

Thank you for taking an interest in applying for a PhD degree at Edinburgh University.

Before approaching me as a potential PhD supervisor, please make sure that your work falls broadly within my research interests as specified on my personal profile page. UoE PhD supervision requires at least two supervisors, so I also encourage you to consider who may be an appropriate co/assistant supervisor from within the subject area ([Politics/IR](#)) School (especially [South Asian Studies](#)) or beyond. Explore the School [staff pages](#) or [Edinburgh Explorer](#) (Pure) to find out profile and research interests of staff.

Some preliminary words on funding

If you wish to be considered for funding, please note that this is an **extremely competitive process**. Due to a limited number of funded places, it only makes sense to put in a formal application for internal funding if (a) you have obtained a 4 year undergraduate degree and or MA/MSc with first class honours/Distinction (b) write a theoretically well-informed, focused and original research proposal (see below). Please explore any EXTERNAL funding opportunities first or alongside internal funding channels. Applications for School scholarships are normally ranked by a committee within the specified subject area (i.e. Politics/IR or South Asian Studies) and subsequently pooled with the best proposals from other subjects within our School. Some scholarships also require input from College and an interview.

More information on internal scholarships can be found [here](#). Usually, internal funding deadlines fall in January for studies commencing the following September.

Our School also participates in the [Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences](#), which provides several pathways (student-led and supervisor-led) to scholarships. The process for these is also very competitive and initial deadlines usually fall in Autumn, about one year before the scholarships can be taken up.

Self-funded students may be able to gain some income from tutoring, but you should be aware that while this may contribute towards meeting cost of living expenditures, it will not be enough to (also) cover (overseas) PhD registration fees.

The application process

When you apply for a PhD, you will need to submit several documents. More information on this can be found [here](#).

However, as a prospective supervisor I must see the following

- (1) a short one or two page CV (including your most recent degree and degree classification).
- (2) A **research proposal** of not more than 4 pages, **excluding** academic references in Times New Roman, Font 12. This proposal should cover each of the following points:

1. Your main **research question**: explain what you will be exploring and what you will try to establish.
2. A **literature review**, in which you situate your proposed topic within the existing literature and explain in what way your own research will enrich/contribute to the topic's scholarly knowledge, i.e. by identifying possible gaps that it seeks to cover or puzzles it may seek to resolve.
3. A clear specification of what **theoretical insights** will inform your research. Say how you located yourself in a theoretical field or fields, and why you draw on certain theories or concepts to study a specified research question.
4. If you propose to work on a single case, or engage in comparative analysis, justify your **case selection** and consider using the literature on the (subnational) comparative method for doing so.
5. **Methods**: align your methods to your research question, or if you divide your main research question in several sub-question specify the method(s) you will use to analyse each of these. Be as precise as you possibly can be (e.g. if you wish to apply critical discourse analysis specify what documents you will apply this to, what you seek to gain from doing so and how you may analyse text; if conducting interviews specify your interview population and for what purpose, if statistical analysis specify the datasets that will be analysed and what for etc).
6. Identify any **ethical concerns** and how you propose to address them especially if based on field research (ethnography, elite- interviews) or experiments. More information on our ethics procedures in the school can be found here: <https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/research/ethics>
7. A PhD topic must be focused and precise. We require depth of knowledge and analysis, not breadth. Furthermore, you need to persuade us that you can accomplish what you set out to do within a three-to-four-year period (if you are a full-time student) or double that if you are part-time. A **tentative schedule** of how you envisage to carry out this research over a three-to four-year period can be helpful in this regard. Note that the first year is a preparatory year during which you will take part in seminars, training courses and focus on the literature review and research design, taking you into the next two years (at least). These will make the core of your end of first year Board review paper. The second year is the one during which you will conduct your field research (common for PhD theses other than political theory or philosophy). The third year is mostly devoted to writing up.
8. Apart from supervisory fits tell us **why** you want to conduct this research at **Edinburgh University**.

Make sure to add **references** to the literature with which you have engaged in writing the proposal. These can add up to maximum one or two pages.