



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Block Grant Partnerships: Capacity Building Route

Guide for Applicants

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Introduction

1. The AHRC offers studentships through four different routes:
 - Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA)
 - Research Grants with Project Studentships attached (PS)
 - Block Grant Partnerships 2009-2013 (BGP)
 - Block Grant Partnerships: Capacity Building Route 2011-2013 (BGP: CB)
2. The Block Grant Partnerships: Capacity Building Route has replaced the Studentship Competition. Each Research Organisation should have received a letter informing them of the changes in April 2010. If you did not receive this letter and would like further information, please contact the AHRC.
3. The information in this guide is intended for staff in those organisations that are submitting a proposal for funding through the Block Grant Partnerships: Capacity Building Route. Awards made through this scheme will start in 2011.

Principles of Block Grant Partnerships: Capacity Building Route

The key principle underpinning all the AHRC's postgraduate funding is the need to ensure we fund high quality students across the full range of arts and humanities subjects, in institutions and departments that offer high quality postgraduate training in the relevant discipline(s), a critical mass of excellent postgraduate and post-doctoral work in the relevant discipline(s), and a strong and supportive postgraduate research and training environment in the arts and humanities.

The Block Grant Partnership: Capacity Building Route will:

- Allow ROs to build capacity and develop a strategic researcher base, enabling ROs to compete on a equal footing with current BGP ROs in the next round of BGPs in 2013
- Create a partnership between the AHRC and BGP:CB award holders, bringing stability in allocating awards for the next three years whilst allowing ROs flexibility to manage their AHRC funding in an effective and creative way
- Encourage creative ways of developing capacity, for example by using AHRC funding to part-fund students where appropriate
- Encourage collaboration between ROs and Departments by allowing bids from consortiums

AHRC Studentship Schemes

4. Within the Block Grant Partnerships: Capacity Building Route the AHRC operates three separate schemes:
 - Doctoral Awards Scheme
 - **Research Preparation Master's Scheme (RPM)**
 - **Professional Preparation Master's Scheme (PPM)**

Full details on each of these schemes is available in the *Guide to Student Eligibility* available to download here

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/bgpcb.aspx>

5. The Doctoral Awards scheme provides support for students undertaking doctoral study in the arts and humanities. This includes all research degree students even if their initial registration is for a probationary period or as an MPhil candidate.
6. The RPM scheme provides support for students intending to proceed to doctoral study in the arts and humanities, **who are undertaking a Master's course which will prepare them for doctoral study or a research career. We expect these students to gain a Master's qualification** at the end of the studentship award.
7. The PPM scheme provides support for students intending to proceed to a career in professional practice in the arts and humanities, who are **undertaking a Master's course that will prepare them specifically for that professional practice.** Certain subjects are not eligible for support in the PPM scheme: full details can be found in the *Guide to Student Eligibility*.

Eligibility and Funding Information

What is BGP: Capacity Building Route?

8. Block Grant Partnership: Capacity Building Route will allow organisations who **don't hold a BGP to bid for studentships for the next three years, from 2011-2013**. BGP: CB proposals are made for a small number of studentships each year across all relevant subject areas in an organisation and across all three schemes. There will be a particular focus on the Creative and Performing Arts, and practice-based, vocational areas. The first studentships will start in 2011/12 and will support the next two cohorts, up to and including studentships commencing in the 2013/14 academic year.

Who is eligible to apply?

9. A Research Organisation (RO) is able to submit a BGP:CB proposal if:
 - it is a UK based research organisation supported by one of the four UK Higher Education funding councils; **and**
 - **it does not** already hold an AHRC Block Grant Partnership Award

How many studentships can an organisation apply for in a BGP: CB proposal?

10. The maximum number of studentships an organisation can bid for will vary depending on the organisation's track record of applying for AHRC Studentships. The AHRC wrote to all ROs in May 2010 informing them of their maximum bid. The bid allowance will either be between 1-5 awards or between 5-10 awards each year.
11. It is up to the RO to decide how many studentships they bid for, provided **they don't exceed the maximum figure** (i.e. either 5 or 10, depending on track record)

Subject spread and spread of awards available

12. When preparing a bid ROs should consider the past performance of the organisation and the number of awards available in the BGP: CBs over the three-year period. We expect to have between 100 and 135 awards to make in each of the three years of the BGP Capacity Building Scheme route, subject to the confirmation of funding levels after 2011 in the light of the forthcoming government spending review.
13. It is likely that many BGP: CB awards will consist of between 3 and 5 awards per RO per year, given typical award numbers in its predecessor, the Studentship Competition, as well as the number of awards available overall. These awards are intended to complement the subject areas covered substantially in the existing BGP awards, and so we particularly welcome proposals in the creative and performing arts, and cultural and heritage areas, including practice-based and vocational training.

