



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

AHRC Postgraduate Studentships

Guide to Student Eligibility

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Introduction

This Guide sets out all eligibility criteria for AHRC studentships and it is the responsibility of the Research Organisation (RO) to ensure that all information provided to the AHRC is accurate and correct and in line with these eligibility criteria. Please note that any award made on the basis of incorrect or inaccurate information may be terminated.

Students must ensure they contact their RO at the earliest opportunity to discuss which competition they will be applying through and to seek advice on the RO's internal policies, procedures and deadlines. All queries regarding eligibility should be directed in the first instance to the RO to which the student wishes to apply.

Heads of Departments, prospective supervisors and potential students needing advice on eligibility should contact the Registrars Office in the first instance. Where there is doubt about an individual's eligibility for a AHRC studentship the Registrar should contact AHRC.

1. The AHRC offers studentships through four different competitions:
 - **Block Grant Partnerships (BGP)**
<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/BGP.aspx>
 - **Studentship Competition (SC)**
<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/StudentshipCompetition.aspx>
 - **Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA)**
<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/CollaborativeDoctoralAwards.aspx>
 - Research grants with **Project Studentships (PS)** attached
<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/RG-StandardRoute.aspx>
2. Within these competitions the AHRC operates three separate schemes:
 - **Doctoral Awards**
 - **Research Preparation Master's (RPM)**
 - **Professional Preparation Master's (PPM)**
3. Studentship awards are available for all three schemes through the SC and BGP competitions. CDA and PS only provide opportunities for Doctoral study.
4. **The AHRC does not accept applications or nominations for any of its competitions directly from students,** they must apply through the Research Organisation (RO) at which they are intending to study.
5. Every student, their course of study and the RO at which they are studying must meet the eligibility criteria set out in this guide, and the competition specific eligibility criteria set out in the relevant competition guide or the guide to student recruitment and nomination.

6. If a student is a member of staff employed at the RO at which they wish to study, and they hold a full-time or part-time academic or academic related salaried position (eg lecturer, researcher, fellow) they are not eligible to apply for an AHRC studentship at that RO.
7. The AHRC funds the Master's and doctoral elements of postgraduate study as stand-alone awards, on either a 1+3 or a 2+2 model. It will not fund a student at the outset of their Master's award for Master's and doctoral study combined. A student who has received AHRC funding at Master's level is obliged to undergo a second competitive recruitment process in order to be considered for a doctoral award. The aim of this approach is to ensure we maximise the funding opportunities available to all candidates at each stage of their postgraduate study. There are also opportunities for award holders to apply for extended funding under certain circumstances – further details of this are available in Section 3 of this Guide..
8. For details about what an AHRC studentship will provide, key terms and conditions of the award and how the award will be administered, please refer to the Council's *Guide for Postgraduate Award Holder* which is available to download from our web site and is updated on an annual basis <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/StudentshipCompetition.aspx>

Section 1 - Academic Eligibility

9. To be eligible for an AHRC postgraduate studentship, a student must meet certain academic criteria.
 - They must be studying at a **Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the UK** that is recognised and funded by one of the four UK higher education funding councils, or at an RO whose postgraduate courses are validated by a recognised HEI. A 'recognised' HEI is one that is able to award its own degrees.
 - Before an application is made or nomination submitted, the student must have been **accepted** by an RO to undertake the programme of postgraduate study for which they are seeking funding.
 - At the end of the AHRC studentship the student must be in a position to be awarded a **publicly-recognised postgraduate degree**.

Academic qualifications required for all studentships

10. A student should have gained an undergraduate degree (usually an Honours degree, such as a BA, BMus, BSc, LLB or equivalent) from a recognised RO, or be an undergraduate expecting to graduate before **31 July in the year in which the studentship is being taken up**. Other qualifications may be considered only exceptionally.
11. If the student is nominated or applies before 31 July and subsequently fails to gain an undergraduate degree, the proposal or nomination must be withdrawn.
12. Students without an undergraduate degree may be considered for an AHRC studentship only if they are able to demonstrate substantial equivalent and relevant experience that has prepared them to undertake their proposed course of study.

Additional academic qualifications required for doctoral studentships

13. In addition, those applying for a doctoral studentship should normally have, or be studying for, a Master's degree or similar postgraduate qualification.
14. A student must have met all the requirements for a Master's qualification (or equivalent) prior to the start date of their AHRC doctoral studentship (ie 1st October or 1st January). If this is not the case (or the Masters qualification is not awarded), the student will not meet the requirements of the scheme and the award will be terminated.

If a prospective doctoral student does not have a Master's qualification

15. If a student does not have experience of formal postgraduate study, they may be eligible for a studentship **only** if they can demonstrate evidence of sustained experience beyond undergraduate degree level that is specifically relevant to their proposed research topic, and could be considered equivalent to Master's study. A student and their RO will need to be able to justify why this experience qualifies them **exceptionally** as prepared for doctoral research without prior formal postgraduate training. On their own, the following are not considered as 'exceptional' in terms of qualifying a student for doctoral study:

- An undergraduate MA from Oxford or Cambridge
- An undergraduate MA from a Scottish University
- A four-year undergraduate degree
- The completion of a dissertation as part of an undergraduate degree.

16. If a student does not have a formal Master's qualification but has already commenced doctoral study, it should not be assumed that this is considered as adequate preparation for doctoral study. The RO must have evidence as to how the training and development the student has received is equivalent to that obtained through a Master's course and, therefore, prepares them to continue to doctoral study.

Eligibility to apply if a degree is from an RO outside the UK

17. If a student has gained, or is studying for, an undergraduate and/or Master's-level degree at an RO outside the UK **that is equivalent to a relevant UK degree**, then they are eligible for AHRC funding. The AHRC uses the National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the UK (UK NARIC) to ascertain the equivalence of an overseas degree to a UK degree.

