



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

AHRC Annual Delivery Report 2009-10

June 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic research priorities 2009-10

The AHRC continued to address pressing national and international concerns through a range of activities including:

- encouraging creative approaches in the arts and humanities to be applied to the digital industries
- shaping public policy on threats to global security
- contributing to the conservation of the UK's cultural assets
- exploring key areas where arts and humanities research can contribute to the issue of climate change
- developing a programme of research designed to create vibrant, cohesive and sustainable communities.

Sustaining the research base

The AHRC realigned its postgraduate support to meet strategic aims by:

- equipping researchers with skills required in the knowledge economy
- providing support for responsive-mode research to complement strategic programmes, build collaborative research capacity and support partnerships.

Economic, social and cultural impact

The AHRC continued to promote the impact of arts and humanities research through a range of activities including:

- increasing awareness of Knowledge Transfer within the arts and humanities community
- training the next generation of researchers in stakeholder engagement and collaborative working with non-HEI partners, and in designing projects with maximum impact beyond the academic sphere
- presenting convincing evidence on the importance of arts and humanities research, the case for taxpayer support and the vital and unique role of the AHRC.

International

The AHRC enabled UK researchers to benefit from international collaboration and funding through its involvement in the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) Joint Research Programme.

Progress in management

A number of changes took place including:

- the appointment of a new AHRC Chief Executive, Professor Rick Rylance
- the successful transfer of HR and payroll services to the SSC Ltd
- the relocation of AHRC offices, on time and on budget, to the Polaris House offices on 22 June 2010
- AHRC staff numbers reducing from 115 to 69 once the transfer of services to the SSC Ltd and the relocation to Swindon have been fully implemented.

RECENT SUCCESSES

Strategic Research Priorities

In 2009-10 the AHRC continued to develop and support research addressing areas of pressing national and international concern. Highlights include:

- **Digital Economy:** A workshop was held in July 2009 with the EPSRC and the British Library. It focused on the interaction between research practices, the physical environment and Digital Economy, and resulted in three collaborative projects funded jointly by the AHRC and EPSRC. The AHRC also became a key funding partner in a major new research facility at MediaCityUK in Salford, which provides a unique opportunity to bring knowledge and expertise in the arts and creative sectors together with digital technologies.
- **Connected Communities:** Two initial cross-council workshops were held in June 2009 involving representatives from local government and academic researchers. Potential priority areas for the programme have been disseminated for consultation and for discussion by an expert advisory group. A summit of representatives from key Research Council investments relevant to Connected Communities is planned for June 2010.
- **Global Uncertainties, Religion and Society:** At events in September 2009 and January 2010, Global Uncertainties fellows on 'Ideas and Beliefs' shared their findings on how notions of security and insecurity develop in individuals, communities, organisations, nation states and international domains. Awards were also made under the third phase of the Religion and Society programme with applications encouraged in areas looking at the relationship between religion and law, politics and the state.
- **Living With Environmental Change:** A consultation workshop on 'Researching Environmental Change' was held to identify and explore the key areas where arts and humanities research is required. This led to a call announced in September 2009 for networking awards around four themes: histories of environmental change; representing environmental change; knowledge and value; material culture and sustainability.

The AHRC also supported research that enabled the UK to capitalise on its cultural assets:

- Interdisciplinary research grants and post-doctoral fellowships were awarded through the AHRC/EPSRC Science and Heritage strategic programme.

- The AHRC also carried out a review of its funding of research at the British Museum, looking at the benefits brought by the Independent Research Organisation (IRO) status awarded by the AHRC, and the value added to the museum by AHRC-funded collaborative research and postgraduate training.

The AHRC stimulated innovation and enabled the exchange of knowledge between academia and research users by supporting awards in its Knowledge Catalyst and Knowledge Transfer Fellowships schemes, as well as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships in collaboration with the Technology Strategy Board (TSB). Further work in partnership with the TSB included:

- co-sponsoring the TSB's second Collaborative R&D competition aimed at the Creative Industries
- helping to launch the TSB's Creative Industries Technology and Innovation Network (CITIN)
- leading a joint workshop in November 2009 bringing together AHRC strategic programme directors and researchers with broad spectrum of TSB lead technologists and KT experts.

