



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

# **Studentship Competition 2010**

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## **Mission Statement**

The Arts and Humanities Research Council aims to:

- Support and promote high-quality and innovative research in the arts and humanities.
- Support, through programmes in the arts and humanities, the development of skilled people for academic, professional and other employment.
- Promote awareness of the importance of arts and humanities research and its role in understanding ourselves, our society, our past and our future, and the world in which we live.
- Ensure that the knowledge and understanding generated by arts and humanities research is widely disseminated for the economic, social and cultural benefit of the UK and beyond.
- Contribute to the shaping of national policy in relation to the arts and humanities.

## **Research Councils' Equal Opportunities Statement**

The Research Councils aim to develop as organisations that value the diversity of their staff and stakeholders, enabling all to realise their full potential by valuing the contribution of everyone and recognising and harnessing the benefits that differences can bring.

The UK Research Councils are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations across and between the defined equalities groups in all of their relevant functions.

Accordingly no eligible job applicant, funding applicant, employee or external stakeholder including members of the public should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of: gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins, religion or similar philosophical belief, spent criminal conviction, age or disability.

The AHRC has also published a **Single Equality Scheme** which is available to download from our website [www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk)

## Section 1 – Background

### AHRC Studentship Competitions

1. The AHRC offers studentships through four different competitions:
  - Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs)
  - Research Grants with Project Studentships (PS) attached
  - Block Grant Partnerships (BGPs)
  - Studentship Competition (SC)
2. CDAs aim to encourage, promote and develop collaboration between RO departments and non-academic organisations. They offer doctoral students the chance to conduct their research in collaboration with a non-academic body and gain experience of work outside the academic sphere. The CDA competition is run annually. Collaborative studentships may also be offered as part of strategic research programmes such as Landscape and Environment and Religion and Society. For further details please see the CDA guidance notes available to download from our web site <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/CollaborativeDoctoralAwards.aspx>.
3. PS offers funding for doctoral students attached to research grants, where funding is provided to support large-scale collaborative research projects. Academic members of staff applying for such grants may include in their application support for up to two doctoral students whose work will be closely related to the research project. For further details please see the Research Funding Guide, available to download from our website <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/default.aspx>.
4. The Studentship Competition will:
  1. aim to provide funding for pockets of excellence in organisations which do not hold BGPs
  2. fund Doctoral, Research Preparation Master's and Professional Preparation Master's studentships
  3. aim to allocate around 20% of the total annual allocation of postgraduate studentships
  4. be run annually with proposals being made on behalf of individual students
  5. be capped to ensure higher success rates for applicants
  6. allow for capacity building
  7. be monitored through student reports.

## AHRC Studentship Schemes

5. Within the competitions outlined above 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 from

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/StudentshipCompetition.aspx> All three schemes are eligible in the Studentship Competition.

6. The Doctoral Awards Scheme provides support for students undertaking doctoral study. Students should apply through this scheme even if their initial registration is as a probationary student or as an MPhil student.
7. The RPM scheme provides support for students intending to proceed to doctoral study, who are undertaking a Master's course which will prepare them for doctoral study. The scheme provides support for students in the creative and performing arts who are intending to proceed to doctoral study or to a career in research in the higher education sector, who are undertaking a Master's course that will prepare them for doctoral study or a research career. We expect these students to gain a Master's qualification at the end of their AHRC award. Students who are initially registered as a Master's student, but who are proceeding directly to doctoral study without gaining a Master's qualification, should apply in the DA scheme.
8. The PPM scheme provides support for students intending to proceed to a career in professional practice, who are undertaking a Master's course that will prepare them specifically for that professional practice. Certain subject areas **are not eligible** for support in the PPM scheme, full details of which can be found in the *Guide to Student Eligibility*.

