



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

Training the next generation of Arts and Humanities Researchers







Training the next generation of arts and humanities researchers is fundamental to the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) mission. We currently support over 600 doctoral students each year, through a range of programmes involving a wide variety of UK universities and partners beyond academia. We are continually refreshing our doctoral training provision so it meets the needs of each new generation of arts and humanities graduate students and remains aligned with the UK's social, cultural and economic requirements. Across the whole breadth of our current programmes - Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs), Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDPs) and Collaborative Doctoral Training programmes (CDTs) – our central aims include:

- **Improving the health of the research base** by bringing on future academic leaders within the arts and humanities;
- **Strengthening interdisciplinarity** by ensuring that our funded doctoral students work as members of a large and diverse student cohort;
- **Creating and sustaining partnerships beyond academia** to ensure that our students acquire the skills and networks they need to flourish in a wide variety of careers.

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AHRC's programme of funding for PhD students is the cornerstone of our strategy for supporting arts and humanities research in the UK. It's only by investing whole-heartedly in today's doctoral students that we can ensure the cultural, economic and societal benefits that the next generation of arts and humanities researchers will bring. Today's political and cultural climate is as rich and diverse as it's ever been. And in this time of change, no one will be better placed to bring context, understanding and clarity to these issues than Arts and Humanities researchers. ”

Andrew Thompson Executive Chair of AHRC

The Next Generation of Researchers

Through our doctoral training programmes we provide a number of funding mechanisms and opportunities that train and support the next generation of arts and humanities researchers.

Supporting arts and humanities researchers pursuing a career in academia

Midlands3Cities (M3C) DTP Doctoral student Lynda Clark has gained major recognition for her creative writing, and has gone on to win prestigious fellowships since passing her PhD viva in April 2019. Lynda was the regional (Europe and Canada) winner of the 2018 Commonwealth Short Story prize, with her submission 'Ghillie's Mum' published in Granta in 2018. In January 2019, Lynda started a six-month M3C-funded Innovation Placement with the British Library, supporting its 'Emerging Formats' digital publications project by developing an archive of British interactive fiction.

After completing the placement she was appointed to a four-year Research and Development Postdoctoral Fellowship, hosted by the University of Dundee and funded jointly by the AHRC Creative Industries Clusters Programme and the Scottish Funding Council. Starting in July 2019, Lynda's Fellowship is part of the InGAME Innovation for Games and Media Enterprise project, which will establish a dedicated research and development centre for the Dundee video games cluster with a view to driving product, service and experience innovation across the industry.

Encouraging researchers to engage with the wider public

Professor Alexandra Harris's doctoral research combined her interests in English literature, which she read at undergraduate level, and the history of art, the subject of her AHRC-funded MA. This resulted in the publication of her first book – Romantic Moderns: Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper – which won the Guardian First Book Award, and a Somerset Maugham Award. Alexandra was also one of the first researchers to be successful in the AHRC/ BBC New Generations Thinkers Scheme, which built her ability to communicate her research to a public audience, and the confidence to pitch her research to producers, resulting in contributions to Nightwaves and Front Row.

Now Professor of English at the University of Birmingham, she feels that her doctorate gave her the freedom to think innovatively and openly.







Cutting-edge Research

AHRC's doctoral programmes support research that is both world-leading in its various fields gaining recognition through the academy and has real impact.

Making sport accessible to visually impaired children

With support from the Design Star Centre for Doctoral Training, Victor Jeganathan, Loughborough University, has developed Running Line, a tool that enables visually impaired (VI) young children to run short distances unaided. Working with visually impaired communities, schools and influential organisations, Victor's work has been used across the country to provide better access to sports. Engagement events have included school visits to demonstrate VI running; setting up a Royal National Institute of the Blind Running Club; and events at the Youth Sports Trust National School Games, which reached 3000 people on the day. His work has been featured by the BBC, and in 2018 Victor won the New Researcher Award at the European Congress of Adapted Physical Activity (EUCAPA) conference.