Collaborative funding with the private sector was realised with the launch of the AHRC/British Telecom (BT) pilot Research Networking call on 'Digital Heritage'. An evaluation of the AHRC's previous co-sponsored KT scheme with the BBC was also carried out, with the outcomes of the joint funding disseminated to a wide audience.

Sustaining the Research Base

In 2009-10 the AHRC continued to sustain the research base through support for high-quality postgraduate students. Highlights include:

- **Block Grant Partnerships (BGPs):** The first round was delivered successfully, ensuring support for institutions with strong strategies for the support of arts and humanities postgraduate training. The accompanying AHRC studentship competition was also launched, aiming to invest in pockets of excellence and strategically important subject areas, complementing the large-scale BGP investments.
- **Skills for the Knowledge Economy:** There was a large increase in 2009 in the number of applications received for the Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs), a scheme which provides opportunities for PhD students to gain first hand experience of work outside an academic environment. The Language-Based Area Studies centres co-funded by the AHRC are also training postgraduates who will be able to

provide culturally-informed advice to policymakers in key foreign policy and immigration policy areas.

- **Roberts training agenda:** Direct funding of £850 per AHRC doctoral award-holder or research assistant was paid to institutions to provide generic skills training for the 2009-10 academic year.

The AHRC's ongoing support for responsive-mode research continues to complement and underpin strategic programmes, build collaborative research capacity, and support partnerships beyond academia. Applications were received under new open deadlines and assessed using a new decision-making structure. Applications to the new Fellowships scheme were also accepted, providing opportunities for early-career researchers.

Economic, Social and Cultural Impact

The AHRC continued to demonstrate the value and impact of arts and humanities research in 2009-10. *Leading the World* was published in 2009 presenting evidence on the importance of arts and humanities research, the case for taxpayer support and the vital and unique role of the AHRC. The influence of arts and humanities research in forming public policy was also encouraged through a number of policy fellowships supporting academics working within the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, the Strategic Advisory Board for Intellectual Property Policy and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

The AHRC also sought to embed a culture of Knowledge Transfer across its funding programmes. An event was held in May 2009 entitled 'Sharing Knowledge, Shaping Practice', and a number of visits were made over the year to increase awareness of KT within the arts and humanities community. A series of case studies was also published and disseminated demonstrating the co-production of knowledge between arts and humanities researchers and non-academic bodies.

International

In 2009-10 the AHRC continued its activities to foster international collaboration in arts and humanities research. Proposals were received in 2009 to the two programmes launched by the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) Joint Research Programme: 'Cultural Dynamics: Inheritance and Identity' and 'Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation'. Of the 19 projects funded, 18 include UK researchers and 11 are based in UK institutions.

PROGRESS IN MANAGEMENT

There were a number of new activities and developments in 2009-10, including:

- **New Chief Executive:** In June 2009 the AHRC appointed Professor Rick Rylance, previously the Head of the School of Arts, Languages and Literatures at the University of Exeter, as its new Chief Executive. He took up the four-year post in September 2009.
- **Advisory Board:** The initial meetings of the AHRC's new Advisory Board were held in 2009-10 with members discussing a number of issues including future research themes, public engagement, support for modern languages, and the plans for the next round of the BGP scheme.
- **Decision-making:** A report on the lessons learned from the project to embed the new decision-making structures was disseminated within the AHRC. Training sessions have been held with peer-review college members and a new nomination process is in place.
- **Retained structure:** With the ongoing transfer of services to the RCUK Shared Service Centre (SSC), the structure of the retained organisation was finalised in 2009-10.

The development of the RCUK Shared Service Centre (SSC), the relocation of the AHRC offices to Swindon and the AHRC's 'Value for Money' savings are detailed under the Efficiency Programme section.

