SUPER Student-Led Studentships 2026

The SUPER DTP is delighted to offer, by open competition, four funded student-led studentships for a March 2026 start of studies. If you are a recent [Home](#) graduate of Higher Education and can demonstrate academic excellence or relevant experience, we invite you to apply.

The seven SUPER DTP partners applicable for this call are Aberdeen, Edinburgh Napier, Heriot Watt, St Andrews, Strathclyde, and West of Scotland Universities, and the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS). Each of these partners will be able to submit two applications to this call.

SUPER encourages applications from candidates with research interests across our [catchment to coast theme](#). As well as blue skies research applications, we are particularly interested to receive applications that are one or more of the following: inter- or transdisciplinary in nature; challenge-led (i.e., address a specific challenge related to an established or emerging area of research, policy, or regulation); or which use advanced quantitative and/or innovative analytical methods.

In line with SUPER's commitment to [diversity, equality, and inclusion](#), please indicate if you are a Home student and have one of the following backgrounds - being from a particular ethnic background, having a disability, having significant, unpaid caring responsibilities, or having grown up one of the most deprived areas of the UK. Part-time study is welcome, at a minimum of 50%, and funding would be adjusted on a pro-rata basis for part-time students.

The deadline for applications to this opportunity will close at **1000 on Monday 27th October 2025**. Each student may only submit one application.

What is a SUPER Student-Led Studentship?

- You will work on a research project you have conceived and designed yourself.
- You will be based at one of our [partner institutions](#).
- You will be guided in this work by an expert academic supervisory team. You will need a minimum of two supervisors – one at your host partner and one at another SUPER partner institution.
- It should involve prolonged periods of research at more than one partner institution.
- It may involve working with an external partner (such as a business, public, or third sector organisation), which may provide you with access to data, equipment, and/or additional funding, and/or an additional supervisor.

What is provided by a SUPER Student-Led Studentship?

SUPER Student-Led Studentships include the following for the duration of the award, which is 3.5 years FTE:

- Full cover of tuition fees which are paid in full directly to the host University. You will not be required to pay towards these fees.
- A tax-free maintenance grant for your living costs at the UKRI rate (£20,780 for 2025/26), which may change each year in line with inflation
- Enrolment on the SUPER DTP Postgraduate Certificate in Researcher Professional Development (PGCert), providing an additional qualification on successful completion.
- Access to a research training support grant for costs associated with your research.
- Access to additional training support funds for activities such as conference attendance, an internship, training opportunities, etc.

What is the application process for applying for a SUPER Student-Led Studentship?

- If you are eligible to apply, identify the SUPER DTP partner that you would like to base your studies with, and an academic in your field of study at that partner you would like to become your supervisor. Each partner can only submit two applications, so you must discuss your research proposal with your primary supervisor before completing and submitting your application form.
- Contact your potential supervisor to informally discuss your research idea. Choosing the right supervisor is a very important step towards a successful and rewarding PhD. Before approaching a supervisor, ensure you have a clear idea of the research you hope to undertake.
- If you are unsure about which academic to approach, please get in touch with the SUPER DTP at superdtp@st-andrews.ac.uk, and we will try and assist you in the process of finding an appropriate supervisor.
- By email to superdtp@st-andrews.ac.uk, submit your CV, proposal, and letters of support before **1000 on Monday 27th October 2025**.
- Applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee and shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview on Friday 28th November 2025.

More details on application format

The application process will require the following information.

1. Your Curriculum Vitae (maximum two sides of A4), comprising:
   a. Your personal details including first and last name, contact email, contact telephone number, and home address (i.e., the address at which you are ordinarily resident during most of the year).
   b. Details of your higher education (after secondary/high school) academic record.

      c. Details of your academic achievements such as prizes, awards, publications, relevant experience, etc.

      d. A brief personal statement of what makes you a suitable candidate for a SUPER Student-Led Studentship, your skillset and why you are the right person to do this research (max 300 words).

2. A project proposal (maximum three sides of A4, using Arial font size 11 and margins of no less than 2.5cm). Use a clear and easy to read structure and headings that include:

      a. Project Title – Propose a catchy, informative and interesting title which clearly and accurately indicates your area of study and/or proposed approach.

      b. University/Partner and supervisory team – Include your lead SUPER partner institution, your primary supervisor and your collaborating SUPER institution(s), with the names of any co-supervisors. If appropriate, include details of any other collaborators and their contribution to the project (cash or in-kind).

      c. Introduction - Provide a short summary of your project, that details how your research addresses a gap in, or builds upon, existing knowledge, how it fits with SUPER and the institutional department that you're linking to, and the academic / cultural / political and/or social significance of your research questions.

      d. Aims and objectives – Provide 2-3 broad statements emphasising what you want to achieve, and include 2-3 objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

      e. Methodology – Briefly outline how you will answer your research questions, including any relevant information related to methods, fieldwork and/or laboratory work.

      f. Timetable – Provide a Gannt chart so the assessment panel can evaluate the feasibility of your project. This step provides evidence that you have thought about how you would put the PhD proposal into practice if you were awarded funding.

      g. Summary - State clearly what you hope to discover at the end of your research and any specific outputs and/or impact you hope to achieve.

      h. Dependencies and considerations – Make a brief note of any dependencies of this work (e.g., access to cruises, specific data sets, specialist equipment, facilities, software etc) and/or any ethical consideration raised by your proposal.

      i. Bibliography – Provide a short list of appropriate and relevant resources used to develop this proposal. It does not have to be an exhaustive list.

3. Letters of support from your primary and secondary supervisors. You may also provide letters of support from external partners/collaborators or beneficiaries of your research.

4. Completion of our [online consent and equal opportunities form](#).

IMPORTANT – Each partner can only submit two applications, so you must discuss your research proposal with your primary supervisor before completing and submitting your application form.

It is good practice to discuss your ideas with others in your research area and use their suggestions to further your understanding and strengthen your proposal. However, it is your responsibility to write your own research proposal. This is your chance to highlight why your research proposal

should be funded by SUPER. It should articulate what you want to research and why, the background that frames the proposed work and conveys your understanding of the literature and clearly defines at least one research question that could lead to the development of new or original knowledge and how you propose to answer it. It is important that the proposed project is feasible within the constraints of time and budget allocated to the PhD.

What is the selection process for applications for a SUPER Student-Led Studentship

Applications will be shortlisted by a Selection Committee, drawn from across the SUPER partnership, who will consider both the quality of the candidate and the proposal, as well as the fit with the SUPER DTP remit.

The Committee will look for:

- evidence of your ability to design and conduct a strong research project.
- awareness of how your research fits within the current field and potential impact.
- evidence that you are well-prepared for postgraduate study.
- evidence of the suitability of the proposed supervisory team.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an online interview, and as part of this, will be asked to provide a short verbal presentation of their proposal to the Committee.

Contact details

For clarification of matters relating to the application process, please email the Deputy Dean of the Graduate School, Dr Emma Defew at ecd2@st-andrews.ac.uk