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# The Impact of AHRC Research 2010/11



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**Front cover images**

*Left: A glazed ceramic model produced by AHRC-funded researchers and Denby.  
Credit: Photographer: David Huson*

*2nd left: The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.  
Photographer: Peter Mackertich*

*Middle: The National Theatre's production of 'War Horse'.  
Photographer: Simon Annand*

*2nd from right: A busy railway station.  
Image courtesy of [©istockphoto.com/urbanecow](https://www.istockphoto.com/urbanecow)*

*Far right: 'Suburban Birmingham: Hands On' app.  
Photographer: Brigitte Winsor*

This is the first annual *Research Performance and Economic Impact* Report published by the AHRC. It covers performance over the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 and focuses on outcomes and impacts. It replaces the *Economic Impact Reporting Framework* and the *Economic Impact Baseline* reports.

The report contains quantitative and qualitative data on selected aspects of AHRC performance relevant to the Government's objectives for the UK research base. It includes a group of common metrics for all Research Councils as set out by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Metrics are included in the narrative report with a full list set out in an annex.

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# Key points

The AHRC makes an important contribution to world-class research and postgraduate training in the UK. Competitive, peer-reviewed programmes ensure that only the very best is funded. Collaborations and large-scale interdisciplinary projects expand the potential for arts and humanities research, and a culture of knowledge exchange generates new possibilities. The impacts of AHRC-funded research and postgraduate training stem from their quality and from their interactions with other sectors.

## **The majority of AHRC research funding is for responsive-mode, collaborative projects**

Collaboration is a fundamental aspect of many areas of AHRC-funded research. Almost 80% of active research projects on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 were for collaborations. Bringing researchers together, often with external partners, can pool and diversify knowledge. This creates the new perspectives that can address pressing and complex challenges.

Responsive-mode schemes ensure that competitive, high-quality research is supported widely as new problems appear. Around 70% of research funding goes to responsive-mode grants. A balanced portfolio also includes a series of themed initiatives, where issues of particular social and economic importance are addressed by drawing together a range of projects in the same area.

## **Training and skills development are significant areas for AHRC support**

A pool of talented people with the right skills is vital for research and innovation. Postgraduate students are prized for their advanced knowledge and capabilities. They help to sustain the research base, and can expand the role of knowledge-intensive jobs in the economy. The 730 new doctoral students appointed on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 will help form the next generation of researchers and highly-skilled professionals.

The AHRC funds the best research and training environments. Block Grant Partnerships (BGPs) ensure that there is long-term strategic planning for postgraduate support in the arts and humanities. The second phase of BGPs, starting in 2014, will also facilitate collaboration and optimise resources to maintain the best training.

Support for early career researchers provides a springboard for their careers. Roles as postdoctoral research assistants on research grants and a dedicated Fellowship scheme provide research and collaborative experience. This creates the highly-skilled people that sustain the research base.

## **The AHRC encourages participation in the Creative Economy**

The Creative Economy embraces the multiple sectors of the Creative Industries and cultural institutions. It provides economic growth,

while also fostering social wellbeing. Exports in this area are worth £16 billion a year, and it is the largest creative sector in Europe.

Arts and humanities researchers make important contributions to the Creative Economy. They develop new ideas, content and practices, and new cultural and commercial opportunities stem from their work. The AHRC provides support for this to happen. New 'Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy', for example, will develop strategic partnerships with creative businesses and cultural institutions. Partners will include the BBC, IBM, the V&A, Microsoft and numerous small and medium sized companies.

## **Innovation is bolstered by AHRC-funded research**

The AHRC contributes to innovation and growth. A focus on quality in its funding helps to maintain the world-class standing of arts and humanities research in the UK. This excellence creates a solid base for innovation. The highly-skilled workforce needed for the knowledge-intensive jobs of advanced economies is also supported through AHRC postgraduate funding.

## **Policy and social issues are addressed by AHRC-funded research**

Arts and humanities researchers play an important role in public policy. The AHRC facilitates those links through policy seminars, commissioned research projects and Public Policy Fellowships. There is, for example, a series of Fellowships and a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency project set up in collaboration with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This will result in a new approach for measuring the value of culture that can benefit policymakers, funders and practitioners.

Social issues are also addressed through AHRC-funded research. The Connected Communities programme, for example, is combining expertise from across the research base to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the social and economic challenges for communities. This cross-Council programme is led by the AHRC, and the contribution of arts and humanities researchers is essential for its success.

## **There are close links between arts and humanities research and the public**

Arts and humanities research, with its focus on human culture and creativity, is often closely involved with people's lives. Public engagement is an essential element of many of the 3,640 outputs recorded in AHRC final reports in 2010/11, including exhibitions and performances. Initiatives, such as the New Generation Thinkers programme with BBC Radio 3 which brought early-career researchers to public audiences, show how the AHRC helps to strengthen that engagement.

# Impact through Knowledge Exchange



The impacts of arts and humanities research are extensive. Over a quarter of all university-based researchers in the UK are in the arts and humanities, with more than 14,000 active researchers in over 50 disciplines.<sup>1</sup> Many of these academics are highly connected with the private, public and third sectors.<sup>2</sup> This range and scale of arts and humanities research is a source of strength in addressing a wide variety of critical issues.