## Section 2 – Eligibility

### Studentship Competition eligibility

9. ROs that hold a BGP, or rejected the offer of a BGP award, are not eligible to submit applications to the SC.
10. Students and ROs applying to the SC must ensure all aspects of the proposed application meet the eligibility criteria set out in the ***Guide to Student Eligibility*** in addition to the criteria set out in this guide.
11. Students must decide in advance which AHRC competition they want to access as they can only apply for an AHRC studentship under **one** of the AHRC's competitions (i.e. BGP, SC, CDA or PS).
12. The AHRC will not accept any nominations in advance of the SC, and will only accept nominations for students who have not submitted an application to the SC. In addition, students cannot be nominated to a BGP, CDA or PS place by withdrawing their application to the SC. However, if a student is unsuccessful in the SC, they will subsequently be able to be nominated to a BGP, CDA or PS place.
13. If the AHRC receives more than one nomination form or competition application form from the same student, they reserve the right to reject all the nominations and applications from that student.

### Capping

14. The number of proposals that an RO can submit will be capped at their average number of offers in the AHRC's postgraduate competition from 2005 to 2009, plus 100%; the minimum cap applied to an RO will be 5. This cap operates at RO level across all eligible arts and humanities subjects and the three schemes (Doctoral, RPM and PPM).
15. ROs do not have to fill their allocation of proposals. We would discourage ROs from submitting proposals that they feel do not meet the quality threshold expected simply to meet the minimum quota of proposals allowable.
16. The AHRC will write to all ROs in **Mid January** informing them of the number of proposals they may submit. A RO will need to have a mechanism in place to select the proposals it wishes to submit to the AHRC for assessment and may find the AHRC's *Guide to Student Recruitment and Selection* helpful for guidance on this. The Guide can be downloaded from our web site <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/StudentshipCompetition.aspx>

17. If a RO has not received information from the AHRC about their cap by the end of January, they should contact the AHRC.
18. In completing and submitting a proposal the RO is authorising and supporting it. It is worth bearing in mind that the competition for awards is fierce, and it is not be helpful to the student to submit a proposal that has very little chance of success.
19. Whilst the quality of the student should be the RO's primary motivation in submitting a student to the SC, we also require that ROs ensure their recruitment and selection procedures allow equality of opportunities for all students seeking AHRC studentships. Should an RO require any further guidance on these requirements, please consult the AHRC's *Guide to Student Recruitment and Selection*.

### Section 3 – The process from application to outcome

#### Timetable

Closing date	6 May 2010
Proposals checked and returned for amendment if necessary*	10-21 May 2010
Proposals sent to assessors	By 18 June 2010
Assessors meet to agree grades	5 – 9 July 2010
Academic chairs meet to recommend award allocations	16 July 2010
Outcomes announced	By 6 August 2010

\* ROs and students should ensure they are available at this time to amend proposals if necessary

#### Application process

20. The AHRC does not accept any applications directly from students; they must apply through the RO at which they intend to study.
21. All applications must be completed and submitted via the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system which may be accessed at <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk>.
22. ROs will want to put in place their own internal processes and deadlines to ensure they are able to select students and submit proposals to the AHRC by the competition closing date. The RO's timetable and processes should be clearly communicated to students.
23. To create a SC proposal in JeS choose 'Add New Document'; then select AHRC as the Council; Studentship Proposal as the Document Type; and the relevant Scheme, before selecting Create Document. Je-S will then create a proposal form, displaying the relevant section headings.
24. Once all sections have been completed the case for support should be uploaded (see further details below), the document validated and submitted to the next step in the process.
25. The RO will then check the form, upload the references and Organisational statement (see further details below) and submit the form to the AHRC. Please note that the student must be the 'owner' of the document when the form is submitted to the AHRC.
26. There is detailed, context-sensitive **Help text** within the JeS system that provides information on how to complete each section of the proposal form. It is extremely important that anyone completing a form reads this, it may be accessed by selecting 'Help' in the top right of any screen within the form.

27. There is also a dedicated JeS 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](mailto:jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk) or by telephone on 01793 444164.
28. **The closing date for applications is 4pm on 6th May 2009.** The AHRC will not accept late applications.

### **Case for Support**

29. The Case for Support should be completed by the student and uploaded to the proposal form on JeS before submitting the form to the RO for approval. This section plays a key part in the assessment of the proposal and we recommend that student's discuss the content of this section with their proposed course leader or supervisor.
30. A Case for Support should be typed in no less than 11pt Arial typescript (or equivalent) and be no longer than one side of A4. The AHRC reserves the right to reject applications which exceed this limit.
31. Assessors are interested in evidence of the intellectual purpose and originality of the proposed project, details about a student's reasons for, and approach towards, undertaking their proposed study and a good awareness of the research context.
32. Students should clearly state the title of their proposed course or programme of study and then comment under the scheme specific headings outlined in Annex A.