ROs **must** use this service to make an assessment of the academic qualifications and their relationship to UK degree qualifications, further information can be found on the NARIC website www.naric.org.uk. Students should submit a copy of their degree certificates (if already completed) along with transcripts of their grades to the RO to enable the RO to make their assessment.

Section 2 – Residency Eligibility

18. There are two types of studentship awards:

- A full studentship award – this covers the cost of approved tuition fees and provides a maintenance grant.
- A fees-only studentship award – this covers the cost of approved tuition fees, but no maintenance grant is provided.

19. In order to be eligible for one of these studentship awards, a student must meet certain conditions relating to residence. This section describes these eligibility criteria. In submitting a studentship proposal or nomination the RO are confirming that they have checked the eligibility of the student. AHRC reserves the right to exclude students whom it considers to be ineligible and the final decision on a student's eligibility rests with AHRC.

20. Please note that the status of the award (e.g. full or fees-only) is determined at the start of the award and cannot be changed once an award is made. For example a student cannot 'upgrade' from a fees-only to a full award once their award has been made.

21. Students are expected to remain resident in the UK, and close to the RO at which they are registered throughout the period of their award (unless registered as a Masters distance learning student, however they must still reside in the UK). The only exceptions to these requirements are to cover periods of fieldwork or study visits that are an essential part of their study, attendance at conferences and for CDA studentships, whilst working with a collaborating organisation.

22. The RO will be responsible for determining the residency status, based on the information provided by the student, and in accordance with the rules followed by the Research Councils. The university are confirming that they have checked the eligibility of the student, when submitting the students details via Je-S. AHRC reserves the right to contact an RO for additional information on the residency status of a student if it considers residency has not been determined in accordance with these rules or to exclude nominated students whom it considers to be ineligible and the final decision on a student's eligibility rests with AHRC.

Residence

23. The legal basis for defining residence eligibility for postgraduate training awards is set down in the *Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations 1997*^[1]. The guidance below is based on the *Regulations* and on guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)^{[2],[3]}. Candidates for awards

^[1] *The education (Fees and Award) regulations 1997*. Statutory Instrument 1997 No. 1972.

^[2] *Guidance on Fees. The Education (Fees & Awards) Regulations 1997*. Department for Education and Employment 1998. ISBN 0 85522 771 0.

must have a relevant connection with the United Kingdom. A relevant connection may be established if, at the start of the course:

- The student has been ordinarily resident in the UK throughout the 3-year period preceding the date of application for an award, **and**
 - Has not been resident in the UK, during any part of that 3-year period wholly or mainly for the purposes of full time education, **and**
 - Has settled status in the UK within the meaning of the Immigration Act 1971 (i.e. is not subject to any restriction on the period for which he/she may stay).
24. A relevant connection may be established for an **EU student** if the student has been ordinarily resident in the UK throughout the 3-year period preceding the start of the course (including for full-time education).
25. British citizens are not subject to immigration control but only those other nationals who have been granted written permission to stay in the UK permanently are settled.

Temporary absence

26. A UK citizen may have spent an extended period living outside the UK, either for study or employment.
27. Most students in these circumstances will be able to show that they have maintained a relevant connection with their home country and therefore claim that the absence was temporary. "Temporary" does not depend solely on the length of the absence.
28. For the purposes of eligibility, a period of ordinary residence will not be treated as being interrupted by an absence which is caused by:
- The temporary absence abroad, by reasons of training or employment, of the candidate, the candidate's spouse or parents, or
 - The temporary full time education abroad of the candidate or spouse.
29. An expatriate, or the child of an expatriate, who may have been born in the UK or abroad, and appears to have returned to the UK for full time education, is required to establish temporary absence. In order to be eligible, it must be shown that:
- The absence abroad was involuntary, and attempts were made to remedy the breach with the UK at the earliest opportunity
 - There was no individual intention to sever links with the UK, and
 - Links have been maintained or re-established through visits, vacation work and subsequent re-settlement in the UK.
30. It should be noted that anyone who is resident in a country is normally subject to the residence and tax conditions of that country. A resident may or may not acquire other rights by virtue of living there, but birth or long-term residence does not automatically confer similar rights to citizens of that

^[3] *Higher Education Student Support in England and Wales in 2001/02: Chapter 3 – Assessing Eligibility.*

country. If a student has opted for full citizenship of a country other than the UK, then it should be assumed that the candidate will be ineligible.

Indefinite Leave to Remain

31. Students who have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILTR) by the Home Office have been given the right to reside in the UK, and thus have settled status. ILTR is usually given to those who have already spent a period in the UK, and are looking to take up British Citizenship. A student who holds ILTR must nevertheless establish a relevant connection as set out in the introduction above.

Refugees, Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave

32. A student who has been granted full refugee status by the Home Office, or is the child or spouse of a refugee, has settled status and is eligible on residence grounds, provided that he/she has not ceased to be resident since being granted asylum or refugee status. Such students must provide documentary evidence of their status, usually in the form of a letter from the Immigration and Nationality Department of the Home Office. Refugees do not have to meet the requirement of three years' residence.
33. Students who are 'asylum seekers' are required to demonstrate settled status to be eligible.
34. Students who have not been recognised by the Home Office as meeting the terms of the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees may be granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary leave. The granting of Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave circumstances make it impossible for him/her to return home at that time. Thus, the holder will normally be allowed to stay in the UK for three years. After this the award will be actively reviewed. Also, he/she is entitled to work in the UK and claim unemployment benefit and, after a certain period of residence, may be able to apply for ILTR, and subsequently British Citizenship.
35. Students who have been granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary leave do not have the same entitlements as refugees. They will, however, be eligible on residence grounds if they have spent the previous three years in the UK, not wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full time education.

Visas, Work Permits etc

36. Students who are resident in the UK on a student visa, work permit or dependant visa have restrictions on the time they may stay in the UK and cannot demonstrate a relevant connection or settled status. They will not therefore be eligible on residence grounds.

