

GUIDE FOR PHD APPLICANTS

School of Government and Society (SGS)

Constituent Departments:

Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS)

International Development Department (IDD)

Institute for Local Government Studies (INLOGOV)

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KEY CONTACTS

AT THE SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

Dr Emma Foster, SGS Director of Postgraduate Research

- Email: e.a.foster@bham.ac.uk
- Contact for information relating to scholarship and Doctoral Training

Tricia Thomas, Doctoral Research Administrator, School of Government and Society

- Email: p.a.thomas.1@bham.ac.uk
- Contact for general information relating to a PhD application in SGS

DEPARTMENT LEADS AND ADMISSIONS CONTACTS

Enquiries relating to doctoral study, supervision, and admissions should be directed to the following department contacts:

POLSI

Dr Daniele Albertazzi, POLSIS Director of Postgraduate Research

- Email: d.albertazzi@bham.ac.uk

Professor Pete Burnham, POLSIS Director of Doctoral Admissions

- Email: p.burnham@bham.ac.uk

IDD

Dr Danielle Beswick, IDD Director of Postgraduate Research & Admissions Contact

- Email: d.beswick@bham.ac.uk

Dr Martin Ottmann, IDD Director of Postgraduate Research & Admissions Contact

- Email: m.ottmann@bham.ac.uk

INLOGOV

Dr Louise Reardon, INLOGOV Director of Postgraduate Research & Admissions Contact

- Email: l.h.reardon@bham.ac.uk

University of Birmingham Postgraduate Admissions Office

- Phone: +44 (0)121 414 5488
- Email: pgadmissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk

KEY CONTACTS

- Contact for technical information relating to the PhD application process, including: admission requirements; documentation requirements; fees; language requirements.

TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES FOR APPLICANTS

October 2018

Applications open to start in September/October of the following academic year

30th November 2018

Applications for School scholarships close.

22nd January 2019

Applications for ESRC scholarships close.

July 2019

All applicants intending to start in Sept/Oct 2019 should have their applications in by July 1st 2019 at the latest.

August 2019

Successful applicants will receive additional information relating to PhD orientation and doctoral research training

September/October 2019

New doctoral researchers will start their studies at the beginning of the new academic year



Please note:

- This timeline is **indicative** only, and **deadlines are subject to change**
- **You must hold an offer of a PhD place at the university to be eligible for funding.** As such, we recommend that you apply for a PhD place by the **beginning of November**. If you wish to apply for funding, contact the Departmental PGR Director (and cc the School PGR Director) as soon as possible. Advance consultation when preparing your application is key to success. Links to further info on scholarships [here](#).
- PhD applications should not be rushed. Successful applications require time and effort to put together
- It is important to establish whether the department you are looking at in SGS is the right fit for your research plans and qualifications and to make initial contact with a prospective supervisor
- For a full list of departments with links to staff and research interests in SGS, please follow the link available [here](#)

THE STAGES OF A PHD APPLICATION IN SGS

1

DEVELOP YOUR RESEARCH PROPOSAL



2

MAKE CONTACT WITH A POTENTIAL SUPERVISOR



3

FINALIZE THE MATERIAL FOR YOUR APPLICATION



4

COMPLETE YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION
(WITH SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, SEE CHECKLIST)



For more detailed advice on preparing a PhD research proposal, see:

- Patrick Dunleavy, *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation* (Palgrave, 2003).

INFORMATION ON SCHOLARSHIPS

The University of Birmingham offers a range of scholarship options available each year (see below) for doctoral researchers who meet the eligibility criteria and can demonstrate an excellent academic track record. These include scholarships from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as well as University and School of Government & Society scholarships.

For details of funding see [here](#).

Scholarships are highly competitive, with limited funding available. It is essential that all applications for scholarships are carefully prepared, and include all necessary documentation. **Incomplete applications cannot be considered for scholarship funding.**

The deadlines for scholarship applications are given above. If you wish to be considered for scholarships, please contact the relevant departmental lead (see p. 2) and cc. Dr Emma Foster (e.a.foster@bham.ac.uk) as soon as possible, and well in advance of the December/January deadline.

PHD RESEARCH PROPOSAL INGREDIENTS

- A **project title** and **abstract / summary** (300-400 words)
- A **brief introduction** to / background on the topic and its significance within the relevant field
- **Central research question** (with sub-questions where appropriate)
- A concise **literature review** of the key existing debates in the field relating to this topic, with appropriate references to key academic sources
- The proposed **theoretical framework** for the project (including discussion of potential alternative approaches where appropriate)
- The proposed **research methodology** (with clear justifications for why a particular methodology is appropriate for this research, and what methodological limitations, if any, you may encounter)
- A succinct discussion of the potential **original contribution** of the project to existing scholarship in the field
- A proposed **timeline** and detailed **chapter outline** for the project
- A list of **references**



Please note:

- For the purposes of your application, a PhD Research Proposal should be no more than **2500 words** in length (not including bibliography)

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ✓ Personal e-mail address (in addition to a university e-mail address)
- ✓ Contact with a potential supervisor in POLSIS, IDD, or INLOGOV
- ✓ A completed [online application](#) (please follow this link to a hub from which you can select the appropriate programme and then find the right application link)
- ✓ 2–3 page CV, with previous educational achievements and grades
- ✓ 2500-word PhD Research Proposal (see guidelines on page 7)
- ✓ For applicants to the Distance Learning programmes only: complete 'checklist' in consultation with your supervisor (please contact p.a.thomas.1@bham.ac.uk for details)
- ✓ Academic references and copies of academic transcripts / degrees
- ✓ Successfully completed English Language Test (if applicable)

CRITERIA FOR A SUCCESSFUL PHD APPLICATION

- Educational background and academic achievements
- The strength and quality of your proposed research project
- The capacity of the department to supervise a particular topic (i.e. is there a supervisor available with the right expertise?)
- The support of your prospective supervisor for your application
- Fluency in English
- Evidence of your ability to fully finance your studies (for self-funding students)