The AHRC manages a significant amount of public money – £111 million in 2010/11 – and has a responsibility to ensure that this investment is of real benefit. It plays an important role in supporting interactions through team-based collaborations, through encouraging different disciplines and

<sup>1</sup> Figures derived from RAE, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Hughes, A., Kitson, M., Probert, J., Bullock, A. and Milner, I., *Hidden Connections: Knowledge exchange between the arts and humanities and the private, public and third sectors*, AHRC and CBR (2011)

Above: The National Theatre production of *War Horse* was developed over three years at the NT's R&D Studio and is now a Tony Award-winning hit in London and New York, seen by audiences of nearly 1.5 million. The Creative Economy – including cultural institutions, the creative industries and arts and humanities research – forms an important part of life in the UK.

Photographer: Simon Annand

sectors to come together, and by promoting a broader culture of knowledge exchange.

## Innovation

Innovation is the successful exploitation of new ideas. It is the result of a process of discovery and problem solving. To manage the uncertainties in research and innovation processes the AHRC organises its investment through a balanced portfolio of responsive and themed initiatives. In 2010/11, the split was 70/30 in favour of responsive mode funding.



**Above: A busy railway station. A new iPhone app can inform users of their surrounding heritage as they travel.**

*Image courtesy of ©istockphoto.com/urbanacow*

Responsive-mode schemes ensure that competitive, high-quality research can be supported widely as new problems appear. Themed programmes address issues identified as of particular social and economic importance, and can draw together a range of projects in the same area. For example, in 2010/11 the 'Religion and Society' programme set up a new radicalisation website which gave policymakers and others with an interest in fundamentalism access to the best academic research on the subject.<sup>3</sup> Before the website's formal launch, new material is being added in light of discussions with key prospective users, such as the civil service and police forces.

Innovations are an important element of AHRC-funded research.<sup>4</sup> The 'Game Catcher', for instance, is a new computer application that has adapted the Nintendo *Wii* to create a low-cost motion capture system.<sup>5</sup> This has allowed children to make 3D recordings of their playground games and to use them in their play. Bringing together traditional forms of play with modern electronic tools has created new opportunities for innovative games while also producing 3D recordings of movement for researchers to study.

<sup>3</sup> [www.radicalisationresearch.org](http://www.radicalisationresearch.org)

<sup>4</sup> Bakhshi, H, Schneider, P & Walker, C, *Arts and Humanities Research and Innovation*, AHRC and NESTA (2008)

<sup>5</sup> *Children's Playground Games and Songs in the New Media Age*, AHRC Beyond Text Large Research Grant, PI: Professor Andrew Burn, Institute of Education: <http://projects.beyondtext.ac.uk/playgroundgames/index.php>

An expert advisory panel of game industry representatives and specialists in children's oral culture assisted in the research process. Related digitised material from the Opie Collection of Children's Games and Songs at the British Library is now available online. An interactive website has made these resources available to children, parents, teachers and the wider public.<sup>6</sup> In its first six weeks, the website received almost 2,000 visits.

AHRC funding also led to a new iPhone app that unites objects, places and histories to inform users of their surrounding heritage as they travel.<sup>7</sup> The new ideas and technologies developed have been used by Illumina Digital to release products, such as a historical tour of Bath. Andre Chitty, MD of Illumina, sees the AHRC-funded network as "...*exactly the environment that is needed to encourage cross sectoral innovation. It has enabled Illumina to develop new concepts, products and services for the heritage sector as well as apply the lessons from the project to the needs of our commercial partners.*"

## Collaboration

Innovation is a shared activity that relies on networks and collaborations. Bringing researchers together, often with external partners, can pool and diversify knowledge. This creates the new perspectives that can address pressing and complex challenges. The majority of AHRC research awards are collaborative. Principal Investigators leading collaborative projects numbered 584 or 79% of awards that were active on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. Of those, 76 were supported through smaller, exploratory networking grants.

Collaboration is a fundamental aspect of many areas of AHRC-funded research. A multi-agency team, for example, researched and communicated the history of Birmingham's suburbs. The team consisted of researchers from the University of Birmingham and curators from Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, together with archivists and librarians from the city's Archives and Heritage Service and the university's Cadbury Research Library.<sup>8</sup>

A new approach to collaborative partnerships was pioneered by the project. Groups of embedded curators, archivists and librarians participated in the research, bringing their expertise while also exploring new ways of working. Findings and practices developed through the project have improved services at the partner institutions. The Archives and Heritage Service, for

<sup>6</sup> [www.bl.uk/playtimes](http://www.bl.uk/playtimes)

<sup>7</sup> *Locating Communications Heritage: engaging the mobile user*, AHRC & BT Pilot Research Networking Scheme, PI: Dr Jon Agar, UCL

<sup>8</sup> *Suburban Birmingham: spaces and places, 1880-1960*, AHRC Research Grant – Museums, Archives and Libraries, PI: Dr Richard Clay, University of Birmingham: [www.suburbanbirmingham.org.uk/](http://www.suburbanbirmingham.org.uk/)



Above: The 'Suburban Birmingham: Hands On' app in use. This offers new ways for members of the public to interact with objects and research findings. Photographer: Brigitte Winsor

instance, enhanced the quality of its cataloguing and its approach to collections. Public exhibitions on a significant part of the city's history were also developed, including at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery which redesigned its new £10 million Birmingham History Gallery to accommodate the project's findings.

