

GREAT WESTERN RESEARCH



Studentship Eligibility and Application Guidelines (December 2007)

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Introduction

1. These guidelines describe doctoral level funding available from Great Western Research. It contains details of the Studentship scheme including aims, eligibility criteria, details of how best to apply and the timing and procedures of the evaluation process.
2. A total of 130 Studentships will be available from Great Western Research, at a notional value of £18,400 pa for 3 years. 50% partnership funding must be arranged, so the maximum contribution from Great Western Research will be £27.6k in total, ie £9.2k pa. **Please note** that an administration fee of £830 pa is payable to Great Western Research from the grant **and** from the external partner - £1660 will therefore be deducted from Great Western Research's contribution to the lead HEI per annum.
3. The collaborative projects must focus on one of six research themes: Materials, Applied Mathematics, Sustainability, Psychology, Creative Arts and Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and may collaborate across 2 of these themes.
4. You are strongly advised to read this document, **in full**, prior to submitting an application for a Studentship.
5. Great Western Research also funds research through 20 research Fellowships, which were awarded in October 2006. Details of the projects we have agreed to fund may be found on our website <http://www.greatwesternresearch.ac.uk/fellowships.html>

Aims of the initiative

6. Great Western Research Studentships aim to build a strong cadre of research students and staff and to ensure the sustainability of internationally-excellent research in South-West England.
7. The Studentships will build collaborative, interdisciplinary research at the interface of existing disciplines by engaging with SWRDA and business research teams as proposed in the Lambert Report, encouraging partners to develop further long-term research projects and major collaborations in order to attract international interest and recognition.
8. The funded research projects will encourage growth in business funded R&D in the South West. The provision of research studentships is seen as an effective way to catalyse research partnerships between research groups in SW HEIs and industry.

9. The Studentships will prepare the South West region for the technologies of the future and provide the new technologists to lead change.
10. The collaborative research projects will be of the highest quality and standards that will lead to significant advances in the chosen theme, and be of interest and value to the wider research community.
11. Great Western Research will make awards only where the proposed research meets the aims of the scheme and is considered to be of high quality.

Eligibility and Commitments

12. Great Western Research will make an individual assessment of eligibility of all applications. The application should fulfil the criteria below, or will be considered ineligible.

Themes

13. Applications for Great Western Research Studentships must be rooted within Great Western Research's subject domains. Great Western Research supports research in the fields of Materials, Applied Mathematics, Sustainability, Psychology, ICT or Creative Arts. Detailed guidance on the themes, and on the remit of each of the research panels, is provided on our website <http://www.greatwesternresearch.ac.uk>
14. Cross-theme applications are welcomed, but will only be eligible if the themes fall within the subject domains outlined above. A lead theme and supervisor must be identified. It is expected the lead theme will relate to the host department, and the application will be assessed by this theme panel.

Lead and collaborating HEIs

15. All studentships must be offered as collaboration, with joint supervision by at least two HEIs in the South West. The application must include a description of how the joint supervision will work.
16. The lead and collaborating HEIs for the Studentship application must be based in the South West of England, as defined by the South West Regional Development Agency region (see para. 23). A list of eligible HEIs is available on our website at <http://www.greatwesternresearch.ac.uk/about>
17. A department hosting a PhD student must comply with QAA quality standards for supervising postgraduate students.

Students

18. Part time studentships are no longer eligible.
19. International Students are eligible to apply. However, Great Western Research's contribution is fixed and HEIs will need to cover any additional fees from other sources.

