

HSS Principal's Studentships Guidance to Applicants 2025/2026

Research Proposal

Your research proposal should be no more than **2000 words** in length, including any references to existing research.

Please make sure that you address the following points:

Title of proposed thesis: Please include this in the title of your proposal, which should be in the form: 'Research Proposal: [proposed thesis title]'. This does not count towards your word limit.

Please include a 200-word non-technical summary of your research

Context and significance of your research:

In your research proposal, please outline the significance and originality of your proposed research, indicating:

- its aims
- its relationship to previous research in the field
- the research question(s) you are seeking to answer

Research design and methods

Please outline the design of your proposed research, indicating:

- its methodology and/or sources (if your proposed research is practice-based, please explain how)
- any fieldwork or study visits that may be required
- a timetable for completion of the project
- any ethical considerations that your research may raise

Perspectives on dissemination and impact

Please identify:

- possible opportunities to disseminate your research to academic audiences during your PhD programme
- the ways in which your research might be relevant outside academia (this may not be applicable to your proposed research)

You can allocate as much or as little space as you think necessary to these different points, as long as you remain within the overall word limit. You are strongly advised to identify and approach a supervisory team (i.e. a primary and secondary supervisor, or two co-supervisors on a 50/50 basis), and discuss your proposal with them before making your application.

Statement of Purpose

Your statement should be no more than 4000 characters in length, including spaces. If you are eligible for the BAME awards (UK candidates only), you should include in your statement of purpose the declaration 'I wish to be considered for a BAME award'. This declaration does not count towards the 4000-character limit.

Please make sure that you address the following points:

- What knowledge, skills, and training would you bring to the proposed research? This may include relevant academic study, relevant experience as a professional or practitioner, and any specific training in research skills/methods.
- Are there any areas where you think you will benefit from training in new or more advanced skills?
- Why do you want to undertake this research at QMUL?
- How does the proposed research relate to your career goals?

How your application will be assessed

Your application will be considered and ranked by a School selection panel.

Selected applications will then be considered and ranked by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The School panel will evaluate applications on the basis of the following criteria and weightings:

- Quality of proposal (50%) – i.e. the significance and originality of the proposed research; its underpinning ideas, aims, and research questions; the research design, methodology, and/or sources; the suitability of the proposal for doctoral research; opportunities for dissemination and potential impact; and any ethical considerations that the proposal may raise

- Preparedness of applicant (25%) – i.e. previous academic achievements in relevant subject areas; any relevant professional/practitioner experience (particularly for applicants with non-standard academic trajectories); and relevant knowledge, skills, and/or training for the proposed research
- Feasibility of project (25%) – i.e. the project's likely completion within the timeframe; the identification of training needs; justification of fieldwork and study visits; and fit with the expertise and interests of the two named supervisors

The Faculty panel will then evaluate applications on the basis of the following criteria and weightings:

- Quality of proposal (40%) – defined as above
- Preparedness of applicant (20%) – defined as above
- Feasibility of project (20%) – defined as above
- School ranking (20%)

At both School and Faculty levels, if two or more candidates are equally ranked, preference will be given to the candidate scoring more highly on the following criteria: quality of proposal; if still equal, preparedness of applicant; if still equal, feasibility of project.