## Knowledge Exchange

The AHRC supports Knowledge Exchange activities. Expenditure on dedicated schemes in this area was £7.2 million in 2010/11, a rise of 18% on the £6.1 million in 2009/10. This includes funding for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships through the TSB, where the AHRC is now the second largest Research Council sponsor of these awards with nine new projects in 2010/11.

The new Follow-on Funding Scheme was launched in October 2010. It aims to encourage creativity and innovation through knowledge exchange, public engagement and commercialisation, allowing researchers to embrace new opportunities that appear during or after their research. In 2010/11, 42 Follow-on Funding awards were made.

Follow-on Funding for the Suburban Birmingham project described above, for example, was used to develop a new digital application that allows visitors to use multi-touch and multi-user screens to manipulate and share images of objects.<sup>9</sup> This offers new ways of interacting with artefacts and enhances the visitor experience.

<sup>9</sup> *Suburban Birmingham: Hands On*, AHRC Follow-on Funding – Museums, Archives and Libraries, PI: Dr Richard Clay, University of Birmingham

The general public will have access to this novel technology at the Birmingham Central Library and it will move to the new £192 million Library of Birmingham in 2013.

## The Creative Economy

AHRC-funded researchers participate in the Creative Economy, which embraces the multiple sectors of the Creative Industries and cultural institutions. The Creative Economy promotes economic diversification, revenues, trade and innovation, while also fostering social wellbeing and community interaction.<sup>10</sup>

In the UK, the Creative Industries – only one part of the Creative Economy – accounted for 5.6% of Gross Value Added in 2008, and there were 2.3 million people employed in creative jobs in 2010.<sup>11</sup> Exports in this area are worth £16 billion a year.<sup>12</sup> It is the largest creative sector in Europe, and is seen as having the potential for high growth.<sup>13</sup> Higher Education produces the skills that feed the Creative Economy, with research forming a source of new ideas, practices and business models.<sup>14</sup>

The AHRC builds multiple links between arts and humanities research and the Creative Economy. The new Knowledge Exchange Hubs will form a central contribution in developing strategic partnerships with creative businesses and cultural institutions. Follow-on Funding, Collaborative Doctoral Awards and support for Independent Research Organisations make explicit connections to the Creative Economy. Strategic programmes, such as Beyond Text and Connected Communities, also encourage interactions in this area. The new 'Centre for Copyright and New Business Models for the Creative Economy', part of the cross-Council Digital Economy Programme, will be set up in 2012.

Responsive-mode projects also make direct contributions. An AHRC-funded research project at the University of the West of England (UWE), for example, produced a patented 3D printable ceramic.<sup>15</sup> Follow-on Funding allowed the team to work in partnership with Denby to test the patent as a design tool for the concept modelling

<sup>10</sup> UN, *The Creative Economy Report* (2010)

<sup>11</sup> DCMS, *Creative Industries Economic Estimates* (2010)

<sup>12</sup> HMT & BIS, *The path to strong, sustainable and balanced growth* (2010)

<sup>13</sup> CBI, *Creating growth: A blueprint for the creative industries* (2010)

<sup>14</sup> UUK, *Creating Prosperity: the role of higher education in driving the UK's creative economy* (2010)

<sup>15</sup> *The fabrication of three dimensional art and craft artefacts through virtual digital construction and output*, AHRC Research Grant, PI: Professor Stephen Hoskins, UWE: [www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/cfpr/research/3D/research\\_projects/fabricationof3d.html](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/cfpr/research/3D/research_projects/fabricationof3d.html)



Above: The first fired and glazed ceramic model produced by AHRC-funded researchers and Denby. Photographer: David Huson

of tableware.<sup>16</sup> The ability to print directly onto a ceramic that can be rapidly glazed and decorated opens up commercial potential through quicker manufacturing processes and new design options. Gary Hawley, Senior Designer at Denby, considers that “UWE with Denby can pool their combined skills to unlock a process that pushes the boundaries of what is currently possible”.

## Cultural Institutions

Cultural institutions – such as museums, galleries, theatres, music venues and heritage sites – are an integral part of the Creative Economy. They encourage tourism, promote social wellbeing, foster cultural diversity, and make an essential contribution to the vitality of the Creative Industries.<sup>17</sup> There are numerous interplays between cultural institutions and the Creative Industries.<sup>18</sup>

Arts and humanities research also has deep-seated connections with cultural institutions. AHRC funding for research, both collaboratively with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and directly to cultural institutions, enhances those connections. Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, praises the AHRC for its “constant call to recognise that academic research underpins much of the cultural, artistic and creative life of the United Kingdom.”