Consortium BGP: CB Proposals

14. We strongly encourage ROs to consider submitting a proposal for a BGP: CB in consortium with one or more RO, where there is appropriate academic and intellectual purpose behind the collaboration. Such consortium bids could be made either on a regional or on a discipline basis. These will enable ROs to build capacity and share training and resources, helping them increase the range of support available to students in small and specialist subject areas.
15. Consortium proposals must be made at institutional level, even though it may just be one department or discipline collaborating. Only one proposal should be submitted, with one RO being nominated as the lead applicant. We will be looking for evidence of a strong basis for any consortium bid, including evidence of joint activities already undertaken by the parties involved, evidence of robust agreements about the processes for managing and monitoring AHRC funding and joint provision. AHRC staff are happy to provide further guidance to any ROs considering making a consortium proposal.

Interdisciplinary Studentships

16. The BGP: CB Scheme will allow flexibility for interdisciplinary working as proposals will be made for studentships in very broad subject areas as opposed to specific research projects. Research Organisations will be able to allocate studentships to interdisciplinary projects as long as an element of that project matches the broad subject area, **as defined in the AHRC's subject classifications**, in which the studentship has been awarded.
17. If an organisation has an interdisciplinary centre (e.g. a Centre for Medieval Studies) then it can be referred to in as many subject information statements in the proposal as is relevant. Subjects are not intended to map directly onto individual departments, allowing an organisation maximum flexibility in the allocation of studentships awarded.

What funding is an organisation applying for in a BGP:CB award?

18. Organisations are applying for studentship grants, which will be paid in a block payment mechanism. Instead of receiving individual payments relating to specific students, Research Organisations will receive aggregated blocks of **funding each year covering student's maintenance, tuition fees** etc.

For further information please see the block payment FAQs at:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Documents/FAQblockpayment.pdf>

19. Terms and conditions for studentship grants for the 2010-2011 academic year will be published on the website in the Autumn. Applicants to the BGP: CB scheme may find these useful for further information on how studentship grants will operate, including payment, administration and monitoring information but please note that these terms and conditions will be subject to change for studentships in the 2011-2012 academic year.

20. It is likely that organisations will be able to use AHRC funding to part-fund students as long as there is matched funding in place. Further information will follow next year.

Application and Assessment

Timetable

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Proposal Forms available through JeS | 17 August 2010 |
| Closing Date | Thursday 13 January 2011 |
| Proposals checked and returned for amendment if necessary | 17 January – 28 January 2011 |
| Proposals sent to assessors | w/c 6 February 2011 |
| Assessors meet to agree grades | 16 March 2011 |
| Outcomes announced | <i>From</i> 4 April 2011 |
| First cohort of students start | October 2011 |

How to apply for a BGP: CB

21. Proposals must be submitted via the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission (JeS) system which may be accessed at <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx>. Proposal forms will be available through the JeS system from **17 August 2010**.
22. Proposals must be made at organisational level and should cover all subject areas for which they intend to bid. Departments may not submit separate proposals and only one proposal per RO can be submitted.
23. ROs should appoint a BGP co-ordinator who will act as the main contact for any AHRC correspondence throughout the assessment process. The co-ordinator's details will be requested on the Je-S proposal form.
24. To create a BGP:CB proposal in Je-S choose 'Add New Document'; then select AHRC as the Council; Studentship Proposal as the Document Type; and **Block Grant Partnerships: Capacity Building Route** as the scheme (please ensure that you do not select the standard Block Grant Partnerships scheme); then select 13 January 2011 as the Call/Type Mode before selecting 'Create Document'. Je-S will then create a proposal form, displaying the relevant section headings. Please note the forms will be available from 17 August 2010.
25. There is detailed, context-sensitive **Helptext** within the Je-S system that provides information on how to complete each section of the proposal form. It is extremely important that you read this, it may be accessed by selecting 'Help' in the top right of any screen within the form.
26. There is also a dedicated Je-S Helpdesk that provides telephone and email support with the proposal process. Support is available between 9am and

5pm, Monday to Friday, and can be contacted by email at jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk or by telephone on 01793 444164.

27. The closing date for proposals is **4pm on Thursday 13 January 2011**. The AHRC will not accept late applications.

What information is required in a BGP: CB Proposal?

