LSSI PGR Placement Scheme – Guidance

The aims of the placement scheme are provide social science PhD students an opportunity to engage with external organisations to enhance their experience and transferrable skills outside of their PhD. The placement will provide the PGR with:

* Opportunities to develop their professional skills and collaborative understanding of research users and their needs through research based engagement with businesses/organisations.
* Provide organisations with access to innovative ideas, knowledge and research and research that would improve policy or practice and enhance organisational learning and performance.
* Foster development of collaborative partnerships between businesses/organisations and researchers at the University of Leeds.
* Enhance the take up and application of evidence based knowledge and maximise the impact of social science research within the business community.

The scheme allows social science postgraduate researchers to undertake a co-designed research project, **tailored to the needs of the external partner,**that provides the researcher with skills and career development opportunities. The project will also result in a report for the external partner at the end of the placement.

The scheme expects postgraduate researchers to commit a maximum of 130 hours, with specific weekly hours to be agreed with the partner organisation. As an example, previously, researchers have phased their projects over a 13 week period (10 hours/week).

Projects might involve but not limited to:

* Projects that are ‘policy-facing’ or that include ‘policy engagement’ activities.
* Surveying or interviewing users of providers of relevant services to identify ways in which they could be improved.
* Evaluating a project or scoping out the potential for a new project which aims to bring social or economic benefit to a particular community.
* Gathering evidence, writing reports and responding to government consultation exercises/informing policy making.

LSSI will offer the postgraduate a bursary to cover their expenses. If the project entails costs that are outside of this, these will need to be covered by the partner organisation.

If you would like to discuss the scheme further, please contact LSSI Manager,  Cheryl Harris (C.A.Harris@leeds.ac.uk)

#### **The Process**

If you have a project in mind, please complete the organisation application template and return to Cheryl Harris (C.A.Harris@leeds.ac.uk) for consideration:

You will want to consider the following details:

* The proposed project and timescales, ensuring that the project scope is achievable in the placement timescale.
* The skills you are looking for in the ideal candidate for completion of the placement.
* Details of your organisation including background information.
* Details of who will be supervising the student during their placement and where the student will be based, stipulate if this will be office based, hybrid or online.
* The anticipated benefits, both for your organisation and the researcher’s skills and experience.
* Details of any costs that you will be covering (financial or in-kind) to support the placement.

Applications will be internally reviewed and, if deemed suitable, details of the project with be circulated across university networks to suitable students. We will ask interested students to submit a CV and covering letter. These will be sent to you where you will then select the most suitable candidate for the role. You will be able to informally interview any candidate you deem suitable for the placement.

Once a suitable candidate has been selected, you will need to inform Cheryl Harris of your decision with feedback for each of the candidates if they are successful or not. We will be providing the feedback to the candidates after selection.

Before the placement can commence there will be placement paperwork which will need to be completed and signed off. The agreements that will need to be completed are:

Tripartite agreement which indicates your responsibility to the student while they undertake the project.

A Health & Safety Assessment which the student can bring with them on their first day and

IP cover letter, you will need to confirm that you are happy with the IP terms.

For projects that include research with human participation or personal data such as interviews and focus groups the PGR will need to submit an ethics application for review by the University of Leeds ethics team which may take up to 6 weeks to approve.

On completion of the placement, the student will be required to complete an end of placement report due within 1 month of the end of the placement.