AHRC doctoral student receives prestigious research prizes

Jake Richards, University of Cambridge DTP, works on the legal status and treatment of 'liberated Africans' who were recaptured from slave ships by the British Navy and then made subject to judicial processes, illuminating how this group themselves effected, and were affected by, the ending of the slave trade. His presentation on 'Anti-slave-trade law, "Liberated Africans", and the state in the South Atlantic world, c. 1839 – 1852', received the 2017 D.C. Watt Prize for the best paper given by an early career scholar at the annual Transatlantic Studies Association Conference. Meanwhile, his paper 'Abolition as a Sovereign Project: the Auditoria Geral da Marinha, Legal Geography, and the Testimony of Slaves in Ending the Illegal Slave Trade to Brazil, 1850-1856', has been awarded the 2019 Morris L. Cohen Student Essay Prize by the Legal History and Rare Books Section of the American Association of Law Libraries. Jake is the first UK-based scholar to win this prize.

Economic and Social Impact

The benefits of AHRC's investment in doctoral research go well beyond individual students and UK universities.

Exploring the history of botanic medicines

Kim Walker, TECHNE doctoral student, is predominantly based at the Royal Botanic Gardens, working on their collections and archives of cinchona. Cinchona is one of the most important botanic medicines of the 17-19th centuries, as the only known anti-malarial in the West. Kim has managed to merge her science background with the humanities-based PhD in order to help inform the work of phylogeneticists and pharmacologists working on historic and modern research.

The unique nature of this AHRC doctoral award has not only allowed Kim to work across multiple organisations but allowed her to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. Kim has recently produced a book exploring the history of tonic water, covering the history of medicine and malaria, the plantations era all the way to the development of the cocktail. As artisan gin and tonic sales are increasing year on year, with hundreds of gin books available, a tonic book has filled a gap in the market.

Supporting silk weaving in Cambodia

Magali An Berthon's doctoral research explores the dynamics of political change and silk production in the history of Cambodia, particularly from the 1990s to the present day. As part of her research, Magali An conducted an action learning project with Krama Yuyu, a weaving workshop comprising 35 women in the Siem Reap Province of Cambodia.

Traditional weft ikat weaving is practised by only a handful of workshops in Cambodia and the project, part-funded by the Friends of Khmer Culture Foundation (FOKCI), was an opportunity for Krama Yuyu to reclaim this set of skills and offer it to potential clients. Based on the results of this trial project, the weavers are considering developing a new, more streamlined and flexible business model. In addition to economic impact, the project enabled the weavers to affirm the value of their work, and to establish a collaborative dynamic, supporting each other to learn the whole process of silk ikat production together from start to finish.

Creative and Cultural Impact

Our mechanisms for delivering doctoral research - through our Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs), Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDPs) and Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) – encourage collaboration across UK higher education institutions, creating greater potential for impact on the wider creative and cultural landscape.

Supporting the creative and cultural sector

The Heritage Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) participated in the European Commission's Voices of Culture sessions on 'Skills, Training and Knowledge Transfer for Traditional and Emerging Heritage Professionals'. In 2017, the CDT was one of 34 organisations involved in the dialogue meetings and in drawing together the subsequent report 'Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe' prospectus on "skills, training and knowledge transfer for traditional and emerging heritage professions", which was presented to the European Commission and the European Parliament Open Method of Coordination in

2017. The report, which the academic coordinator for the Heritage Consortium helped to compile, was selected as a showcase piece at the closing conference of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 in Vienna.

Following Heritage CDTs participation in the Voices of Culture sessions, they were invited to respond to the British Council's report on Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth, which informed a collaboration between the British Council and the Royal Society of Arts to develop and test a framework outlining how heritage can deliver inclusive and sustainable social and economic outcomes at a local level.

The Importance of Partnership

Our doctoral programmes are designed to drive new methods of partnership, delivery and collaboration, by uniquely bringing together consortia of UK universities. Professor Dee Heddton, Director of one AHRC's Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs), the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH), notes the impact that AHRC's doctoral funding opportunities are having on a national level.

