Development Needs Analysis:
Research Conversations Tool

1. UKRI ESRC Requirements

The ESRC requires that the starting point for training provision for ESCR-funded doctoral researchers is be a rigorous Development Needs Analysis (DNA). The DNA is required at the point of application and is reviewed annually. The term DNA rather than TNA (Training Needs Analysis) signals a view of needs that goes beyond training courses and workshops to include a range of other developmental and experiential opportunities. Students feel ownership over a bespoke learning process that is aligned to their needs and aspirations.

Following the PhD review the ESRC favour a process of student self-reflection throughout the doctoral journey and support for this through a range of tools and approaches. This necessitates the support of supervisors well-equipped to help students and engagement with a range of development opportunities and internal and external stakeholders.

The goal of the DNA and supporting tools is to ensure that:
- students receive the specific training and development that they require
- students/DTP have sufficient understanding of current and future development needs for planning purposes
- the DTP can document ways in which students may have already achieved the learning outcomes of a competent social science researcher via previous learning or experience and where there are gaps to be filled
- the DTP can match student profiles and any outstanding conceptual and general training needs to modules that can address these
- the DTP can identify students' needs for specialist training and flexible delivery requirements.

2. The SCDTP approach

The SCDTP approach is to underpin the aspiration for personalised training planning by putting the student at the centre of their own training programme. We seek to avoid replicating some of the frustrations with what can feel like a very procedural TNA process by creating a genuinely developmental process. This involves providing, iteratively refining, and ultimately co-developing a **Research Conversations Tool** that offers options and meets needs. The following table shows the stages, approach options, conversation starters and recording requirements to begin this co-development process.

STAGE	APPROACH OPTIONS	CONVERSATION STARTERS	RECORDING REQUIREMENTS
1 (Application) Selectors and potential supervisors will work with applicants to consider and communicate the applicants' development needs in an honest and constructive way	- Interview - Preparatory reflection work - UG & masters audit - Focus on biography, identity, skills, values and dispositions in relation to the upcoming challenges and opportunities	- How has your UG/masters training prepared you for the PhD you want to do? - Where will you need further specialist training? - How has your UG/masters training equipped you with a broad range of social research competencies? - Where are the gaps in relation to conceptual and general skills? - What professional experience to you bring? - What new experiences might enable you to develop your research skills in practice in the workplace? - What kind of workplace host should we be looking for to support your development? - What kinds of learning activities do you value and why?	- Applicant's preference (and shared vision) for 1+3.5/3.5/4.5 funding - Applicant's profile of general, conceptual and specialist research skills - Applicant's perceived early development needs - Supervisors' views on the applicant's development needs - Early views on a potential Research in Practice experience Use: interview record form and SCDTP application form

2 (induction and first semester) Each student, with their supervisor, will participate in training workshops on the DNA process to support them in systematic analysis of their development needs in relation to their disciplinary pathway, thematic cluster, aptitudes and prior training/experience, and intended career path.	- Democratic dialogue, opening up several spaces for reflection, dialogue and planning. Focusing on collaborative conversations to build on each other's insights in self-critical but not disempowering talk. Expanding the student's vision by looking through different lenses and focusing on research practice-based concerns. Listening , questioning and telling anecdotes. - Story telling, enabling the student to tell their story spanning before, now and next. The can be a located in events or aspirations or a mix of the two. - Dreaming, constructing 'in an ideal world' scenarios and circling back to aspects that are achievable and how. - Talking pictures, sketching out ideas visually to help navigate the conversation and the ideas under discussion.	- What is the story of your research training so far? - What kind of researcher are you aiming to be? - Why do you value the skills that your ideal researcher would offer? - What research assets would someone outside your project see in you? - Can you identify the key components of your research training for this year and next year? - How are your training needs different to others? - What opportunities for learning would most suit your situation and disposition? - In an ideal world, how would your training pan out from here? - Can you draw your research learning journey up to the present? What would the next phase look like? - Can you picture a bespoke mosaic of development opportunities suited to you?	- Agreed training plan within funding type (1+3.5/3.5/4.5) including modules and pass requirements - Bespoke mosaic of training showing back and forward view - Training and development needs to bring to DTP attention Use: Recording approach the student prefers to enable them to retain ownership; SCDTP evaluation & planning forms; SCDTP annual monitoring survey; RiP requirement planning tool

3 (ongoing) Reviewing development needs, recording training, monitoring how needs are being met and communicating emerging needs	- Cooperative venture management, bringing student and others' ideas into dialogue/collision to complicate the plan for training - Stakeholder mapping, looking at what others invested in the student's success (e.g. progression reviewers, RiP hosts) add to the training plan - Critical thinking exercises, revisiting the student's self-analysis and encouraging problem-focused thinking	- How well have you taken ownership of your development and training programme? - What could you offer as a intern and what would you want from a placement host? - What skills could you development further by applying them in the workplace (RiP component)? - What are your next priorities for your development?	- Bespoke mosaic showing back and forward view - Training and development needs to bring to DTP attention - Training and development analysis for progression reviews Use: Own university progression system; recording approach the student prefers to enable them to retain ownership; SCDTP evaluation & planning forms; SCDTP annual monitoring survey; RiP requirement planning tool
4 (career) Training plan for transitioning out of the doctorate	- Expert panel method, seeking the opinion of careers advisors, alumni, postdoc fellows, people in industry, public sector etc about developing a profile for the next stage	- In your career trajectory what route have you taken and what route are you planning? - How are you planning ahead to the next stage?	- Next steps plan - Training and development needs to bring to DTP attention Use: Recording approach the student prefers to enable them to retain ownership; SCDTP evaluation & planning forms; SCDTP annual monitoring survey.