

## White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership

### Training FAQs

The information below answers some of the most common questions, asked by social science doctoral researchers and their supervisors, in relation to the training offered by the WRDTP partner Universities.

#### 1) What is the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership (WRDTP)?

It is a consortium of 7 universities, led by the University of Sheffield, which offers social science doctoral researchers a range of training opportunities linked to interdisciplinary themed Pathways, drawn from the thematic and methodological strengths of each HEI. The WRDTP also offers three/four year fully funded ESRC studentships across a range of different awards, e.g. Network Awards, Pathway Awards, Interdisciplinary Research Awards and AQM (Advanced Quantitative Methods) Awards.

#### 2) Which Universities participate in the WRDTP?

The University of Sheffield, the University of Leeds, the University of York, Manchester Metropolitan University, Bradford University, University of Hull, and Sheffield Hallam University are members of the WRDTP.

#### 3) Which social science departments participate in the WRDTP?

There is a list of accredited<sup>1</sup> departments in Annex I. To be eligible to join a Pathway you must be registered in one of these departments.

#### 4) What does it mean for doctoral research students to be a member of the WRDTP?

- a) You can take part in all the events/conferences.
- b) You have access to research training opportunities beyond your own university and can work together with other social science researchers to identify collective training needs, which the WRDTP will look to commission.
- c) You can access additional funding to support your training (for eligible ESRC funded students), run your own training events, and set up new networks.

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<sup>1</sup> Accredited departments are those that have met certain minimum thresholds in research performance, as assessed by the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). The criteria for accreditation included the quality of the environment for undertaking research in the department, the track record for delivering excellence in postgraduate research supervision, the quality of research outputs, and evidence of research impact.

## 5) Training Pathways

### a) What are Pathways?

Pathways are innovative interdisciplinary themed training routes. They enable students to articulate how their PhD contributes to wider societal challenges and to gain an advanced understanding of social science research. There is a list of Pathways and a brief summary of these Pathways in Annex II.

### b) What do WRDTP Pathways mean to me?

Pathways offer you the opportunity to engage with researchers working in other universities, as well as in other disciplines, in order to gain a wider understanding of the scope and complexity of social science research in your thematic area. All ESRC-funded students are allocated to an appropriate training Pathway based on their funding arrangements. However, ALL students are invited to become members of a WRDTP Pathway and to participate in training activities that are aligned with their research needs. This will provide an important context for research training, including for Masters students via the Working Beyond Disciplines module and for PhD students via the Pathway element of their studies.

### c) How do I decide what the best Pathway fit is for my research topic?

You will receive guidance on this from your department/supervisor. The best fit for you will be the Pathway that offers the most suitable help and guidance in supporting your research training and your research topic. All Pathways are multidisciplinary and include students from a range of different discipline-based departments and research centres.

### d) How do I meet and network with other students on my Pathway?

There will be regular conferences and workshops for Pathways. Students on Pathways are encouraged and supported to organise their own events, including events that bring together different Pathways. In addition, each University has a local academic colleague who leads each Pathway – this may be the Pathway Director or Deputy Director – who can be contacted if you have queries or ideas about activities

you'd like to offer. You will be invited to 'sign-up' to a Pathway and will receive regular email updates on what events and training is on offer.

**e) Can I attend training from more than one Pathway?**

Normally the answer is yes, subject to availability. We will also be offering training events and activities that bring together students from different Pathways.

**f) Can I move into another Pathway?**

You can move to another Pathway within your first year of study to a different Pathway after consultation with your school/department/supervisor.

**g) What is the relationship between my department/school and my Pathway?**

All Pathways are multidisciplinary. You will have access to high quality disciplinary training and research supervision through your own institution, complemented by what the WRDTP can offer. The Pathways complement this by providing opportunities to engage with researchers working in other universities as well as in other disciplines.

**h) How do I find out about WRDTP training and events?**

The wrdtp.ac.uk web site will advertise all the events and training offered by the WRDTP and this is where you will book a place – see the TRAINING section. You will also receive direct email communications from your elected Pathway and your institution. Alerts will also go out on the @wrssdtp Twitter account.

**i) Is there funding available for travel and how do I access this?**

The WRDTP policy regarding the availability of travel bursaries will be advertised on the website (wrdtp.ac.uk).