External partners

20. All studentships must include an external non-HEI funding partner. The external funding partner must be based in the SWRDA region or have substantial business interests in the South West. This would include, for example, an organisation which is not based in the region but which has a large establishment in the region (for example, Hewlett-Packard or British Aerospace or the BBC).
21. The South West Region consists of the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, as well as Swindon, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Bournemouth, Poole, Torbay and Plymouth.
22. There is a strong preference for external funding partners to be commercial organisations, but Public Sector Research Establishments, such as the Met Office, NHS Trusts, and DEFRA Research Institutes are eligible.
23. There is a limit of 30 to the total number of studentships that can be awarded to such public-sector partners in the Great Western Research programme. **As of August 2007 all Studentships in this non-commercial quota have been approved.**
24. Any individual external funding partner will not normally be able to undertake more than 6 Great Western Research studentships without special agreement from the Regional Research Board. As of August 2007, Airbus UK are already the lead external partner for 8 studentships and therefore cannot be lead external partner for further Studentships in subsequent calls, regardless of theme (**but see point 25**). Additionally the Environment Agency are lead partner for 6 projects and Rolls-Royce 5.
25. In order to facilitate the involvement of SMEs in the scheme GWR has agreed with SWRDA to allow proposals in which an SME is the lead partner in research/intellectual terms whilst not contributing the majority of the funding. In such "*mentoring*" proposals the SME must provide at least 20% of the overall funding. The proposal must be able to demonstrate clear benefits for the SME, and the application should describe clearly how the SME lead partner will exploit the results of the research. As with non-mentoring proposals the IP rights will reside with the lead partner, in this case the SME. An additional funding partner(s) will be required to contribute 30% of the funding, with GWR contributing the remaining 50%. Provision of the 30% funding for mentoring proposals by the mentor organisation will **NOT** count to either the cap of 6 proposals per organisation or the overall cap on non-business partners' totals. Thus for example a proposal with an SME as a lead partner contributing 20% of the funding and Airbus acting as a mentor organisation contributing 30% of the funding **would be eligible** under this mentoring scheme , and the IP rights would rest with the SME lead partner.

Funding

26. Studentships have a notional value of £55.2k, i.e. £18.4k pa for three years. The maximum contribution from Great Western Research will be £27.6k in total, ie £9.2k pa. The registering HEI will be expected to cover all costs of accommodation and other overheads. **Please note point 2 above.**
27. Normally, the external funding partners will be expected to provide 50% of the value of the studentship. Proposals with less than 50% external funding for studentships can be considered, but the proposal must indicate clearly where the remaining funding will come from, subject to point 29.
28. You may wish to use University funds or funds from other organisations such as research councils, charities or HEFCE to contribute towards the cost of the studentship thereby either reducing the external partner contribution or creating a top-up.
29. University supplementary contributions must not exceed 25% of the total project cost. Please note that you may not use SWRDA funds in this way.
30. The full cost of some PhD programmes may be higher than the notional value because of the costs of materials, travel and other research project costs. Therefore the HEI, the external partner, or another source (not including the SWRDA) either singly or in combination, may top up the studentship to a higher figure.
31. It is possible to have more than one external funding partner in a project, and the partners do not need to contribute equal amounts of funding. Thus, for example, a large organisation might contribute most of the external funding, allowing a smaller company to begin collaboration with an HEI without having to make a large initial financial commitment, or a consortium of several SMEs could provide the funding package.
32. In the main, a charity will not be eligible to count as the sole "external funding partner" for a Great Western Research Studentship project, unless the charity is based in the South West and the research will contribute directly to the development of the South West region. Thus, for example, a charity working in the area of sustainable development in the South West could act as an external partner for a research project into sustainable housing, but funding from general charities supporting research such as The Leverhulme or Wellcome Trusts, would not be eligible.
33. However, general charities can contribute towards the funding for a studentship, thus reducing the amount that the other external partners have to pay, for example acting as a mentor for an SME, see point 25.

