

Announcement of Opportunity

Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)

Closing date: 1st May 2013

Updated February 2013

Summary

1. Proposals are invited for the new NERC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) Competition. This responsive scheme replaces the current algorithm-based system for allocating doctoral studentships.
2. It is expected that 10-20 DTPs will be funded from this call. Funding for 240 studentships will be awarded per annum, and each DTP award will provide funding for five years of new student intake, i.e. nine years of funding in total, from the start of the academic year 14/15.
3. Organisations may be involved in more than one DTP. Each DTP should be able to offer training across a range of science topics within the NERC remit.
4. Proposals for this call are invited from eligible UK research organisation. Please refer to <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/> for eligibility of Host Partners (see paragraph 24): the competition is a responsive mode scheme.
5. The closing date for proposals is 1st May 2013.

Backgr ound

6. Postgraduate training has been a part of NERC's mission since its foundation and is explicit within its charter. For NERC to provide the starting point for research careers that will blossom and grow, it needs to invest in the individuals who will take forward environmental research. It must also ensure that the next generation of researchers is equipped with the skills are needed across our diverse community, for the benefit of science, the wider labour market, and the economy.
7. In April 2010 NERC Council agreed a new strategy for training. As part of that strategy, Council identified two types of training that NERC aims to support: responsive and focused training.

Responsive training: This is postgraduate training where the topic is chosen by the student/supervisor and which can be drawn from any part of NERC's remit.

Focused training: This is postgraduate training that ensures NERC provides individuals with particular, specialist skills that are linked to its strategic priorities or to priority skills needs. Whilst the training topic may be chosen by the student/supervisor, it will reflect a specific training objective which NERC has identified.

8. As well as the new strategy, Council also requested a review of the allocation and delivery mechanisms that NERC uses to support postgraduate training. In late 2010 a formal Review Group was established, with significant community involvement. The review and recommendations are available on the NERC website².

9. Council accepted the recommendations of the review in December 2011. The recommendations included a change from the current algorithm-based system for allocating responsive doctoral studentships, to the use of a competition to award DTPs to institutes or consortia. This will concentrate training funding, in line with the Smith Review's recommendations.

10. The review also proposed establishing a Training Advisory Group (TAG) to assist and advise NERC with postgraduate training. NERC has been working with the TAG³ to develop the detailed working of the DTP competition.

Remit of the call

11. NERC does not wish to be over-prescriptive in the conditions it expects DTPs to meet, and is looking to encourage innovative proposals that will result in excellent Doctoral training opportunities. There are, however, certain expectations (described below in paragraphs 12, 14, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33 and 36) which those thinking of submitting proposals should note.

Responsive Scheme:

12. The DTP competition is a responsive scheme, i.e. NERC are not specifying the areas that DTPs should focus on. Each DTP must be able to offer training across a range of subject areas within NERC remit, and may include training at the interface between environmental sciences and other disciplines, where many major research challenges exist. There is no expectation that a single DTP will cover the whole of the NERC remit.

13. NERC reserves the right to manage the balance of the overall DTP portfolio to ensure broad coverage of the NERC remit.

Partnerships:

²<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/skills/postgrad/policy/skillsreview/>

³<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/skills/postgrad/policy/tag/>

14. NERC is using the term partnerships to recognise the relationships between both NERC and Research Organisations (ROs)⁴, and similarly ROs and their students. NERC also recognises the value of ROs working together to deliver studentships in partnership. NERC will therefore value bids from organisations that can show they are working across boundaries, including across departmental boundaries within a single organisation, or across boundaries between organisations.

Funding

15. NERC anticipates that between 10 and 20 DTPs will be awarded from this call, most with funding for between 12 and 24 new notional studentships per annum. The minimum studentship award is 12, but where the proposal justifies it, e.g. on the basis of the research concentration resulting from a strong partnership, applications for more than 24 students per annum will be considered on their merits. NERC will award a total of 240 new studentship starts each year (i.e. the level currently supported). DTP awards will fund five years of new student intake – nine years' funding in total.

16. The overall DTP award will be calculated on the basis of the notional (minimum) number of new students per year. The total funding awarded each year will be calculated on the basis of: the set student stipend, plus the set research training support grant, plus the set fee level, plus the set management costs, multiplied by the minimum number of students, multiplied by four. Awards will be supplemented with London Allowance where necessary.