28. An organisation will be asked to provide information relating to its strategy for promoting and developing postgraduate research in the arts and humanities, including, Training and Environment, Spread of Studentships and Management and Monitoring. Information will be required for each subject included in the proposal in order to facilitate decisions regarding BGP: CB awards and allocations of studentships.
29. As well as completing the application form, ROs will be asked to attach a Case for Support document. The Case for Support should be used to bring together the whole bid and allows the organisation to justify the requested studentships by providing evidence as to how it delivers the organisation's strategy for arts and humanities. Further details of what information should be included in the Case for Support can be found in Annex A.

Assessment process and criteria

30. The proposals will be assessed against specific criteria by a panel of senior **academics selected from the AHRC's Peer Review College**. The assessors will have a good strategic overview of arts and humanities in the UK and will have experience of postgraduate assessment. The panel will be responsible for assessing and grading the proposals. They will then recommend specific subject allocations for each proposal considering the assessments, number of studentships applied for, the need to ensure a good balance of awards across all disciplines, and historical data on previous award allocation. The panel will have the option of awarding a smaller number of studentships than requested.
31. The assessors will be looking at the overall proposal and the subject level information for the following:

Strategy and Vision

- Evidence that the organisation has a coherent long-term strategy for promoting and developing postgraduate research and training in the arts and humanities disciplines, and that the AHRC funding it requests will clearly support and develop this strategy

Spread of studentships

- Evidence that there is a convincing rationale for the proposed spread and number of studentships (in terms of spread across subject disciplines,

Master's and Doctoral level courses, research based and professional courses, as appropriate)

- Evidence that the spread of studentships supports the **organisation's** and **the AHRC's strategies for postgraduate funding, and that the proposed spread can be maintained by the organisation's** infrastructure
- Evidence that the organisation is a priority to hold the requested number of studentships in each subject area, offering a high standard of postgraduate training and support in the relevant disciplines

Training and Environment

- Evidence that postgraduate students across the arts and humanities disciplines at the RO will be trained as high-quality researchers and/or practitioners in their field
- Evidence that high-quality and relevant transferable skills training is provided across the arts and humanities disciplines at the organisation, both for research-based and professional courses at **Master's and Doctoral** level, as appropriate.
- Evidence that effective supervisory arrangements are in place across the organisation for all arts and humanities students where needed
- Evidence that there is a high-quality, active and supportive research environment at the organisation, and that all postgraduate students within arts and humanities disciplines are supported to play a full part in this environment
- Evidence that effective processes are in place across the organisation to **monitor students' progress and to support students whose circumstances may change**
- Evidence that there is appropriate training provision in place in each subject area, in terms of subject specific skills as well as generic skills, both for research-based and professional modes of study at both **Master's** and doctoral level

Management and monitoring

- Evidence that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure transparent and effective use of the **AHRC's block of funding over the period of the award**
- Evidence that the RO has proposed a fair, open and transparent selection process to allocate AHRC funding to individual students; and that this process will seek to appoint the highest quality students, considering equal opportunities and ensuring appropriate advertisement of studentship opportunities

Consortium proposals

- Evidence that the consortium is appropriate and viable, with mechanisms already agreed for shared responsibilities including financial arrangements, student monitoring, and sharing of research and training resources

Annex A – Attachments

Case for Support

This attachment is mandatory for all proposals and should be a **maximum of 6 sides of A4 paper** in a font size no smaller than size 12, and each page should be numbered.

The Case for Support should be used to bring together the whole bid and allows the organisation to justify the requested studentships by providing evidence as to how it delivers the organisation's strategy for arts and humanities.

Please structure your case for support using the following headings:

Long Term Strategy

Please detail your organisation's long-term strategy for promoting and developing postgraduate research and training in the arts and humanities and how your requested BGP: CB funding supports and builds on this strategy.

You may like to include information on how you will develop your strategy over the next three years; or how you might implement new strategies to foster growth in particular areas; or what innovative ways of building capacity your organisation may consider.

You may like to include information on any specialist expertise or provision, or innovative practices, for example, any links with museums; any international engagement your organisation has developed; any external investment which has been of benefit to your organisation.

Whilst in the main proposal form you will be indicating your proposed studentships at a very broad subject level, you may wish to highlight a particular specialist subject area in which you intend to offer studentships with BGP: CB funding. Please also comment on why you wish to support studentships in this area, e.g. health of disciplines grounds, specialist expertise in the area or if this is a new area of investment or developing area of excellence.

