# Spring into Methods: Guidance 2024

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## 1. Overview

The Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities (SGSAH) and the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS) have collaborated on *Spring into Methods* to commission interactive, interdisciplinary and innovative research, knowledge exchange and impact methods training for our PhD researchers since 2018.

We are relaunching the programme for 2024 with the ambition of innovating and moving to learning experiences that fuel our students' ambitions and widen their horizons. We recommend that you read our guidance notes before submitting your application to ensure that your proposal meets all requirements. Applications must be submitted by HEIs by 3pm on Friday 2 Feb 2024 within our applications portal at https://sgsah.smapply.io/prog/spring_into_methods_proposal/

For delivery in Spring 2024, we are inviting applications for two types of events, see below.

### 1.1 Grand Challenge Hackathon

SGSAH and SGSSS invite proposals from members of staff in any affiliated HEIs to provide this training. Offering exciting problem-solving challenges, hackathons can provide prime opportunities for students to practice their interdisciplinary skills as they recognise and draw from their strengths to contribute to the team. We particularly welcome hackathons that pose challenges which articulate the UN Sustainability Goals, and/or Scotland's National Performance Framework. Hackathons do not need to also deliver research training, rather, they should seek to develop students' broader skills such as interdisciplinary working, problem-solving, or entrepreneurial thinking. We are keen to fund these events, with an elevated budget in recognition of the resources that may be required for successful delivery. See example in section 6.

### 1.2 In-Depth Research Training

All events should focus on a method and be inclusive and relevant to students from across the arts, humanities and social sciences.

SGSAH and SGSSS also invite proposals from members of staff in any affiliated HEIs to provide this training. To increase accessibility, we ask for highly interactive proposals delivered either online or in person. A hybrid event is possible; however, facilitators are required to show that they are supporting all learners. Please ensure that you clearly outline the pedagogical rationale for your approach if proposing a hybrid event.

Our emphasis is on interactive, interdisciplinary and innovative sessions that demonstrate both expertise in methods training and leadership to involve early career researchers in delivery. Our main audience is doctoral researchers from arts, humanities, and social science, but our emphasis on interdisciplinarity means we encourage applications from other disciplines, e.g. academics affiliated with the SOCIAL Centre for Doctoral Training in Socially Intelligent Artificial Agents and SICSA, the Scottish Informatics and Computer Science Alliance.

## 2. Planning the Event

- The event(s) should take place between Monday 8th April and Friday 14 June 2024 (avoiding holidays including Eid anticipated as 10 April 2024, Passover, Tuesday 23 April and bank holidays on Monday 6 and 27 May 2024).
- Considering the diverse needs of potential attendees, the programme should be no more than 15 hours spread over an accessible timescale, e.g., 2 days in person: 4 x 3.5-hour sessions online.
- At least one Early Career Researcher (doctoral researcher or ECR on fixed-term research contract) should be included (but not as principal organiser) in the development and delivery of materials. See Budget for funding of ECRs.
- SGSAH and SGSSS will coordinate the administration for each event, including the application process, advertising, communication and evaluation. Following the communication of results, successful proposals will be asked to complete a proforma within one week to confirm acceptance of the funding and final details.
- Please consider the maximum number of participants based on the method of delivery, level of interactivity and engagement throughout. We recognise that digital delivery may increase opportunities for participation in some cases. We are unlikely to support an event with less than 20 students.
- Risk assessments should be completed for all in-person engagement, in line with your own HEI policies.

## 3. Budget

### 3.1 Budget for development, design and delivery of each proposal

- Fully online: up to £1,500
- Hybrid / Fully in-person: up to £2,500
- Hackathon: up to £3,500

For in-person sessions, you should budget on a minimum of 20 attendees.

### 3.2 Eligible Costs

- Materials / resource development
- Doctoral/ Early Career Researchers to support delivery and preparation of materials up to £250 per half-day
- Catering costs for participants and organisers (in-person)
- Travel expenses/ overnight accommodation for organisers (in-person). As SGSSS and SGSAH are national Doctoral Training Partnerships, it is anticipated that all facilitators will be based in Scotland given the breadth and depth of expertise.