17. The costs that will be awarded per notional studentship can be seen below. The student stipend and fees are indicative (and based on the 2012 agreed Cross-Council levels, and excluding London Weighting) and the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) and management costs are fixed.

18. Indicative Funding per notional studentship

Student Stipend	£54,360
Fees	£15,312
RTSG	£11,000
Management Costs	£1,500
Total	£82,172

19. A contribution toward management costs has been included within the above indicative funding calculation, in recognition of the need to manage the partnership.

⁴ Research Organisations are defined as bodies eligible for NERC funding i.e. all UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as determined by Education Funding Councils, Research Institutes (RIs), which are listed on the RCUK eligibility pages, and other eligible Independent Research Organisations (IROs) – see <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/eligibility/>

20. DTPs will have flexibility in how they use the funding (subject to the normal training grant terms and conditions), as long as the minimum numbers of students are supported. All students should be funded at the minimum stipend level, and for at least three years.

21. It will, therefore, be possible for DTPs to use the funding to support more than the minimum number of students each year. This could be achieved by having students undertake training over a variety of time frames (i.e. between 3 and 4 years as appropriate, depending on the discipline and the student's experience/knowledge) and by co-funding students with other sources.

Eligibility

22. This opportunity is open to organisations eligible for NERC research grant funding, i.e. applicants based in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), NERC Research & Collaborative Centres, and Independent Research Organisations (IROs) approved by NERC. Please refer to <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/> for details; the competition is a responsive mode scheme.

23. Each DTP must include an accredited Higher Education PhD award-making body. Research Organisations may be involved in more than one DTP.

24. Involvement in a DTP may take two forms:

- (i) **ADMINISTRATIVE LEAD PARTNER:** The Administrative Lead Partner is the organisation that will receive the funding for the DTP from NERC, and will be the main point of contact between the two bodies. This should not be interpreted as recognition of a dominant partner which will host the majority of studentships. The Administrative Lead Partner must be eligible for NERC funding.
- (ii) **DTP PARTNERS:** Any organisation involved in a DTP, which is not the Administrative Lead Partner, is a DTP partner. There are no restrictions on which organisations can be DTP partners but their role should be indicated on the DTP Partner Form which is a required attachment (see Annex J).

25. NERC will value proposals that demonstrate how Partners will enrich the student experience and help generate and demonstrate impact across the entire cohort.

26. Potential applicants should contact NERC well in advance of the submission deadline if they have any queries about their eligibility.

CASE Studentships:

27. Each DTP must ensure, over the five years of student starts, that 30% of their total studentships are CASE (collaborative) studentships.

28. Any and all partners within a DTP may act as CASE partners within that DTP provided they meet CASE eligibility requirements, namely:

“Any non-academic organisation within the public, private or third sector that has research interests in NERC's remit is eligible to act as a CASE partner within a DTP. This includes private industry, the research organisations of the nationalised industries, public bodies such as regional water companies, county planning offices and public sector research establishments (PSREs), and similar overseas bodies.”

29. NERC does expect to see diversity of CASE partners (as appropriate to individual student needs) and this will be closely monitored through the annual reporting system.

30. NERC DTP funding cannot be used to meet the CASE partner financial contribution.

31. Potential CASE partners should be included as DTP Partners within the application. It is recognised that not all CASE partners drawn on during the DTP award will be listed at the proposal stage.

Reporting and Evaluation

32. There will be institutional visits and mandatory annual reporting requirements for each DTP as well as the standard studentships information captured through the Je-S Studentship Details Portal (SDP). NERC reserves the right to discuss, adjust or terminate DTP awards based on the information provided. It is expected that there will be an evaluation of DTPs in year three and that over the period of the award DTPs will, in dialogue with NERC, develop to the benefit of their students and mission.

Application process

33. Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S)

DTP proposals must be submitted using the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). Applicants should select Proposal Type – ‘Studentship Proposal’ and then select the Scheme – ‘Doctoral Training Partnership’ and the Call – ‘Doctoral Training Partnership’.

34. To use the Je-S system, the Research Organisation must be registered as a Je-S user. Full details are available on the [Je-S website](#). Further information can also be obtained by contacting the Je-S Helpdesk by email at JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk, or by telephone on 01793 444164.