Fees-only Awards

37. Students from EU countries other than the UK are generally eligible (subject to their eligibility on grounds of academic qualifications) for awards restricted to the payment of tuition fees only and no maintenance award. In order to be eligible for a fees-only award, a student must be ordinarily resident in a

member state of the EU, in the same way as UK students must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

Currently, the member states of the Economic Union are as follows: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark ^[4], Finland, France ^[5], Germany ^[6], Greece, The Irish Republic (Eire), Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands ^[7], Portugal ^[8], Romania, Spain ^[9], Sweden, Cyprus, The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, The Slovak Republic, and Slovenia.

38. Gibraltar is part of the EU, and students from Gibraltar are to be treated as other EU nationals.
39. The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not part of the EU (see below). The UK Dependent Territories are also not part of the EU. The independent states of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and The Vatican are not part of the European Union.
40. The implementation of the Switzerland Agreement means that permanent residence in Switzerland is no longer a bar to EU nationals being classed as "EU Students". Swiss nationals do not qualify to be considered as EU students.

Migrant workers

41. Articles 7 (2) and Article 12 of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1612/68 allow for candidates who have established a relevant connection with a member state of the EU to be eligible for a full award to include maintenance, as 'migrant workers', in that member state. A migrant worker can be defined as an EU citizen that is employed in a member state of the EU who should be treated as a national of that member state. Similarly, a child or spouse of a migrant worker is also eligible to be treated in the same way..
42. The following conditions must be met:
 - The employment must be full-time and of significant duration. Therefore, if they are engaged in part-time or short-term casual employment, or have been effectively unemployed, they cannot be considered to hold migrant worker status. Additionally, the employment should normally be expected to be relevant to their previous or future course of study, although employment of a 'professional' nature may be considered on its merits
 - The employment must not be ancillary, that is, taken up with a view towards engaging in subsequent studies, or subject to their being accepted for the

^[4] **Greenland** and the **Faroe Islands** are not part of the EU

^[5] The French Overseas Departments (DOMs) of **Guadeloupe**, **Martinique**, **French Guyana**, and **Reunion** are part of Metropolitan France, and the treaties apply. However, French Overseas Territories (TOMs) e.g. **French Polynesia**, are not part of the EU.

^[6] **Heligoland**, although a tax free port, is part of the EU.

^[7] The **Netherlands Antilles** are not part of the EU.

^[8] **Madeira** and **The Azores** are part of the EU under special terms. **Macao** is not part of the EU.

^[9] The **Balearic Islands**, the **Canary Islands**, **Ceuta** and **Melilla** are all part of the EU.

training for which they have applied. An example of this would be if they have been employed as a Research Assistant in a Research Organisation department where a future award is to be held

- If they are a child of migrant workers, they must show that their residence is as a consequence of their parent's past or present employment. A child who has not been resident in the UK during the parent's employment, or departed with the parent at the cessation of that employment, will not be eligible to claim for migrant worker status.

Migrant workers from the European Economic Area (EEA) States

43. If they are a citizen of an EEA Member State, i.e. Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway, and they meet the migrant worker requirements set out above, they will be eligible for a full studentship award. However, as these countries are not member states of the EU, if they are a citizen of these countries and do not meet the migrant worker requirements they will not then be eligible for a fees-only studentship award.

Holders of time-limited visas and work permits

44. If they are resident in the UK on a student visa, work permit or dependent visa have restrictions on the time they may stay in the UK, and if they cannot demonstrate a relevant connection or settled status, they are not eligible for an award.

Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

45. A student who is ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland is eligible to receive a full studentship award. Northern Ireland students can also apply for funding support from the Department of Education and Learning (DELNI).
46. A student who is ordinarily resident in the Channel Islands is eligible to receive a full studentship award as the Channel Islands Education Authorities no longer provide funding for postgraduate studies.
47. A student who is ordinarily resident in the Isle of Man is not eligible for an award and they should approach the Island Education Authorities for information about postgraduate funding. Also if they are ordinarily resident in the Isle of Man, they will not have established eligibility for an award through any period of residence in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland during which they were in full-time education.

Section 3 - Scheme Eligibility

48. There are three schemes to enable students to undertake postgraduate study at an RO in the UK:

- **The Doctoral Awards Scheme (DA)**
- **The Research Preparation Master's Scheme (RPM)**
- **The Professional Preparation Master's Scheme (PPM)**

49. All schemes are intended to provide support for students of the highest quality and potential, to pursue high-quality courses of postgraduate study across all areas of the arts and humanities.

50. Students are expected to start their course on 1st October of the year in which the award is made. Exceptionally students can start on the 1st January. CDAs may be able to negotiate a different start date and Project Studentships attached to a Research Grant award can start at any time provided the full period of the award remains within the Research Grant award dates.

51. Please note that the AHRC will not provide retrospective funding under any of its postgraduate schemes. If a student has already undertaken any study prior to the academic year for which the funding is provided they cannot apply to the AHRC for funding to cover this period or extend their funding. The funding requested from AHRC must be pro-rated to take account of study already undertaken.

The Doctoral Awards Scheme

52. This provides support for students undertaking doctoral study. Students can initially be registered as a probationary student (PRS) or on MPhil status, but they must upgrade to full doctoral status by the start of the final year of their studentship.

53. Students receiving doctoral funding are expected to have completed a formal Master's-level qualification by the time their studentship commences. Please also see section 1 of this guide.

54. The AHRC will only provide support for students who are fully registered and will not provide funding for students who are in their 'writing up' year. ROs must ensure that studentships are not used for this purpose. If this is discovered to be the case, the AHRC reserves the right to terminate the studentship and reclaim any monies paid.