The AHRC’s support for Independent Research Organisations (IROs) – research-intensive cultural institutions such as the British Museum and the Tate – improves research and collaborative

<sup>16</sup> Solid free-form fabrication in fired ceramic as a design aid for concept modelling in the ceramic industry, AHRC Follow-on Funding, PI: Professor Stephen Hoskins, UWE: [www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/cfpr/research/3D/research\\_projects/solid\\_free\\_form.html](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/cfpr/research/3D/research_projects/solid_free_form.html)

<sup>17</sup> UN, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> The Work Foundation, *Staying Ahead: The economic performance of the UK’s Creative Industries* (2007)



Above: The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Cultural institutions, such as the ROH, are an integral part of the creative fabric of the UK. Photographer: Peter Mackertich

capacity. A recent AHRC Review found that IRO status both widened and deepened the work of the British Museum, including through the leverage of substantial increases in both internal and external research funding.<sup>19</sup> A more vibrant research and collaborative culture has developed at the museum because of AHRC support.

AHRC-funded research at IROs also leads to exhibitions on previously less-known subjects, creating new experiences for visitors. The AHRC Review of the British Museum found that over 70% of visitors to exhibitions based on AHRC-funded research came from outside London or overseas, with over 50% reporting that the exhibition was the primary reason for their visit. Over 80% had little or no prior knowledge of the subject, indicating that visitors are drawn to new research-based experiences. Seven of the top ten UK visitor attractions in 2010 were IROs, with a total of around 25.5 million visitors.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> AHRC, *Review of the British Museum as an Independent Research Organisation* (2011)

<sup>20</sup> Figures taken from the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions: [www.alva.org.uk/visitor\\_statistics/](http://www.alva.org.uk/visitor_statistics/)



Above: The AHRC/BBC Radio 3 New Generation Thinkers brought early-career researchers to public audiences. Top row left to right Corin Throsby, Philip Roscoe, Shahidha Bari, Laurence Scott, Alexandra Harris, Zoe Norridge. Bottom row left to right Jon Adams, Lucy Powell, David Petts, Rachel Hewitt. Image courtesy of ©BBC/Richard Cannon.

## Broader public engagement

Arts and humanities research, with its focus on human culture and creativity, is often closely involved with people's lives. Public engagement is an essential element of many of the 3,640 outputs recorded in AHRC final reports in 2010/11, including exhibitions and performances.<sup>21</sup> Initiatives such as the New Generation Thinkers programme with BBC Radio 3, which brought early-career researchers to public audiences, show how the AHRC helps to strengthen that engagement.

New Generation Thinkers aimed to bring new voices, fresh thinking and original ideas to broadcasting. The ten academics involved have appeared on *Night Waves*, BBC Radio 3's flagship arts programme, and are developing other opportunities with the BBC. Press coverage of the scheme reached the front page of *The Guardian*, as well as *The Daily Mail*, *The Observer* and BBC News online.

The AHRC also ran a series of broadcast media workshops for long-listed applicants who did not make the final ten. Over 320 arts and humanities researchers have benefitted from these workshops which were delivered by BBC journalists and producers. A new call for more New Generation Thinkers will be made by the AHRC and the BBC later in 2011.

## Interactions with policymakers

Arts and humanities researchers play an important role in public policy, and the AHRC works to facilitate those links. In 2010/11, the AHRC held nine policy seminars, funded two commissioned research projects and four Public Policy Fellowships. A Fellowship situated in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), for example, investigated how to measure the value of culture. This led to a further Fellowship and a new multi-disciplinary, multi-agency project to develop approaches that will benefit policymakers, funders, researchers and practitioners. The AHRC is well placed to lead on this type of policy issue as it can deliver independent research that crosses the boundaries between research, policy and practice.

Individual projects are also involved in policy issues. A research team at the University of Derby, for example, is looking at religion,

<sup>21</sup> Outputs data only available up to 28/2/11.



Above: A report for the Equality and Human Rights Commission provides new evidence about the nature and extent of religious discrimination in Britain. Image courtesy of EHRC

discrimination and equality.<sup>22</sup> The project team informed a new report for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).<sup>23</sup> Dr David Perfect, Research Manager at EHRC, considers that the report “provides new evidence about the nature and extent of religious discrimination in Britain. The Equality and Human Rights Commission will be using the report to increase its understanding of this important issue and to help guide its future work on religion or belief more generally.” The project is also more widely engaged with practitioners, government bodies, religious groups and lawyers.

## International links

Strengthening ties with international partners is a significant part of the AHRC’s work. The AHRC, for example, chairs the Knowledge Transfer Advisory Committee for the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) Joint Research Programme. It also led on a workshop for European funders on good practice in knowledge exchange. These developments are a new dimension in European research funding for the arts and humanities.

The leading role played by the UK is also highlighted by its prominence in HERA funding. Of the €16.5 million pooled from European and individual national funders for the Joint Research Programme, the UK has access to €15.5 million. UK-based arts and humanities researchers are included in 15 of the 16 transnational projects, and lead on 11 of them.