35. Applicants must ensure that their proposal is received by NERC by 4pm on the closing date. They should leave enough time for their application to pass through their organisation's Je-S submission route before this date. Any application that is received after the closing date, is incomplete, or does not meet NERC's eligibility criteria, will be returned to the applicant and will not be considered.

36. A single proposal should be submitted from the administrative lead partner. The administrative lead partner will receive the funding for the DTP from NERC and will be the main point of contact between the two bodies. Where multiple departments of the

same research organisation are involved in a DTP, they will need to be added to the application form as a separate DTP partner.

Proposals:

37. All attachments submitted through the Je-S system, must be completed on standard A4 sized paper, in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point, Arial font, with margins of at least 2cm. Applicants should note that the assessment panel will not consider reference to other sources, e.g. websites, if these are included within the text.

38. Each DTP proposal should include the documents detailed below.

1. DTP Application Form (Je-S Proforma).
2. Case for Support: should not exceed 16 sides of A4. Applicants should justify and evidence their proposals using the following headings:
 - a. Research Excellence;
 - b. Training Excellence;
 - c. Multidisciplinarity; and
 - d. Partnership Operational Management.
3. Completed DTP Partner: Support Form for each Partner involved in the DTP.
4. Completed DTP Partner Details Form.

39. Applicants should ensure that for each Partner involved in the DTP the DTP Partner: Support Form is completed by the Vice Chancellor or equivalent (e.g. Director/CE) for each organisation and submitted as an attachment of type 'Additional Attachment' in Je-S. The form that needs to be completed can be found at Annex I.

40. Applicants should note that NERC reserves the right to use information it already holds at the proposal assessment stage to verify statements made in the case for support.

Assessment Process

41. Proposals will be assessed by a panel consisting primarily of members of the TAG supplemented by additional individuals as appropriate and if necessary.

42. The assessment criteria used to judge proposals will be as follows:

- Research Excellence (35%)
- Training Excellence (35%)
- Multidisciplinarity (15%)
- Partnership Operational Management (15%)

[see Annexes for further information].

43. Following the assessment panel meeting, feedback for unsuccessful proposals will be available upon request.

Timetable

44. Overview of the competition timetable:

- 11 Dec 2012: Town Meeting, Institute of Physics, London (www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/news/121211)
- 15-17 Jan 2013: Informal drop-in-days with NERC office
- 1st May 2013: Competition closing date.
- September 2013: Assessment Panel Meeting
- November 2013: Decision communicated to applicants
- October 2014: First DTP studentships commence

Contact

45. For all enquiries please contact: NERC Head of Skills and Careers, Kirsty Grainger khg@nerc.ac.uk or 01793 442540

Further information

46. The following annexes are included to help guide applicants. In addition to these resources applicants are advised to read the Frequently Asked Question and Glossary document which is available on the NERC website

(<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/postgrad/responsive/dtp/dtp-faq.pdf>)

Annexes:

- A. Potential ways of organising/ shaping a DTP
- B. Grading Proposals
- C. Overall DTP grade definitions
- D. DTP Assessment Criteria: Applicant Guidance
- E. What does an outstanding DTP look like?
- F. Assessment process
- G. Representative DTP Proforma (Application Form)
- H. Case For Support
- I. DTP Partner: Support Form
- J. DTP Partner Details Form
- K. Annual Reporting Information

Annex A

Potential ways of organising/shaping a NERC DTP

The table below is designed as a guide to help applicants decide how to shape and structure their DTP. The table illustrates some of the advantages and disadvantages of certain approaches. The table does not show all the possible variants and alternatives are welcomed.

	Examples of potential advantages	Examples of issues to mitigate against
Broad Theme	Links and exposes students to established, world-class research collaborations.	Theming restricts innovative new collaborations and multidisciplinary working.
No Theme	Develops truly multidisciplinary training environments.	Partnerships being in name only as nothing cementing the different groups together.
Single Research Organisation	Well organised partnership as exists within established and common ways of working.	Students only experience one Research Organisation culture, excellence and resources.
Multiple Research Organisations	Allows students to be exposed to different research organisation cultures, and a greater variety and depth of research excellence and training resources and wider cohort of peers.	Difficulties in aligning and agreeing ways of working and sharing resources between the different organisations. Logistic problems for students.
Single-site	Strong cohort of students develops who are able to meet regularly and provide a mutually supportive environment.	Not exposed to wider cohort of peers or opportunities off-site.
Multiple-sites	Allows students to be exposed to different research organisation cultures, and a greater variety and depth of research excellence and training resources and wider cohort of peers.	Managing working across multiple-sites. Logistic problems for students.

