

GambleAware

PhD funding 2018 – application process

1. Introduction

GambleAware wishes to fund one new PhD project with effect from autumn 2018. Key terms and conditions are as follows:

- Applicants must demonstrate that they possess the necessary research skills.
- Projects must be related to our aims, objectives and programme themes.
- The successful applicant will be funded for a three-year PhD programme. The funding covers a student stipend, a set amount to cover conference travel, research expenses and, where justified, the cost of fieldwork.
- Overseas applicants are welcome to apply, but may be required to provide proof of financial stability, and must be accepted for study at a UK university.
- Applications which offer matched funding from academic institutions or other funding bodies will be considered favourably.

2. Timetable for PhD application process

Call for applications published	March 2018
Deadline for written applications	31 May 2018
Interviews	June 2018
Award made	by 30 June 2018
PhD commences	Autumn 2018

3. Background

3.1 GambleAware is the leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm. As an independent national charity, GambleAware funds education, prevention and treatment services, and research to broaden understanding of gambling-related harm. GambleAware's aim is to stop people getting into problems with their gambling and ensure that those that do develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support.

3.2 GambleAware develops its research priorities and commissioning plans in collaboration with the Gambling Commission and the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) - the independent expert body which advises government and produces the national responsible gambling strategy. GambleAware is funded

by voluntary contributions from the gambling industry. Strong governance arrangements within GambleAware and between GambleAware, the RGSB and Gambling Commission. For further background information on GambleAware visit our website at <http://about.gambleaware.org/>.

3.3 Our research programme is unique in being solely dedicated to issues relating to problem gambling and gambling-related harm in Britain, as a significant public health issue.

4. The GambleAware PhD programme and themes

4.1 Context

4.1.1 British gambling-related harm research capacity is small but growing. It is important that our research is diverse and covers all disciplines relevant to gambling-related harm, and that it is recognised for its quality. Funding PhD-level research is a means of meeting those objectives by growing the field of gambling studies.

4.1.2 Applicants should be familiar with the strategy and priorities of the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board, as set out in the National Responsible Gambling Strategy 2016-17 – 2018-19 and Research Programme 2017 - 2019. These can be found by following the web links at <http://www.rgsb.org.uk/>.

4.2 Funding

4.2.1 Funding is provided for a PhD programme lasting three years in total.

4.2.2 GambleAware will provide the following funding to the PhD student, via the relevant academic institution, subject to meeting the full residential eligibility conditions and depending on the type of award allocated. These represent maximum funding levels, and proposals for matched funding from academic institutions or other funding bodies are encouraged.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Standard maintenance grant	£14,815	£15,082	£15,353
Fees	£4,271	£4,347	£4,425
Research Training Support Grant	£750	£750	£750
Fieldwork support	£450	£450	£450
Total	£20,285	£20,629	£20,978

4.2.3 Awards based within a London institution are eligible for an additional £2,000 maintenance grant per year.

4.2.4 Please note that payment of the allowance is subject to satisfactory progress.

4.3 Principles underpinning GambleAware research

The following principles underpin our PhD funding programme:

- We aim to support research that offers practical recommendations and proposes solutions to both minimise gambling harm and enhance treatment and education/prevention services
- Researchers are encouraged to address questions that are raised by policy makers, regulators and practitioners
- As far as possible, people affected by gambling-related harm should be engaged throughout the research process
- Research findings should be communicated through a variety of means to suit multiple audiences
- Policy-makers and providers of education/prevention and treatment services should be enabled to interpret and apply research findings.

4.4 Research themes

4.4.1 GambleAware has the following priorities for PhD research:

- Understanding and measuring harm
 - Developing understanding of specific areas of gambling-related harm, at the level of individuals, affected others or communities/society.
- Gambling and health or social inequalities.
- Insights from the lived experience of those negatively affected by gambling, including seldom heard groups.
- Understanding the determinants of gambling difficulties or harms and the needs of different groups of people, defined by socio-demographic or psycho-social factors.
- Increased understanding of the effects of gambling product characteristics and gambling environments and their interaction with consumer vulnerabilities.
- What works in education and prevention of gambling-related harm.
- Building the quality and capacity of treatment
 - Innovative, cost effective, recovery-oriented approaches to support and treatment for those experiencing problems with gambling and affected others.
- The changing nature and future of gambling, risks and harms – intersections of gambling, video and social gaming and esports.

