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| **September 2018 entry**  **Application Guidance Notes 2018**  **Application Deadline: 11.59pm Monday 5th February 2018** |  |  |  |  |  |



***General Notes on Completing the LDoc Application Form***

* Applicants are advised to seek advice on completing the form from the University at which they would like to study. Applicants must also apply for a place on the PhD programme at this University.
* You may apply to only one LDoc member university for a LDoc scholarship.
* The application must be supported by two references.
* Applications must include Degree Transcripts or Certificates (as complete as are available) as evidence of marks and degree results.
* All sections of the form must be word-processed using at least a 10pt font. Text should be confined to the spaces provided. Please ensure that the format of the form is preserved.
* You may submit up to **four images** with your application in a separate PDF file but otherwise no other documents (for example a personal statement or covering letter) will be accepted. Each image should be on a separate page, and should not be made from a combination of other images.
* It is the applicant's responsibility to complete the application. The applicant should keep in regular contact with anyone providing information to ensure that all parts are completed and submitted by the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be progressed.
* Application assessment criteria are provided at the end of these notes.
* Wherever possible questions should be addressed to your University contact in the first instance; if this is not possible then please contact LDoc Administration at [ldoc@rca.ac.uk](mailto:ldoc@rca.ac.uk)

***Submission Checklist***

In order to complete your application, please ensure that the following have been sent to your chosen University contact (as per Question 8) by the deadline of **11.59pm Monday 5th February 2018**. You must also have applied to your University for a place on their PhD programme.

* Completed Application Form
* Copies of your transcripts or certificates
* Two references (to be sent directly by your referees to your contact in Question 8.)
* Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

***Detailed Notes on Completing the Application Form***

***Question 2: Contact details***

Please provide contact details covering the period April to September 2018.

***Question 3: Mode of Study***

Please indicate whether you will be studying Full Time or Part Time. Please note that the maximum period of funded registration for a part time student is 6 years (at 50%). Please discuss with your supervisor which mode is most suitable for you.

***Question 4: Student Classification***

LDoc AHRC funding is only available to Home or EU students. Both Home and EU students have to satisfy the standard research council eligibility criteria.

The AHRC eligibility criteria, the terms and conditions of grants and monitoring arrangements are set out in their ‘AHRC Training Grant Funding Guide’ 2015-16. This should be read in conjunction with the RCUK ‘Terms and Conditions of Training Grants’ and ‘Training Grant Guide’. All three documents can be found at: [RCUK and AHRC postgrad funding guides](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/phdstudents/currentawardholders/)

EU students who have not been resident in the UK for the 3 years preceding the award (i.e. on 30th September 2018) will be entitled to a Fees Only award.

***Question 5: Other funding applications***

Please indicate if you are also applying to other Doctoral Training Partnerships for an AHRC scholarship.

(If an applicant is offered more than one AHRC studentship only one can be accepted).

***Question 6: Professional experience***

Provide information about any employment, work or professional experience (research and /or practice-based) that is relevant to your proposed programme of study and will therefore strengthen your application. **Please use the space provided** and do not attach additional pages.

***Question 7: Career in higher education to date***

If you have more than one qualification at the same level, please provide details.

***Question 8: Details of the Institution in which you propose to study***

Please enter the University at which you are registering and give the name of the principal person (either an administrator or academic) you have been liaising with, and to whom references should be sent.

**Note: you may apply to only one LDoc member university for an LDoc scholarship.**

***Question 9: Proposed research project.***

You should discuss the content of this section with your proposed supervisor(s). Assessors will look for evidence of high quality and strong potential for doctoral study (evidence of intellectual purpose and originality, reasons for, and approach towards, undertaking your proposed study, awareness of the research context).

Use clear and concise language, avoiding jargon. Bear in mind that the members of the LDoc Selection Panel assessing your application will not all be experts in your particular specialist field.

Please note there is a strict limit of 1,000 words (excluding bibliographic references) on the main section. The number of words used must be provided. **Please note that any text exceeding 1,000 words will be cut out and the assessor will not be able to read it.** A list of brief academic references at the end of your research proposal is preferable to footnotes.

**Continuing students should account for the work they have already completed and outline what they have learnt so far, as part of the word limit.**

***Question 10: Training needs***

You are advised to discuss this section with your proposed supervisor(s). Please give an indication of training needs you anticipate, both to support your research project and the development of your future career. Although LDoc cannot commit to meeting these needs, your answers here will be used to inform LDoc training plans.