Annex B

Proposals Scoring System

DTP proposals will be assessed on four criteria: Research Excellence, Training Excellence, Multidisciplinarity and Partnership Operational Management.

DTP Assessment Criteria	Weighting	Score	Overall Excellence Score
1. Research Excellence	35%	/10	= 0.35 x Score
2. Training Excellence	35%	/10	= 0.35 x Score
3. Multidisciplinarity	15%	/10	= 0.15 x Score
4. Partnership Operational Management	15%	/10	= 0.15 x Score
Overall Grade Excellence Score	100%		/10

Table 1: DTP Scoring Matrix

Annex C

Overall Excellence Score Definitions

Score	Usual Indicators
Excellent quality proposal	
10	The proposal is outstanding and represents world-leading standards. Highest priority for funding.
9	The proposal is excellent and represents world-class standards. Very high priority for funding.
8	The proposal is very good and contains aspects of excellence. High priority for funding.
Good quality proposal	
7	The proposal is good and is internationally competitive. Should be funded if possible.
6	The proposal is good and on the borderline between nationally and internationally competitive. Potentially fundable.
5	The proposal is good and has some merit but is not at the leading edge. It is suitable for funding in principle but in a competitive context is not a priority.
Potentially useful proposal	
4	The proposal is good and has some merit, but has a number of weaknesses. Not recommended for funding.
3	The proposal is satisfactory. It would provide something useful, but fails to provide reasonable evidence and justification for funding. Not recommended for funding.
Unacceptable proposal	
2	The proposal is weak, and has only a few strengths. Not suitable for funding.
1	The proposal is unsatisfactory and is unlikely to train students successfully. Not suitable for funding.
0	For special cases, e.g. flawed in approach, subject to serious difficulties, does not address operational risks, sufficiently un-clearly written so it cannot be properly assessed, or outside of NERC remit.

Annex D

DTP Assessment Criteria: Applicant Guidance

The table below is designed as a guide for applicants. The assessment panel will be looking for innovative proposals and will expect to see evidence to support any statements made within the application. The table illustrates the types of activities and processes NERC would expect to find in a good DTP proposal. The table is split into 3 columns:

1. The first column shows the 4 assessment criteria for the DTP competition. Each proposal will be awarded a mark out of 10 for each criterion.
2. The second column shows the key aspects which all DTP proposals should include to meet the assessment criteria.
3. The third column is a list of **examples** which can be used as supporting evidence to prove that a DTP meets the assessment criteria. This is not an exhaustive list and applicants are encouraged to add their own ideas to improve the overall training experience offered by their DTP.
4. Applicants must score at a reasonable level under all four assessment criteria to be funded. The assessment panel will be looking for evidence to support statements made as part of the application.

Assessment criteria	Key aspects for an outstanding DTP	Factors and Evidence that might be discussed
Research Excellence (35%)	<p>Training environment includes scientifically excellent and original research within NERC remit, and may include interdisciplinary interfaces with other Research Councils.</p> <p>Critical mass of researchers/teams/projects to allow students to be supported effectively and sufficiently exposed to excellent research and researchers.</p>	<p>Number of active NERC-funded research projects at host RO's.</p> <p>RAE 2008 profiles (where relevant).</p> <p>Standing in community – national, international etc.</p> <p>Institutional commitment to research excellence in environmental sciences of host RO's.</p> <p>Amount of NERC and Research Council research income.</p>
Training Excellence (35%)	<p>Students are part of an active community and managed as a cohort.</p> <p>Excellent scientific training</p>	<p>Students have access to, and are encouraged, by peer to peer learning and support.</p> <p>Mechanisms for supervision and monitoring of both student and supervisor.</p>