Duration of study supported

55. If a student has undertaken a 1 year masters a Full-time studentship awards for doctoral study normally last for a maximum of three years. Part-time studentships for doctoral study normally last for a maximum of five years. If a student has undertaken a 2 year masters at the same institution a full time doctoral award would normally last 2 years (insert part time pro-rata) see introduction for further details.

56. There is a minimum period of funding for doctoral studentships, which is one year for students studying full-time and 20 months for those studying part-time.
57. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to transfer between full-time and part-time study and vice-versa during the course of an award, but only one transfer of status will be permitted.
58. In specific cases under a BGP and in the SC, doctoral students may apply for extended funding. The extended time is intended for students whose research cannot be undertaken in full without the acquisition of new skills or knowledge that cannot be gained through a research preparation Master's course and, without which, the doctoral research would be incomplete. Extended doctoral funding is not available under the PS and CDA competitions.
59. This means that if a student has undertaken a one year Master's course (or two years part-time), they can apply for a four year doctoral award (or seven years part-time). Students must apply for an extended doctoral award if they wish to undertake a 4 year doctorate regardless of whether they are moving ROs between their Masters and doctoral study. If they have undertaken a two year Master's course (or four years part-time), they should apply for extended doctoral funding if they then intend to undertake a three year doctoral award (or five years part-time).
60. To be eligible for the extended funding, a student's research must meet one or more of the following criteria:
- the research cannot be undertaken in full without the acquisition of specific language skills
 - the research cannot be undertaken in full without learning specific new, high-level methodological skills, for example, complex quantitative skills
 - the research cannot be undertaken in full without the development of very significant and demanding new discipline-specific skill, for example, palaeographical, papyrological or epigraphical skills, or where a high degree of collaboration with other disciplines necessitates a significant period of additional time to develop the requisite knowledge of other areas
 - the research cannot be undertaken in full without fieldwork being undertaken which presents significant challenges, for example, of a methodological or practical nature.
61. The acquisition of such skills or knowledge must be integral to the doctoral study as a whole. Extended funding will not be considered appropriate where additional time is requested for writing-up, or where the acquisition of relevant skills or knowledge could reasonably have been provided through training as part of a Master's course, or could be provided as part of a standard three-year full-time or five-year part-time doctoral programme.
62. The request for an extended award can only be made at the proposal or nomination stage. There will be no scope to consider requests for extended study once the award has commenced.

63. The option to apply for extended funding is only available to students who have not already commenced their doctoral study.

If a student has already commenced doctoral study

64. A student may still be eligible under a BGP or the SC for studentship funding from the AHRC if they have already commenced doctoral study, provided they will be studying for at least one more year full time or 20 months part time (excluding the writing up period). A student who has already commenced their study on a part-time basis, can be supported by the AHRC to continue their studies full-time. Please note that under the CDA and PS competitions, the AHRC only funds students from the commencement of their studies and does not support students who started their doctoral study before the collaboration or Research Grant was awarded funding.

65. In determining the length of a studentship to be offered, the period must be reduced to take account of any time a student has already spent on doctoral study and funding will only be offered for the period required to complete their studies as a fully registered doctoral student. To determine the period of doctoral study remaining if a student is transferring from part-time to full-time study, the calculation that one year full-time is equivalent to twenty months part-time must be used.

If a student has already undertaken doctoral study

66. If, by the start date of a studentship, a student will have already gained or completed the requirements for a doctoral degree in any subject, however funded, they are not eligible to apply for, or be nominated for, a doctoral studentship under any competition.

Upgrades if a student is currently undertaking an MPhil

67. If a student has been funded by the AHRC to undertake a Master's degree, they **may not** upgrade to doctoral study, but must gain a qualification at the end of their Master's award. They will then be eligible to apply, or be nominated for, doctoral funding.

68. If a student is supported by the AHRC to undertake a Master's course, it is not permissible to treat the Master's work as the first year of doctoral study. If this appears to be the case then any doctoral funding will be reduced accordingly.

Submission deadlines

69. As a full-time doctoral award holder, students are expected to submit their thesis within the period of their award, or at most four years after the start of their award. If a student has received four years' support, they will still be expected to submit their thesis within four years from the start of their award.

If the student is a part-time award holder, they are expected to submit their thesis within the period of their award or at most seven years after the start of their award. If the student has received seven years' support, they are still expected to submit their thesis within seven years from the start of their award.

Ineligible ROs

70. Certain departments or ROs are ineligible to hold **doctoral** awards on behalf of students in 2009 because of their low doctoral submission rates in past years. This list will be published on the AHRC website in early 2010.

AHRC's definition of a doctoral thesis

71. Students are expected to produce a thesis, which we define as the work submitted for the degree of PhD or DPhil. It should be understood to include practice-based doctoral research as well as text-based. We expect the thesis to be a piece of work that:

- Exhibits substantial evidence of original scholarship and contains material that can be prepared for publication or exhibition.
- Can be produced by a capable, well-qualified and diligent student, properly supervised and supported, within the period of the award.

72. Many ROs make clear in their regulations a similar concept of quality, length and scope of the doctoral thesis.

AHRC's definition of research

73. The Council's definition of research is primarily concerned with the definition of research process, rather than outputs. The definition is built around three key features that students should address in full in order to be considered eligible for support:

- It must define a series of **research questions** or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research. It must also define its objectives in terms of seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding in relation to the questions or problems to be

addressed.

- It must specify a **research context** for the questions or problems to be addressed. It must specify why it is important that these particular questions or problems should be addressed; what other research is being or has been conducted in this area; and what particular contribution the student's project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in the area
- It must specify the **research methods** for addressing and answering the research questions or problems. It must state how, in the course of the research project, the student will seek to answer the questions, or advance available knowledge and understanding of the problems. It should also explain the rationale for the chosen research methods and why the student thinks they provide the most appropriate means by which to answer the questions.