<sup>22</sup> *Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality in England and Wales: Theory, Policy and Practice (2000–2010)*, Research Grant, AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme. PI: Professor Paul Weller, University of Derby: [www.derby.ac.uk/religion-and-society](http://www.derby.ac.uk/religion-and-society)

<sup>23</sup> [www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/research/research\\_report\\_73\\_religious\\_discrimination.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/research_report_73_religious_discrimination.pdf)

# Impact through skilled people

A pool of talented people with the right skills is vital for innovation and creativity in all sectors of the UK economy.<sup>24</sup> Businesses that interact with the arts and humanities are also more likely to employ graduate and postgraduate labour compared with businesses that interact with other disciplines.<sup>25</sup> The UK benefits from the links between training in the arts and humanities and the skills needed for the Creative Economy.

## Postgraduate support

The advanced knowledge and capabilities of postgraduates are highly prized by all sectors of the economy.<sup>26</sup> High-quality students in the best research and training environments are supported by the AHRC. The four-year submission rate for AHRC-funded doctoral students – rising to 90% in 2010/11 – indicates the quality of the students and institutions involved.

The AHRC's Block Grant Partnerships (BGPs) ensure that there is long-term strategic planning for postgraduate support. The BGP with the University of Liverpool, for example, raised the significance of the arts and humanities in its institutional plans and secured an extra £500,000 in internal funding. The second phase of BGPs, starting in 2014, will also facilitate collaboration and optimise resources across HEIs to maintain the best training and support for postgraduate students.

The AHRC funded 730 new doctoral and 617 new Masters students on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010. These students will form the next generation of researchers and highly-skilled professionals. Destination of Leavers data shows that around 60% of AHRC doctoral students go on to work in Higher Education, with the rest spread over businesses, charities and other areas.

## Collaborative Doctoral Awards

Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs) give students employment-related skills from first-hand experience of work outside of an academic environment. They develop 'work wisdom' in real-world challenges.<sup>27</sup> They also stimulate innovation and create an appetite for knowledge-intensive jobs in the economy.<sup>28</sup> CDAs work in partnership with a range of sectors. Of the 275 awards made since 2007/08, IROs have participated in 24% of CDAs, with other important sectors being local/public authorities (23%), charities (21%) and industrial/commercial (15%).



Above: 'Moehammad Jen Jamain', by Thomas Baines, watercolour, Timor, 1856. The CDA research undertaken by Dr Lowri Jones included a focus on the Royal Geographical Society's substantial collections of artworks by Thomas Baines (1820-1875), expedition artist, who travelled extensively in southern Africa and Australasia.

Image courtesy of Royal Geographical Society with IBG

<sup>24</sup> DCMS, *New Talent for the New Economy* (2008)

<sup>25</sup> Hughes et al. op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> BIS, *One Step Beyond: Making the most of postgraduate education* (2010)

<sup>27</sup> CIHE, *Talent Fishing: What Businesses Want from Postgraduates* (2010)

<sup>28</sup> OECD, *Higher Education and Regions: Globally Competitive, Locally Engaged* (2007)



**Above: The Great Court at the British Museum. Involvement in the CDA scheme has helped to create a pool of highly-skilled, sector spanning professionals who understand both research and museum contexts.**  
Image courtesy of the British Museum

CDA students benefit from the combination of research and non-academic experience. Dr Lowri Jones, for example, who was a CDA student at Royal Holloway and the Royal Geographic Society, is now a Teaching Associate at the University of Nottingham.<sup>29</sup> Her CDA had initially led to a follow-on research project, for which she was appointed as a Research Assistant, and an exhibition on the role of local inhabitants in histories of exploration.<sup>30</sup> She gained valuable experience in disseminating research to wider public audiences and continues to collaborate with non-academic organisations in her current post.

CDAs also benefit partner organisations. At the British Museum, for example, they have given students research and museum-based

expertise that has opened up new career opportunities.<sup>31</sup> This has created a group of highly-skilled, sector-spanning professionals. Involvement in the CDA scheme has also encouraged the museum to develop a broader culture where collaborations have become normal practice.

### Special training opportunities

The Collaborative Research Training scheme encourages combined training provision across different HEIs. In 2010/11, five awards were made to consortia delivering specialist skills training in Modern Languages and eight to deliver training in Public Engagement. There were also 24 smaller-scale awards for student-led initiatives.

International opportunities are also available. The Library of Congress scholarship scheme allows doctoral students and postdoctoral research assistants to spend a short period of time working in the library's vast collections and to make new connections with other researchers working there. A similar scheme is supported with the National Institutes for the Humanities in Japan.

<sup>29</sup> *Hidden Histories of Exploration*, AHRC CDA, Dr Lowri Jones

<sup>30</sup> *Hidden Histories of Exploration: Exhibiting Geographical Collections*, AHRC Research Grant – Museums, Archives and Libraries, PI: Professor Felix Driver, Royal Holloway: <http://hiddenhistories.rgs.org>

<sup>31</sup> AHRC, (2011) op. cit.



Above: 'Military Land: Entrance Forbidden' at Camp de Bitche, north eastern France. Dr Chris Pearson's postdoctoral work focused on French and transnational militarised landscapes. *Photographer: Dr Chris Pearson.*

## Postdoctoral and early career support

The AHRC supports postdoctoral and early career researchers through its grants. Postdoctoral research assistants (PDRAs) are included in AHRC-funded projects. Working as part of a team gives PDRAs research and collaborative experience, and can act as a springboard for their careers. PDRAs are also important for sustaining the research base.

