

Call for Studentship Proposals October 2025 Entry

06/06/2024



ARIES has submitted a bid to UKRI-NERC for a Doctoral Landscape Award. The outcome for this bid won't be known until September 2024. The programme is therefore proceeding with the call for October 2025 start without being able to confirm the number of places available on the programme. We will communicate the outcome of the bid as soon as we are aware.

The ARIES online form will open on 01 September 2024

Deadline for submission to ARIES Strategy Board: midday, 13 September 2024

Project selection criteria

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/>).

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

1. Quality of the Scientific Experience

- Proposals should demonstrate that the PGR will be engaged on a **rewarding and relevant** research project that will provide them with a first-class research experience, and provide the opportunity for PGRs to develop the research as the PhD progresses.
- The proposal should have clearly articulated aims, objectives, and focus.
- The research methodology should be appropriate and well defined, and demonstrate scientific rigour in its approach.
- The project should enable the PGR to demonstrate a level of independence and originality, to test ideas and hypotheses, and to make a contribution to learning that is worthy of publication.

2. Suitability and Feasibility

- The project should have clear aims that provide opportunities for intellectual challenge whilst having security in that due progress can be made within the time constraints¹, and by a PGR who may be undertaking research for the first time.
- The project should be feasible within the given resource limitations (including financial constraints), and achievable within the given time frame.
- Risks to the completion of the project should be identified, and robust contingency plans described that would allow the PGR to successfully conclude a programme of doctoral level research in the event of delays to, or failure of, the original work plan.
- A high-quality research environment exists that will support the PGR on all levels (e.g. intellectually, practically, and with respect to protected characteristics).

3. 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.

¹ We recommend that submission of thesis is planned to coincide with the end of the funded period: in most cases 3.5 years.

- Training 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), as well as developing more generic/transferrable skills.
- Please note all supervisors will be required to sign up to, and comply with, the to the ARIES Supervisory Charter.

The advertisement should be compelling and intelligible to potential applicants, and meet all requirements given in the form.

Final acceptance of projects submitted is made by the ARIES Strategy Board, which reserves the right to reject proposals. Further strategic criteria will be applied by the Strategy Board at the PGR selection stage, as outlined below.

The decision of the ARIES Strategy Board is final.

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

Co-funding and funding priorities

All candidates will be ranked according to excellence as judged in the ARIES DTP interviews, and ARIES will prioritise the recruitment of applicants to advertised projects in the following order:

1. Studentships with 50% match-funding, where the candidate is in the top 2/3 of the ranked list.
2. According to candidate ranking taking the following into account:
 - a. Only 30% of PGR students in each cohort may be international.
 - b. 35% of Studentships awarded over the lifetime of the DTP will be CASE² (confirmed in writing at point of submission of proposal).
 - c. 70% of studentships awarded over the lifetime of the DTP will be Collaborative³/CASE (confirmed in writing at point of submission of proposal).

Each year one NERC-ESRC PGR will be recruited, with 50% funding from ARIES and 50% funding from SeNSS. Recruitment under this scheme is managed by the ESRC DTP for this year.

Each year one NERC-BBSRC PGR will be recruited, with 50% funding from ARIES and 50% funding from NRPDTP. Recruitment under this scheme is managed by the BBSRC DTP for this year.

Studentship Details

ARIES studentships include tuition fees and a stipend at standard NERC rates for 3.5 years.

Research Costs

ARIES places a notional value of £8,000 on Research costs available for each studentship it funds, however requests must be justified using the ARIES DTP Research Costs Form. Requests for levels of funding above this notional value will be considered, but there is an expectation that each institutional sift will submit proposals with an average request of £8,000 RTSG. Research costs of over £9,600 will not be considered. The DTP will hold central funds of £2,500 for each PGR for extramural activities (attendance at conferences and external training events - conditions apply).

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

³ 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.

It is expected that organisations will submit proposals to the DTP with average RTSGs of not more than £8,000.

Candidates from numerical disciplines

ARIES wishes to encourage applications from candidates with high level numerical skills, but no 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 3–6 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 who they believe are eligible for this funding at the nomination stage.

Supporting Documents

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