**6) Training**

**a) What does the WRDTP Training Experience look like?**

You will undertake a Training Needs Analysis during your first month of registration in consultation with your supervisors, and this will be regularly reviewed throughout your

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doctoral studies. The WRDTP offers Pathway, Advanced Training and Professional Skills training that will be tailored to your specific training needs and aspirations as a doctoral researcher. You will also receive training in your specific discipline area from your department/school. You are advised to discuss with your supervisor the local arrangements for recording your engagement with the training offered.

**b) Will I be able to access training on line?**

The WRDTP will be recording training sessions where possible, live streaming sessions, offering webinars and also hosting training materials, e.g talks and presentations, on the Virtual Interdisciplinary Research Environment (VIRE) accessed via the wrdtp.ac.uk web site. You will be given access to the VIRE upon Pathway registration.

## Masters Year Training Modules

Core research training is delivered through a Masters in Social Research framework at your home university which has been harmonised across the seven WRDTP partner universities. The structure will normally provide: a minimum of 75 credits of core social science research methods skills and transferable skills and a maximum of 45 credits of core subject-specific training. *Examples of the module content:*

<p><b><i>Principles of Research Design:</i></b></p> <p>The content will focus on the principles of research strategy and design, reflexivity, and the impact of alternative ontologies and epistemologies on research design, methods, analysis and theory.</p>	<p><b><i>Introduction to Quantitative Research and Introduction to Qualitative Research:</i></b></p> <p>These modules cover data collection, analysis and management.</p>
<p><b><i>Working Beyond Disciplines:</i></b></p> <p>This will introduce students to ‘grand challenges’ within the thematic fields of each Pathway, and will highlight the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to research.</p>	<p><b><i>Further Quantitative Methods:</i></b></p> <p>This will cover those elements not already covered, such as ‘high-level quantitative tools and techniques’ for Economists and will showcase the advanced/innovative/‘sophisticated’ usage of methods.</p>
<p><b><i>Further Qualitative Methods:</i></b></p> <p>This will showcase the advanced/innovative/‘sophisticated’ usage of qualitative methods.</p>	<p><b><i>Subject-based optional modules:</i></b></p> <p>This will extend core subject knowledge in the interdisciplinary thematic area appropriate to the PhD topic.</p>
<p><b><i>Professional Skills for Researchers:</i></b></p> <p>This is a ‘portfolio’ module, taught through short workshops throughout the year. It may include: bibliographic and computing skills; Ethics Training; Introduction to Impact; IPR and Open Access; Research Management; Communication Skills.</p>	<p><b><i>Individual Research Project:</i></b></p> <p>This ‘capstone’ (Dissertation/Research Proposal) module is a self-contained project demonstrating skills of literature review, research design, and data analysis (and collection of primary data where appropriate) which will contextualise training within an individual research project.</p>

## Doctoral Training Modules

All ESRC-funded students (1+3 by progression, or +3 by entry) will normally be required to complete at least 60 credits of further training during their '+3' period of research. This is monitored for individual students via the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) process. There will be flexibility to spread this across the whole of the doctoral period, so that students are engaging with elements of training that directly relate to, and support, appropriate stages of their research and thesis development.

The 60 credits of doctoral level training will comprise four portfolio areas (compulsory for ESRC funded students):

<p><b><i>Doctoral Training, Interdisciplinary Thematic Pathway:</i></b></p> <p>Cutting edge debates through WR-level seminar series; cohort-building through regular events throughout the year, comprising a mixture of Pathway-based research conferences, workshops, engagement events, reading groups, etc.</p>	<p><b><i>Doctoral Training, Discipline:</i></b></p> <p>Departmental-level cohort-building through discipline-specific workshops, reading groups, everyday research management and leadership.</p>
<p><b><i>Professional Skills for Research Leadership:</i></b></p> <p>This module develops the professional skills that are expected of independent researchers in the social sciences, enabling them to develop and articulate the skills required to make the transition from postgraduate research to post-doctoral research.</p>	<p><b><i>Advanced Research Training:</i></b></p> <p>The content will be drawn from a selection of advanced methods training courses. This module builds on Masters level social science research training through a focus on methodological innovation and high-level training (showcasing the work of methodological leaders and specialist workshops), and learning based around the use of methods in context (drawing on students' own projects-in-progress, and work of experienced researchers).</p>