***Question 11 Resources***

Please describe any study trips, facilities, access to libraries, archives or similar, which are integral to your research. This will enable assessors to determine whether LDoc can provide or support these. We may liaise with LDoc Partner organisations, which may also be able to provide relevant resources, see www.ldoc-cdt.ac.uk.

Also mention any other potential Partner organisation with which you already have links as part of your research, or with which you may wish to explore options, including work placements.

***Question 12: Why LDoc?***

Please explain why you have chosen to put forward an application to LDoc, how your proposal fits with its philosophy ([www.ldoc-cdt.ac.uk](http://www.ldoc-cdt.ac.uk)) and what you see as the benefits of working in the Consortium context.

***Question 14: Your referees***

You should choose your two referees carefully. Together they should have a good knowledge of your academic record to date and your plans for the research project. They should be in a position to judge your suitability and preparedness for doctoral study. **Only one of your referees can be a member of your proposed (or actual) supervisory team.** You may ask the supervisor of your Masters dissertation to be one of your referees.

There is no LDoc template for references but you should ask the referee to include:

* The referee’s name and their relationship to you
* Your name i.e. who the reference is for
* Comment on your previous performance/achievements
* Comment on your preparedness for doctoral study
* Your predicted or actual degree result if appropriate

**Please note that it is the applicant's responsibility to monitor the progress of the references and check that all parts are completed on time. Neither LDoc nor your chosen university will request references on your behalf from your referees. Your application will not be considered if both references are not received.**

***When the application form has been completed…***

* Pass a copy of the completed application form, along with copies of transcripts or certificates (evidence of your marks and degree results) to each of the referees you have identified so that they can complete their reports. The referees should send completed references directly to the University contact person (as provided in Question 8).
* Pass the completed application form to the University contact person in the institution at which you propose to study, along with transcripts or certificates (evidence of your marks and degree results) **and the** **Equal Opportunities form** (see page 5).
* Both referees must return their references to the relevant University by **11.59pm on Monday 5th February 2018**. This is the deadline by which the University must have the completed application form, and all supporting documents.

***Guidance for LDoc Member Institutions and Supervisors on completing questions 15-18***

**These questions are for internal use only, and only to be completed for applicants who are put forward to the LDoc Selection process.**

***NOTE: Question 11: Resources***

**Although question 11 is for completion by students on their Application Form, supervisors should identify cases where use of a particular resource is critical to the research project. This may include LDoc Partner institutions, or other potential Partner Institutions.**

***Question 15: Supervisors***

**Please give full details of the supervisory team. All LDoc supervision must involve at least two supervisors. If the applicant is planning to work with non-Higher Education partners then details should be given of the supervisor from the collaborative partner. At least one supervisor must have successfully completed a PhD or have equivalent experience. LDoc welcomes and encourages cross institutional and/or cross discipline supervisory teams. If there is a potential for a co-supervisor at another LDoc institution or at one of LDoc’s Partners, please give their name, or indicate the area of expertise that would be a useful addition to the supervisory team.**

***Question 16: Student Training Needs: what training is needed to support the student’s research or career development?***

**Is the student’s own assessment in Q 10 realistic? Are there any other areas you would identify at this stage? Successful candidates will undertake training needs analysis with you at institutional level, and LDoc will liaise with you in planning its wider programme for students’ development and training, but it is useful to have an indication at this stage.**

***Question 17: Ethical Issues: please describe any ethical issues which will need to be addressed by the University***

**Significant ethical issues which may arise during the course of the applicant’s research should be flagged and details given on how they will be addressed before submission to the Selection Panel. The Panel will take a view in regards to training issues or requirements for supervisory expertise in relation to the ethics identified. Consideration should be given to issues such as potentially vulnerable participants, safeguarding/child protection, risks to participants or the researcher, methods of research anticipated and confidentiality.**

***Question 18: Please make any other points relevant to the application not mentioned elsewhere***

**Suggestions about working with external partners might be made here.**

**See also Question 11.**

***Selection and Notification Process***

Applicants will be assessed firstly by selection panels in the university through which they have applied. Applicants will be informed in mid March by that university whether or not they have passed this first stage and whether their application will go forward to LDoc.

At the second stage in April, the LDoc Selection Panel will consider applications using the Grade Descriptors below. Their recommendations will then be considered by the LDoc Management Group. Applicants will be contacted by LDoc administration in May if they have been successful. Those offered an award will have to confirm their acceptance by a specified date; if no answer is received by that date it will be assumed that the offer has been declined.

The offer is dependent on the applicant completing registration at their university.

***Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form***

LDoc and the AHRC are committed to ensuring that applicants are selected on the basis of merit. Completion of the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will help us to ensure that our policies and procedures are effective in avoiding discrimination and promoting equal opportunities in awarding studentships.

Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form and return it to your University contact (detailed in Question 8) by the deadline of **11.59pm on Monday 5th February 2018**.

Your answers will be used to evaluate the effective operation of our Equal Opportunities Policy and to report to the AHRC. **Please note: Your answers will not affect your application in any way.** The form does not need to be sent to your referees or potential supervisors and will not be seen by the Selection Panel.

It is a requirement of your application to submit the Equal Opportunities form.

***Grade Descriptors used for the assessment of student applications***

***Updated 30th July 2014***

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Quality of student**  **33%** | **Quality of Proposal**  **33%** | **Feasibility of Proposal**  **33%** |
|  | Assessment criteria:   * Past academic achievement * Contribution of academic and professional experience to preparedness for doctoral study * How doctoral study will contribute to long term career aims   As evidenced in Questions 6, 7, 18 and references | Assessment criteria:   * Ideas underpinning the proposal * Concept and design of research * Fit of the project with the LDoc philosophy   As evidenced in Questions 9, 12 and 18 | Assessment criteria :   * Coherence and quality of research plan * Feasibility of research being completed in 3 years * Advancement of work in the current field * Potential impact * Expertise of potential supervisors * Feasibility of necessary training, fieldwork or study trips   As evidenced in Questions 9, 10, 11 and 15 to 18. |
| **6** | A student of outstanding quality, who is outstandingly well prepared to undertake the proposed postgraduate study. | An outstanding proposal in all of the following: scholarship, originality, quality, significance and openness to diverse approaches. It provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept and design. The proposal merits the very highest priority for funding. | The research plan is coherent, clear and convincing and the project has strong potential for impact. The project will significantly advance work in the current field and is undoubtedly capable of completion within 3 years. There is an excellent fit between the project and the expertise of the supervisors. Resourcing of training or fieldwork is unproblematic. |
| **5** | A student of excellent quality, who is exceptionally well prepared to undertake the proposed postgraduate study. | An excellent proposal in all of the following: scholarship, originality, quality, significance and openness to diverse approaches. It provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal. The proposal should be funded as a matter of priority, but does not merit the very highest priority rating. | The research plan is coherent, clear and convincing and the project has strong potential for impact. The project will advance work in the current field and is capable of completion within 3 years. There is a good fit between the project and the expertise of the supervisors. . Resourcing of training or fieldwork is unproblematic |
| **4** | A student of good quality, who is well prepared to undertake the proposed postgraduate study. | A very good proposal in all of the following: scholarship, originality, quality, significance and openness to diverse approaches. It provides very good evidence and justification for the proposal. It is worthy of consideration for funding. | The research plan is coherent, clear and convincing and the project has some potential for impact. The project will advance work in the current field and is capable of completion within 3 years. There is an adequate fit between the project and the expertise of the supervisors. Resourcing of training or fieldwork is unproblematic. |
| **3** | A student of satisfactory quality, who is prepared to undertake the proposed postgraduate study. | A satisfactory proposal in terms of the overall standard of scholarship and quality but which is more limited in terms of originality, significance, its contribution to the research field or openness to diverse approaches. In a competitive context the proposal is not considered of a sufficient quality to recommend for funding. | The research plan is adequate. The project may advance work in the current field and it may be possible to complete it within 3 years. There is an adequate fit between the project and the expertise of the supervisors. Resourcing of training or fieldwork may present some problems. |
| **2** | The quality of the student is inconsistent. The student may be of insufficient quality or may not be well prepared to undertake and complete the proposed postgraduate study. | A proposal of inconsistent quality which has some strengths, innovative ideas and/or good components or dimensions but also has significant weaknesses or flaws in one or more of the following: conceptualisation, design, methodology. As a result of the flaws or weaknesses identified, the proposal is not considered to be of fundable quality. | There are significant weaknesses or flaws in the management of the project and it would be unlikely to be completed in 3 years or to advance work in the field. The fit between the project and supervisors is inadequate. Resourcing of training or fieldwork is likely to be problematic. |
| **1** | A student of an unsatisfactory quality who is not well prepared to undertake and complete the proposed postgraduate study. | A proposal of an unsatisfactory quality which:   * Has unsatisfactory levels of originality, quality and/or significance * Contains insufficient evidence and justification for the proposal * Displays limited potential to advance the research field   It is not suitable for funding. | The project is unconvincing in terms of its management or capacity to deliver the proposed outcomes or its contribution to the field. The fit between the project and supervisors is inadequate. Resourcing of training or fieldwork is likely to be problematic. |