	<p>opportunities.</p> <p>Challenging and relevant projects.</p> <p>Timely access to world-class facilities, direct experience of cutting-edge techniques, technologies, and up-to-date methodologies.</p> <p>Transferrable and professional skills development.</p> <p>Produces success stories.</p> <p>Excellent training and support for supervisors.</p>	<p>Integration of students into teams/projects/departments/schools</p> <p>How generalist and specialist development needs of individual students will be identified and delivered.</p> <p>The personal/ professional/ career learning and development that students will receive.</p> <p>The collaborative opportunities, which may include internships, industrial placements, overseas studies, and co-supervisory arrangements.</p> <p>Completion rates, publication and first destination data for students hosted within DTP institutions.</p> <p>Employability.</p> <p>Development of independent researchers and world-leading scientists.</p>
<p>Multidisciplinarity (15%)</p>	<p>Training embedded in multidisciplinary research environments.</p>	<p>How students will be made aware of the context of their research and how it relates to other areas.</p> <p>Supervisory or wider advisory team engagement in research outside the relevant discipline(s).</p> <p>Ability to expose students to different disciplines via, for example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Establishing cohorts beyond the NERC funded students by using the DTP as a magnet/nucleus for research and training activities and investment; ii. Placing students within multidisciplinary research teams; iii. Giving students the opportunity to attend transferrable skills training programmes at which students from different disciplines come together; iv. Offering rotations across different disciplines within the first few months of training, where appropriate; v. Networking opportunities including multi-discipline student conferences or poster competitions; vi. Seminars open to students across different disciplines.

<p>Partnership Operational Management (15%)</p>	<p>Robust and transparent governance arrangements.</p> <p>Mechanism for planning, managing and monitoring training.</p> <p>Mechanism for managing partnerships between or within organisations.</p> <p>Mechanism for aligning and agreeing ways of working and sharing resources between different organisations (including non-academic partners).</p>	<p>Systems and processes for assessing the suitability of supervisors and projects.</p> <p>Competitive mechanisms for awarding studentships within the DTP.</p> <p>Excellent students - processes for student recruitment, induction, progression, monitoring and submission.</p> <p>Arrangements for returning accurate and timely data on studentships to NERC.</p> <p>Mechanisms for improving and maintaining submission rates.</p> <p>Establishing cohorts beyond the NERC funded students by using the DTP as a magnet/nucleus for research and training activities.</p> <p>Robust quality-assurance procedures and structures.</p> <p>The benefits of the operational model that the DTP has chosen and how the DTP will mitigate the potential downsides of this model (See Annex A)</p> <p>Development and demonstration of Success Stories.</p> <p>Arrangements in place for management of data generated by studentship projects.</p>
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1. The text below sets out activities and processes that NERC would recognise as features of an outstanding DTP. These are suggestions and potential applicants are encouraged to innovate and show how alternatives can also create an outstanding DTP. The headings are based on the DTP Assessment Criteria.

Research Excellence

2. Students should be placed within research excellent environments. These can be characterised by terms such as: novel, ambitious, timely, exciting, at the international forefront, adventurous, elegant or transformative, but need not demonstrate all of them.

3. Students should be embedded in a critical mass of researchers/teams/projects to allow students to have the opportunity to understand, exchange and develop ideas, to be supported effectively, and exposed to research excellence. This may be demonstrated by:

- i. The critical mass of active researchers – both in terms of size and composition;
- ii. Active NERC-funded research projects (NERC Research Income);
- iii. Other Research Council Income;
- iv. Strong RAE2008 profiles (where relevant) and groups with international standing that are making significant contributions to the environmental sciences; and
- v. Host organisation(s) that have strong institutional commitment to research excellence in the environmental sciences.

4. The training must include scientifically excellent and original research. NERC students “should be trained to become creative, critical and autonomous intellectual risk takers, pushing the boundaries of frontier research”⁶. PhD topics should meet high standards of originality, quality and significance and either address important scientific questions or enable them to be addressed through technological development. The research topics must be realistically challenging for the students: well defined with ‘researchable’ questions or hypotheses to be developed and addressed, and offering genuine scope for high-level research and innovative science.

5. Research topics must be concerned with the scientific aspects of the natural environment and must fall broadly within the NERC remit, although they may include disciplinary interfaces with other Research Councils.

Training Excellence

Student Community

6. There should be a strong and active community of students that are able – and encouraged – to integrate, work, and learn together. That cohort should have clear leadership, and may be wider than NERC students.

7. Being part of a cohort means students:

⁶ EUROPEAN COMMISSION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION Directorate B - European Research Area Unit B.2 "Skills" Brussels, 27/06/2011: Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training1
http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Principles_for_Innovative_Doctoral_Training.pdf

- i. experience a greater breadth of research, helping develop researchers capable of forming linkages beyond their own areas of expertise;
- ii. have networking opportunities that last beyond the life of the PhD training;
- iii. are in appropriate environments for peer-to-peer learning and support (both formal and informal), and with opportunities for sharing ideas;
- iv. are not isolated; and
- v. are part of an active student community.

