



Welcome to the LISS DTP Open Competition Online Applicant Briefing Session!

2nd December 2025, 10:00 – 11:30 GMT

Key Links:

[Applying to LISS DTP](#)

[LISS DTP Open Competition Webpage](#)

[FAQs](#)



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Introduction to LISS DTP

Professor Pietro Panzarasa, LISS Director

A short overview

- Partnership between King's College London, Queen Mary University of London, and Imperial College London.
- Commissioned and funded by the ESRC and institutional investment, with approximately 54 studentships offered annually.
- Provides foundation and advanced social science training - all PGRs using social science approaches across the partnership can participate in LISS Research Area activities and research methods training.

<https://liss-dtp.ac.uk/>



LISS DTP's vision



Three core principles:

Interdisciplinarity: Research across topics and disciplinary boundaries, within and beyond the social sciences

Data-driven research: Focus on various forms of data (e.g., numeric, textual, visual) and methods (e.g., quantitative, computational, digital, qualitative, participatory, mixed methods)

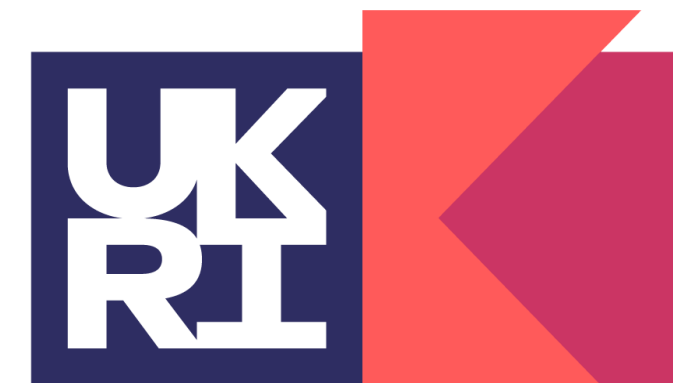
Impact: Engage with extensive networks of non-academic collaborators, and co-design research and training with users, practitioners, and potential future employers

<https://liss-dtp.ac.uk/about/liss-dtp-vision-aims/>

LISS DTP is organised into 6 Research Areas (RAs):

- RA1: Global Health Innovation
- RA2: Business Analytics, Management, and Applied Economics
- RA3: Language, Culture, and Education
- RA4: Environment and Sustainability
- RA5: Global Order and Security
- RA6: Government and Public Policy

<https://liss-dtp.ac.uk/research-areas/>



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Training and Development

- Provided through Research Area activities and LISS DTP's central methods training programme (35-40 courses per year). Open to all funded and unfunded PGR students in the partnership
- Development Needs Analysis
- Individual Research Training Support Grants of £940 per annum (for funded LISS DTP Students)
- Opportunities to undertake placements, international visits and difficult language training.

<https://liss-dtp.ac.uk/training/>



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LISS DTP Studentships

Liisa Matomaki – LISS DTP Manager

LISS DTP Studentships

- There are two studentship competitions:
 1. Open Competition where research proposals are generated by applicants
 2. CASE Competition where research projects must have a non-academic partner, and the research proposal is submitted by the academic supervisor.
- Studentships: 1+3.5 (Master's + PhD) or +3.5 (PhD only) formats. Applicants for +3.5 awards must meet the ESRC's [research methods training](#) standards.
- **Open competition** - around 30-35 studentship awards per year, application deadline 5pm, Friday 23rd January 2026.
- **CASE competition** - up to 20 studentships p/a, projects recruit from early January for October start.

<https://liss-dtp.ac.uk/applying-to-liss/>



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Studentship eligibility

- Open to both Home and International (including EU) students, but LISS DTP can award only up to 30% of total studentship allocation to International Students (capped at this level by the ESRC).
- ESRC studentships only covers the UKRI home fee. Depending on the host institution there are different mechanisms for possibly covering the difference between the home fee and the overseas fee amount.
- Students must be resident close to London.
- Project must be at least 50% social science.
- Must not be more than 1 year (full-time) or 2 years (part-time) into PhD programme by the date the studentship starts (October 2026).
- Primary supervisor must be based within LISS DTP partner institutions.
- We offer 9 ringfenced studentships for home students from underrepresented backgrounds, disabled students and students with caring responsibilities.
- 9 ESRC streered studentships in data skills, AQM and interdisciplinary research.