Practice-led research

74. This definition of research provides a distinction between research and practice *per se*. Creative output can be produced or practice undertaken as an integral part of a research process. The Council would expect this practice to be accompanied by some form of documentation of the research process, as well as some form of textual analysis or explanation to support its position and to demonstrate critical reflection. Creativity or practice which involves no such processes is not eligible for support from the Council.

The Council's guidance on Research Training

75. The AHRC uses 'research training' in its broadest sense to describe the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will need to successfully pursue his/her studies, complete a high quality thesis and prepare for a career once his/her studies have been completed. We aim not to be prescriptive about the type of training or how it should be delivered. 'Training' encompasses all the opportunities – formal and informal – available to postgraduate students to develop as researchers and practitioners in their fields and as highly qualified individuals in preparation for their future careers.

76. Research training is an issue that is very much on the current agenda for higher education. The focus is on the assessment of needs and the provision of training to meet those needs. The AHRC considers training to be an ongoing process which takes place throughout a student's studies and is adapted as new needs arise. This means a programme of monitoring and assessment of the student's needs at regular intervals.

77. Details of the AHRC's Research Training Framework can be found at <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/ResearchTrainingFramework.aspx>.

The Research Preparation Master's Scheme

78. The Research Preparation Scheme provides funding to enable studentship award holders to gain a Master's degree where the course aims focus on advanced study and research training that is **explicitly intended to provide a foundation for further research at doctoral level.**
79. Students will be required to produce a dissertation or extended piece of work that:
- Demonstrates understanding and awareness of current research in their field
 - Contributes to the advancement of knowledge and understanding in their field
 - Demonstrates their proficiency as an independent researcher equipped to proceed to doctoral level or, in the creative and performing arts, to proceed to doctoral level.
80. The eligibility of a studentship to be held under this Scheme, rather than the PPM Scheme, will depend on the aims and focus of the course and the individual student's long-term career goals.
81. It is possible that students pursuing different pathways (one a preparation for further academic research and the other a preparation for professional practice) through the same Master's course could be eligible for an AHRC award in either the RPM or PPM scheme. In such cases, the choice of scheme should be guided by the consideration of the content and aims of the particular pathway the student is intending to pursue and the student's long-term career aims.

Qualifications covered by the scheme

82. A course is eligible for funding in this scheme if, by the end of the period of the AHRC award, the student will gain a Master's degree such as the MA, MSc or MPhil in the arts and humanities. Qualifications such as the Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma are not eligible for support under this scheme.

Upgrade to doctoral study

83. Award holders in the RPM Scheme must not upgrade to doctoral status during the tenure of their award, nor should they treat their period of Master's study as the first year(s) of research on a doctoral thesis.
84. RPM award holders intending to pursue doctoral research should apply for funding the following year through the Doctoral Scheme.

85. The Council expects RPM award holders to gain a Master's qualification at the end of their AHRC studentship. Students who are initially registered as a Master's student (e.g. MPhil), but who are intending to proceed directly to doctoral study without gaining a Master's qualification are not eligible in this scheme.

Students already holding a postgraduate qualification

86. If a student already has a postgraduate qualification they are **not** eligible for a RPM studentship unless they can make a case as to why the additional postgraduate qualification is **essential** for a substantial change in career.
87. If a student already holds a doctoral degree they are not eligible for a RPM studentship.

Duration of course supported

88. Studentships can support courses of full-time study that last a minimum of 9 months and a maximum of 12 months, and for part-time study that lasts a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 24 months. Courses will normally start on or around 1 October.
89. Longer courses of up to 24 months full-time and 48 months part-time can be supported in this scheme where the value and necessity of the additional year's training has been demonstrated. Please note that if a student undertakes this length of course and then applies to the DA scheme, the length of their doctoral study should be 24 months full-time or 48 months part-time. The only exception to this is if they can make a case for extended doctoral funding (please see paragraphs 51-56 of this guide).
90. ROs should consider the **actual start and end dates of a course** to ensure it meets the minimum of 9 months duration otherwise it will not be eligible. A course which runs from 19 September 2009 to 19 June 2010, would be eligible as a 9 month course, however AHRC funding will not commence until 1 October 2009 and will end on 30 June 2010. A course which starts on 19 September 2009 and runs to 31 May 2010 would not be eligible.
91. By the end of any studentship, students must be in a position to have completed all the requirements (both taught and dissertation and, where relevant, any practical project elements) necessary to gain the Master's degree no more than 12 or 24 calendar months (as appropriate) after its commencement.
92. Previously unfunded students are eligible to receive funding for the second year of a two-year course provided the second 'year' meets the minimum duration requirements (see para 89). However, if a student will gain a Postgraduate Diploma at the end of their first year they cannot then apply for the second year to gain a MA (or equivalent).

Distance learning courses

93. If the course fulfils the other eligibility requirements described in this Guide and has a clearly defined structure, and if there is clear evidence that the RO provides a high level of support to students on the course, it is possible for an award to be given a student undertaking a distance-learning Master's degree. However, the student must still reside in the UK (see section 2) and meet all relevant eligibility criteria

Royal College of Art

94. Students intending to pursue Master's courses at the Royal College of Art are not eligible for AHRC awards, since funding for such students is available directly from the college.

Definition of research preparation

95. There are a variety of ways in which an RO can provide students with the range of knowledge, understanding and high-quality skills that will enable them to study effectively at doctoral level and continue to engage in scholarly research after their Master's degree. The AHRC recognises that there is a need to gain an appropriate combination of knowledge and understanding, general and specific research skills, and methods appropriate for the arts and humanities. Also, through advanced study, to gain an understanding of the substantive and conceptual issues relevant to the field of the proposed research.

96. They might gain the knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of ways, e.g. through taught courses, as well as through participating in seminars. It is unlikely that there will be a common 'research methods' course alone that will suffice for all students. Some generic training in research and other key skills may be appropriate, but advanced study of content and of the issues related to the proposed topic of research will also be necessary. For example, the research skills needed to study medieval manuscripts will not be the same as those needed to study the use of digital technology.