Links to South West development priorities

34. All studentships must be able to demonstrate an economic benefit to the SW region and be aligned with SWRDA's economic and other strategic priorities. This must be described on the application form. Types of benefit may include:

- a) Additional R&D expenditure in the region
- b) Helping an organisation to develop a new technology or process
- c) Improving systems or techniques within the SW region
- d) Enhancing information about the SW region

Please visit the SWRDA website for more information, **and read notes below** :

www.southwestrda.gov.uk

<http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/economic-strategy.shtm>

<http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/about/job-vacancies/our-work.shtm>

Submitting an application

35. The Studentship application form is designed to provide all the information needed for a rigorous peer review process. The guidelines that follow will help you prepare the application for that process.
36. Overall, you are advised to focus your application and to provide sufficient evidence to enable members of the relevant Theme Panel to reach a considered judgement as to the quality of your proposal, its significance and its feasibility.
37. Applications may be submitted at any time until the close of the third call on 31st October 2007, and will be assessed by the Theme Panels and the Regional Research Board on a regular rolling schedule. GWR reserves the right to close the Third call before 1st October 2007 if all of the available funding has been allocated.

Method of submission

38. Applications must be submitted through the Great Western Research Website. Applications submitted by any other means will **not** be accepted.
39. The website application process provides an opportunity for the applicant to begin an application, save it, and come back to it a later date. When first saved, the lead applicant/supervisor will receive an email with a password to enable access to saved applications.
40. It is imperative that the lead applicant/supervisor inputs **one valid** email address on the application form. The email address is the primary route for contact between the applicant and the Great Western Research application process. Similarly, please only use numbers for telephone details.
41. Once an application form is submitted, you will not be able to retrieve or print its contents. 'Submission' means you are willing for the Theme Panel Secretary to log the application as complete. If, after submission, you need a printed copy or wish to withdraw the application, please contact support@gwr.ex.ac.uk
42. Certain questions on the application form have a word limit. Please try to keep to this word limit.
43. You will not be able to submit your application without all compulsory fields completed, though you can still save the application for completion at a later date.

General guidance

Host institution

44. Each collaborative Studentship application must have a nominated host institution. The host department/institution for the Studentship should be an appropriate place for the proposed programme of research, and should be in a position to nurture and contribute to it.
45. Payment of the grant to successful projects will be made to the host institution in which the Principal Applicant is based.

The research

46. Great Western Research's primary concern is to ensure that the collaborative research Studentship it funds will address clearly-articulated research questions or problems which are set in a clear research context.
47. The application must therefore define the research questions or problems that will be addressed during the award period. It must also define its objectives in terms of seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding relating to the questions or problems to be addressed.
48. The application must also specify why it is important that these particular questions or problems should be addressed and what particular contribution this project will make.
49. The Lead Supervisor takes responsibility for the intellectual leadership of the research. They will be the person to whom we shall address all correspondence and must be based at the organisation at which the grant will be held.

Submitting more than one application from the Lead Supervisor

50. If, as Lead Supervisor, you submit more than one application, then you must demonstrate that you and your department will be able to carry out all of the projects and supervision for which you are applying.

Question-specific guidance

51. Please use this section in conjunction with the application form. Questions identified with an * must be answered. Failure to provide an answer will result in the application being ineligible:

***Theme** – Please select one from the Great Western Research themes. If you wish to collaborate across more than one theme, please make this clear in your 'Project description' section. This will determine who the

application is sent to for peer review. It is acceptable for applicants working in different theme areas to jointly supervise the studentship and this should be detailed in the supervision section.

***Project Title (max 50 words)** – Please enter a full title

*** Host institution** – Please select one from the list of eligible HEIs in the South West of England.

*** QAA compliant** - The host institution and department must be QAA compliant for supervising post-graduate students. Applications will be rejected if 'no' has been ticked.

***Department** – Please state which department the Studentship will be registered with.

*** 2nd institution** – All studentships must be offered as collaboration, with joint supervision by at least two HEIs in the South West. There is no QAA requirement for the second or subsequent supervising institutions.

Other HEI – Studentships can involve more than two HEIs. Use this field to select a third partner. If you have more than three partner HEIs, please contact the relevant Theme Panel Secretary to provide the additional details. Contact details are available on each Theme page at www.greatwesternresearch.ac.uk

*** Lead External Partner** - All studentships must include a lead external non-HEI funding partner. See Eligibility and Commitments above for details of eligible organisations, and specifically note 25. Enter their full name and address including post code.