## **7) What is Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and why does it matter?**

To ensure that all students (including 1+3 MA Social Research students) within the WRDTP receive a high level of social science training with a full complement of core, advanced, and transferable skills, Personal Development Planning will be used to allow you and your supervisors to tailor training within an appropriate framework. The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) framework at each partner university is used to do this and is based on the Researcher Development Framework developed by Vitae. Your TNA should be completed as soon as possible after your initial registration and it will be reviewed with your supervisory team twice a year for the rest of your doctoral journey. Your TNA will be used by the WRDTP as a means of evidencing that you have received the appropriate training in pursuit of becoming an effective social science researcher and will allow the WRDTP to tailor training to meet your ongoing needs. The TNAs will be independently reviewed by each of the WRDTP universities annually and reported into the WRDTP Training Group who will then assess the suitability of training on offer and commission additional courses where necessary.

## **8) Training and my supervisor**

### **a) How does my supervisor support my training needs and development as a doctoral researcher?**

As well as providing supervision for your research project, your supervisor, and wider thesis advisory group, are crucial in informing your Training Needs Analysis (TNA), in guiding you on appropriate training courses and activities, including Pathway membership, and in helping you to balance research and training.

## **9) Code of Practice**

Your studies are governed by the regulations, codes, policies and procedures at the institution where you are registered and you are advised to familiarise yourself with these rules at the start of your studies.

## **10) Ethics**

It is the responsibility of each doctoral researcher to take into account the ethical issues that apply to your research. You must ensure that ethical approval is sought at your institution following the rules set down there in regarding research practice.

**If your specific question is not answered in this document please email [training@wrctp.ac.uk](mailto:training@wrctp.ac.uk)**

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## **Annex I – List of eligible departments**

### **Manchester Metropolitan University**

Department of Social Care and Social Work – *Education, Childhood, and Youth Pathway; Wellbeing, Health, and Communities Pathway*

Faculty of Education – *Education, Childhood, and Youth Pathway*

### **Sheffield Hallam University**

Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research – *Cities, Environment, and Liveability Pathway; Wellbeing, Health, and Communities Pathway; Civil Society, Development, and Democracy Pathway*

Sheffield Institute of Education – *Education, Childhood, and Youth Pathway*

### **University of Bradford**

Faculty of Health Studies – *Wellbeing, Health and Communities Pathway*

School of Management - *Wellbeing, Health and Communities Pathway; Sustainable Growth, Management, and Economic Productivity Pathway*

### **University of Hull**

School of History, Languages and Cultures – *Cities, Environment, and Liveability Pathway*

School of Life Sciences – *Education, Childhood, and Youth Pathway; Wellbeing, Health and Communities Pathway*

School of Environmental Sciences – *Cities, Environment, and Liveability Pathway; Sustainable Growth, Management, and Economic Productivity Pathway; Civil Society, Development, and Democracy Pathway*

### **University of Leeds (ALL 7 Thematic Interdisciplinary Pathways)**

Leeds University Business School

Institute for Transport Studies

School of Computing

School of Earth and Environment

School of Education

School of Geography

Institute of Health Sciences

School of Healthcare

School of History

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

School of Law

School of Media and Communications

School of Politics and International Studies

School of Psychology

School of Sociology and Social Policy

### **University of Sheffield (ALL 7 Thematic Interdisciplinary Pathways)**

Department of Computer Science

Department of Economics

Department of Geography

Department of History  
Department of Human Communication Sciences  
Department of Journalism Studies  
Department of Landscape  
Department of Politics  
Department of Psychology  
Department of Sociological Studies  
Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
Information School  
Management School  
School of Architecture  
School of East Asian Studies  
School of Education  
School of Health and Related Research  
School of Law

**University of York (ALL 7 Thematic Interdisciplinary Pathways)**

Department of Economics  
Department of Education  
Department of Health Sciences  
Department of History  
Department of Language and Linguistic Science  
Department of Politics  
Department of Psychology  
Department of Social Policy and Social Work  
Department of Sociology  
Environment Department  
Law School  
Management School