4.4.2 Applicants interested in examining different topics within the area of gambling-related harm are welcome to approach us for an informal discussion in the first instance. We are willing to support innovative projects, provided they increase our understanding of problem gambling and/or gambling-related harm. A list of completed PhD's can be found on the GambleAware Infohub: <http://infohub.gambleaware.org/reports/>.

4.5 Academic disciplines

4.5.1 Research on gambling-related harm is potentially linked to a broad range of topics and disciplines, from studies focusing on individuals, social networks, populations, governments, businesses and products. Issues raised by gambling frequently require research that is multi-disciplinary in nature. While we will consider high-quality applications grounded in any academic discipline, we would particularly like to encourage proposals related to the following areas:

- Anthropology
- Community development studies
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) management studies
- Counselling and psychotherapy
- Economics
- Health studies
- Law and regulation
- Neurology
- Political science
- Psychology
- Public or social policy
- Social geography
- Social marketing studies
- Social sciences, including sociology
- Computing and technology.

4.5.2 We encourage cross-disciplinary approaches, which can have major advantages in terms of supporting relevant research, and we urge applicants to consider developing their proposals with input from different disciplines. This may involve using a supervisor from disciplines distinct from those in which the student is centred.

4.6 Eligibility

Eligibility requirements for our research studentships are as follows:

- Students should hold (or expect to hold) a Master's degree in the same discipline. Applicants with equivalent experience may also be considered.
- An application should be supported by a senior member of the University department, unit or institute, who would supervise the student if an award is made.
- Applications will not be considered from those who have already received support for their doctoral studies from another funding body or who are already registered for a research degree.
- Prospective applicants should note that only a very small number of doctoral studentships are awarded each year and that competition for them is intense. Strong preference is given to applicants intending to make a long-term academic career in the subject of problem-gambling or gambling-related harm.

4.7 Support arrangements

4.7.1 We aim to support the student throughout the research project, and, where appropriate and feasible, beyond. Reciprocally, we expect students to engage with us and other stakeholders in a process of ongoing communication, in order to ensure that the research process is informed by the needs of those hoping to use the results.

4.7.2 We aim to facilitate and ensure contact between the student and other bodies that are relevant to the field of study, such as the Gambling Commission or Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. We support the student's engagement with other individual researchers and organisations working on topics related to gambling-related harm. We do this by conducting networking events and providing contact details of relevant individuals and agencies. We will broker access for students who need to make contact with gambling operators and/or recruit problem gamblers. We can also provide access to our internal knowledge base and experience.

4.7.3 Finally, once the thesis has been approved by the faculty, we expect to make it available through our research Infohub: <http://infohub.gambleaware.org/>.

4.8 Reporting requirements

We have high expectations of the students we fund, and wish to be involved in the research process not only as funders but also as stakeholders. We require quarterly progress reports from both the student and their supervisor, in the form of a detailed annual report and three interim updates per year. These must detail progress against the timetable set out in the funding application, discuss any difficulties encountered, and indicate how these will be tackled. We also expect to be provided with opportunities to comment on plans and progress reports.

On completion of their PhD, students will be expected to attend a GambleAware Research and Evaluation Committee meeting and present their findings.

5. Application and selection arrangements

5.1 General points

5.1.1 There are no shortcuts to applying for PhD funding, and we have high expectations regarding the quality of applications submitted. Applicants should not expect that they can fulfil the funding requirements based purely on desk research and in a short amount of time. Also, in cases where the project would entail the cooperation of other parties, access would need to be demonstrated rather than assumed. Please plan your application in good time, as late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

5.1.2 GambleAware reserves the right to extend any deadline. Any extension granted will apply to all applicants.

5.1.3 Proposals must be submitted by 17.00hrs GMT on Thursday 31 May 2018 to the following email address: commissioning@gambleaware.org.

5.1.4 GambleAware reserves the right to reject any proposals:

(a) received after the deadline; and/or

(b) which do not comply with the conditions and requirements set out in this document.

5.2 Required documentation

5.2.1 Every applicant must provide, by the deadline, each of the following documents, described in more detail below:

- Cover letter
- Personal statement
- Project proposal
- Statement of authorship
- Applicant's CV
- Supervisor's letters of support and CVs
- Letter from the head of the faculty
- Details of two referees.

5.2.2 These documents should be emailed to commissioning@gambleaware.org.

5.2.3 Applicants are encouraged to check with us before submitting an application regarding whether or not their proposed project falls within the remit of our funding. Pre-application discussions may, as appropriate, enable us to recommend changes

or additions to make the application more competitive. Please email any questions to commissioning@gambleaware.org.

