



## Sustainable Futures – Joint SWDTP and NERC GW+4 Studentship

**Call for students to apply at Bath, Bristol, Exeter and the University of the West of England**

### What is it?

Many environmental challenges are so called "wicked" problems involving complicated interdependence between the environmental and social sciences, and there is an increasing need for researchers who can work across the boundaries. Thus the overarching goal of this pathway is to promote greater interaction between social and environmental sciences and to help generate a community of professional researchers capable of working across these sets of disciplines; specifically to bring together academics in the NERC GW4+ DTP and the economic and social science researchers within SWDTP to tackle these real-world and highly topical environmental and societal problems. Two particularly topical issues to the UK are fracking, and nuclear development at Hinkley Point. Both issues have a complex interplay between scientific knowledge and economics, policy and regulation (local, UK and global), safety, and public perception. The responses to these problems are diverse and rapidly developing with no obvious answer. Together we seek projects that develop the dialogue and debate between environmental sciences and social sciences by encouraging studentships on the social science underpinning fracking or Hinkley point development. However, this joint call is not limited to these two areas, so if you have a project that is interdisciplinary in nature and straddles the NERC and ESRC remits then please apply. Your proposed research must include substantive interaction between the relevant scientific areas, with a minimum of 50% social science.

NERC remit: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/portfolio/remit/>

ESRC remit: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/>

### Who is it for?

The call is for social scientists who will be trained to work on the interface between the social and environmental sciences. Researchers should explore the environmental and societal impacts of living with large scale infrastructure projects and the diverse responses needed to foster behaviours, practices and policies that promote dialogue and debate. Students from a wide range of social science disciplinary backgrounds will be accepted into this pathway and they should have a good understanding of the environmental science surrounding these issues.

### What are the prerequisites?

Details of the [Admissions Statement](#) should be reviewed before applying. Applicants should have an MRes or MSc level training in a social science discipline, public health or statistics. As students will be working with environmental scientists, students should have some knowledge of quantitative data and an interest in developing experience of quantitative data analysis.

### When would it start?

Students will be expected to start September/October annually.

### How many studentships are there?

One or two PhD studentships will be awarded each year on a competitive basis from a pool of 45 SWDTP studentships across the five universities.

### How do I apply?

- Work out your substantive research topic and consider what quantitative and qualitative methods you might need to address your research questions.
- Contact the pathway lead Margherita Pieraccini, [M.Pieraccini@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:M.Pieraccini@bristol.ac.uk) (Social Sciences) with a brief description of your proposed research topic on Fracking and Hinkley Point (no more than 1 page), or other cross remit project that you have designed. She will discuss your research ideas and then put you in touch with potential supervisor(s) for your topic. Your first supervisor will be in social sciences and your co-supervisor will be in physical sciences.
- Write a 1000 word proposal which should include both social and physical sciences.
- Students are also encouraged to look at ways of incorporating collaboration with external partners into their research proposal. Collaboration does not always have to be a financial arrangement and could take the form of a placement, voluntary work, data sharing or other payment in kind opportunities. Students considering overseas fieldwork, overseas institutional visits or difficult language training should also mention this in their application.
- Submit your proposal to your host University using their online application form before noon on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 and in the Personal Statement section please make it clear you wish to apply for the Environmental Challenges joint SWDTP/NERC GW4+ pathway.

### NERC Training and Support

Students will be offered access to the following opportunities from the NERC GW4+ DTP, all of which will be optional:

- DTP residential orientation event at the Eden Project in September.
- Autumn School - In their first year, students will attend a one-week residential course in Dartington Hall in November where they will receive training in transferable skills and in foundation research skills in each of the three DTP research themes.
- Foundation Researcher Training - Students will be offered a range of foundation researcher training courses throughout the duration of their PhD. These courses are offered on a first-come, first-served basis and there are no course fees for DTP students. A schedule for training courses will be provided at the beginning of the academic year. Details of the courses we currently offer can be found here: <http://nercgw4plus.ac.uk/training/foundation-researcher-training/>.
- Annual Wessex DTN Student Congress, which is held on a rotating basis between the GW4+, Spitfire (Southampton) and Oxford DTPs. Students may also be asked to participate in research seminars and DTP social events as these are planned throughout the duration of the PhD.
- Associate Partner Event in January bringing in the DTP's 24 industry, policy and third sector partners in a one day training event.

### SWDTP Training, Allowances and Support

Students will be given a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) of £750 per year, plus the chance to apply for fieldwork allowances, placements and overseas institutional visits.

**Institutional Links, (to apply for this as part of the Sustainable Futures Pathway):**

**Bath:** <http://www.bath.ac.uk/hss/graduate-school/study-with-us/south-west-doctoral-training-partnership>

**Bristol:** <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/2017/ssl/phd-environment-energy-resilience/>

**Exeter:** <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/studying/funding/award/?id=2527>

**UWE:** <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/research/postgraduateresearchstudy/studentshipopportunities/swdtp.aspx>

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