## Annex II - DTP Thematic Interdisciplinary Pathways

DTP Pathway	Discipline and Topic Coverage
<b>Cities, Environment, and Liveability (CEL)</b>	Understanding and managing socio-economic change in cities and urban-based responses through policy, governance, and the connecting of communities. An emphasis on environment recognises the growing importance of interactions between populations and climate/environmental/ecological changes, the politics of sustainability, and the importance of urban and rural dynamics and interconnections. Liveability provides a nexus by placing emphasis on infrastructures and their resilience (breadth of services, utilities, such as energy and water) and shifts within the built environment (spaces and places, mobilities, interaction, property, housing policy and practice).
<b>Security, Conflict, and Justice (SCJ)</b>	The Security, Conflict and Justice pathway engages with a range of broad societal challenges addressed within and across political science, international studies, criminology, law, socio-legal studies, and public policy. Climate change, social deprivation, public health, global development challenges, distributive justice, violent extremism and terrorism, egregious human rights abuse, changing patterns of conflict, the impact of new technologies on criminal justice, (forced) migration, and the evolving security agenda – amongst many others – are challenges which arguably defy narrow disciplinary approaches. They are also defined by the evolving social, technological and normative contexts in which they are found, and the blurring distinction between traditional academic categories. Debates about the nature and driving forces of conflict – and in particular the growing emphasis upon social and economic factors, identity, and environmental stresses – are relevant to the development, governance and security subject areas. In turn, security and conflict are both inherently linked to debates about justice. Injustice is a source of conflict, and the question of ‘just security’ – including the politics and governance of security in contemporary society – is highly topical and contested. Injustice and insecurity are experienced by people in different ways on an everyday basis, including the challenges of social deprivation, unequal access to legal justice, the denial of minority rights, and deficiencies in the rule of law. These challenges illustrate interlinkages across the security, conflict and justice theme, as well as links to broader societal debates. Many of the themes related to this pathway are also directly linked to pressing policy challenges which need to be approached with new and wider perspectives in order to develop better strategies for conflict resolution and securing justice locally/globally.
<b>Education, Childhood, and Youth (ECY)</b>	This pathway covers the fields of education, learning and development, including students and academic staff from Education, Psychology, Sociology and Language & Linguistics departments. Members have an interest in learning and education, from early childhood through to adulthood. As an interdisciplinary pathway, we look at ways in which the different disciplines concerned with education, learning and development, practice and research, learn from one another and collaborate to produce new findings. As such, we cover a wide range of research areas, from laboratory studies of learning and development, to educational interventions to improve children’s outcomes in schools, to exploring ways in which children and young people are conceptualised and produced.
<b>Data,</b>	Communications and interactions between social groups, society, and data, information and digital technologies. Cutting-edge frameworks and methods for understanding these interactions and novel applications to support them. How social actors can better make

<b>Communication, and New Technologies (DCT)</b>	sense of and manage increasing volumes of data and information encountered ('datafication') in a variety of domains, and investigates how we experience and make sense of the changing data landscape and information environment.
<b>Wellbeing, Health, and Communities (WHC)</b>	This pathway concerns multi-disciplinary perspectives on health and wellbeing often in partnership with policy and practice networks, including local authorities, voluntary organisation and NHS trusts, and increasingly decentralisation and devolution to communities. The partnership has expertise on the following topics: inequalities, ageing, e-health, emergency care, obesity, modelling and economic evaluation, and cost-effectiveness of health policy interventions. In addition, inclusion and resilience connections are made between health, employment, employability and work psychology in this pathway.
<b>Sustainable Growth, Management, and Economic Productivity (SMP)</b>	Productivity and sustainable economic growth at multi-level scale, from firm, to sectoral, regional and national levels. Wages, finance, financialisation, skills and welfare. Macro-level economics and other levels of micro-analysis to capture complex systems of management, regulation, governance (covering marketing, work and employment relations, accounting and finance, public services). Economic development, business support, and the sustainability of economic policies and interventions.
<b>Civil Society, Development, and Democracy (CDD)</b>	Spans excellence in understanding the changing nature of civil and political society: governance, institutions, community, individuals, migration, and difference. Addresses political climate of devolution, constitutional change, patterns and processes of democracy, legitimacy, and citizenship. This is set within the broader context of crisis, inequality, processes and patterns of uneven international development, public policy, situated development studies, and dynamics of rising powers vis-à-vis area studies.