*** Nature of Business** – Please enter a brief description. For example; shoe manufacturer, construction industry, mining and quarrying.

Charity and public sector organisations have different criteria to private industries. Please see Eligibility and Commitments above. SMEs (small to medium enterprises incorporating micro enterprises) are classed as organisations with less than 250 employees and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro. **Preference is given to projects involving SMEs.**

A Significant Regional Employer (**SRE**) is defined as an organisation that employs more than 250 people in the region and has an annual turnover exceeding 50 million euro.

*** Has a commitment in principle been obtained and forwarded from the external funding partners?** - In order to ensure proposals are quickly and effectively assessed, a commitment in principle, subject to contract, from the industry partner(s) is necessary. This should take the form of a letter from the industry partner(s) supporting the aims and

objectives of the research, and refer to their financial support, in principle and subject to contract, for the proposed project (template available on the GWR website). Please arrange for this information to be forwarded to Paul Hudson, Great Western Research, Kay Buildings, North Park Rd, Exeter University, EX4 4QF (or p.s.hudson@ex.ac.uk) when you submit your application.

Supporting External partners – Details as above – please see note 25

* **Total cost of Studentship** - Studentships have a notional value of £55.2k i.e. £18.4k pa (including an admin fee of £1600pa). The maximum contribution from GWR will be £9.2K per annum ie £27.6K in total. However, the full cost of some PhD programmes may be higher than the notional value because of the costs of materials, travel and other research project costs. Enter the total value of the studentship here.

NOTE: You should enter numbers without any currency or separator symbols. You may enter 50000 or 50000.00. The only symbols allowed are digits and decimal separator.

* **Total Contribution from Lead External Partner** - The lead external funding partner will normally be expected to provide the residual cost of the studentship once the GWR contribution has been made (ie all costs above £27.6K). However, please note 25 above.

Partners may set a maximum of £9.2K pa contribution or may be willing to make a further top-up to cover specified additional costs eg for materials, travel etc. Ensure you enter the total contribution from all the external partners, and that the contribution is in cash and not 'in kind'. If this contribution is less than 50% of the total value of the studentship, please explain why.

Total contribution from supporting external partners (£) - Others partners may wish to contribute funds and this should be entered here. Please note 25 above.

Total contribution from external partners (£) - Automatic

Explanation if less than 50% - You may wish to use University funds or funds from other organisations such as research councils, charities or HEFCE to contribute towards the cost of the studentship thereby either reducing the external partner contribution or creating a top-up. If you wish to do this, please describe your intentions here.

Additional Contribution (Amount and source) – If applicable, the supplementary contributions mentioned above should not exceed 25% of the total project cost. Please note that you may not use SWRDA funds in this way.

* **Total Required from Great Western Research** - The contribution from GWR will be capped at £27.6K.

* **Proposed start and end dates** – The Great Western Research Studentship last for 3 years and it is hoped they will be cited in the RAE 2008 submissions of the relevant departments. You may use the calendar buttons provided.

* **Project description (up to 1000 words)** - Enter a description of the project's scope and objectives. This should be no more than 1000 words. You should aim to outline your objectives as concisely and clearly as possible, and illustrate what specific targets or outcomes the research will achieve by the end of the research programme. The work to be undertaken should be fully explained, as failure to provide adequate detail may prejudice the application.

* **Abstract (up to 250 words)** - The final decision making body will include individuals who have a broad knowledge and understanding of the subject areas and disciplines, but do not necessarily have a detailed knowledge of your particular specialism. Moreover, Great Western Research may wish to publicise successful applications outside of academic networks. Please ensure you include here a brief description of 'how the research would be promoted', which would help assessment by non-specialists.

* **Alignment with proposed theme (up to 500 words)** – Details of why the proposed studentship project fits within the proposed theme.