If you wish to refer to existing policy documents at your organisation, such as an existing Organisation or Arts and Humanities Strategy then please either quote the relevant section in your statement, or summarise the information you are referring to; please do not include web links to documents or attach any additional information.

Method for calculating the spread of studentships

Please detail the decision making process at how you have arrived at your proposed spread of and number of studentships, referring to any relevant evidence. If applicable, please also explain why you have chosen to leave any arts and humanities subjects out of the bid that have previously received AHRC funding.

Consortium Bids

This attachment is mandatory for Consortium bids only and should be a **maximum of 3 sides of A4** in a font no smaller than size 12, and each page should be numbered.

Please structure the consortium bid attachment using the following heading:

Benefits

What are the perceived benefits of the consortium for the organisations involved and potential studentship award holders?

History of consortium

Please provide details of the history behind the proposed consortium. Is it based on an existing partnership? If so, please provide details on what has already been achieved by working in partnership.

If it is a new partnership, how has it been developed?

Management

Describe how the BGP: CB awards would be managed across the partner organisations. How will studentships be allocated across subjects in each organisation? How will the use of funding be monitored and evaluated across the organisations?

Training and Supervision

How will training provision and supervisory arrangements be managed across the consortium organisations?

Recruitment

How will students be recruited and selected to studentships across the consortium organisations?

Annex B - Awards Available

There will be approximately 100 to 135 awards available in the BGP: CB scheme in each of the three years of the scheme. These are allocated by scheme and subject. The **estimated** spread of awards by subject as outlined below is based on the allocations made through the BGP Scheme and the historic pattern of awards from the AHRC's Studentship Competition, whilst also aiming to achieve a 50/50% split of awards **between doctoral level and master's level across both the BGP and the BGP: CB schemes**. This will ensure all areas in our subject remit continue to gain postgraduate support, whilst allowing some flexibility within the allocation to support newly emerging disciplines or courses.

We strongly advise you to consider the awards available when deciding which applications to put forward in the BGP: CB scheme. The table below gives an **estimated** spread of awards by scheme and subject area, based on total award numbers of 130. We anticipate award numbers will be between 100 and 135 each year, and will follow the spread as outlined below, but this is subject to the confirmation of funding levels after 2011, in the light of the forthcoming Government spending review. We anticipate that a high proportion of awards made under this competition will fall within the area of Creative and Performing Arts.

| Subject | Doctoral awards | Research Preparation Master's awards | Professional Preparation Master's awards | Total |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------|
| Applied Arts & Crafts | 2 | 0 | 4 | 6 |
| Archaeology | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Asian Studies | 0 | 0 | n/a | 0 |
| Celtic Studies | 1 | 1 | n/a | 2 |
| Classics & Ancient History | 0 | 0 | n/a | 0 |
| Communications, Graphics & Photography | 1 | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| Conservation | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Creative Writing | 1 | 0 | 8 | 9 |
| Cultural Studies | 1 | 1 | n/a | 2 |
| Dance, Drama & Performing Arts | 1 | 0 | 8 | 9 |
| Design | 3 | 1 | 6 | 10 |
| English Language & Literature | 4 | 2 | n/a | 6 |
| European Studies | 0 | 1 | n/a | 1 |
| Film Studies & Television Studies | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Film, Digital & other Media | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| Fine Art | 3 | 1 | 15 | 19 |
| French Language & Culture | 0 | 0 | n/a | 0 |
| German Language & Culture | 0 | 0 | n/a | 0 |
| History | 6 | 3 | n/a | 9 |
| History of Art, Architecture & Design | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Iberian & Latin American Language & Culture | 1 | 0 | n/a | 1 |
| Interpreting and Translation | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Italian Language & Culture | 1 | 1 | n/a | 2 |
| Journalism & Publishing studies | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Law | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Librarianship, Archives & Record Management | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Linguistics | 0 | 0 | n/a | 0 |
| Middle Eastern & African Language & Culture | 0 | 1 | n/a | 1 |
| Museum studies | 1 | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| Music | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| Philosophy | 1 | 0 | n/a | 1 |
| Religious Studies | 1 | 0 | n/a | 1 |
| Russian, Slavonic & Eastern European Language & Culture | 0 | 1 | n/a | 1 |
| TOTAL | 39 | 20 | 71 | 130 |

*** Where 0 appears in some columns this indicates we have not estimated the number of awards in this scheme/subject but awards may be available. Where n/a appears no awards will be available because this subject is not eligible in this scheme.**