PROGRESS TO DATE

All the targets and milestones set out in the 2009-10 Scorecard were met, including those described in the *Recent Successes* section, apart from following:

Amber status

- The student-led initiatives in the Beyond Text programme have commenced but the small grants awards will now start in Q1 of 2010-11 rather than Q4 of 2009-10.
- Applications for the LWEC networking call were received and considered in April 2010.
- The third phase of funding in the Religion and Society programme has started with the launch conference held in May 2010.
- Arrangements are being made for a 'summit' of representatives from key Research Council investments relevant to Connected Communities to be held in the summer of 2010 and also a more focused event on crime and security at a similar time.
- The AHRC is also currently exploring the opportunity for joint funding with ESRC for a scoping project on civility led by the Young Foundation. However, the preparatory activities have not yet led to commissioning.
- Some elements of the strategy developed from the 'Future Directions' consultation are being carried forward with initial talks and meetings. The focus of the strategy is to develop the AHRC's submission to the CSR over the summer.
- A process for reviewing potential KT activity outlined in new impact summaries needs to be developed but other activities are taking priority and this is now planned for next year.

EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME

The relocation of the AHRC offices to Swindon was planned over the course of 2009-10 and was delivered on time and on budget in June 2010. This will lead to reductions in rent and travel costs, shared resources with other Research Councils based in Swindon and a closer partnership with the SSC Ltd.

The successful transfer of HR and payroll services to the SSC Ltd, and a corresponding reduction in staff, took place during 2009-10 with work ongoing in the background to prepare for the eventual transfer of Finance in 2010-11.

The design of the AHRC's retained function was finalised in 2009-10 and staff were appointed to positions in the new structure. Work was undertaken in 2009-10 to identify the shared support services that the AHRC will take advantage of as a result of the office move to Swindon and the retained function was designed to maximise efficiency accordingly. AHRC staff numbers will reduce from 115 to 69 once the transfer of services to the SSC Ltd and the relocation to Swindon have been fully implemented.

Value for Money savings in 2009-10 totalled **£7.786m** against a target of **£6.32m**. Savings on administration costs were **£0.116m** (target £0.05m), reprioritisation of spend was **£6.869m** (target £6m) and co-funding of research was **£0.801m** (target £0.27m).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH

The RCUK Science in Society programme has been focused on addressing the public's attitude to, and engagement with, the sciences rather than the arts or humanities. However, the AHRC continues to be involved with this work and has been an advocate for greater awareness in the programme of the role of arts and humanities research in society. Recognition of this can be seen in the decision last year to rename the programme 'Public Engagement with Research'.

The AHRC organised an event in partnership with the National Coordination Centre for Public Engagement to promote public engagement in the arts and humanities, and has also launched a targeted call for Collaborative Research Training awards in this area. However, the AHRC does not have a dedicated programme of public engagement and, given the current challenging financial situation, this is unlikely to change in the near future.

Wider public engagement with, and public understanding of, arts and humanities research is achieved through the activities of the individual projects and researchers supported by the AHRC. Successes in this area from 2009-10 include:

- the screening of a primetime BBC drama, *Garrow's Law*, based on the records from an AHRC-funded digital archive, Old Bailey online
- a well-received National Gallery exhibition, expecting 10,000 visitors, of previously little known Danish painter Christen Købke resulting from the work of an AHRC-funded researcher
- cinematic release for a critically acclaimed film, winning the Guardian First Film Award for 2009, created from research funded by the AHRC.

The AHRC also supports collaborative research with cultural and creative institutions to bring the results of arts and humanities research to public audiences.

FUTURE TARGETS/MILESTONES

The current budgetary situation is uncertain. The following targets are therefore provisional at this stage.

