



University
of Glasgow



ESRC SDAI

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University of Oxford, 5 March 2026

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Economic
and Social
Research Council



Funding opportunity

ESRC responsive mode: secondary data analysis round two

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Funding type:	Grant
Maximum award:	£300,000
Publication date:	29 September 2023
Opening date:	29 September 2023 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	Open - no closing date

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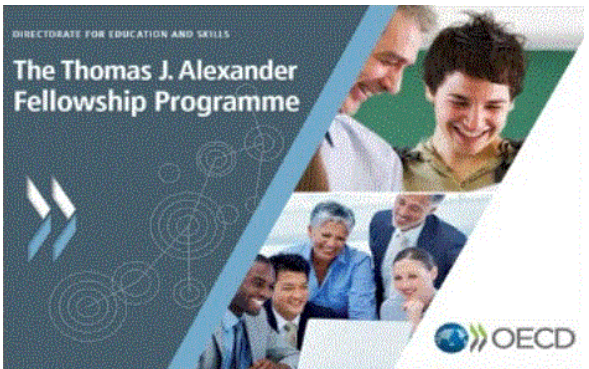
Guidance on good research

 [Good research resource hub](#)

KU LEUVEN



My track record – why ESRC SDAI?



My track record – and rejections! Applications since at UofG ...



<p>INTERVIEW PANEL SH3 Still feel interview went well but not funded</p>	<p>LARGE GRANT 100/100 REVIEWER SCORE 4/4 on all 4 criteria from all 4 reviewers but not funded</p>	<p>MID-CAREER FELLOWSHIP Second round full proposal stage Not funded</p>	<p>OPEN CALL 6/6 REVIEWER SCORES FROM ALL 3 REVIEWERS Not funded</p>
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Familiarise yourself with the guidelines!!!

- Are you eligible?
- What's in scope?
- Does your project fall within ESRC remit?
- Do your background research on ESRC !
- While not compulsory, use of ESRC funded data sources are encouraged!

Proposals can draw from the wider sciences, but the social sciences must represent more than 50% of the research focus and effort.

£300k FEC – maximum 24 months – open call

Current highlight notice on AI and Social Sciences



 **Help Shape the Future of UKRI's Gateway to Research (GtR)**

We're improving UKRI's Gateway to Research and are seeking your input! If you would be interested in being interviewed about the improvements we're making and to have your say about how we can make GtR more user-friendly, impactful, and effective for the Research and Innovation community, please email gateway@ukri.org.

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Search

All Data

Help

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Application structure

- Summary (550 words)
- Vision (500 words)
- Approach (2,500 words)
- Applicant and team capability (1,500 words)
- Data management (500 words)
- Ethics (500 words)
- Resources and costs (1,000 words)
- Bibliography (1,000 words)

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£300k FEC – maximum 24 months – open call

Current highlight notice on AI and Social Sciences

Project title:

Refining and reinvigorating adult education and training research through longitudinal analyses.

What is this
proposal
about?

What is the
argument for
the proposal?

What is this proposal about?

Very first paragraph!

*The proposed project aims to investigate **patterns of participation** in education and training among adults and its related **potential benefits** in the domains of (1) health, (2) work and careers, and (3) the social community.*

*Structured according to **three objectives**, the project will utilize data from the UK's **Understanding Society** Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS). We will apply Propensity Score Matching techniques and multivariate longitudinal **data analyses**.*

What is the argument?

This is important because ...

Keep post-doc
Expand portfolio

*The argument for this proposal is grounded in the **findings** of the first Work Package of our ongoing **ESRC Standard Grant** 'A UK-Ireland investigation into the statistical evidence-base underpinning adult learning and education policy-making' (ES/X000826/1), resulting in **the need to supplement** cross-sectional analyses on participation in adult education and training with **longitudinal data**.*

*Supplementing more **sophisticated analyses** to the current knowledge base will increase the **quality of evidence** which we will share and discuss with **policymakers and stakeholders** across social policy fields such as education and training, the economy, labour market and health.*

What is the argument? This is important because ...

What came before you?



**Centre for Research on the
Wider Benefits of Learning**

WBL is a research centre at the Institute of Education



What are the wider benefits of learning across the life course?

Tom Schuller

June 2017

This review has been commissioned as part of the UK government's Foresight Future of Skills and Lifelong Learning project. The views expressed do not represent policy of any government or organisation.

Use of logic structure from Objectives to Tasks, underpinned by Arguments

Obj	Argument	TASKS
O1	Specialised adult education surveys are cross-sectional in nature. These allow us to undertake trend analyses to examine fluctuations in participations among socio-economic and socio-demographic groups. However, they limit our opportunity to better understand who participates frequently, occasionally or hardly ever – or never – over a number of years and what fluctuations are attributed to ‘age’ versus ‘generational’ effects.	T1 investigate individuals’ frequency and patterns of participation in learning over an extended period of time
O2	Specialised cross-sectional adult education surveys measure motivations to participate in training but do not give us the opportunity to examine how learning purposes might shift over time at the individual level.	T2 investigate shifts in learning purposes of frequent and occasional learners over time
O3	Specialised cross-sectional surveys contain questions on ‘ perceived ’ benefits of participation but do not allow us to fact check these through longitudinal follow-up of respondents.	T3 investigate health, work and careers, and social community outcomes of participation in learning in the immediate versus longer term