Find out more about eligibility from our website:
<https://liss-dtp.ac.uk/applying-to-liss/>

What does a studentship include?



- Stipend of at least £22,780 at the full-time rate (50% the part-time rate)
- Fees at the UKRI Home Level of £5,006 p/a (full-time)
- 3-month funding for placements is included in the funding duration
- Research Training Support Grant of around £940 per annum
- Additional support for overseas fieldwork, difficult language training and overseas institutional visits.
- Funding award up to 3.5 years or 4.5 years depending on application (PhD-only or Masters + PhD).

International Students:

LISS DTP can award up to 30% of total studentship allocation to International Students (capped at this level by the ESRC).

- ESRC will only fund the Home UKRI Fee, which means that the difference between the UKRI Home and international fee must be found elsewhere, such as the student's department, institution, or another source such as self-funding.
- LISS DTP institutions will fund the difference between the home and international fee for a limited number of international students. *At this stage we cannot guarantee that every international student offered a LISS DTP studentship will receive this funding as part of their studentship.*

Am I a Home or International Student?

Home Students

- Be a UK National (meeting 3 year residency requirements), or
- Have settled status, or
- Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have indefinite leave to remain or enter

If you do not meet the above criteria, you are classed as an International student.

International Students

- If you do not meet the criteria for Home fee status, you are classed as an international student
- Contact the Admissions team at the institution to which you have applied if you are uncertain of your status. LISS DTP is unable to advise on complex cases and will abide by your institution's assessment of your status.

For further details please refer to [Annex One of the UKRI Guidance issued in October 2020](#)





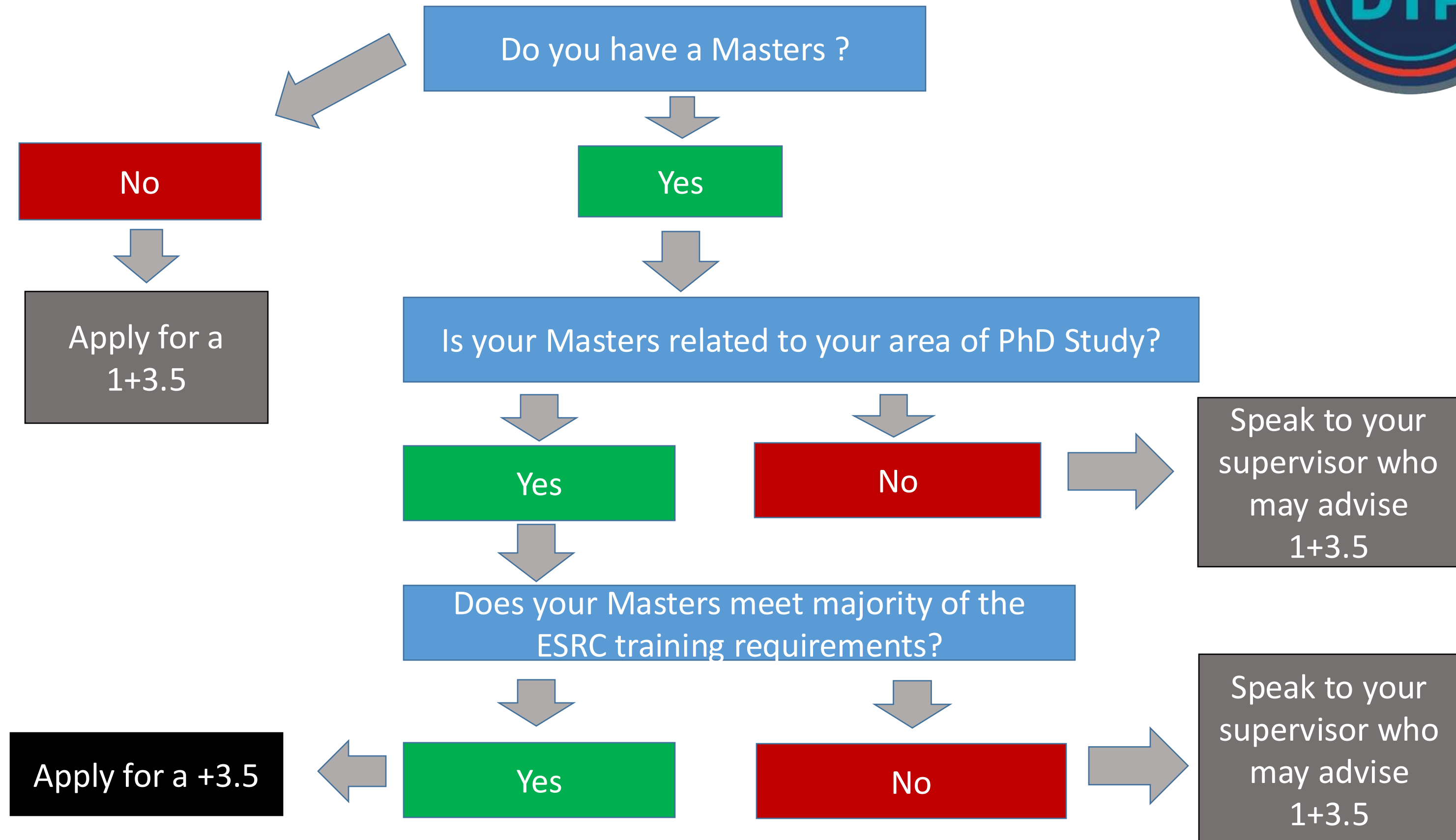
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Open Competition – Route (+3.5 or 1+3.5) and application review

