadvantage and inequality.

Promoting equality of opportunity for supervisors and applicants:

- All Hosting Partners are required to collect and report EDI data for supervisors submitting proposals to ARIES, and we monitor success rates within the studentship proposal competition.

² Any organisation that is **not eligible for NERC funding** may be a CASE partner, whether or not they are an ARIES partner. The student is required to spend a minimum of three months with the CASE partner at the partner's cost. The CASE partner also pays a minimum of £1,000 per year towards the student's research and training costs.

³ Some non-HEI partners are ineligible to act as CASE partners according to NERC regulations, or do not have the means to support CASE award requirements in full. We therefore recognise the concept of a "Collaborative" award, in which the partner(s) is/are involved in co-designing the project, nominating a member of their staff to join the supervisory team, and undertaking to host a placement for the PGR involved.

- All supervisors, at point of proposal, are required to prepare mitigation plans for projects that may be less accessible to some groups, and to consider the safety and inclusivity of the research and fieldwork environment

Promoting Equality in Recruitment of PGRs:

- We use inclusive and positive language in our advertisements
- ARIES is a neurodiversity-inclusive partnership, and we enable PGRs to succeed by supporting specific needs and making reasonable adjustments
- ARIES is a disability-inclusive partnership, and we enable PGRs to succeed by supporting specific needs and making reasonable adjustments
- Our recruitment process is transparent to both PGRs and supervisors, with detailed instructions and information available on our webpages.
- We hold a pre-application workshop with a particular focus on minoritised groups to provide advice on making the most of a PhD application and to promote a career in the environmental sciences.
- We hold a pre-interview webinar to introduce candidates to the DTP and answer any questions about the interview process.
- Our interviews involve a presentation from the candidate on a topic of their choosing, to enable neurodivergent or anxious candidates to take control of the process and present themselves as they wish
- ARIES recognises that not all candidates have equal access to opportunities such as Masters' or research placements. Our interview process equally weights future potential with past achievements (given opportunities to date), and panels are given instruction on how to assess these criteria.
- We collect feedback on our interview process from all candidates and panellists and act on it.
- All ARIES studentships are available on a part-time basis, and we support PGRs to make decisions if changing mode of study is required.