### **References**

33. Students must select two referees and ensure that the referees send their references to the JeS Approver / Submitter at the student's proposed RO in good time for them to upload the reference to the student's proposal form in JeS.
34. References should be typed in no less than 11pt Arial typescript (or equivalent) and be no longer than one side of A4. The AHRC reserves the right to reject applications which exceed this limit.
35. The assessors are asking for a realistic assessment of the student's abilities and, importantly, how well prepared they are to undertake the programme of work or course of study. Using examples to illustrate the quality of the student's performance greatly assists the assessors in distinguishing between the many high calibre students who apply for awards. References that do not provide a detailed appraisal of the student's academic development and

- suitability for his/her proposed study, but are instead simply a general statement of support, may disadvantage even the strongest student.
36. Academic referees are asked to draw on their experience of the student's work as a whole, not just on individual modules or courses.
  37. Professional referees should state how long the applicant has worked with them and in what capacity. They should detail the type and range of duties that were performed, and how this may have prepared the student for the proposed study.
  38. Referees should bear in mind the assessment criteria for the relevant scheme outlined in Annex E of this guide when completing their reference. They should also note the aims of the individual schemes outlined in the AHRC's *Guide to Student Eligibility*.
  39. Referees should state their name and their relationship to the student and then comment under the headings outlined in Annex B.

### **Organisational Statement**

40. The information provided in this attachment should be completed by the Head of Department or equivalent, and tailored to the student. A blanket description of the support and facilities the RO offers all students is not helpful to the assessors. General statements may disadvantage even the strongest students.
41. The Organisational Statement should be typed in no less than 11pt Arial typescript (or equivalent) and be no longer than **two** sides of A4 and must follow the scheme specific headings outlined in Annex C.

### **Assessment process**

42. Once proposals have been received by the AHRC the subject classification section will be used to identify the assessors to which the proposal will be allocated.
43. The assessors are appointed from the AHRC's Peer Review College which is made up of senior academic staff in ROs across the UK. Details of these assessors can be found on our website.
44. The assessors will be grouped into four panels A, B, C and D, each of which will have an academic chair. The panel structure can be found at Annex D.
45. It is essential that the subject classification is selected accurately for each proposal as it is the **primary subject** that will be used to direct a proposal to a panel. A proposal cannot normally be moved to a different panel by the RO once it has been submitted to the AHRC. If a proposal is genuinely

- interdisciplinary in nature, the assessors can request comments on the proposal from assessors in a different panel to inform their decisions.
46. The panels will agree an overall grade for each of their applications that reflects their assessment of the entire application, including the information and evidence provided about the student's ability, aptitude, commitment and preparedness for postgraduate study (at Master's and doctoral level as applicable), the quality of the work the student will produce, and the quality of the training and support provided by the department and the RO. Each application will be judged on its own merits, taking into account the scheme specific assessment criteria outlined in Annex E.
47. The assessors will also assign two separate grades: on the quality of the student and proposed study including evidence of the student's ability to achieve their postgraduate degree; and the quality of the training and environment supplied by the RO. These criteria will be used to rank applications that have been awarded the same overall grade. The system for ranking is:
1. Overall grade
  2. Quality of student and proposed study including evidence of their ability to achieve their postgraduate degree
  3. Quality of training and environment
48. The grading scale is currently being revised and will be published in an updated version of this guide in *January*.
49. The academic chairs of each panel will then meet to consider each panel's gradings and make a recommendation to the office for an allocation of awards in each subject and scheme.