Professor Pietro Panzarasa, LISS Director

Should I apply for a +3.5 (PhD) or 1+3.5 (Masters and PhD)?

(Based on LISS DTP assessment the route offered may be different from the route originally applied for)



Finding a Supervisor

- Your first supervisor must be based at the institution you are applying to
- Research portals for the institutions within our partnership. Search by the academic's name or subject of research
- Staff bios on departmental websites
- Approach academics within departments who are designated as 'PGR or PhD tutors' or admin staff responsible for PGRs.



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Application Review Stages

1. Eligibility check (LISS DTP Team)
2. Sifting review (academic reviewers)
3. Full review (academic reviewers)
4. Research Area assessment (Research Area Leads)



Sifting Stage

Abstract (theoretical underpinning; gaps in literature; research problem/objectives; sources of data; methodological approaches; anticipated contributions to theory and practice) [max 400 words]

Interdisciplinarity (perspectives from different fields; experience/skills of interdisciplinary research) [max 200 words]

Data-Driven Research (type and scale of data; experience/skills in collecting, managing, and analysing data) [max 200 words]

Impact (potential impact of research within academia and beyond; pathways to impact; experience of generating impact) [max 200 words]

Suitability for LISS DTP (why you consider yourself a strong candidate; academic achievements; professional experiences) [max 200 words]



**Anonymous two-page
application**

Criteria of evaluation

Your application will be assessed by academic reviewers according to the following criteria:

Student Research Potential

- As evidenced in the personal statement, academic references; academic transcripts, degree results, and other credentials such as prizes, academic awards or publications; and, where appropriate, professional qualifications and/or relevant experience. (Some candidates may have developed relevant and rounded expertise in core research methods in other contexts, and panels may decide that this broadly equivalent background is sufficient.)