5.3 Covering letter

The covering letter will provide a short summary of the proposed project, written for a lay audience. The letter should briefly summarise the project's aims and objectives, its link to GambleAware's strategic priorities, and, in layperson's terms, the proposed methodology. The letter should not be longer than one page.

5.4 Personal statement

A personal statement enables us to understand applicants' motivations to conduct their proposed programme of research, and provides us with useful background information. A description of the student's previous education, indicating how the funding will fit into past and future research career development, should be included. If there are consistent themes or issues that have guided your previous work, these should be made clear.

5.5 Project proposal

This is the most important part of the application. All proposals must include the following:

- Title page
- Project description
- Discussion regarding any ethical considerations and how ethics approval will be obtained
- Bibliography
- Timetable
- Funding justification.

5.5.1 Title page

The title page should include the title of project; the applicant's current institution; the university where the proposed research will be undertaken; the supervisor's and applicant's details (including name, postal address, telephone and email address); and the dates of the proposed period for which financial support is sought.

5.5.2 Project description

The project description allows us to make an assessment of the academic quality of the proposed research and the knowledge and understanding of the field. However, an assessment of academic quality is not limited to an appreciation of a robust methodology, and as such, proposals should include considerations of applicability

of findings, ethics, stakeholder engagement, policy implications, and potential dissemination channels.

Within a **maximum of five pages**, your project description should include:

- Key research question(s), theoretical context of the study, methodology, method of analysis, justification/relevance of the proposed research, dissemination and engagement plans, including those relating to interim findings
- An outline of how the proposed research relates to GambleAware's aims and objectives and the National Responsible Gambling Strategy.
- An assessment of the contribution the study will make to the existing body of related research and to policy and practice
- As appropriate, a discussion of how stakeholders will be engaged throughout the process. By stakeholders, we mean the range of individuals and organisations you would expect to have an interest in the outcome of your work.

5.5.3 Bibliography

The bibliography should list the references of the literature cited in the project description, employing a standard referencing system.

5.5.4 Timetable

Please provide a timetable for the project, based on the project description.

5.5.5 Funding justification

The application must include a short statement justifying the amount of funds requested, including a breakdown of tuition fees, other research-related costs, and the proportion of funding that would represent a contribution to living costs.

5.5.6 Appendices

Any other supporting materials the applicant considers essential to the project should be included as an appendix. If an appendix is included, reference to it should be clearly indicated in the project description.

5.6 Statement of authorship

The project proposal for a PhD project must be written and supplied by the potential student. We require this in order to ensure that applicants have intellectual ownership of the application, as we believe this to be vital for a successful project. We therefore require a statement signed by the applicant confirming that the project proposal is the intellectual work of the applicant.

5.7 Applicant's CV

An up-to-date CV must be supplied. This should include the applicant's qualifications and results, and any (funded or non-funded) research projects already completed.

5.8 Supervisors' letter of support and CV

We require a written statement from the proposed PhD supervisor stating that she or he will be supervising the project. We also require the supervisor's academic CV.

5.9 Letter from the head of the faculty

In all cases, the head of the faculty (or equivalent) should also sign a statement confirming that the details in the application are correct and that the institution will provide the necessary support.

5.10 Referees

5.10.1 Two signed letters of academic reference must be provided. Referees should indicate their academic rank, how long they have known the candidate, and in what capacity. Letters should address why the applicant merits the fellowship, based on the following:

- Background preparation
- Originality of thought
- Judgement
- Written and oral skills
- Research skills.

5.10.2 It is expected that referees will have had, or currently do have a good opportunity to assess the applicant's potential to carry out the research in question, such as a graduate supervisor, academic adviser or tutor, or research collaborator.

5.11 Dates and deadlines

Please note the dates for deadlines in the table at the top of this document. Late applications cannot be considered.

5.12 Selection

5.12.1 All applications that fall within the overall remit of our criteria are assessed by our independent Research and Evaluation Committee. This assessment will take into account the relevance of the proposed project to the strategic priorities of GambleAware and the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board, the academic quality of the proposal, and the abilities of the applicant.

5.12.2 All applicants who are considered potential candidates after the written application stage will be invited to attend an interview. These interviews will take place in our offices in London on the dates set out above, at an agreed time. No expenses will be reimbursed for attending the interview.

5.13 Further information

If you have any queries, please contact us by email at commissioning@gambleaware.org.