### **Notification of decisions**

50. Whether the proposal is successful or unsuccessful, notification of the outcome will be sent to both the student and the RO by 6<sup>th</sup> August 2009. This will contain the overall grade assigned to the proposal and the two additional grades, but the AHRC regrets that it cannot offer any additional feedback.
51. Please do not contact the AHRC to ask about the outcome of a proposal as staff are not authorised to disclose this information over the telephone or by email.
52. If the proposal is successful the RO will only have a limited time to confirm whether the student wishes to accept the award. Details of this form and the timescale for returning the completed form will be included with the offer notification. **The student and the RO must ensure that their e-mail address details are updated on JeS as this will be used for correspondence.**
53. Please bear in mind that the competition is fierce and, inevitably, many highly qualified and strongly supported candidates do not get an award. Each

proposal receives careful scrutiny by the assessors, and their decision is reached in the context of the competing proposals from other candidates.

54. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, the AHRC does have a complaints and appeals procedure, details of which can be found on our web site. <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/About/Policy/Pages/CorporateDocuments.aspx>
55. 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 Holders* which is available to download from our web site and is updated annually. <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/StudentshipCompetition.aspx>

## Annex A – Case for Support

56. The Case for Support must be typed in no less than 11pt Arial typescript (or equivalent) and be no longer than 1 side of A4. **The AHRC reserves the right to reject applications which exceed this limit.**

### Doctoral scheme

#### Reasons for undertaking this project

57. The student should state briefly what the key area or issues of their project will be and why they wish to pursue this research project. The student should make it clear how the proposed work relates to what they have already studied and where there is a significant overlap with their Master's dissertation (if the student has completed one), the student should demonstrate clearly how the project goes beyond this and the added value of continuing to research in this area. This does not mean that the assessors expect a student's research programme to be in the same area as their previous study, but they will need to know that a student has sufficient experience to complete their project. Finally, the student should say how their doctoral study relates to their eventual career aims.

#### Research Project

58. The student should give a brief synopsis of their proposed research project. We recommend that the student refers to the Council's definition of research (given in the *Guide to Student Eligibility*) before completing this section and ensures that, in describing their research project, they address the key points of: research questions, context and methods. In a competition as fierce as this, how a student makes their case for support is crucial, so they should use clear and concise language, avoiding jargon. Students should bear in mind that the assessors might not be experts in their particular specialist field.
59. The main thrust of this section should be the research problems or questions the student intends to address in their doctoral study. These should be clearly defined in the student's proposal. They should describe:
- the research problems or questions they intend to address
  - the research context (background) in which those problems or questions are located. In describing the context, the student should refer to the current state of knowledge and any recent debate on the subject
  - the particular contribution to knowledge and understanding in this area that the student hopes to make. The student should explain why the work is important. The fact that an area has not been studied previously is not, in itself, a case for the work to be supported. We are also seeking a description of relevance beyond the development of the student's own skills or experience, though this is important too
  - the methods and critical approaches that the student plans to use to address the problems or questions they have set. We don't just need

to know what the student is going to work on, we need to know how they plan to go about it

- the sources that the student will use, if appropriate. The student will need to state where these sources and materials are located and how these will be accessed. For example, if the student is undertaking an archaeological project, do they need a permit to access a particular site, and how will this be obtained? It is sometimes helpful to put forward alternative strategies or approaches if the student is aware that problems might arise
- The student should say, as far as they can, how the project will develop or how they will structure the work over the period of the award.
- The student should identify and address any ethical issues relating to the research project (see the *Guide to Student Eligibility* for more information).

60. For creative and practice-led subjects, the Council will not support proposals that aim to produce only a creative outcome or piece of work. The Council expects the 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 it and to demonstrate critical reflection.

61. If a student has already begun their doctoral study, it is important that they give some indication of the work they have undertaken to date, e.g. information on any chapters or major pieces of work they have completed.

#### Preparation and previous experience

62. The student should give a brief indication of any previous experience or preparation that is relevant to their proposed doctoral study. For example, they may wish to highlight key areas of their Master's study. Where applicable, the student should also include training and preparation, additional to the formal undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications already listed, which is relevant to their proposed study, e.g. if the student has additional degrees, qualifications or relevant skills that they have not mentioned elsewhere on the form. If the student is aware of additional training, e.g. language skills, ICT training, that they will require in order to complete their studies, it should be included in this section. The fact that the student requires further training will not be regarded by the assessors as a sign of weakness.

