

PHD APPLICATION SERVICE

ELEMENT SEVEN



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ZOOM CALL NOTES

Call 1 Notes (Initial Consultation)

Date: July 4, 2025

Client Name: Thomas Radcliffe [Fictional]

Academic Consultant: Dr. A. F. (Economics Lecturer, UK-based)

Duration: 30 minutes

Thomas Radcliffe has a BA in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (First Class) from Durham University and an MSc in Economics (Distinction) from the University of Manchester. He was trained in quantitative methods and has a regional bias, as he completed his MSc dissertation on the productivity impacts of skills mismatch in the deindustrialised Northeast of England. In his career, Thomas has worked for three years as a policy analyst at the Institute of Regional Futures, completing government policy reports on levelling up, labour mobility, and housing economics as a co-author. His background in the field reveals that he has been able to translate the academic research into real policy work.

Thomas is inspired to pursue a PhD because he wants to add to the academy some source of scholarship on regional inequality and remain in a hybrid academic-policy career. His suggested topic is within his educational experience and competence since his area of study aligns with his work experience, which is economics and geography. His areas of interest especially focus on spatial inequality, and he is willing to pursue interdisciplinary or mixed methods.

In terms of preferences at the university, Thomas is tempted by four universities with research excellence in regional economics and policy: Cambridge, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, and Birmingham. He is looking at quantitatively skilled supervisors who would be willing to participate in interdisciplinary co-supervision. Of interest when it comes to funding are ESRC Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs), institutional scholarships and awards like

Leverhulme, and college-based schemes. Thomas is not profitable due to geographical and personal limitations and wants to pursue his PhD in October 2026.

Call 2 Notes (Decision and Confirmation)

Date: (One Week Later) July 12, 2025

Duration: 30 minutes

When making this follow-up call, one thing that Thomas clarified was his finalised PhD topic: "Place, Productivity, and Persistence: Investigating Regional Economic Inequality in England, 1980-2020." The title is sophisticated, as he concentrates on long-term tendencies within the regional productivity and the significance of local policies. In terms of methodology, Thomas intends to use econometric modelling, GIS, and spatial analysis, as well as mixed-methods case studies, to answer his research questions.

The five universities will be used in the application process, and they include Cambridge, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, and Birmingham. These two institutions were selected due to their potential for regional economics, policy participation, and funding channels. Thomas stressed the significance of potential supervisors who would actively work in ESRC DTPs and with quantitative skills.

As a funding source, Thomas will focus first on ESRC DTP applications in each university and will supplement with institutional studentships (Gates Cambridge [Cambridge], President Doctoral Scholar Awards [Manchester], and White Rose DTP [the Universities of Sheffield and Leeds]). His personal statement and CV will emphasise his hybrid academic-policy environment background, depending on the strength of the institution to which he is applying.