* **Nature of the proposed collaboration, describing clearly proposed working relationships (up to 500 words)** - Describe clearly the working relationships that are envisaged between all the members of the project team. How will the collaboration be managed? The collaborating institution(s) should be clear about the contribution to the research they can make, and that it is a mutually beneficial relationship. There is an opportunity later to describe administrative arrangements for supervision.

* **Is the research linked to other GWR studentship applications?** – Please indicate whether the work is linked to other Studentship applications, past or current, and, if yes, outline how the research projects are dependent on each other.

* **Lead supervisor** - Enter the name of the lead academic supervisor for the studentship **and ensure contact details are correctly completed**. Please include only one contact email, telephone number and address. Please tick one of the three boxes to indicate experience of working with business.

Please note that the Lead supervisor's contractual arrangement with the host HEI must cover the period of the award from Great Western Research.

* **Relevant Academic Experience** - Enter details of the supervisor's academic background in this theme area. This can be copied and pasted from a CV or other document where appropriate.

* **2nd and other supervisors** - Enter the name of the academic who will be supervising the studentship at the second HEI, and their experience of working with business. The same eligibility criteria outlined for the lead supervisor apply to 2nd and other supervisors. If three HEIs are involved, enter the name of the academic who will be supervising the studentship at the third HEI, and their experience of working with business. This information is required for each supervisor at each HEI, so if there are more than three please provide this information to the relevant Theme Panel Secretary.

* **Arrangements for Supervision** - The proposal must include a description of how the joint supervision will work. This may include details of how the external partner will be involved in supervision, and may detail cross-Theme supervision.

* **SW Economic Benefits** - The application must explain how the proposed research project will benefit the economy of the South West and illustrate how the benefits of the research activity will be captured and exploited within the region. Please tick each box you complete. This might be in the form of:

a) additional investment in research and development - some explanation of how this might result and the eventual outcomes of the research activity should be given; if the output includes the development of a new research centre or strengthening research capacity in the region, this should be described with a brief description of the potential regional benefit through enhanced links with business, inward investment benefits etc.

b) helping an organisation to develop a new technology or process - the intended outcome of such activity for the region should be described and might include improvements to efficiency/productivity; improved competitiveness/business growth; development of higher value added goods and services etc.

c) improving systems or techniques within the SW region

d) enhancing information about the South West

c) and d) can include activities which contribute to a successful and sustainable economy through improving quality of life; urban and rural renaissance; and building the capacity of communities to participate in the growing economy. It can also include research which aims to improve the effectiveness of regional policy and action, such as effective transport and communications; effective promotion and improvement of regional assets; effective long-term planning with flexible governance structures, strong leadership and effective partnerships. The expected economic outcomes of such activities should be described, especially where the outcome is in the

form of enhanced information where the application needs to show clearly how it is intended to exploit the information.

*** Other Benefits** - The application must explain what the external partner expects to gain from its investment in the proposed research project. It should describe the expected outputs from the research project, including intermediate outputs which might arise before the research project is complete. These might be in the form of

- new systems or techniques
- changes to production processes
- strengthening the knowledge base of the business/organisation
- supporting further investment in the company
- contributing to the development of new/improved goods and services

*** Has the partner worked with the HEI sector previously** - An important objective of the GWR project is to increase the number of new collaborations between businesses in the South West and the region's HEIs. Please use this opportunity to briefly outline the extent of previous collaborations between the partner organisation and the HE sector.

***What potential is there for future research collaboration** - If this research project is an intermediate step in a more substantial research and development initiative, this should be explained and the eventual output described briefly.

The application should also describe the longer term benefits to the external partner which might be in the form of improved efficiency, new production processes, increased sales/turnover; different ways of doing things, and new, higher value added products or services. There should be some indication of the expected timescale for impacts where possible.