- **Structure of Funding:** The AHRC will continue to review the structure of its funding to ensure an appropriate balance between postgraduate and research support, a strategic focus on centres of excellence, the realisation of maximum translational benefit, the sustainability of key skills and disciplines, and the development of partnerships, consortia and interdisciplinary activity. Next year, it will introduce a new strand of Commissioned Research, 'Follow-on' funding for translational research, and extend its Block Grant Partnerships in Postgraduate support (see below). It will introduce new thematic programmes and review the mechanisms for supporting research in larger institutions or consortiums of HEIs.
- **Translational Research:** The AHRC is reviewing its strategy in relation to translational/knowledge exchange activity. In future, translational research will be more strategically focussed (especially in relation to the creative industries); will aim to discover business needs and opportunities and structure engagements on that basis (rather than around the initiatives of researchers); be more directly and consistently linked to work with the TSB; develop a manageable number of sustainable partnerships; broker between HEIs and the business and the cultural sectors; and be more consistently integrated with activity across the Council (e.g. internationally).
- In terms of **Public Policy**, the AHRC will establish consistent and consolidated mechanisms for engaging with the development of public policy with an appropriate range of agencies in government and the devolved administrations.. The AHRC hopes to announce a co-funded Knowledge Exchange Programme with Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in 2010-11, and a joint AHRC/SFC policy forum on 'Translating Public Health Messages in Scotland' has been arranged. A series of policy seminars and workshops in Westminster and Whitehall are planned to facilitate interaction between arts and humanities research and public policy. More policy fellowship opportunities will be identified and the AHRC has agreed to collaborate with the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology to create fellowship opportunities for AHRC funded PhD students to work at POST for three months, producing briefings for Parliamentarians. Through Connected Communities (see below), the AHRC will engage with national and local government and third sector partners as well as other research councils.

- **Digital Economy:** The AHRC will continue to participate in the Digital Economy cross-council programme and contribute to its future shape. We will continue to support specific activities including:
 - Salford Media City
 - Designing Effective Research Spaces
 - Research in the Wild calls
 - collaborations with the British Library.

As part of this programme, a collaboration on a centre for copyright, intellectual property and business models in a digital age is being developed as a partnership between AHRC (lead), EPSRC, ESRC, IPO, NESTA, SABIP and TSB.

- **Global Uncertainties:** A website will be launched on 'Researching Radicalisation', developed as a part of the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme to enable access by policymakers and media to the latest research.
- **Landscape and Environment:** A conference will be held at Tate Britain on 25-26 June on the theme of art and environment as a part of the Landscape and Environment programme, and the first 'Researching Environmental Change' networking awards totalling £313k will start in 2010-11. Both activities are an AHRC contributions to the cross-council Living With Environmental Change programme.
- **Connected Communities:** The outcomes of a June summit, drawing together leaders of key AHRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC and NERC research initiatives relevant to the programme, will be considered by the expert advisory group and the next steps decided. An initial programme of knowledge exchange activities will be developed with the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG). Three topics have been agreed for a series of research-based policy briefings with CLG: community self-reliance, the third sector and conflict in communities.
- **Skills development:** The AHRC plans to increase the connection between its postgraduate support and strategic funding. This will include increasing support for doctoral students working in partnership with the creative and cultural industries through the Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme and issuing a targeted call for Collaborative Research Training in modern languages and public engagement.
- **Postgraduate support:** A new funding mechanism will replace the studentship competition in 2011 and 2012 alongside the main Block Grant Partnerships. It will establish a specialist BGP pathway to allow capacity building, particularly through strategic alliances, in subject areas not covered substantially by the existing BGP awards. A review of the Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme will look at lessons learned and make recommendations for future delivery of the scheme.

- **Impact:** Case studies will develop the evidence base for the value and impact of arts and humanities research. The AHRC will also continue to provide input to the development of impact assessment in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and assist with HEFCE REF workshops and pilots on the assessment of impact for research in arts and humanities disciplines.
- **International:** The AHRC will contribute to the vision and plans for the proposed European Joint Programme Initiative (JPI) on Cultural Heritage, and maintain a strategic lead in HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area). Relations with India will be a priority, including with the Indian Creative Industries. In the US, existing collaborations with, e.g., NSF, NEH and Library of Congress will be maintained and (funding permitting) developed. We will also explore opportunities in relation to the US creative industries.

UPDATE OF ECONOMIC IMPACT BASELINE

The AHRC Economic Impact Baseline was updated and submitted to BIS in May 2010.

Key facts and figures from the report include:

Arts and humanities researchers bring benefits to the UK economy

- 18 percent of UK firms cite the arts and humanities as important to innovation and technological activity.
- 82 percent of the enterprise partners surveyed in the AHRC's Knowledge Catalyst scheme report enhanced economic growth as a direct result of their project, along with a significant enhancement of the skills base in their organisation.
- Six of the top ten visitor attractions in 2008 are museums and galleries funded by the AHRC.
- The total economic effect of arts and humanities international students in the UK ranges between £2billion and £3.3billion.
- Arts and humanities research also contributes to urban and regional regeneration through collaborations with local and regional organisations.