Dr Chris Pearson, for example, was appointed to an Assistant Professorship in French History at the University of Warwick following the completion of an AHRC-funded project on militarised landscapes.<sup>32</sup> His PDRA role, which allowed him to publish his doctoral research and to complete a second book, was an important stage in securing a permanent post. The opportunity to teach, to undertake media and professional development training, and to see the administrative side of Higher Education, improved his career prospects. Having access to the expertise of the rest of the research team was also invaluable.

Dr Kate Cooper, a PDRA on a project on Greek and Roman antiquities based at the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, enhanced her academic and curatorial skills.<sup>33</sup> Working with conservators, technicians and designers on aspects of object care and display, and her involvement in public engagement

<sup>32</sup> *Militarised Landscapes in Twentieth Century Britain, France and the United States*, AHRC Research Grant, PI: Professor Peter Coates, University of Bristol: [www.bris.ac.uk/history/militarylandscapes/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/history/militarylandscapes/)

<sup>33</sup> *Greece and Rome at the Fitzwilliam Museum*, AHRC Research Grant – Museums, Archives and Libraries, PI: Dr Lucilla Burn, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, [www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/ant/greeceandrome/projects/gr/ahrc.html](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/ant/greeceandrome/projects/gr/ahrc.html)



Above: Dr Kate Cooper in the Greek and Roman Gallery of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. As a PDRA, Dr Cooper gained a solid grounding in the work of the museum, while also increasing her academic experience. *Image courtesy of the Antiquities Department, Fitzwilliam Museum*

activities, has given her a solid grounding in the work of museums. Her role as part of this collaborative project between the Fitzwilliam and the Classics Faculty has also given her academic experience. She has, for example, given lectures to undergraduates and has set up and run a graduate seminar series about the ancient world in museums.

Early career researchers also have a dedicated Fellowship scheme, which requires HEIs to provide appropriate support and mentoring. In 2010/11, 36 Fellowship awards for early career researchers were made.

## People Exchanges

Movement between the research base and other sectors is encouraged at all career stages. This includes the CDA scheme described above. The Knowledge Catalyst scheme, where a recent graduate works in a non-academic organisation supported by an academic, also creates some of the same opportunities.

Matthew Fedak, for example, was a Knowledge Catalyst graduate who worked with Phoenix Arts in Leicester to create an online media centre.<sup>34</sup> He found that the business context imposed a new pressure to produce marketable outputs at justifiable costs. This commercial experience led to employment as a web developer and programmer by Activ, a sales and marketing company. A new version of the company's web design software developed by him is now being used by more than 800 websites around the world. He is now the senior developer at the company.

Knowledge Transfer Fellowships bring established researchers and non-academic partners together. A team from Birmingham City University, for example, worked with 27 radio and music organisations to co-produce new online business strategies, prototypes and media content.<sup>35</sup> While the technologies for these activities are often accessible, smaller and community-based organisations tend to have less appreciation of their use as creative tools. The researchers shared their knowledge and skills, and in the process developed new insights into the Creative Industries and opened up new routes for further interaction.

Many of the partner organisations realised lower costs, increased revenue, or located new markets. Craig Hamilton of Commercially Inviabile Records highlights the value of the Fellowship: *"They point us in the direction of new developments, help us to formulate strategy and – most importantly – instil the belief that it can be done."* Amran Ellahi, Creative Director of Aashiq-al-Rasul found it *"helpful to us as an independent music organisation. They helped us think through and implement innovative online ideas that help us grow our market, develop new products and strategies, and reduce the costs we used to incur in the old, traditional music business world"*.

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<sup>34</sup> *Phoenix Rising: Online New Media Centre Development*, AHRC Knowledge Catalyst

<sup>35</sup> *New Strategies for Radio and Music Organisations*, AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship, PI: Professor Tim Wall, Birmingham City University

# Sustaining world-class research

A significant amount of arts and humanities research in the UK is world class. It can be seen as the most successful part of the UK research base in terms of its quality. In the RAE 2008 it secured the highest percentage in the 4\* category, which denotes “*quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour*”.<sup>36</sup>

The AHRC makes an important contribution to world-class research in the UK. Competitive, peer-reviewed responsive and themed programmes ensure that only the very best is funded. Supporting collaborations and large-scale interdisciplinary projects expand the potential for arts and humanities research. Encouraging a culture of knowledge exchange generates new possibilities. The impacts of AHRC-funded research stem from its quality and from its interactions with other sectors.

RAE 2008 panel reports highlight the role of the AHRC in broadening the horizon of arts and humanities research. Panel N – covering Classics, Philosophy, Theology and History – recorded that “*the achievement of full research council status by the AHRC has had a major impact on research...*”<sup>37</sup> The importance of AHRC funding was also raised by Panel M, which covers Languages: “*Large project funding and consequent collaborative research have led to much excellent work...*”<sup>38</sup>

Arts and humanities researchers in the UK also have a good international standing. In the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) Joint Research Programme, for example, UK researchers are included in 15 of the 16 funded projects, and lead on 11 of them. This highlights a capacity and profile to manage large-scale transnational projects.