63. For practice-led subjects, the student should include details of their professional or work experience (including relevant voluntary work or exhibitions), as the assessors will be looking at their track record. For example, if a student's application is for doctoral study in creative writing, they should describe the kind of writing (published or unpublished) they have undertaken. If the student's work experience was completed over several short periods, it would be helpful to give an overall number of weeks or months, e.g. 3 months' gallery experience.

#### Applying for extended funding

64. If the student is applying for more than three years' full-time or five years' part-time funding then please ensure that you read the relevant section in the *Guide to Student Eligibility*. The student must provide a justification for the additional period of support they are requesting, in line with the criteria outlined in the *Guide to Student Eligibility*, as follows:

- 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 skills, 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.

65. The justification should be under a separate heading in the case for support and should:

- demonstrate why the additional time is needed, including why the research cannot be completed in the standard time, and why it was not possible to acquire the relevant skills and knowledge as part of a research preparation Master's course
- give details of how the additional time would be used and demonstrate how the acquisition of the relevant skills and knowledge would be integral to the proposed doctoral study.

### **Research Preparation Master's Scheme**

#### Preparation for doctoral study or a career in research in the higher education sector

66. The student should state briefly why they wish to study this course, or to pursue this research project, at this RO. The assessors are interested in the relationship between the course the student wishes to take, their academic development and training, and their research and career aspirations. The sorts of questions that need to be addressed are highlighted here:

- What are the intellectual problems that interest the student and how will this course address these interests?
  - How will the course and the RO prepare the student for doctoral study?
  - In the case of creative and performing arts, how will the course prepare the student for either doctoral study or provide a foundation for a career in research in the higher education sector?
  - How does it relate to the student's eventual career aims?
67. The expectation is that the student will proceed to a course of doctoral study. They should therefore say why they wish to proceed to doctoral study and include an indication of the likely focus of their doctoral studies.
68. For creative and performing arts subjects, including practice-led study, if the student is not intending to continue to doctoral study, they should say how the course will act as a foundation for their career in research in the higher education sector. They should include an indication of the likely focus of their research beyond their Master's degree.
69. If the student has had a career change, it would be helpful to the assessors to say why they wish to pursue this new direction.

The course or programme of study to be undertaken, including the student's dissertation

70. If the student is pursuing a taught course, they should briefly describe the individual pathway they intend to pursue through it, the subjects and topics they will be studying, and the proportion of time they will spend on each of them. Students should not simply copy the structure of the course from the prospectus. The assessors are interested in a student's reasons for taking this course; they do not need general information on the course structure.
71. The student should identify their dissertation topic, showing that they are aware of the current state of knowledge and how the research will be pursued. In describing their dissertation, the student may find it helpful to read the points above about the 'research project'. Please note, however, that a student is not required at this stage to have a fully worked-out plan for their dissertation. The student should include any problems they foresee and say how these will be overcome.
72. Where there is a significant overlap between their undergraduate dissertation (if they completed one) and their proposed dissertation or research programme, the student should demonstrate clearly how the project goes beyond their undergraduate work. The added value of continuing research in the area needs to be demonstrated.
73. If the student is applying for a Master's by Research, they should give a brief synopsis of their proposed research project. The main thrust of this section should be the research problems or questions the student intends to address. These should be clearly defined in their proposal. The student should describe:
- the research problem or question they intend to address

- the research context in which those problems or questions are located. In describing the context, they should refer to the current state of knowledge and any recent debate on the subject
- the particular contribution to knowledge and understanding in this area that they hope to make. They should explain why the work is important. The fact that an area has not been studied previously is not, in itself, a case for the work to be supported. We are also seeking a description of relevance beyond the development of the student's own skills or experience
- the methods and critical approaches that they plan to use to address the problems or questions they have set. We don't just need to know what the student is going to work on, we need to know how they plan to go about it
- the sources that they will use, if appropriate. The student will need to state where these sources and materials are located and how these will be accessed. For example, if they are undertaking an archaeological project, does the student need a permit to access a particular site and how will this be obtained? It is sometimes helpful to include alternative strategies or approaches if they are aware that problems might arise
- they should say, as far as they can, how the project will develop over the period of the award.

74. For practice-led research subjects (including creative writing), the Council will not support proposals that aim to produce only a creative outcome or a piece of work; there must be a research basis and outcome to the project and this must be clearly explained in the proposal.