### 3.3 Ineligible Costs

- Room hires, as we expect the host HEI to waive these costs
- Fees for permanent full-time staff employed at SGSAH/SGSSS member HEIs who are involved in the event, as we cannot make an additional payment to their salary
- Administration costs (SGSAH and SGSSS will coordinate the application process, advertising, communication and evaluation)
- Participants will be able to apply to their graduate school /DTP/ CTD for reimbursement of travel, accommodation, further subsistence for in-person events.

The total budget for each event as detailed above. We require a clear breakdown of how the requested funds will be used on the *Spring into Methods* application portal, including any materials, and daily or hourly rates for assistance by fixed term ECRs or doctoral researchers.

## 4. Further Guidance on planning training event

Proposal should clearly articulate which route they are applying for:
1. Grand Challenges Hackathon: Addressing grand challenges, linked to UN Sustainability Goals and/or Scotland's National Performance Framework, considering cross disciplines using advanced general skills and methods or a hackathon style approach.
2. Interdisciplinary Research Training: In depth approach to a specific research method articulating how it will be interdisciplinary for arts, humanities and social sciences.

The application portal permits applicants to identify where their proposed event meets either route. We require details on how the proposal will provide in-depth training of value to doctoral researchers across the arts, humanities and social sciences and/or where these intersect with other disciplines. As well as being interdisciplinary, training should be innovative and highly interactive, providing participants with an opportunity to share their own work and engage with others. Please make sessions widely accessible to students of different experiences/expertise; this may be achieved by providing pre-session materials or being explicit about prerequisite skills.

We encourage events which may include an external partner (such as a third sector organisation) in the delivery of training, where this is appropriate.

Once the training has been commissioned, doctoral researchers across the UK (irrespective of their funding) will be invited to apply. The selection process will aim to balance students attending from across SGSSS and SGSAH with those from other CDTs, and DTPs across the UK. ESRC and AHRC funded PhD candidates from out with Scotland are free to attend but must seek funding for travel and expenses from their home HEI or graduate school.

## 5. Delivery Model

Whilst we hope and expect in-person training to be possible, we welcome proposals that are delivered online. Irrespective of approach, we greatly encourage a combination of synchronous engagement, including group/break out opportunities for students to engage with others, and asynchronous engagement that enables students to work at their own pace (for example, providing pre-reading for in-person events).

The proposal should articulate the legacy of training beyond the events and what online learning resources could be available to all SGSAH and SGSSS researchers. Resource contributions could include: video recordings of presentations, podcasts, reading lists, templates or other learning materials.

# 6. Potential Topics for Spring into Methods 2024

We are keen to encourage proposals that present new ideas that demonstrate innovation, international significance, or interdisciplinarity. We are particularly keen to see proposals for hackathons and in recognition of the demands around delivery, we have increased the budget to accommodate any extra resources required. Please note, we can still receive applications for previous events where evidence is provided of the event's success and planned updates based on feedback.

## 6.1 Interdisciplinary Training
We are keen to see new ideas, however selected previous topics have included:
- Building research methods on principles of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Decolonising Methods
- Methods and Climate Crisis
- Feminist research methods
- Post-humanist or more-than-human research
- Rethinking 'vulnerability' in participatory research

Based on training needs analyses, we are keen to see applications that can showcase machine learning/AI skills; training that incorporates data management/research integrity; training that considers the post-qualitative turn; and training that involves numbers. Additionally, we welcome applications for novel areas – please contact to discuss at team@sgsss.ac.uk and/ or enquiries@sgsah.ac.uk.