## A focus on quality

Quality is a primary requirement for AHRC funding. The Peer Review College is crucial in ensuring that this is maintained. There are over 1,350 College members who have had access to training and guidance in undertaking peer review. Of the 957 applications made to research schemes in 2010/11, 374 awards were made, producing a success rate of 39%.

## Sustaining a world-class research base

The AHRC’s Block Grant Partnerships (BGPs) ensure that quality and critical mass are key factors in postgraduate support. A focus on ensuring high-quality postgraduates in the best research and training environments helps to sustain the research base. In 2010/11, the new BGP Capacity-Building scheme allowed HEIs with limited AHRC postgraduate funding to form consortia and build collaborative critical mass in more emergent disciplines, particularly in the Creative and Performing Arts. This will help develop a strong base for research in developing as well as in more established areas.

## Themed research

High-quality research is also derived from themed initiatives. Through targeted calls, the AHRC is able to lead researchers towards new opportunities for interdisciplinarity and engagement with broader society. For example, the Connected Communities programme is combining expertise from across the research base to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the social and economic challenges for communities.

A number of activities in 2010/11 helped to develop the Connected Communities programme. This included a series of initial scoping studies, networking activities and research reviews. There was also a workshop on the topic of culture, communities and the Creative Economy which included over 50 researchers from a wide range of disciplines, plus practitioners and policymakers.

The AHRC also contributes to RCUK research themes, thereby supporting high-quality interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research in collaboration with other Research Councils.<sup>39</sup> It worked closely in developing the new strategy for the Digital Economy programme, particularly on its Communities and Culture priority area. It is also involved in the Living with Environmental Change, the Lifelong Health and Wellbeing, and Global Uncertainties programmes.

<sup>36</sup> AHRC, *Leading the world: The economic impact of UK arts and humanities research* (2009)

<sup>37</sup> RAE, *Panel N subject overview report* (2008)

<sup>38</sup> RAE, *Panel M subject overview report* (2008)

<sup>39</sup> The RCUK 2010/11 report covers cross-Council programmes and links with the TSB in more detail.

# Methodological developments and future challenges

The AHRC is committed to realising the impact of arts and humanities research. It works with its funded researchers, the broader arts and humanities research community, and related organisations and sectors. The aim is to open up more opportunities for impact and to understand the results of investments, interactions and activities.

## Thematic developments

To meet future challenges for the research base, the AHRC is implementing new thematic programmes which have emerged from consultations with arts and humanities researchers. The new programmes – *Digital Transformations*, *Translating Cultures*, *Care for the Future and Science in Culture* – will develop interdisciplinary research, new partnerships and engagement with other sectors. They will offer opportunities for the AHRC to increase the potential for impact in these important areas.

The move to supporting longer and larger awards to centres of excellence in HEIs, including through consortia, also presents new opportunities for impact. By developing collaborative partnerships with its larger awards, the AHRC can work more closely with its funded researchers to realise strategic aims.

'Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy', which will be set up in 2012, mark a new approach in the long-term funding of consortia. The Hubs will build new partnerships and entrepreneurial capacity through research-based knowledge exchange. They will encourage interactions between research and the Creative Economy which will generate social, economic and cultural benefits. Partners will include the BBC, IBM, Microsoft, FutureEverything, County Councils, the V&A and SAGE Gateshead. Small and medium sized companies, such as Stardotstar and Mudlark, are also involved.

## Robust performance management

A robust performance management framework will support these new developments. This will create a structure to underpin strategic priorities including impact. Reporting from large-scale ventures will enhance the evidence base, and will align with the AHRC's own reporting requirements to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Impact evidence will be systematically collected through the new web-based Research Outcomes System (ROS), a collaboration involving four Research Councils. ROS will present a common approach for gathering quantitative and qualitative data. This will help with strategy development, and will demonstrate the benefits of funded research.

## Working with HEFCE

The AHRC has expertise in the impact evaluation of arts and humanities research. It has worked with the Higher Education Funding

Council for England (HEFCE) on the Research Excellence Framework (REF). This has included the sharing of good practice, developing criteria, informing the development of impact measures for the arts and humanities, and nominating participants for REF workshops and other events. David Sweeney, Director of Research, Innovation and Skills at HEFCE, acknowledges the AHRC's role: *"Teasing out how we can best recognise the contribution of humanities disciplines to society have involved much joint work, underpinned by several excellent [AHRC] publications..."*

## Building an understanding of impact

The AHRC recognises that the impact of arts and humanities research is complex. It works with researchers, HEIs and related sectors to build awareness, methods and opportunities for engagement. 'Pathways to Impact' is a part of this approach. The new Knowledge Exchange Hubs, in particular, will further understanding and engagement with the Creative Economy.