Essentially, applications for studentships must be aligned with the SWRDA's economic priorities, and all studentships must be able to demonstrate an economic benefit to the SW region. Please see the SWRDA website (www.southwestrda.org.uk) for more details. These pages may help:

<http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/economic-strategy.shtm>

Resubmission of an application

52. Great Western Research's policy on resubmitting applications is as follows: if your application was not approved in a previous funding round, but you were advised to resubmit you will be permitted to make a resubmission of that application. If you were discouraged from resubmitting application, the application is unlikely to be funded.
53. The resubmission policy is to allow projects which are inherently worthy of funding a second chance of success. There is, however, no guarantee that a resubmitted application will be successful second time around, as it will be in open competition with entirely new applications.

Confidentiality and use of the information supplied

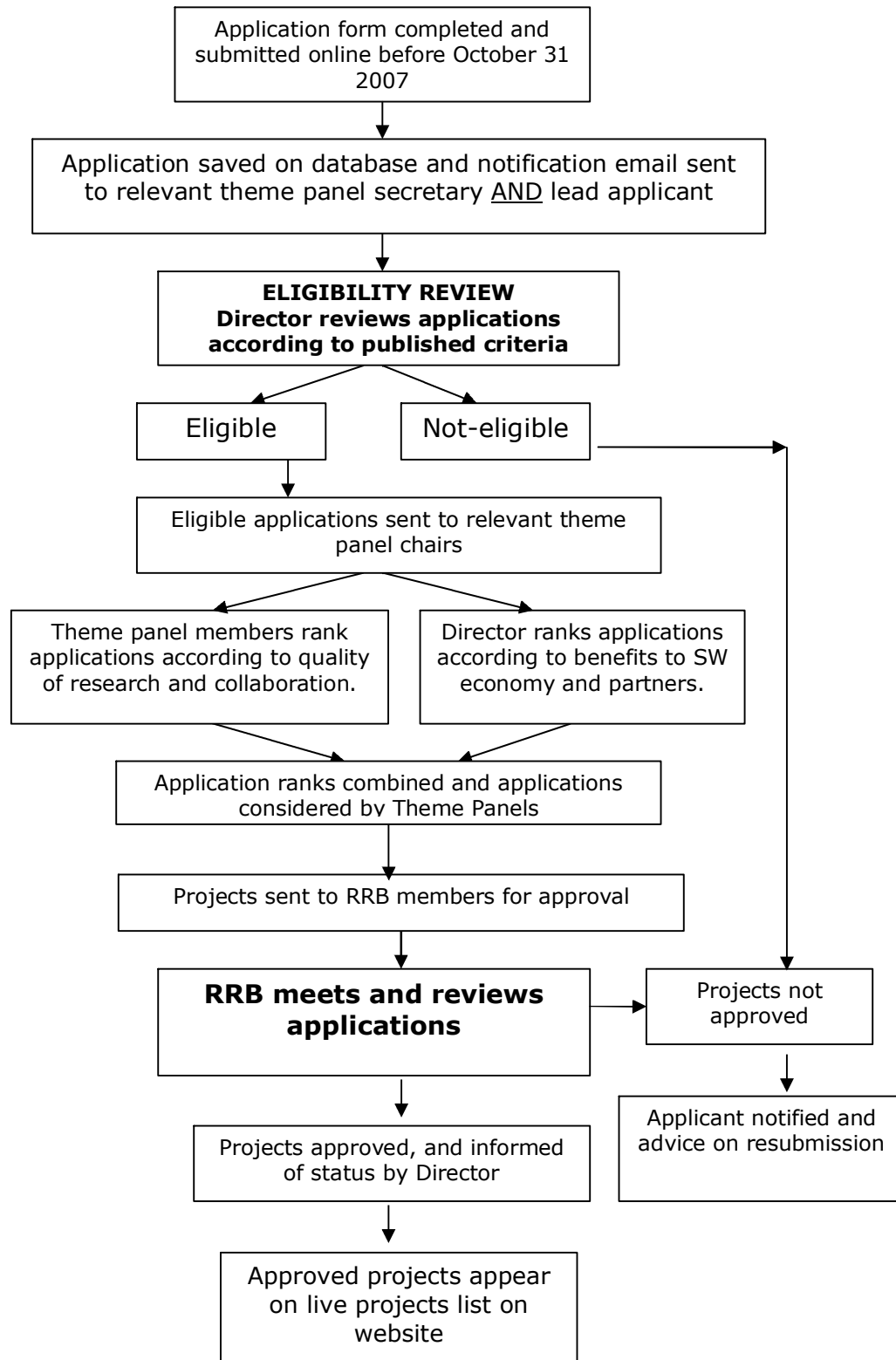
54. By submitting an application you are giving your permission to Great Western Research to process and disclose the data you provide, including processing of the personal data, as described in Appendix 1 below.

