

## Advice to students and supervisors

### Deciding on whether to apply for a 1+3 or a +3 PhD Programme with SGSSS

The 1+3 programme aims to ensure that students begin their 3 years of PhD study with a robust grounding in social science research methods that allow them to proceed with a good understanding of the rationale for the use of different kinds of research design and specific methods across the social sciences. Such learning aims not simply to enable students to make the best choices for their own research but allows them to situate these choices within a broader conceptual and methodological context thus strengthening critical appraisal skills and personal reflexivity.

The pathway representative or convenor within the institution that you plan to apply to should be in a good position to tell you whether you meet the training requirements to go straight to a +3 programme or whether you're more suited to a 1+3. You may need to do a 1+3 even if you already have a Masters qualification if your previous Masters doesn't have sufficient methods training.

As a rule of thumb, for a +3 award you will be expected to have undertaken the equivalent of 3 x 20 credit courses on the following: research design, quantitative methods and qualitative methods as part of a relevant Masters programme. Undertaking a dissertation does not count towards evidencing learning in core methods.

At SGSSS we audit the training requirements of all applications that are nominated by pathways. This allows us to identify if you fit somewhere between a +3 and a 1+3. For example, if you have taken a Masters programme that is only 20 credits short of meeting the requirements then you may be awarded a 3.3. This will mean that you have an additional 3 months added to the end of your funded period and will be required to achieve a pass in a 20 credit course that addresses your existing methods gap. This will need to be undertaken in year 1 of your PhD. Similarly, starting in 2019, if you have done a disciplinary relevant Masters programme that is 40 credits short in terms of core methods then we may award you a 3.5 (where you will be expected to undertake between 40-60 additional credits). The decisions around these fractional awards will be made by SGSSS – when you are making your original application you should discuss with your supervisors whether a 1+3 or a +3 best suits your circumstances. More information on the specific components of the required training can be found in pages 7-10 here: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/files/skills-and-careers/studentships/postgraduate-training-and-development-guidelines-2015/>.

If you do need to undertake a second Masters as part of a 1+3 then this can be an extremely positive experience – allowing you not only to meet ESRC requirements but to have the opportunity to think more deeply about your PhD plans so that you are able to hit the ground running.

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