## 6.2 Hackathon
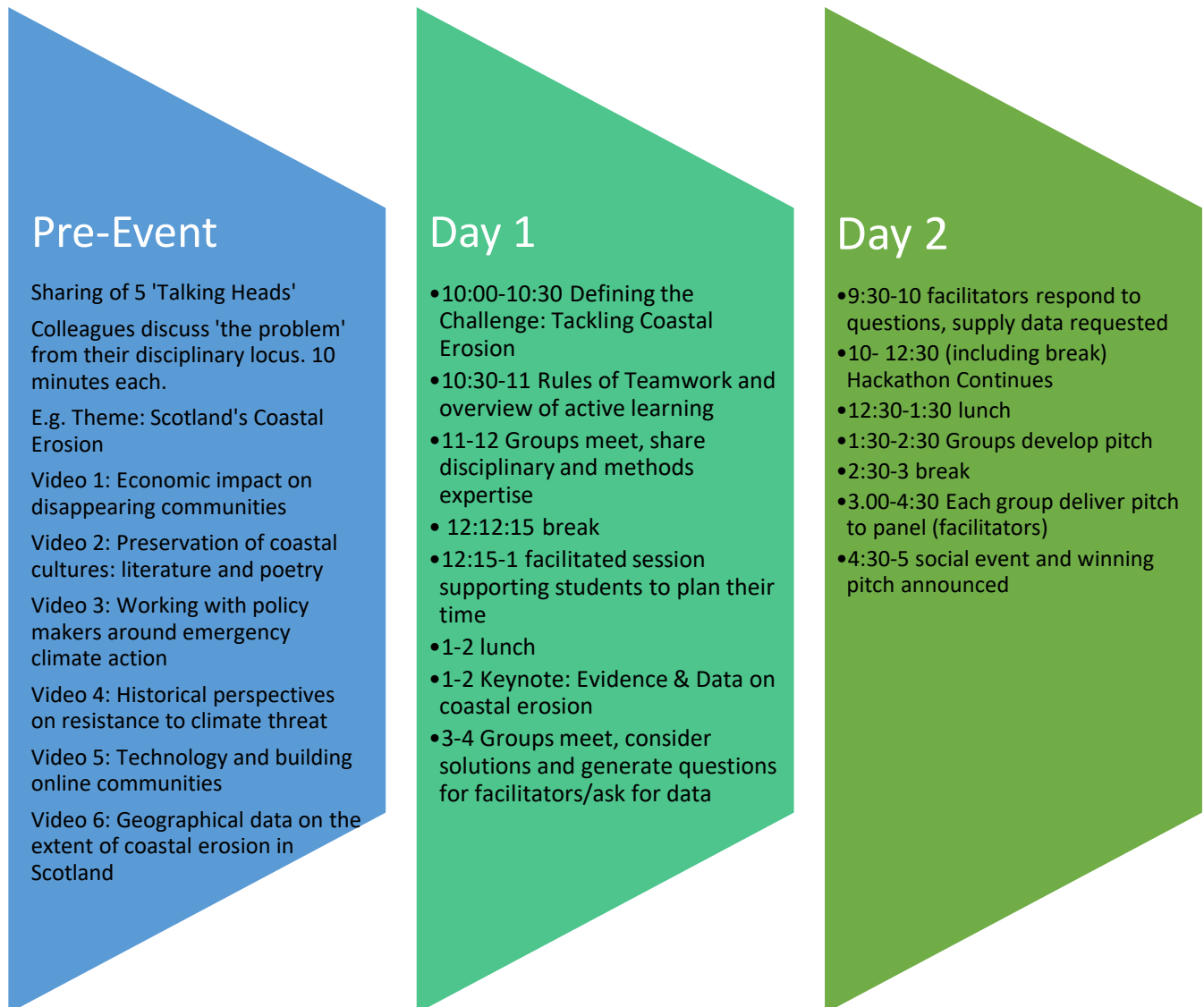Drawing from the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, we are keen to see proposals that meet grand challenges and seek to address wicked problems. (A wicked problem is a social or cultural problem that is difficult to solve because of its interconnected nature with other problems.) This could include, (but is not limited to):
- Sustainable Living
- Climate Emergency
- Harnessing Artificial Intelligence

*6.3 Indicative Overview of the Hackathon Model*

Example: Using Climate Emergencies and Coastal Erosion in Scotland, 2-day event: Series of short videos on the topic were created to encourage students to consider in advance, how their skills and knowledge could contribute to problem solving and provide insight into how other disciplinary areas could work towards solutions. The event itself combined data/ evidence delivered by the facilitators and group work focused on problem-solving. Students then delivered a pitch that contributed to solving the grand challenge set. See process outline below:

## Pre-Event

Sharing of 5 'Talking Heads'

Colleagues discuss 'the problem' from their disciplinary locus. 10 minutes each.