97. An RO must have mechanisms in place to ensure that RPM students are supported and trained, ideally through a combination of taught elements and a student's own research. By the end of the Master's course, students should be equipped to begin work as an independent researcher at doctoral level. Alternatively, in the creative and performing arts, they should be equipped to begin work as an independent researcher at doctoral level or to undertake a career in research in the higher education sector. Students themselves need to demonstrate that they plan to continue to engage in, and contribute to, scholarly research in the relevant field.

98. Examples of skills that may apply to a broad range of students include:

- library and archival resources and how to use them (e.g. the RO's own library, the British Library)

- bibliographic resources and how to use them, using editions, using journals
- understanding primary and secondary sources
- developing a personal bibliography
- handling and managing research data
- how to cite sources and compile footnotes
- ICT skills (including how to use electronic databases and web-based resources)
- presenting papers and participating in conferences and seminars.

99. Examples of research skills that may be related to a specific subject area or topic:

- developing practical techniques (e.g. artistic or performance skills)
- understanding visual sources
- using specialist libraries, collections and archives
- using specialist bibliographic resources
- using sound and visual technology
- creating databases and other ICT resources
- language skills
- linguistic or phonetic skills
- interview skills; observing practice or workshops
- working with manuscripts; palaeography
- understanding a range of research methods, analytical techniques and theoretical approaches
- developing a context for practice-based research, incorporating it into a thesis
- conceptualising the relationship between practice, theory and criticism
- undertaking fieldwork.

The Professional Preparation Master's Scheme

100. This scheme provides funding to enable studentship award holders to gain a Master's degree or a Postgraduate Diploma where the course aims focus on the development of high-level skills and competences as a **preparation for professional practice in a field relevant to the content of the course.**
101. We expect there to be a demonstrable connection between the course that the student is taking and their long-term career aims. In some cases, the course may be a prerequisite for practice in the student's chosen profession, e.g librarianship or museum studies. In other cases, while the qualification is not a professional prerequisite, in order to be eligible for this scheme, it must equip the student with skills that are directly relevant to the pursuit of a career or profession related to the arts and humanities. For example, courses in fine art, performing arts or creative writing.
102. To be eligible for funding under this scheme, courses should offer students the opportunity to pursue practical work and related theory at advanced level, to acquire and develop further skills related to professional practice in their field of study, and to develop their own work critically. Such courses should also demonstrate a clear relationship with professional practice. They should equip the student with the necessary skills to pursue a career or profession in a field **relevant** to the content of the course.
103. Students funded under this Scheme are not required to demonstrate an intention to continue to doctoral study. This Scheme is not intended to support preparation for doctoral research, and award holders in this Scheme must not upgrade to doctoral status during the tenure of their AHRC studentship award. If a student intends to continue to doctoral study, they would normally be expected to pursue a course eligible for support in the RPM Scheme.
104. The eligibility of a studentship to be held under this scheme, rather than the RPM Scheme, will depend on the aims and focus of the course and the individual student's long-term career goals.
105. It is possible that students pursuing different pathways (one a preparation for further academic research and the other a preparation for professional practice) through the same Master's course could be eligible for an AHRC award in either the RPM or PPM scheme. In such cases, the choice of scheme should be guided by the consideration of the content and aims of the particular pathway the student is intending to pursue and the student's long-term career aims.

Qualifications covered by the scheme

106. A course is eligible for funding under this scheme if, by the end of the period of the AHRC studentship, the student will gain a Master's degree (e.g. an MA or MSc) or a Postgraduate Diploma. Courses leading to a Postgraduate

Certificate are not eligible for support.

Applying for for doctoral funding after a Professional Preparation Master’s course

107. The aim of the Scheme is to enable students to undertake high-quality preparation for professional practice. Courses that prepare students for doctoral study are eligible under the RPM Scheme. While the AHRC considers that undertaking an RPM course is the best way to prepare for doctoral study, it also recognises that it is not the only way. Students may approach doctoral study from other routes, and therefore we will accept students for doctoral studentship awards who can demonstrate that they are appropriately prepared in other ways for doctoral research in their chosen subject.

Student already holding a postgraduate qualification

108. If a student already has a postgraduate qualification they are not eligible for a PPM studentship unless they can make a case as to why the additional postgraduate qualification is **essential** for their change in career.

Duration of course supported

109. Studentships can support courses of full-time study that last a minimum of 9 months and a maximum of 12 months, and for part-time study that lasts a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 24 months. Courses will normally start on or around 1 October.

110. Longer courses of up to 24 months full-time and 48 months part-time can be supported under this scheme where the value and necessity of the additional year’s training has been demonstrated.

111. ROs should consider the **actual start and end dates of a course** to ensure it meets the minimum of 9 months duration otherwise it will not be eligible. A course which runs from 19 September 2009 to 19 June 2010, would be eligible as a 9 month course, however AHRC funding will not commence until 1 October 2009 and will end on 30 June 2010. A course which starts on 19 September 2009 and runs to 31 May 2010 would not be eligible.

112. There are three courses in the Conservation of Painting shown in the table below that are exceptions to the rules on the length of course supported under this scheme

RO	Course	Max. length of award
Courtauld Institute of Art	Postgraduate Diploma in the Conservation of Easel Painting	3 years
Courtauld Institute of Art	MA in Painting Conservation (Wall Painting)	3 years
Hamilton Kerr Institute, University of Cambridge	Diploma in Conservation of Easel Painting	3 years

113. By the end of any studentship, students must be in a position to have completed all the requirements (both taught and dissertation and, where relevant, any practical project elements) necessary to gain the Master's degree or Postgraduate Diploma no more than 12 or 24 calendar months (as appropriate) after its commencement.
114. Previously unfunded students are eligible to receive funding for the second year of a two-year course provided the second 'year' meets the minimum duration requirements. However, if a student will gain a Postgraduate Diploma at the end of their first year they cannot then apply for the second year to gain a MA (or equivalent).