Approach - Analytical Plan

- **Provide arguments for choice of dataset** → Why this dataset? What are alternative datasets and why is this one more suitable to answer your Research Questions?
- **Already show you are familiar with the codebooks** → drop in the variable names of the key ones you will use
- **We did not mention preregistration of our analytical plan but are preparing for this** → I will mention it in future bids
- **We had already undertaken secure data training with the UK Data Service and mentioned this in the bid** → show that you understand the requirements to access data and say you will comply with these

Other sections of proposal such as Costing, Team capability, Data Management Plan are similar as in ESRC generic open call

Mention Pathways to Impact in 2500 words core project proposal description

Approach - Analytical Plan

- **Provide arguments for choice of dataset** → Why this dataset? What are alternative datasets and why is this one more suitable to answer your Research Questions?

OUR CRITERIA

- Needs to be longitudinal
- Needs an adult sample
- Needs variable on participation in training



- Understanding Society annual data
- Multiple generations



Approach - Analytical Plan

- **Already show you are familiar with the codebooks** → drop in the variable names of the key ones you will use

Main Survey variables

Search by keyword

Search

Search by key variables i

Family and households

60

Health and well-being

145

Housing

32

Money and finances

86

Demographic characteristics

17

Politics and social attitudes

86

Employment

200

Education

37

Transport and environment

121

Ethnicity and immigration

32

Young people

173

Scrutinise website!

- Information per datafile
- Index terms
- Questionnaire modules
- Check user guides for sampling information, data collection methods, attrition, weighting

Approach - Analytical Plan

annualeducationhistory_w15.trainany

Question label:

Training since last interview

Question text:

In the last 12 months, that is since [interview month] [interview year - 1], have you done any [other] training schemes or courses, even if they are not finished yet? Please include any part-time or evening courses, training provided by an employer, day release schemes, apprenticeships and government training schemes.

Question universe:

if [ff_ivlowlw = 1 | ff_everint = 1] // interviewed at prior wave or has been interviewed previously

Further details:

For further details about this question, please see the [questionnaires](#)

Approach - Analytical Plan

- **Already show you are familiar with the codebooks** → drop in the variable names of the key ones you will use

In preparation of this proposal, we engaged in a concept mapping exercise based on previous work in this area and the availability of measures found through the Understanding Society ‘variable search’ tool. A selection of outcome variables was made as follows:

1. Health: We will use variables on ‘*subjective wellbeing*’ and ‘*weight for height*’. This will combine a focus on mental and physical health.
2. Work and careers: This outcome group will capture potential changes in ‘*employment status*’, ‘*Standard Occupational Classification*’, ‘*income from labour*’, and ‘*gaining a qualification*’.
3. The social community: Outcome variables will be used in relation to ‘*perceived political influence*’, ‘*environmentally friendly behaviour*’, ‘*active in community groups and organizations*’.

All project outputs will contain descriptions on definitions and measurement of the selected variables.

- **Name tag analytical techniques you plan to use**
→ Propensity Score Matching

Approach – Pathways to Impact

- Reserve sufficient space for this in the 2,500 words section
- Check ESRC's Impact Toolkit
<https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/impact-toolkit-for-economic-and-social-sciences/>

Applicant and team capability

- Check UKRI's Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI): guidance
<https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/develop-your-application/resume-for-research-and-innovation-r4ri-guidance/>

Reviewer scores and feedback

ESRC bids	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Outcome
2022 open call	5/6	5/6	6/6	FUNDED
2024 SDAI	6/6	5/6	4/6	FUNDED
2025 open call	6/6	6/6	6/6	NOT FUNDED

SDAI:

6/6 lengthy review glitter and glamour

5/6 very short review – around 5 sentences to say they liked the bid

4/6 reviewer did not have skills to review bid but did – and gave it a 4

‘As I am relatively inexperienced in quantitative research and still more in the use of descriptive statistics, I learnt a great deal from reading the application. Techniques such as sensitivity analysis, panel regression and Propensity Score Matching (among others) are all new to me. My comments need to be viewed in the light of this.’ (Reviewer 3)

Reviewer scores and feedback

'As I am relatively inexperienced in quantitative research and still more in the use of descriptive statistics, I learnt a great deal from reading the application. Techniques such as sensitivity analysis, panel regression and Propensity Score Matching (among others) are all new to me. My comments need to be viewed in the light of this.' (Reviewer 3)

Our Response Letter – 1,000 words

Structured according to the 4 assessment criteria

- A. A NOVEL AND TIMELY QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE
- B. A STRONG COMMITMENT TO RIGOROUS RESEARCH
- C. A PATHWAY TO HIGH QUALITY OUTPUTS, DISSEMINATION AND IMPACT
- D. A STRONG TEAM THAT PROVIDES VALUE FOR MONEY

A wider contribution to 'a step-change in quantitative social research skills'

We name tagged ESRC portfolio
Q-step

National Centre for Research Methods

Boeren (2018) review paper
'The Methodological Underdog'



University
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THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS?

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