

PREPARATION EDITION

Prepare the case. Do not freeze the rules.

This Preparation edition uses historical 2025 guidance to identify questions. It is not current 2027 guidance and must not be used as a live rules checklist.

NOT SOURCE-LOCKED

Do not use this brief as a 2027 rules checklist. Replace every historical rule when the Trust publishes the official next-round package.

WHAT THE 2025 GUIDANCE SIGNALS

About 145

HISTORICAL VOLUME

The 2025 guidance described approximately 145 fellowships.

3 years

HISTORICAL DURATION

The same guidance described a three-year project period.

New step

INTELLECTUAL PROGRESSION

The project should not merely extend or rework doctoral work.

FOUR QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE ANSWERED NOW

Progression

01 What is genuinely new after the doctorate?

Ownership

02 What is the applicant's individual intellectual contribution?

Method

03 Are the method, skills, and access credible?

Feasibility

04 Is the three-year project realistic and achievable?

WHAT MUST WAIT

The exact deadline, eligibility wording, forms, cost rules, host contribution, referee steps, and AI policy must come from the official 2027 package.

Official sources: [Historical 2025 guidance](#)

BUILD THE EVIDENCE BEFORE THE FORM OPENS

Five weaknesses to pressure-test early.

These are preparation questions grounded in historical guidance. They are not ranked causes of rejection and they are not current 2027 rules.

01

A disguised PhD extension

The proposal changes the setting or sample but not the underlying intellectual contribution.

02

Unclear individual ownership

The applicant's contribution disappears behind the supervisor, group, or existing programme.

03

Methods without a credible route

Important skills, data, access, or facilities are assumed rather than evidenced.

04

Originality stated, not demonstrated

The case uses labels such as novel or interdisciplinary without showing the precise advance.

05

A three-year plan without risk control

The sequence, dependencies, alternatives, or time allowance make delivery hard to believe.

YOUR INSTITUTION MAY CLOSE EARLIER

Oxford, for example, publishes an institution-specific internal process and expects a February 2027 Trust deadline. Treat that as local planning evidence only.

RELEASE GATE

Do not promote a live 2027 checklist until the Trust package is source-locked.

Official sources: [2025 Trust guidance](#) | [Oxford local process](#)