Distance learning courses

115. If the course fulfils the other eligibility requirements described in this Guide and the course has a clear structure and support provided by the RO it is possible for an award to be completed through distance learning but the student must still reside in the UK (see section 2) and meet all relevant eligibility criteria

Royal College of Art

116. Students intending to pursue Master's courses at the Royal College of Art are not eligible for AHRC awards, since funding for such students is available directly from the college.

Section 4 – Subject Eligibility

The AHRC's subject domain

117. The AHRC will support work that seeks to improve, enhance or develop creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in the artistic and creative activities, history, languages, literatures, and systems of thought and belief of human beings, both past and present. Within that broad definition, there are inevitable overlaps and border territories that are shared with other award-making bodies. We seek to specify where such overlaps are likely to occur in the guidance given below.
118. Many areas of study in the arts and humanities overlap with other disciplines, and some are inherently interdisciplinary. It is not possible to define what falls within or outside the arts and humanities by reference to the methodologies used or by simple reference to the subject matter of the study. Rather, the Council takes into account whether or not the following could plausibly be regarded as falling within our subject domain:
- The approach and methodologies to be adopted
 - The research questions or problems to be addressed
 - The wider context in which those questions or problems are located.
119. Further information on the AHRC's subject domain can be found on our web site <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/Eligibility.aspx> Please note this webpage is organised by 'panels' – whilst the information on AHRC remit is relevant, the panel structure is not applicable to all studentship schemes.

The Subject Categories (* subjects not eligible in the PPM scheme)

Archaeology

- Archaeological Science
- Archaeological Theory
- Archaeology of Human Origins
- Archaeology of Literate Societies
- Industrial Archaeology
- Landscape and Environmental Archaeology
- Maritime Archaeology
- Prehistoric Archaeology

Architecture: History, Theory & Practice

Classics*

- Classical Literature*
- Classical Reception*

- Epigraphy and Papyrology*
- Languages and Linguistics*
- Philosophy, Thought & Religion*

Community Arts (including Art and Health)

Cultural Policy, Arts management and the creative industries

Dance Studies

- Choreography
- Dance Performance
- History of Dance
- Notation
- Physical Theatre
- Social Dance

Design

- Digital Art and Design
- History, Theory and Practice
- Product Design

Drama and Theatre Studies

- Dramaturgy
- Other
- Performance and Live Art
- Scenography
- Theatre and History
- Theories of Theatre
- Theatre and Society

English Language and Literature*

- Comparative Literature*
- English Language and Literature by time and place*
- History and Development of the English Language*
- Medieval Literature (including Old and Middle English, Anglo-Norman and Icelandic / Old Norse)*

History*

- Cultural history*
- Diplomacy and International Relations*
- Economic History*
- History of Ideas*
- History of Science / Medicine / Technology*
- Imperial / Colonial History*
- Political History*
- Religious History*
- Social History*
- War Studies*

Law

- Common Law, including Commercial Law
- Comparative Law
- Criminal Law and Criminology
- EU Law
- Human Rights
- International Law
- Jurisprudence / Philosophy of Law

- Law regulated primarily by statute (e.g. Family, Employment, Procedure)
- Law relating to Property
- Legal History
- Public Law

Librarianship, Information and Museum Studies

- Archives
- Computational Studies
- Conservation Science
- Heritage Management
- Information Management
- Information Retrieval
- Information Science
- Journalism
- Library Studies
- Management
- Museum and Gallery Studies
- Publishing
- Records Management
- User Studies

Linguistics*

- Applications of Linguistics*
- Language Variation and Change*
- Lexicon*
- Linguistic Theory*
- Morphology and Phonology*
- Phonetics*
- Semantics and Pragmatics*
- Syntax*

Media

- Film History, Theory, Criticism
- Media and Communication Studies
- Television History, Theory, Criticism

Modern Languages

- Area Studies*
- Asiatic and Oriental Studies*
- Celtic Studies*
- Comparative Studies*
- French Studies*
- German Studies (including both Dutch and Yiddish)*

- Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin American Studies*
- Interpreting and Translation
- Italian Studies*
- Language Pedagogy
- Middle Eastern and African Studies*
- Russian, Slavonic and East European Studies*
- Scandinavian Studies*

Music

- Classical
- Composition (including computer-aided and electroacoustic composition)
- History of Music
- Music and Society
- Musical Performance
- Musicology
- Popular Music
- Traditional Music

Philosophy*

- Epistemology*
- Ethics and Aesthetics*
- History of Philosophy by period*
- Metaphysics*
- Philosophy of Language and Philosophical Logic*
- Philosophy of Mind and Psychology*
- Philosophy of Science and Mathematics, and Mathematical Logic*
- Political Philosophy*

Theology, Divinity and Religious Studies*

- Church History and History of Theology*
- Indian and Far Eastern Religions*
- Islam*
- Judaism*
- Liturgy*
- Modern Theology*
- New Testament*
- Old Testament*
- Philosophy of Religion*
- Systematic Theology*

Visual Arts

- Applied Arts (History, Theory and Practice)
- Art History
- Art Theory and Aesthetics
- Conservation of Art and Textiles
- Digital Arts (History, Theory and Practice)
- Ethnography and Anthropology
- Film-based media (History, Theory and Practice)
- Fine Art (History, Theory and Practice)
- Other
- Performance and Installation (History, Theory and Practice)
- Photography (History, Theory and Practice)
- Time-based media (History, Theory and Practice)