“

One of the great things that the DTP has done is that it has brought us all together... This level of co-operation just did not exist before 2014. It is unprecedented, and a really remarkable outcome of the DTP model... [is that it] has allowed us to become a very strong advocate for the arts and humanities at a national level, because we can speak with one voice about the value of our research and skills, and we are co-ordinated. ”

Professor Dee Heddton







Collaborative Doctoral Awards

Collaborative Doctoral Awards aim to provide students with direct experience of working in organisations beyond the HE sector. The student works on a joint project between the academic and non-higher education institution, undertaking research of importance to the partner organisation and gaining an understanding of both environments. These projects open opportunities for employment in both sectors.

Utilising the skills learnt from Collaborative Doctoral Awards in challenging environments

In 2015, Dr Erica Harrison completed her CDA at the University of Bristol, partnering with Czech Radio to study the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile during the Second World War and their relationship with broadcasting. She now works for a company that carries out social and political research in 'challenging environments', specialising in Africa and the Middle East. "Our basic quality is that there is nowhere we don't work. We've done a lot of work in Iraq and Syria and Yemen. Whenever possible we travel to them because we work with a wide network of local partners in country.

We have to build up those relationships which means being there in person and we train the interviewers as, culturally, it needs to be local people asking the questions. We train them on how we want the questions to be asked and the different methodologies that need to be used."

For Erica, her doctoral study has made a major contribution to her career: "It's valued in my current job as people know that I can write. I can take a lot of information and compress it down into something comprehensible. I can take quite technical issues and present them to a generalist but highly invested audience."

“ You can't assume that people have any previous knowledge. I'm able to start from the basics and get people to buy into it. Those are skills that my employer values. ”

Dr Erica Harrison



Innovative Skills Training

Our doctoral training programmes include exciting and varied opportunities for individual doctoral students and whole cohorts of students to both develop skills beyond the specifics of their research subject and to build networks that extend beyond academia. These might include media or language training, experience of public engagement or placement opportunities with non-academic partner organisations.

Thinklab Initiative: Collaborative problem solving with non-HEI organisations

ThinkLab is a Cambridge AHRC DTP initiative, designed to help Cambridge doctoral students to connect with social, private and public organisations. Devised with input from senior leaders of the BBC, Arts Council England, and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the DTP has applied the model with a range of partners including The Reading Agency, the Royal

Society of Arts and the Fitzwilliam Museum. Students join a ThinkLab project for a term, working as a team on a live challenge alongside employees from a host organisation. In one recent ThinkLab project, doctoral researchers worked with the Fitzwilliam Museum on the 'Do (not) Touch' project, using 3-D modelling to explore tactile interaction with museum collections and its impact on visitor perceptions of the 'Do Not Touch' policy

Opportunities for AHRC-funded Students

Beyond doctoral training itself, AHRC has created additional opportunities for doctoral researchers to engage beyond the academic environment via internationally recognised initiatives with external partners. An example is AHRC's International Placement Scheme (IPS), which provides both doctoral and early career researchers with dedicated access to the internationally renowned collections, programmes and expertise held at eight world-leading institutions internationally.

AHRC International Placement Scheme

Dr Haili Ma, now Senior Lecturer in Chinese at the University of Cardiff, won a Fellowship through AHRC's International Placement Scheme (IPS) to the Shanghai Theatre Academy as an early career researcher. The three-month placement proved critical to her research, and to progressing her second book, *Chinese Performing Arts and the Creative Economy*. "Gaining working experience abroad definitely strengthens career development. The AHRC International Placement Scheme award has been an asset for me in broadening my research horizons".

IPS fellows often report an impressive number of networking and engagement opportunities that arise while on a placement, and Dr Ma is no exception: she has been invited to present her work at several Chinese institutions, been published in international journals, and maintained productive relationships with the Academy since her placement. Haili has benefitted from AHRC's motivation to continue collaboration between researchers in the UK and China, as she has been awarded both an AHRC UK-China Creative Economy Newton Grant and an AHRC UK-China Creative Cluster Development Grant.

Haili currently sits on the Wales-China Steering Committee, facilitating China-Wales arts and business collaborations at national level. She also works closely with the UNESCO commission, developing new discourse and practice on Chinese entrepreneur artists internationally. Through these continued collaborations, Haili and AHRC hope to continue to bring together institutions and researchers from China and the UK.

