

Sustainable Transitions – Leverhulme Doctoral Training

Programme Guidance for Applicants - 2024 Entry

Introduction

The Sustainable Transitions – Governance, Ecological Management and Society Leverhulme Doctoral Training Programme is a programme that will fund 18 doctoral scholars with intakes in the years of 2024, 2025 and 2026. As part of the programme the University of Essex is also offering three additional scholarships that will be awarded within the same timeframe.

Doctoral students under the programme will become independent and creative researchers who will contribute to our theoretical and empirical understanding in crucial areas relating to environmental sustainability. They will develop a breadth of knowledge across the ‘sustainability’ landscape with the skills to communicate effectively to diverse audiences, making connections between different disciplines. They will be trained in different types of interdisciplinary research methodologies, in order that our understanding of what is needed for ‘sustainable transitions’ to take place, can be properly developed and put into practice.

The core purpose of all research projects under the programme will be first, to clearly understand the systemic change that would be required for the sustainable transition to take place, and second, to understand what processes or systems would be needed to make that change occur. This means that the research can have the potential to challenge existing assumptions and practices at governmental and societal levels, as well as those in business and industry. It will also mean that research under the programme will have the potential for lasting policy and societal impact.

The University of Essex has numerous centres and institutes that operate in the field of environmental sustainability. The [Centre for Environment and Society](#) (CES) acts as a hub for researchers across the Essex bringing together the different centres and institutes that work on environmental and sustainability related projects. Some have a strong focus on sustainable development itself such as the [Centre for Accountability and Global Development](#), the [Centre for Global South Studies](#), and the [Centre for Economic Sociology and Innovation](#), some are more focused on economics and rights such as the [Institute for Social and Economic Research](#) and the [Human Rights Centre](#), and some have a greater

focus on scientific data analysis, such as the [Essex Plant Innovation Centre](#), the [Centre for Computational Finance and Economic Agents](#) and the [Institute for Analytics and Data Science](#) or the [Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis](#). What all of these centres and institutes have in common is the role that their work plays in contributing to the development of knowledge and understanding at Essex that furthers progress in the transition to environmental sustainability.

Supervisor Led Projects

Supervisor-led project areas have been specified (as advertised). Each project area has been determined by the supervisory teams from the participating departments in conjunction with the Director of the Programme and the Management Team. The project areas leave sufficient flexibility for applicants to develop their own research proposal in terms of questions/objectives, approaches and methodologies. Successful applicants will further develop their proposals in close consultation with their supervisors.

Supervision

Within this programme, the primary discipline supervisor takes the lead responsibility for supervising the project.

In terms of content, where there are two supervisors, the primary discipline supervisor would be responsible for approximately 70% of the project content supervision and the secondary discipline supervisor for approximately 30% of the project content supervision.

Where there are three supervisors there may be variations on the above model, but this will be subject to pedagogical constraints to ensure that PhD level research is attained.

This apportionment of content and supervision enables the candidate to build their expertise to PhD standard, whilst achieving interdisciplinarity and the incorporation of interdisciplinary research methods into their project.

The primary discipline supervisor will maintain supervision throughout the project to ensure coherence.

The twice-yearly departmental review of the candidate's work and progress is undertaken by the department of the primary discipline supervisor.

Scholarship Funding details, eligibility criteria and requirements

Refer to the Terms and Conditions.

Proficio Funding

In addition, all PhD students are entitled to the University of Essex Proficio funding of £2,500 (in total) which can be used for training, development and conference attendance

Home / International Applicants

Note: In accordance with the Leverhulme Doctoral Scholarship Programme, only three scholarships in total can be awarded to international students throughout the three annual intakes (i.e. 2024, 2025 and 2026 combined).

See fee status information here: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/money/fee-status-enquiries> .

Location

Scholarships are for on campus study only (NOT for online or distance learning).

How to Apply:

You should apply separately for the scholarship and the PhD course applicable to the project that you are applying for.

To apply for the scholarship: please complete the application form and email it to SustainableLDTP@essex.ac.uk by **11:59pm on Friday 31st May 2024** and attach a 3 page (max) curriculum vitae including educational and academic /professional / working experience

To apply for the PhD course: please complete our online course application, which is quick and straightforward, and the following pages give you all the details: [PhD application information | University of Essex](#)

On the application form on the ‘Course’ page, there is a section entitled, ‘*Proposed research topic or area of research **’ - In the adjacent box please note that you are applying for a ‘Sustainable Transitions’ scholarship and provide the title of the project.

On the same Course Page there is a section that states ‘*If you have contacted a potential supervisor to discuss your application or research proposal, please provide the person's full name.*’ - In the adjacent box please state the name of the primary discipline supervisor for the project.

You should apply for a place to study as soon as possible, and at the latest by **11:59pm GMT on Friday 31st May 2024**.

Guidance on the Content of the Sustainable Transitions Leverhulme Doctoral Training Programme Application

(i) Research proposal (Max 1500 words excluding references)

The proposal should respond to the specific ‘Sustainable Transitions’ research project that you are applying to undertake and should include:

Background literature: A critical overview of relevant literature taking into account the interdisciplinary nature of the research project. This can include an overview of relevant theories and concepts where relevant. It should elaborate on any gaps in the existing literature and areas where additional research is required.

Aims and Objectives: A break down of the different research aims and objectives, or component elements of the project as you envisage it. How those aims and objectives would assist you to achieve the overall objective of the project.

Research methods: A discussion of the importance and relevance of the potential research methods that could be used for the project. This can include methods that are desk based, field based, lab based and so on. (It is recognised that many applicants will not have advanced knowledge of interdisciplinary research methods at the time of application.) However, the discussion should provide an understanding

of the way that the anticipated research methodologies can assist you in answering key research questions associated with the project.

Potential contribution and Impact: A statement detailing the way that the research project can play a role in contributing to changes in ‘governance, ecological management or society’. If possible indicate any stakeholder organisations that may benefit from the research.

List of references: Provide a list of references using an appropriate referencing style (e.g., Harvard / APA) (no more than 20 references/sources)

(ii) Personal Statement (Max 500 words)

In the personal statement you should provide background information related to your education, training, work / professional experience (research/practice based) and any other information which demonstrates that you have the background, experience, preparedness, and knowledge appropriate for the research project that you are applying to undertake. You can also provide a brief statement of your career or future aspirations.

(iii) Curriculum vitae (CV – 3 pages maximum)

Please use 11 point type.

(iv) Referees

Two references are required. One of which should be an academic referee.

Information Considered by the Assessors

The panel of assessors will only consider the documentation and information requested. They will disregard any other documentation that is not requested as part of the application process.

General Information

More general information on postgraduate research at the University of Essex can be found here:
<https://www.essex.ac.uk/postgraduate/research>

Interviews / Shortlisting and Results

Applicants shortlisted for interview will be informed by 10th June 2024.

Two rounds of interviews will take place between 17th and 28th June.

Outcomes for interviewed applicants (i.e. offer, place on waiting list, unsuccessful application) will be made by 8th July.

Guidance Webinar for Applicants

On Thursday 25th April 2024 between 12-2pm (BST i.e. GMT +1) a webinar will take place during which further guidance will be provided. This will also provide the opportunity for applicants to ask questions about the programme and the University.

Registration for the Webinar:

https://essex-university.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oXwVVi_UQXi1sNYrdJgQaA

Further Enquiries

Please contact Ms Kate Davis the Programme Administrator (Email: SustainableLDTP@essex.ac.uk) if you need further general information.

If you have enquiries related to specific advertised projects, please send an email to the primary discipline supervisor.