Other

- American Studies*
- Creative Writing
- Cultural Geography*
- Cultural Studies and Popular Culture*
- Dictionaries and Databases
- Gender and Sexuality*
- Lifewriting (including Biography and Autobiography)
- Literary and Cultural Theory*
- Post-Colonial Studies*
- Textual Editing and Bibliography

Time Periods

- Palaeolithic and Mesolithic
- Neolithic, Copper and Bronze Age
- Protohistory and Iron Age
- Ancient Egypt: Egyptian prehistory
- Ancient Egypt: The Pharaonic Period (c.3000 – c.300BC)
- Ancient Egypt: The Hellenistic and Roman period (c.300BC – c.700AD)
- Ancient Near East: Prehistory
- Ancient Near East: Sumerians to Persians (c.3500BC – c.300BC)
- Ancient Near East: Hellenistic Period to Sassanids (c.300BC – AD 651)
- Archaic Greece (c.850-600BC)
- Classical Greece (c.500BC)
- The Hellenistic Greek World (c.500BC)
- The Roman Republic (c.400-31BC)
- Later Roman Empire (AD250-450)
- Byzantine Empire
- Early Medieval (c.400-1100)
- Medieval (c.1000-1500)
- Early Modern (c.1500-1800)
- Renaissance
- 18th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century
- Contemporary

Places

- UK & Ireland
- Ireland
- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- Western Europe
- Eastern Europe
- Mediterranean
- Scandinavia
- North America
- South America
- Central America (including Caribbean)
- Middle East
- Africa
- Oceania
- Far East (China/Japan)
- Central Asia
- South Asia (Pakistan to Indonesia)

Section 5 – Information use and research ethics

Disclosure of Information

120. The information provided in a proposal or nomination, including personal information, is used to process and monitor the proposal or nomination and award (including both academic and financial monitoring). This includes:
- Operation of the Research Councils¹ grants processing and management information systems
 - The acquisition of RO and referee comments
 - The preparation of material for use by assessors
 - Statistical analysis and surveys to inform the evaluation of the quality of the postgraduate study undertaken and to study demographic trends
 - Policy and strategy studies
 - Monitoring the progress of or changes to postgraduate study as necessary
 - Monitoring the spend of funds awarded.
121. The Research Councils will treat as confidential all confidential information provided by the student and RO and will not use it or disclose it to any other person except as set out here. Research Councils may disclose the proposal or nomination to its employees, associated committees or boards, external reviewers and possibly other funding bodies for the purpose of assisting it in deciding whether or not the proposal or nomination should be funded.
122. If successful, the student's contact details will be passed on to two schemes funded by the AHRC and Research Councils – the Vitae Programme and the Researchers in Residence scheme – in order that they can keep the student informed of the opportunities they offer. The student can inform the AHRC if they do not wish us to pass on their contact details.
123. The Council will not pass award holder details to any commercial organisations, but may use them for future contact with the student and when requesting information from ROs to monitor progress and completion.
124. The RO will provide to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) or any other organisation² acting on the AHRC's or Research Council's behalf any such information requested by them on the AHRC's or Research Council's behalf such as the progress of the student's study or submission of their thesis.
125. If successful, details of the proposal or nomination including the student's name, the RO at which they are studying, the dates and type of award, the funding provided by the AHRC and a description of the subject of study, may

¹ The term Research Councils includes AHRC, all other Research Councils, RCUK and RCUK Shared Services Centre Ltd

² 'Organisation' should be taken to mean any agency empowered to act on the AHRC's behalf or on behalf of the Research Councils

be published on our website and in other AHRC publications. The student can inform the AHRC if they do not wish these details to become public.

126. Award holders must provide, on request, a description of their work that may be included in any of the Council's publications, such as its Annual Report.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

127. Research Councils are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This means that it has a duty to provide information on request unless that information falls within certain exemptions that are specified in the Act. These exemptions apply to, among other things:
- Personal information (which is dealt with under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998)
 - Information that has been provided in confidence and which remains confidential, and
 - Information which is a trade secret or where its release would be likely to prejudice the commercial interest of any person.
128. If the AHRC receives a request under the Act that includes release of information contained in a nomination, proposal or in any reports on the progress of an award (including the final report), the AHRC will make every effort to consult with the award holder before releasing that information to help it to decide whether or not one of the exemptions applies. However, the AHRC has a duty to comply with the Freedom of Information Act and will have to disclose the information requested unless it is satisfied that a relevant exemption applies.

Research Ethics, Health and Safety and Misconduct

129. The AHRC requires all ROs that are involved in postgraduate research and training to comply with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 'Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes (Sep 2004)' as amended or superseded from time to time. <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/>
130. The AHRC attaches considerable importance to the maintenance of high ethical standards in the development, conduct and reporting of the research and training it supports and to ensure that it is conducted in a professional manner and will not give rise to distress or annoyance to individuals.
131. It is the responsibility of the RO to ensure that research is organised and undertaken within a framework of best practice and the Research Councils expect research to be conducted in accordance with the highest standards of integrity and research methodology.
132. The RO must ensure that all ethical issues relating to the nomination or proposal are identified and comply with all relevant legislation and

Government regulation, including that introduced whilst work is in progress. This includes approval or licence from any regulatory body that may be required before the research can commence. Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and may encompass, among other things, relevant codes of practice, the involvement of human participants, tissue or data in research, the use of animals, research that may result in damage to the environment and the use of sensitive economic, social or personal data.

133. The RO is responsible for ensuring a safe working environment is provided for all individuals associated with a research project or course. Its approach and policy on health and safety matters must meet all regulatory and legislative requirements. It must also meet any other legislation concerning the health, welfare and rights of students, including the Data Protection Act (1998).
134. The RO must ensure that there are reliable systems and processes in place for the prevention of research misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, falsification of data), together with well defined and clearly publicised arrangements for investigating allegations of misconduct.
135. The RO must ensure there are adequate facilities and resources available for research training and that research training programmes contain good training in generic and transferable skills.