**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION ADVICE**

**Research Title and Summary**

* The title should succinctly and accurately convey what the project is about. This is not necessarily the best place for clever puns.
* The summary should be comprehensible to non-specialists. Avoid obscure jargon, and be clear about your project’s overall aims and its likely scholarly (and, if relevant, wider) impact.

**Research Proposal**

* This is probably the most important section as it is where the value of the project is sold. Weaker applications tend to lack specifics and/ or assume too much specialist knowledge on behalf of the judging panel.
* Try to get to the point within the first couple of sentences – this is a sales pitch, not an essay. Weaker applications will spend too long setting the scene.
* State your core **research question**, which is most effectively phrased as a question. If there are important supplementary questions, limit yourself to two or three (in under 100 words).
* Discussion of the **research context, methods, and sources** should take up a significant part (probably between a half and two-thirds) of your research proposal.
* You should be clear about the scholarly **context** for the project – i.e. make explicit reference to existing scholarship and its key claims, with an explanation of how your research will add to this or change it.
* Try to explain what difference to your academic field your project will make. Are you the first person to analyse the material? Will the research change how we look at a specific person, event, or institution?
* Be specific where possible about your proposed **source** material. Name specific texts, paintings, archives, people, places.
* Be specific about which historical methods you will use and, if you talk about an ‘interdisciplinary’ approach, try to explain what that means within your research **methodology** – e.g. comparing literary and artistic motifs, or applying social scientific theories to a historical study.
* Invest space (e.g. 200-300 words) talking about **knowledge exchange, public engagement and research impact**, which are increasingly prominent in academic life and for many funders.
* Remember here to be specific – weaker applications tend to talk in general terms about activities.
* Always ask ‘who are the beneficiaries of this project? Why should someone care about it?’ This could be societies, schools, faith groups – anyone who might benefit beyond an immediate academic clique.
* If there are conferences or festivals where you might present research or put on a research-inspired event, name them. If you want to put on an event on yourself, give plans.
* If you are going to have something like a research blog, what is it going to be called and what kinds of things will you discuss?
* If there are organisations, societies or charities who might be interested in your work – with whom you might even want to work – give specific examples.
* Think about the **timetable**. Show that your project, including relevant training and wider academic activities, is feasible within the funded period.
* Propose specific and realistic targets for timely completion of your PhD project.

**Preparedness for Proposed Doctoral Project**

* Make a virtue of having studied relevant topics at masters and undergraduate level.
* Make a virtue of having developed useful research skills, e.g. started the acquisition of a particular language, or worked in a relevant archive, or having relevant methodological awareness. Transferable skills that will aid your doctoral work might also be mentioned.
* If the project is being sold as interdisciplinary, here is a good place to explain your interdisciplinary background/ training, with details.
* If your undergraduate or masters degree was not undertaken within the UK system, please explain how grades obtained relate to UK standards (e.g. a US GPA of 3.9 being a clear first).

**Training Needs Assessment**

* In this section, you show what training needs you have **and** how they will be met.
* Be honest about what kind of research support you will need.
* Be mindful of the need for ethics approval for any research projects involving living subjects, and risk assessments generally.
* Explain how the proposed supervisory arrangements will support your project.
* Explain how you would fit in with the research environment at St Andrews.
* You may want to stress the unique supervisory expertise and other resources offered by the School and the University. Any Centres or Institutes worth mentioning?
* Consider how the training offered by any funding bodies might support your project.