Addressing gaps in the understanding of impact evaluation is an important element of the AHRC's work. This includes leading on a programme which is developing new approaches for valuing culture that meets the needs of policymakers, funders, practitioners and researchers. Two co-funded policy fellowships have been supported with DCMS and ESRC to explore the use of HM Treasury Green Book (Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government) methodologies for this purpose.<sup>40</sup>

Evidence on the contribution of the arts and humanities to society and the economy is produced through in-house AHRC projects and commissioned research. A project set up in partnership with the British Library is, for example, considering the public value of the library and its links to research. Commissioned research undertaken by the Centre for Business Research at the University of Cambridge, meanwhile, has looked at knowledge exchange between the arts and humanities and the private, public and third sectors.<sup>41</sup>

The AHRC's expertise in impact evaluation is also recognised more broadly in Europe. It has been asked by the HERA consortium to lead on the development of a series of impact case studies for the HERA Joint Research Programme. Guidance has also been given to colleagues in agencies across Europe on good practice in creating impact case studies for research projects.

<sup>40</sup> Outputs from the first fellowship included a report, plus a seminar and a workshop. [www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/measuring-the-value-culture-report.pdf](http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/measuring-the-value-culture-report.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Outputs from this project included a publication and a policy seminar. More information can be viewed at: [www.ahrc.ac.uk/News/Events/Pages/MakingConnections.aspx](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/News/Events/Pages/MakingConnections.aspx)

# Annex: research performance and economic impact metrics

The tables in this annex include a group of common metrics for all Research Councils as set out by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. They show results for 2007/08 to 2010/11.

## Section 1: Inputs

**Table 1.1: AHRC Total Funds Available**

	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11	
	£mil	%	£mil	%	£mil	%	£mil	%
Budget Allocation	117		115		105		109	
Leverage	0		12		5		2	
<i>from other Research Councils</i>	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
<i>from other sources*</i>	0	0	10	8	3	3	0	0
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>

\*The largest component of other sources is from HEFCE income for the Museums and Galleries Fund.

**Table 1.2: AHRC Total Expenditure**

	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11	
	£mil	%	£mil	%	£mil	%	£mil	%
Responsive Mode Grants	44	38	46	36	41	37	39	35
Themed Grants	9	8	9	7	9	8	15	14
Postgraduate Awards	41	35	41	32	41	37	43	29
Other components*	23	20	31	34	20	18	14	13
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>

\*The largest other components are the Museum and Galleries Fund and salaries.

**Table 1.3: Human Capital in AHRC Research Awards**

The table contains the number of current Principal Investigators (PI) on 31st March of each year.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
PIs on Collaborative projects	619	617	536	584
<i>of which Network awards</i>	39	59	68	76
Research Fellowships	196	125	106	151
<i>of which Early Career Fellowships</i>	0	0	0	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>735</b>

Grants with a status of 'Suspended' or 'Suspended pending activation' may be included as it was not possible to filter this information.

## Section 2: Outputs

**Table 2.1: AHRC Knowledge Generation**

The table contains output numbers taken from Final Reports.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11*
Refereed Publications	1,910	2,239	2,345	1,326
<i>of which Refereed Journal Articles</i>	657	690	733	444
Exhibition performance and other creative outputs	427	488	448	345
Electronic outputs	356	496	477	275
Non-refereed publications	276	314	331	162
Patents/licences	0	2	4	1
Conference activities	1,774	2,327	2,785	1,531
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,743</b>	<b>5,866</b>	<b>6,390</b>	<b>3,640</b>

\*Outputs data for 2010/11 is only available up to 28/2/11.

**Table 2.2: Human Capital in new AHRC Postgraduate Awards**

The table contains the number of new postgraduate students on 1st October for each year.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Doctoral	811	590	742	730
Masters	736*	496*	583*	617

\*Masters figures for years before 2010/11 are for total new students for each year.

**Table 2.3: AHRC Doctoral Finishing Rate**

The AHRC conducts an annual submission survey on its doctoral awards after four years.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Finishing Rate (%)	79	85	85	90

**Table 2.4: AHRC Knowledge Exchange Spend**

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Knowledge Exchange Spend (£mil)	3.3	5.3	6.1	7.2

**Table 2.5: Number of AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards**

The number of awards is shown by Partner Organisation Type.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11*
Independent Research Organisations*	5	15	20	25
Charity	15	13	15	15
Local/Public Authority	18	16	13	15
Industrial/Commercial	20	11	4	6
Research Institute	1	3	5	4
Professional Institution	1	1	4	4
Govt Department/Research Establishment	2	1	3	1
Hospital/NHS Trust	0	0	2	1
Other	12	0	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>74</b>

\*Independent Research Organisations (IRO) can apply directly for AHRC Research Grants, but can only apply for a Collaborative Doctoral Award as the non-academic partner. IROs currently consist of nationally-significant, research-intensive museums, galleries, libraries and archives.

## Section 3: Outcomes

**Table 3.1: First Destination of AHRC Doctoral Students**

Data is taken from the HESA DLHE survey.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
University	58%	57%	60%	59%
Wider Public Sector	7%	8%	4%	4%
Third Sector	-	-	6%	7%
Private Sector	7%	4%	9%	4%
Unknown or Other	21%	22%	15%	14%
Unemployed	8%	8%	8%	12%

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