

School of Politics and International Relations

Selection of PhD scholarship students

This document explains aspects of the selection criteria and process for the School of Politics and International Relations.

Selection criteria

Essential criteria: To be considered for the scholarships, candidates must hold a good Honours degree (first or 2:1), or a Master's degree (merit or distinction) in Politics, International Relations or a cognate discipline from recognised institutions, with excellent marks in research dissertations and research methods modules, if applicable. All candidates must have at least two supportive academic references.

Applicants must also provide evidence that they satisfy the University's minimum English language requirements.

In the case of GTA scholarships, the panel must be satisfied that the candidates have demonstrated the ability and motivation to teach effectively.

Thereafter, selection of students shall proceed according to the following criteria:

Evidence of outstanding student profile

These criteria will be tested in the application, interview, and academic references. Criteria to be considered include:

- marks across their degree(s), with particular attention to research dissertation and research methods modules marks
- the relevance of their degree(s) to the proposed project
- the quality of their degree programme, for example the ranking of their institution and the rigour of the academic programme
- demonstrated understanding and intellectual ownership of their proposed research project
- relevant research and academic experience
- professional experience and skills that will be of use in the research project.

Evidence that the proposal is feasible and of excellent quality

These criteria will be tested in the application, interview, and academic references.

Criteria to be considered are:

- the feasibility of the project and clarity with which it is described
- the rationale for the project, including its originality and significance to the field of research
- the methodological rigour of the project
- its potential impact within academia (e.g., potentially leading to excellent publications)
- its potential impact outside academia.

Supervisory arrangements

These criteria will be tested in the application and interview:

- the expertise, experience, and skills of your supervisor in relation to the proposed project and their supervisory record
- how well the knowledge and expertise of supervisors and the resources and infrastructure of the School and/or external partners will work to enhance your project.

The panel will also consider the current supervisory load of the proposed supervisor (e.g., supervising more than three PhD students is generally considered a heavy load).

Selection Process

1. Application

You should apply online via the KentVision online application form for a PhD place.

If intending to apply for a SeNSS scholarship, please include a draft statement of support from your prospective main supervisor.

2. Shortlisting and interviewing

Shortlisted candidates will be notified within a week of the submission deadline. Candidates will be shortlisted according to the criteria outlined above. The shortlisting and interviewing panels shall comprise at least three members of staff and will be chaired by the School Director of Graduate Studies – Research. Panel members will have undertaken recruitment training.

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed in the week after shortlisting.

They will be required to prepare a brief (8 minute) presentation of their proposal including visual aids such as Powerpoint, and to field questions about their research from the panel. This presentation and further questions will be used to assess the student profile, the quality of the proposed research, and ability and motivation to teach effectively.

Candidates selected to be put forward for SeNSS will be notified as soon as possible after interviews are complete (within one or two working days). At that point they must be contactable in order to progress with their application to SeNSS. Other candidates will be selected for GTA studentships and notified shortly thereafter (within days of interview). Still other candidates will be notified that they are placed on a waiting list. In previous years several wait-listed students have later been offered GTA studentships (and in several years, all wait-listed students), but, unavoidably, this process can take weeks and even months, pending factors such as the outcome of SeNSS applications. The award of GTA studentships may be affected by the extent to which your potential teaching contribution matches the School's teaching requirements.