Scientific Quality of Proposal

- Relevant questions to consider include:
 - Does the proposal have a clear research question(s) and proposed methodologies/strategy to answer the question(s)?
 - Is the proposal clear and well-written?
 - Is the proposed work plan achievable in a 3.5-year PhD degree/1-year Masters + 3.5 year PhD?
 - Does the proposed research fill a gap in existing literature and offer an individual contribution/potential for contribution to knowledge in its field?
 - Does the proposal demonstrate the broader impact / social value of the research?
 - Is the proposed research interdisciplinary?
 - Is the proposed research data-driven?
 - Does the proposed research fit in with the strategic priorities of the department and institution where the applicant will be based, the fit of the project with LISS DTP's remits, and the fit with the remit of the ESRC?

Full review scores will be weighted as follows:

- Student Research Potential - weighted 60% for 1+3.5; 40% for +3.5
- Scientific Quality of Proposal - weighted 40% for 1+3.5, 60% for +3.5





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How to submit an application for the Open Competition

Liisa Matomaki – LISS DTP Manager

Application documents

Each LISS DTP application has four parts:

1. An **online** LISS DTP student application form (either 1+3.5 or +3.5).
2. An **online** supervisor statement (submitted via collaboration task in the application portal)
3. A copy of your degree transcripts (or interim transcript) uploaded to your application in the application portal
4. A reference from a person other than your supervisor who can testify to your potential to undertake doctoral study (either submitted via collaboration task in the application portal or uploaded to your application in the application portal)

All four parts must be submitted by the deadline of Friday 23 January 2026, 17:00 GMT. Incomplete applications will be rejected.

There are links on the LISS website to the application portal together with PDF versions to assist you in preparing answers – see step 6 on: <https://liss-dtp.ac.uk/applying-to-liss/open-competition/>



IMPORTANT: *To apply for a LISS DTP studentship, **you must also** apply to join a Masters or a doctoral programme of your choice at King's College London, Queen Mary University of London or Imperial College. You must submit your university application through the institution's online admissions system, and this must be submitted before the LISS DTP studentship application deadline of 23 January 2026. You do not need to have an offer of a place before applying for LISS funding.*

It is your responsibility to ensure that your admissions application and your complete LISS DTP studentship application with all required parts are submitted by the deadline.

What happens to my application?

- **We will email you approximately two weeks after the deadline to say whether we have received all necessary documents for your application to proceed.**
- Eligible applications are circulated to academic reviewers first for sifting reviews and shortlisted applications will then undergo full reviews.
- The full review scores and comments of the reviewers go to Research Area Panels for review. The reviewer scores and RA Panel assessment is then used by a high-level ratification Panel to decide on the final award of studentships.
- **Applicants who have been considered for a studentship will be informed of the outcome in late April 2026.**
- Successful applicants will be asked to accept/decline their offer by a given deadline.

Visit our website for step-by-step guidance: <https://liss-dtp.ac.uk/applying-to-liss/open-competition/>



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LISS DTP Studentships – Open Competition Timeline

Applications Open	23/10/2025
Online Briefing Sessions	14/11/2025
	03/12/2025
Application Deadline	23/01/2026, 17:00 GMT
LISS DTP Team to confirm Progression of Application to Shortlisting	Latest by 04/02/2026
Shortlisting and Reviews (all phases)	Early February 2026 to early April 2026
Application Outcomes (by email)	24/04/2026
Formal Offer Letters issued	In week commencing 27th April 2026

NOTE: It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that all 4 parts of the LISS DTP Application are submitted by Friday 23rd January 2026 at 17:00 GMT.

LISS DTP will reject **incomplete applications and reserves the right to decline submission of late documents.**



Further Information

- LISS DTP website: <https://liss-dtp.ac.uk>
– see 'Apply'
- Queries: liss-dtp@kcl.ac.uk

Questions?



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Thank you for attending our LISS DTP Briefing! Here are your next steps:

- The slides will be shared with and uploaded onto our website for you to review.
- Look carefully at the guidance and apply now on our **LISS DTP Open Competition Webpage**: <https://liss-dtp.ac.uk/applying-to-liss/open-competition/>