Postgraduate careers also support the UK economy

- Between 20-30 percent of Doctoral and Research Preparation Masters and over 80 percent of Professional Preparation Masters awards cover creative subjects.
- We fund a growing number of Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs), rising from 41 in 2005 to 67 in 2009. Neil McGregor, Director of the British Museum: *the CDA scheme 'has been one of the most important of the Research Council successes to date, creating new links between universities and the wider community to help a wide range of organisations to carry out research vital for their work.'*
- The AHRC also supports five Language-Based Area Studies (LBAS) Centres in areas strategically critical to the UK. The Centres also have links with Government departments in the UK and overseas. They also respond to requests for help from businesses such as Shell International.

Arts and humanities researchers engage with key strategic challenges

- Nearly half of the 500 respondents to the AHRC policy survey have given oral or written briefings to Government ministers, advisors or civil servants; 40 percent sit on advisory boards or committees; and 37 percent are undertaking commissioned research.
- Five policy seminars were held by the AHRC in 2009-10, covering key strategic areas such as human rights, violent extremism and genetic discrimination.

They also help to improve quality of life in the UK

- Arts and humanities researchers help to address many key societal issues such as health and wellbeing, crime and public safety, and social cohesion.
- Media coverage of AHRC-funded projects has steadily increased from 133 articles in 2006 to 488 in 2009.
- Researchers also work with cultural institutions to bring innovative exhibitions, performances and outreach activities to public audiences.

The AHRC leads strategic international collaborations

- The AHRC plays a leading role in the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) initiative.
- In December 2009, a total of 18 of the 19 projects awarded funding by HERA included UK arts and humanities researchers.
- A total of 707 current research projects report interactions with partners outside the UK, including collaborations with strategically important areas such as India and China.

The full report can be read at:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/About/Policy/Pages/DeliveryPlan.aspx>

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

AHRC DEL Outturn 2009-10

Actual 2009-10 £000

RESOURCE DEL - NEAR CASH

Pay costs	4,166,754
Current expenditure on goods and services	3,297,420
Current grants (UK)	100,245,934
Grants from other bodies	-5,255,084
Pay related income	-159,771
Income for goods and services	-206,160

RESOURCE DEL - NON CASH

Cost of capital charges	159,012
Movement in provisions	1,371,000
Impairments - DEL	270,641
Depreciation on tangibles	56,409
Amortisation on intangibles	77,996

DEL CAPITAL

Capital Grants - UK	2,245,708
Additions – Land and buildings	409,610
Additions – Other assets	189,999
Profit/loss on disposal of other assets	-51

TOTAL DEL EXPENDITURE	106,869,417
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AHRC Expenditure by Themes and Mechanisms 2009-10

AHRC Research 2009-10	
Themed research	17,453,889
Other research (mechanisms)	38,716,093
TOTAL RESEARCH	56,169,981

Themed Research	
Archaeology Data Service	195,415
Beyond Text: Student-led Initiatives	1,640,927
CHEAD Initiative	3,000
Clore Duffield	48,026
Contribution to Research Information Network	10,000
Countering Terrorism Ideas Factory	29,910
DEDEFI Capital Grants	2,245,708
Designing for 21 st Century	47,128
Diasporas, Migration and Identities	807,361
Global Threats to Security Programme	341,098
ICT Programme E-Science Research Grants	583,090
Landscape and Environment	1,616,163
Language Based Area Studies	1,130,612
Living with Environmental Change Programme	25,000
Museums and Galleries Research Programme	1,376,211
Networking and Workshops	703,808
New Dynamics of Ageing	216,464
New Security Challenges	200,000
Oxford Radio Carbon Dating Service	35,000
Religion and Society Youth	1,247,173
Religion and Society	1,675,840
Research Centres	942,927
Science and Heritage	294,479
Synthetic Biology	11,725
International (50%)	662,385
KT (50%)	1,364,438
Total themed research	17,453,889