Application deadlines

55. The third call for studentship proposals will close on 31st October 2007.
56. Applications will be assessed by the Theme Panels and the Regional Research Board on a rolling schedule based on an 8 week cycle of meetings, and decisions are expected to be available on most applications within 8-9 weeks of submission.
57. If successful, you will be expected to sign your contractual agreement within 6 months of approval being received from Great Western Research. Requests for any amendment to this period must be submitted for approval.
58. GWR reserves the right to close the Third call before 31st October 2007 if all of the available funding has been allocated.

Assessment and Award Process

59. Great Western Research is committed to assessment by process of peer review. The assessment process is as follows:



60. The application will be considered individually by the Director of Great Western Research to determine its eligibility. If eligible, the application is considered by the Theme Panel.
61. Details of the current Great Western Research Theme Panel membership are available on our website at <http://www.greatwesternresearch.ac.uk>
62. The Theme Panels will determine a ranking for each application, according to theme, and will rank applications in order of research excellence and collaboration.
63. Simultaneously, the Director will rank applications according to their contribution to the South West and business benefits.
64. These rankings will be combined to provide an overall application ranking.
65. Applications and the associated rankings are forwarded to the Regional Research Board.
66. The applications are then considered individually by the RRB whose membership is drawn from the SWRDA, Theme Panel Chairs, HERDA-SW and the Director.
67. The Regional Research Board decides what proportion of the total Great Western Research resources go to each theme and each call, by choosing how many proposals to approve from each theme list.

Assessment criteria

68. In assessing eligible applications Theme Panel members and the RRB will assess the proposal on the following:
 - whether the proposal meets the aims of the Great Western Research Studentship
 - the quality of the proposed research and supervision
 - the extent to which the proposed activities will generate genuine collaboration and new high quality cross-institutional research projects
 - the significance and importance of the project, and of the contribution it will make, to business and business benefit in the South West
 - Short-term and long-term impact on the South-West (economic, social, intellectual)

- Preference will be given to studentships involving businesses, especially SMEs that have not previously worked with the university or research group named in the proposal.

Award announcement

69. If you are **successful**, you will receive a letter offering you an award, and informing you of the overall amount for the duration of the award
70. If you are **unsuccessful**, you will receive a letter advising that you have not been offered an award.

Monitoring

71. As part of the terms and conditions of a Great Western Research award, you will be required to submit an annual progress report and an end-of-award report **no later than three months** after the end of the award period.
72. While it is the responsibility of the Lead Institution and Lead Supervisor to manage Studentship, Great Western Research reserves the right to call for periodic information on progress or to visit the Student. The lead Supervisor and Student may also be asked to attend meetings and events to exchange information and ideas with others undertaking research in the same or similar fields.

Complaints procedure

73. For details on our complaints procedure, please refer to the document **Great Western Research Complaints Procedure** which can be found on our website at www.greatwesternresearch.ac.uk

Appendix 1: Data Protection

Data Protection Regulations

Great Western Research will use information provided on the Studentship application form and subsequent annual reports for processing the proposal, the award of any consequential grant, and for the payment, maintenance and review of the grant. This may include:

- Registration of proposals;
- Operation of grants processing and management information systems;
- Preparation of material for use by peer review panels;
- Administration, investigation and review of grant applications;
- Statistical analysis in relation to the evaluation of research and the study of trends
- Press and media campaigns

Details of awards will also be made available on the Great Western Research web site and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.