Supervision

8. Supervisors should be recognised as critical to a successful doctoral studentship. Supervisors should receive the support and training that they individually need to provide the highest-quality supervisory support to their students. This may include mentoring, progression management, forums, clear supervisory policies, formal training, and opportunities to share experience and practice.

9. There should be clear processes for supervisor selection and matching supervisors with potential students. Where supervision is undertaken in collaboration between organisations, clear processes should be in place to ensure that standards across organisations are consistent and that the student understands them fully.

Scientific Training

10. As part of the training DTPs should use the flexibility in NERC funding to give students appropriate time:

- i. for understanding advanced research methodologies (especially as they become more complex and sophisticated);
- ii. for developing novel approaches, for experimental failure and blind alleys;
- iii. for preparing and writing both thesis and papers for publication;
- iv. to understand the wider context of their research: impact, ethics, public engagement, outreach and intellectual property rights;
- v. to consider the impact and exploitation of research results including data management, open access and copyright;
- vi. to integrate into the research environment;
- vii. for developing their own research questions to hone PhD topics;
- viii. to benefit from regularly presenting work to academic colleagues both orally and through posters, a strong invited speakers programmes, and conference participation; and
- ix. for personal/professional/career learning, development and support (see below).

11. Students will have timely access to world-class facilities, direct experience of cutting-edge techniques, technologies, and up-to-date methodologies, and access to IT equipment, library and electronic publications.

12. DTPs should be able to tailor the training that they offer to the subject and individual. There should be clear processes in place to monitor and formally assess the student's progress.

Personal/professional/career learning, development and support

13. There should be clear induction programmes for new students. Students should understand their own contribution to the management of their studentship and should be encouraged to contribute to the management of the DTP, direction of their research, and to maximise the opportunities afforded to them.

14. The development of talented researchers with transferrable and professional skills is essential for UK competitiveness. The provision of transferrable skills forms a fundamental part of PhD training.

15. The Researcher Development Framework (RDF)⁷ and associated Statement (RDS)⁸ should underpin professional development programmes for students. They set out the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of effective and highly skilled researchers appropriate for a wide range of careers. In addition to the RDF and RDS, DTPs should use the generic skills identified as part of the Skills Review⁹, to develop this training, ensuring that students are prepared for both research and non-research careers, and increasing their employability.

16. The student should have regular opportunities to review and consider their personal career management and have access to career counselling.

Produces success stories

17. Students should go on to replenish the stock and variety of highly skilled researchers and other R&D staff, and leave with skills required for working in the wider environment sector as well as those demanded by policy makers and regulators; industry and business; and NGOs and charities.

18. DTPs may increase the employability of students and the impact of training by:

- i. embedding provision, innovation and expertise in a broad range of meaningful collaborative opportunities including CASE, internships, industrial placements, overseas studies, and/or co-supervisory arrangements; encouraging and training students both to identify potential benefits and to work with potential beneficiaries of their research;
- ii. helping students develop entrepreneurial and enterprise skills;
- iii. enabling students develop understanding and skills for using their research outputs in policy making;
- iv. helping students develop skills for outreach, impact and public dialogue; and
- v. helping students develop leadership skills.

19. Each DTP will have to allocate 30% of their studentships as CASE studentships.

Multidisciplinarity

20. Training should be embedded in multidisciplinary research environments to enrich the student experience and to encourage the knowledge-sharing and interconnectivity which benefits research within the environmental sciences. This does not mean that individual PhD topics are required to be multidisciplinary.

21. DTPs should encourage multidisciplinary research environments so that students are not restricted by disciplinary 'silos' that may stifle cross-disciplinary communication, innovation and restrict the student's understanding of the broader context of their research. The multidisciplinary research environment should be coherent in relation to the student's own research topic.

