Admission Statement for 2017/2018 Entry

General Criteria and Principles

- The studentships are awarded on merit and strategic fit with the aims of the University, the SWDTP and those of the Discipline.

- Given the importance of ESRC Completion Rates, it is essential that projects are deemed as being achievable within three years and complete within four years (or part time equivalent).

- Students will not already hold a doctorate or equivalent qualification, and will not normally have commenced a PhD. All students will commence their studies from the beginning of the programme.

- It is important that any training needs for the student can be met by the Discipline / SWDTP.

- There should be resources available in the discipline to support the research proposal, including the provision of suitable supervisory team including experienced academic staff.

- There must be a strong strategic fit with the priorities of the SWDTP (for entry in 2017-18 this entails a strong collaborative element or demonstration of clear potential in a collaborative context).

- For the Economics pathway (UoBristol, UoBath and UoExeter) and the Advanced Quantitative Methods (UoBristol, UoBath and UoExeter), international applicants can be considered but the ESRC have stated that a limit of up to 35% of students in these two pathways can be given a full award – so we would expect that only 1 or 2 would be successful, depending upon the open competition results. For all other pathways only home status (i.e. UK and EU) students can be considered, although in most cases EU students will receive a fees only award, unless they have been resident in the UK for 3 years prior to starting the funded programme (see the ESRC Residential Guidance for further details). See “Annex 1: Residential guidelines” in the “ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide”, linked from http://www.esrc.ac.uk/skills-and-careers/studentships/esrc-students/

Entry Requirements

The SWDTC upholds the principles of equality and diversity, respect and dignity. Candidates are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion or belief, disability, health or age.

Applicants for a +3 award should have:

- completed, or be due to complete an ESRC-accredited or an equivalent research Masters* with a significant element of research training. Applicants may be asked for further information to determine the relevance of the content covered.

- * An equivalent research Masters is defined as including significant social sciences research design, quantitative and qualitative research methods elements. The transcript will need to show that a minimum of a third of the taught stage of your programme entailed research methods elements. For students who have undertaken a Masters outside the UK we will look for appropriate equivalencies. All awards are subject to ratification by the “Awards and Ratification Committee", who shall have the authority to reconsider the equivalence of any Masters awards.
achieved a current average grade of their Masters (at the point of application) normally of at least Merit (60%) grade. Successful applicants must ultimately achieve BOTH an overall average of at least 60% across the taught units/modules AND at least 60% for the dissertation component as a condition of their funding.

Holders of Masters degrees that are not considered equivalent (as above), must apply for the 1+3 award. In the case of a 1+3 application, continuation of funding from the ‘1’ stage to the ‘+3’ stage of the programme will be subject to achieving 60% across the taught units / modules AND 60% for the dissertation component. Students who fail to achieve these conditions may have their funding terminated and may be required to refund any money paid to them during the PhD portion of the programme.

Types of Research Proposal
The ESRC continue to emphasise the importance of collaboration with non-academic public, private and civil-society sector organisations. As such, the SWDTP is required to achieve a minimum of 30% collaboration (in practice the SWDTP target is nearer to 50%). There are no prescribed boundaries determining the nature of collaboration but DTPs should demonstrate that studentships are developed in collaboration with other organisations and should involve substantive user engagement and knowledge-exchange activity as part of the award. Collaboration [link], Knowledge exchange activity [link], Impact [link], and Evaluation and Impact [link].

However, the ESRC also encourages ambitious and novel research proposals addressing new concepts and techniques with the potential for significant scientific or societal and economic impact – as can be evidenced through calls such as [link] and [link].

The SWDTP therefore encourages two alternate types of proposal:

a) **Collaborative, Impact and Engagement** Elements - important factors include relevant external partner identified, collaboration plan (with partner), impact and awareness of opportunities and challenges that external collaborations bring.

b) **Ambitious and Novel Research Proposal** - important factors include novelty/fresh ideas, new concepts / techniques with the potential for significant scientific or societal and economic impact, innovative or even untested methods within the context of the particular project, involve multiple or unusual disciplinary combinations both within and beyond the social sciences, and accessing difficult/challenging data or generating new data in challenging settings.

Additional Information Required
Students are able to claim additional funding during their studies for the following:

- difficult language training,
- overseas institutional visits
- overseas fieldwork

HOWEVER this can only be claimed if details are outlined in the original research proposal at the time of application for a studentship. **The research proposal should therefore include such details.**

NB The criteria used at shortlisting compared with that at interview differ: whilst the level of qualifications, ‘quality’ of previous institution, references etc. are important at shortlisting, the applicants engagement with the proposed research, academic potential, research excellence and potential collaborative activities weigh more strongly during interview.