E.g. Theme: Scotland's Coastal Erosion

Video 1: Economic impact on disappearing communities

Video 2: Preservation of coastal cultures: literature and poetry

Video 3: Working with policy makers around emergency climate action

Video 4: Historical perspectives on resistance to climate threat

Video 5: Technology and building online communities

Video 6: Geographical data on the extent of coastal erosion in Scotland

## Day 1

- 10:00-10:30 Defining the Challenge: Tackling Coastal Erosion
- 10:30-11 Rules of Teamwork and overview of active learning
- 11-12 Groups meet, share disciplinary and methods expertise
- 12:12:15 break
- 12:15-1 facilitated session supporting students to plan their time
- 1-2 lunch
- 1-2 Keynote: Evidence & Data on coastal erosion
- 3-4 Groups meet, consider solutions and generate questions for facilitators/ask for data

## Day 2

- 9:30-10 facilitators respond to questions, supply data requested
- 10- 12:30 (including break) Hackathon Continues
- 12:30-1:30 lunch
- 1:30-2:30 Groups develop pitch
- 2:30-3 break
- 3.00-4:30 Each group deliver pitch to panel (facilitators)
- 4:30-5 social event and winning pitch announced

## 7. How will the process be managed?

Applicants can access the online application system at: https://sgsah.smapply.io/prog/spring_into_methods_proposal/ or via the SGSAH or SGSSS websites.

You will need to create an account on the system, ideally using an institutional email address. Please ensure you check your spam or junk filters for any emails from the system.

Use the 'save and continue editing' button as you go in order not to lose your draft. Once you have completed each section, press 'Mark as Complete' (although you can still edit each section until you submit the application).

When your application is complete, please use the 'Submit' button. Once you have pressed this button you cannot edit the application further. Proposals from HEIs should be submitted by **3pm on Friday 2 February 2024.**Applications will be reviewed by a panel drawn from across the SGSAH and SGSSS directorates or their nominees, with input from SOCIAL CDT and SICSA if appropriate. You will be notified of the outcome by the week commencing **12 February 2024.**

## 8. What happens if you are successful?

1. Successful applicants will be issued an award letter and required to confirm their intention to proceed. At this point, we will also ask for confirmation of the event and a short description for advertising purposes.

2. SGSAH and SGSSS will publicise the events through their communication channels. Organisers are also expected to use their own means of communication with doctoral researchers, directing them to the central application system.

3. SGSAH and SGSSS will manage the application process for each event and will launch a call for doctoral researchers/attendees. We aim to include an equal number of arts, humanities and social science participants at each training event. SGSAH and SGSSS will set up registration systems to allow for attendance booking, monitoring and data collection. Where demand exceeds places, we will run and manage reserve lists.

4. We will communicate full attendance to event organisers the week before the event.

5. The named lead organiser will manage the running of the event and is responsible for submitting an attendance list within two weeks of the final session of the event to team@sgsss.ac.uk.

6. The lead organiser is responsible for submitting a post-event evaluation form and an invoice for the SGSAH/SGSSS contribution, as per the agreed limits in the award letter. The SGSAH/SGSSS can only receive one invoice from one institution for an event.

Please use the reference number on the purchase order included in your award letter. Invoices will only be paid on receipt of evaluation forms and must be submitted within 8 weeks of the end of the event. Invoices received after this may not be reimbursed.

7. SGSAH/SGSSS will process invoices and transfer funds.

If you have any queries about a planned event, please email the team at [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk) or [enquiries@sgsah.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@sgsah.ac.uk).

## 9. Timetable

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| Friday 17 November 2023 | Finalise updated guidance |
| Monday 27 November 2023 | Launch call for SiM workshop proposals and advertise through website, twitter and networks |
| Monday 4 December 2023 | SiM Webinar for potential applicants: https://tockify.com/sgsah/detail/222/1701698400000 |
| Friday 2 Feb 2024 | Deadline for SiM proposals<br>Circulate proposals to review panel Mon 05 Feb 2024 |
| Thursday 8 February 2024 | Review panel meets to select SiM events |
| Monday 12 February 2024 | Applicants informed of decision |
| Monday 26 February 2024 | Start promotion of events to students |
| Monday 18 March 2024 | Deadline for students to sign up |
| w/ending 22 March 2024 | Students on waiting list informed |
| Monday 8 April – Friday 14 June 2024, (avoiding holidays) | Events take place |
| Monday 1 July 2023 | Evaluation forms and invoices submitted |