

# **Creating a Scottish Graduate School in the Social Sciences**

**Charlie Jeffery**  
**University of Edinburgh**

# New ESRC PG Training Framework

- Incremental
  - 2 tier, quota and competition
  - Mix of core social science and subject-specific training
  - Transferable skills and knowledge exchange
  - Priority disciplines/skills
  - Multi-year framework
- New
  - Institutional ‘accreditation’ of DTC/DTU, not course ‘recognition’
  - DTCs get quota, DTUs access to competition only
  - Encouragement of consortia
  - ‘Pathways’ of subject-specific training
  - Address thematic ESRC priorities
  - Five years 2011-16

# (Original) Timetable

- Announced May 2009
- Application deadline March 2010
- Peer review April-July 2010
- Decisions on accreditation in August 2010
  - Up to 25 DTCs, unlimited DTUs
- Decisions on quota allocations December 2010
- BUT: postponement of announcements until coordinated decision on accreditation AND quota allocation in Jan 2011
- Pressures of CSR
  - Hints are that ESRC unlikely to fund as big a network of DTCs as originally intended

# Uncertain Start in Scotland

- ESRC-Scottish Govt-SFC keen on a Scotland-wide DTC
- Initial scepticism among some Scottish HEIs
  - Edinburgh 50% ESRC PGR in Scotland, Glasgow 25%
  - But not in some disciplines where consortium arrangements already in place
- Universities Scotland brokers agreement
  - Quality criteria (40% 3\*/4\* last RAE)
  - Inclusiveness mechanisms to open up ESRC-accredited training to units under RAE threshold
- Steering Group established open to all HEIS with social science Oct 2009
  - Co-chaired by Edinburgh/Glasgow
  - Several sub-committees, esp. drafting team

# Building Blocks

- Existing multi-institutional consortia in Economics, Human Geography, Social Anthropology, Economic and Social History
- Scotland/NI Vitae Hub
- SG Office of Chief Researcher an established user of ESRC PG research(ers)
- AQMeN – ESRC/SFC funding for advanced Quant Methods
- More general openness to multi-institutional collaboration through pooling etc

# Distinctive Features

- Scale
- Scope
- Skills
- Structures
- SFC

# Scale

- Quality-led DTC bid embedded in inclusive Scottish Graduate School open to all HEIs
  - DTC bid = 11 institutions, but with much fuller coverage of social science in some
  - SGS = 15 institutions, all social science
  - DTC training open to non-DTC institutions (by payment)
  - DTC collaboration with Strathclyde DTU
  - DTC-non-DTC collaboration through joint applications for studentships under CASE, ESRC grants
- International scale and resonance
  - Internationalisation of doctoral training
  - Bringing the best researchers globally to Scotland
    - Festival of Social Science

# Scale (2007 RAE figures for social science PhDs)

Institution	Full-time PhDs	Part-time PhDs	Total PhDs
<b>Scottish Graduate School</b>	<b>1262</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>1636</b>
University of Cambridge	844	114	958
University of Oxford	788	35	823
University of Manchester	563	122	685
University College London	468	73	541
University of Edinburgh	390	87	477

# Scope

- 24 training pathways, all multi-institutional
  - 15 discipline-specific
  - 9 cross-disciplinary
  - NB all but four developed from scratch
- Working across institutions
  - Joint supervision
  - Student mobility
  - E-delivery
  - Residential Masterclasses
  - Festival of Social Science
- Accounting and Finance, Business and Management, Economic and Social History, Economics, Education, Human Geography, Information Science, Urban Planning & Real Estate, Politics and International Relations, Psychology, Social and Applied Investigations in Language (SAIL), Social Anthropology (STAR Programme), Social Policy, Social Work, Sociology
- African Studies and International Development; Environment, Climate Change and Energy; Families Relationships and Demographic Change; Health; Language Sciences; Language-Based Area Studies; Science, Technology and Innovation Studies; Social Care; and Socio-legal Studies and Criminology.

# Skills

- Languages for research
- Quantitative and qualitative research skills beyond disciplines
- Comprehensive provision of transferable skills
  - Researcher Development Fund to Annual Festival of Social Science
- Maximisation of benefits of proximity to Scottish Govt and wider policy community

# Structures

- Establishment by Principals of participants
- Strategy and policy set (for SGS and DTC) by Board representing all participant HEIs
- Operational management through Director and Secretariat at Edinburgh
- Individual pathways allocate quota studentships and report on training provision

# SFC

- A) Strong supporter of Scotland wide approach
- B) Building infrastructure for multi-institutional working on this scale requires investment
- A) + B) = explore opportunities for SFC co-funding
- Parallel bid developed/submitted spring 2010
- SFC bid:
  - ‘Outcome’-led
  - Stronger focus on:
    - Economic impact
      - Value of social science skills
      - Internationalisation
    - Knowledge exchange
      - In individual PhDs
      - By mainstreaming KE as career skill/approach
  - SFC decision made, not yet public, dependent on ESRC funding decision

# Challenges

- CSR implications
  - ESRC likely to concentrate lower funding on fewer DTCs
    - Will we get it? How much will we get?
  - SFC likely also to face a tighter budget
    - Not possible to deliver scale and scope without SFC support
- Decision only in Jan 2010
  - Late to recruit, esp overseas students
    - SGS/DTC a strong marketing tool
  - Late to get 24 pathways up and running across 11 institutions
    - Slower trajectory to multi-institutional working?
    - Five-year framework enough to demonstrate benefits?