22. Ways of achieving Multidisciplinarity include:

- i. Establishing cohorts beyond the NERC funded students by using the DTP as a magnet/nucleus for research and training activities and investment;

⁷ www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf

⁸ www.vitae.ac.uk/rds

⁹<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/skills/postgrad/policy/skillsreview/>

- ii. Placing students within multidisciplinary research teams;
- iii. Giving students the opportunity to attend transferrable skills training programmes at which students from different disciplines come together;
- iv. Offering rotations across different disciplines within the first few months of training, where appropriate;
- v. Networking opportunities including multi-discipline student conferences or poster competitions;
- vi. Ensuring that discipline-specific seminars are advertised to all research students;
- vii. Holding cross-disciplinary competitions around innovation or enterprise; and
- viii. Having a member of the supervisory or wider advisory team engaged in research outside the relevant discipline(s).

Partnership Operational Management

Student Recruitment

23. The DTP has strategic and systematic approaches to attracting excellent students. PhD opportunities should be actively promoted beyond the host RO(s) and there is expected to be strong competition for studentships (within the DTP) with a wide pool of excellent applicants for each opportunity. As a result, excellent opportunities are awarded to excellent students.

24. Before accepting a studentship, DTPs will make potential students aware of the different types of postgraduate training available to them and how the type of training and its delivery may affect their future career. Individual students should be aware that they are supported by NERC, of how their training fits into NERC's strategic priorities, and of the length of support that they will receive for their training, recognising that there is no standard length of support for NERC studentships. NERC studentships will range between three and four years in length depending on the subject and the individual.

Partnerships

25. Partnerships between Research Organisations are not mandatory, but may bring benefits by:

- i. sharing good practice;
- ii. exposing students to wider multidisciplinary research environments;
- iii. giving students a greater range of training opportunities e.g. advanced skills training, facilities and equipment;
- iv. providing students with experiences outside their 'host' research organisation; and
- v. exposing students to more internationally outstanding research.

Governance

26. Each DTP should have a lead operational manager and senior management body with overall responsibility for the effective governance of the Training Partnership and its funding from NERC. DTPs will be able to demonstrate that robust and transparent governance arrangements are in place, which may include formal partnership agreements, communication plans and systems for monitoring the DTP's overall progress and success. Students should have the opportunity to be involved in the management/running of activities of the DTP.

Data Availability

27. It is NERC policy to increase the visibility and awareness of environmental data and to improve their management as a resource. The DTP should therefore ensure that NERC Designated Data Centres are aware of significant datasets generated, or to be compiled, under the award so that their long-term stewardship can be planned.

Annex F

DTP Assessment Process

1. **DTP proposals submitted** to NERC through Je-S by the lead organisation.
↓
2. **SSC conducts checks** → Ineligible proposals rejected.
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3. **NERC conducts checks** → Ineligible proposals rejected.
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4. **NERC reviews expertise and vested interests of TAG** with respect to the proposals received; and invites additional assessment panel members if necessary.
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5. **Proposals to assessors** (i.e. assessors sent all the DTP proposals received, assessor guidance, and a list of who has been assigned which proposals to assess – each proposal will be assessed by *at least* 5 panel members).
↓
6. **Pre-scores gathered** ahead of panel meeting (e.g. scores awarded by assessors for each assessment criteria for each proposal they are assigned are gathered before the panel meeting and circulated to the panel and chair).
↓
7. **Panel meeting:**
 - Panel agree scores for each of the 4 assessment criteria for each DTP proposal.
 - Overall excellence score for each proposal calculated.
 - Proposals ranked according to overall excellence score.
 - Comments provided to the executive on the science spread of the most highly ranked proposals.
↓
8. **Amendments made** (if needed) to any proposals to be funded based on advice from the panel (e.g. adjustments to student numbers.).
↓
9. **Funding decisions announced.**
↓
10. **Feedback** sent to applicants (upon request).

Annex G – Representative Proforma (Application Form)

NOTE: This form is representative and subject to change depending on Je-S. The final application form will be available on Je-S early 2013. Please note that “Classification of Proposal” onwards is a standard section of NERC proposals and will not be used in the assessment process.



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COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the personal data provided on this form will be processed by NERC, and may be held on computerised database and/or manual files. Further details may be found in the guidance notes

Doctoral Training Partnership PROPOSAL

Administrative Lead Partner (This is the organisation that will receive the funding for the DTP from NERC, and will be the main point of contact between the two bodies. The organisation must be eligible for NERC funding under normal NERC rules).