Collaborating with Edinburgh International Television Festival

A new collaboration between AHRC and the Edinburgh International Television Festival gives AHRC-funded doctoral students the opportunity not only to attend the Edinburgh International Television Festival but also to receive bespoke training and mentoring that will help them to develop strong relationships with TV industry professionals. Midlands3Cities doctoral student Ayesha Taylor-Camara benefitted from this opportunity as it aligned closely with her doctoral research, which explores how audience data is produced, collected and used by UK public service broadcasters and the technological and political-economic conditions that contribute to their data infrastructures.

“A PhD can be quite a lonely experience, so it was great spending time with like-minded people. It opened my mind to learning about the different areas I can go into, like podcasting.”

Ayesha continues "The sessions with commissioners were really helpful – they made efforts to tailor it towards PhD students and their research". Ayesha, who is now halfway through her doctoral studies, has secured a placement at the BBC as a Research Assistant, an opportunity that will be hugely beneficial to her doctoral studies and subsequent career opportunities. Ayesha revealed that her attendance at the festival had certainly helped to secure her placement at the BBC. She added: "It really worked for me when applying to the BBC. I was able to draw on my experiences at the TV Festival during my interview and throughout the assessment process".

Career paths of AHRC Alumni

Not all AHRC-funded doctoral students choose to pursue careers within academia once they have completed their doctoral studies. AHRC doctoral training programmes therefore ensure that all doctoral students are equipped with a wide range of skills that prepares them for a career outside academia.

Head of Pro Bono at Law Firm

Dr Paul Yates completed his PhD in 2002. He studied Musicology and the topic of his research was 'The Song Cycle in 19th Century France'. Directly after finishing his PhD he started a career as a solicitor at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, where he still works. "My job now is to run the firm's pro bono practice. In my own cases I act for victims of human trafficking in litigation against the people who have exploited them within the UK. I run a small team which helps to find and organise the most impactful pro bono opportunities for the 2,500-or-so lawyers globally who work at the firm".

Paul added: "As a music historian you need to understand the point of view of the different people whose accounts you are looking at... this skill is of course an essential part of becoming a good lawyer. You might have different witnesses with differing accounts of an event... or you're in a negotiation and you need to figure out where the different parties are coming from, what their 'red lines' are, what they really want from the transaction. It feels like exercising the same part of my mind."

Multi-award Winning Author

Julia Golding is a multi-award winning writer for children and young adults. She also writes under pseudonyms for young adult and adult readers. She completed her doctorate in 2000, studying English Literature at Oxford.

She worked as a policy advisor for Oxfam, using the general research skills that she gained during her doctoral study, but left in 2003 to pursue writing as a career. Her first novel was published in 2006, winning the Waterstone's Children's Book Prize and the Nestle Children's Book Prize. She continues to write for children, and has published over 30 books in genres ranging from historical adventure to fantasy. Over half a million books have been sold worldwide and have been translated into over 20 languages. Her novels deploy historical knowledge, and versatile styles of writing, which she attributes to her PhD.

Director of Scholarly and Public Programmes at Harvard University

In 2006, Anne-Marie Eze, currently Houghton Library's first Director of Scholarly and Public Programmes at Harvard University, was funded by AHRC to undertake a Collaborative Doctoral Award at the Courtauld Institute of Art and the British Library.

In her current role, she leads the library's scholarly communications and public programming initiatives, including exhibitions, publications, fellowships, lectures, symposia and tours. She is also Houghton's chief communication officer, overseeing the library's social media platforms and working with Harvard Library communications to promote increased engagement with and awareness of Houghton's acclaimed collection of rare books, manuscripts and archival holdings.

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The AHRC studentship added the chance to work at the British Library. In my field it is the pinnacle. It represented a way into the British Library, and to be able to work with a knowledgeable, generous team of colleagues where I learnt such a lot. I had a fantastic supervisor who I am still in contact with, and who became a mentor figure for me. It's an unparalleled experience in many ways when it comes to problem solving. Doing a PhD certainly gives you that skill.

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Anne-Marie Eze







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