Organisation		Research Organisation Reference	
Division or Department			

Lead Applicant (the individual should be from the Administrative Lead Partner and be the administrative lead/head of the DTP)

Name	Organisation	Division or Department	DTP Role

Start Date and Duration¹⁰

a. Proposed start Date b. Duration of the grant (months)

Title [up to 150 characters]

DTP Summary

Please provide a summary of how the DTP will be organised and shaped, in simple terms appropriate for a general audience, including details on what will make your DTP different and unique from other applications. [maximum 4000 characters with spaces].

¹⁰ Standard proposal form section – fixed dates only, will be clarified in the Je-S help text.

--

Student Totals

	Number of students applying for¹¹
Total	0

Classification of Proposal

(a) Scientific Area

Assign % relevance (in multiples of 5) to one or more areas, totalling 100%

Scientific Area	%
Atmospheric	
Earth	
Freshwater	
Marine	
Terrestrial	
	Total = 100%

(b) Secondary Classification

Assign % relevance (in multiples of 5) to any areas that are relevant. Otherwise, leave blank

Scientific Area	%
Co-funded	
Cross-Research Council	
Earth Observation	
Polar North	
Polar South	
Science Based Archaeology	

(c) ENRI

Assign % relevance (in multiples of 5) to one or more ENRIs, totalling 100%

Scientific Area	%
Biodiversity	
Environmental Risks and Hazards	
Global Change	
Natural Resource Management	
Pollution and Waste	
	Total = 100%

¹¹ Expect to normally award between 12-24 notional students per annum per DTP. The minimum studentship award is 12, but where the proposal justifies it, e.g. on the basis of the research concentration resulting from a strong partnership, applications for more than 24 students per annum are then permitted, and will be considered on their merits.

Proposal Classifications

Research Area:

NERC's 'primary' Research Areas (2nd level) are listed here ([Science classification](#)), but also other Research Areas can be selected which may relate to other Research Councils. No more than 5 Research Areas should be chosen, with % attributions totalling 100.

To add or remove Research Areas use the links below

Qualifier:

NERC is using only Geographical Qualifiers (i.e. region or country on which the research is focused).

To add or remove Qualifier values use the links below.

Free-text Keywords:

Free-text keywords may be used to describe the science within your application in more detail. These will facilitate reviewer-matching and may form the basis of a more detailed classification in the future.

Add freetext keywords below (50 character max per keyword):

Annex H: Case For Support.



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Doctoral Training Partnership – Case for Support

Please justify and evidence your proposal using the following headings:

- **Research Excellence**
- **Training Excellence**
- **Multidisciplinarity**
- **Partnership Operational Management.**

Must be completed on standard A4 sized paper, in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point, Arial font, with margins of at least 2cm. Applicants should note that the assessment panel will not consider reference to other sources, e.g. websites, if these are included within the text.

Annex I: DTP Partner: Support Form



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DTP Partner Support Form

This form should be completed by each partner involved in a Doctoral Training Partnership (including the Administrative Lead Partner).

Name of DTP:

Name of organisation providing this form:

Name of Vice Chancellor (or equivalent) at above organisation:

Agreements:

- I. I, the undersigned, agree on behalf of my organisation, to support students within the named Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP).
- II. I, the undersigned, agree on behalf of my organisation, to contribute towards an appropriate management structure for the named DTP.
- III. I, the undersigned, agree on behalf of my organisation, to comply with NERC's reporting and evaluation procedures for the named DTP.
- IV. I, the undersigned, agree that to the best of my knowledge, the information contained within the named DTP proposal is accurate and correct.

Signed.....

Date.....

Amended Application Form

Annex J: DTP Partner Details Form

Please complete the table below to indicate who the DTP partners are, and what their role in the DTP will be. **The table can be expanded to a maximum of six partners per side of A4.**

Organisation	Division or Department (if applicable)	Lead Contact Name	Role in DTP

Annex K: Annual Reporting Information

The list below indicates the type of information that the DTP will be required to submit on an annual basis. The administrative lead partner will be asked to provide the information, although it is recognised that multiple partners may be involved in co-ordinating and informing the submission.

The details of the annual report process will be finalised during 2013. They are being developed in line with cross-council requirements and working practices, according to the following principles: that any information collected is (a) useful and used, (b) doesn't overburden the DTP, and (c) avoids duplication where possible.

Indicative Headings for the DTP Annual Report.

- Name of DTP and organisation providing the report
- Student Population
- Partnership Organisational Management
- Student Training
- Collaborations, including CASE
- Co-funding
- Capturing Impact
- Issues
- Success Stories