#### Applying for more than one year's full-time or two years' part-time funding

75. If the student is applying for more than one year's full-time or two years' part-time funding, they should say why the additional period of training is necessary.

#### Preparation and previous experience

76. The student should give a brief indication of any previous experience or preparation that is relevant to their proposed study. For example, any modules they have taken as part of their undergraduate degree that are particularly relevant. This should not be an exhaustive list, but a summary which demonstrates to the assessors that the student is appropriately prepared to undertake their proposed course.

77. The student should also include preparation that is additional to the formal undergraduate qualifications they have already listed. For example, if they have additional degrees or qualifications that they have not mentioned elsewhere on the form and these are relevant training and preparation, they should be included, e.g. a PGCE. If the student is aware of further training they will require to enable them to complete their studies, e.g. language skills or ICT training, it should be included in this section. The fact that they need further training will not be regarded by the assessors as a sign of weakness.

78. For practice-based research subjects, the student should include details of their professional experience, e.g. any studio work or exhibitions. The assessors will be looking at their track record and at how their research will build on their previous experience.

## **Professional Preparation Master's Scheme**

### Contribution to long-term career aims

79. The student should state briefly why they wish to pursue this course, at this particular RO. Importantly, it should be clear why taking this course is a pre-requisite for meeting their long-term career aims.

### The course to be undertaken and why it is necessary for practice in the student's your chosen field

80. In describing their course of study, the student should remember that the assessors are interested in the relationship between the course the student wishes to take and their own academic and professional development, training and career aspirations. The student will need to describe clearly in their proposal how the course will be of benefit to them in developing their career. This is particularly important if the student is already practising professionally in the field. They should describe the individual pathway they intend to pursue through the course, they will need to indicate the subjects and topics they will be studying, and the proportion of time they will spend on each of them. The student should not simply copy the structure of the course from the prospectus. If this is a taught course, the student should explain why they have chosen the modules they intend to study. If the student has had a career change, it would be helpful to the assessors to say why they wish to pursue this new direction.

81. *Dissertation topic.* If relevant, the student should give a brief description of the subject area in which they plan to do their dissertation. Where there is a significant overlap between their undergraduate dissertation (if they completed one) and their proposed dissertation work, they should demonstrate clearly how the project goes beyond their undergraduate work.

82. *Practical assessment.* If a student's course includes an assessed practical element, they should give a brief description of the work they intend to pursue.

### Applying for more than one year's full-time or two years' part-time support

83. If a student is applying for more than one year's full-time or two years' part-time funding, they should ensure that they say why the additional period of training is necessary.

### Previous experience

84. The student should say how their proposed work relates to what they have studied already, and any relevant professional experience they have had.

85. It is important to include details of the student's professional or work experience in their field of study (including relevant voluntary work), as the assessors will be looking at their track record. For example, if the student is undertaking a creative writing course, they should describe the kind of writing (published and unpublished) they have undertaken. If the student's work experience was completed over several short periods, it would be helpful to give an overall number of weeks or months, e.g. 3 months' gallery experience.
86. The student should give a brief indication of the training and preparation they have already undertaken that is relevant to their proposed study. They should say how this training has prepared them for their course of study and their future career, and what further training they will require. They should give a realistic assessment of the academic challenges they will face on the course or project, and say how they will meet these challenges.
87. If the student has additional degrees or qualifications that they have not mentioned elsewhere on the form, e.g. a PGCE, and these are relevant training and preparation, they should be included here. If the student already has a postgraduate qualification, they should say how this relates to their proposed studies.

## Annex B – Reference Headings

88. Each reference must be typed in no less than 11pt Arial typescript (or equivalent) and be no longer than 1 side of A4. The AHRC reserves the right to reject applications which exceed this limit.

### Previous Performance

89. Please note that now the AHRC no longer requests separate forms for information about degree results, the assessors are heavily reliant on the information and comments provided by referees and the RO.
90. Referees should provide a realistic appraisal of the student's abilities based on their assessment of his/her academic and, where relevant, professional performance to date. Comments should be included on the student's overall performance in his/her degree(s) and his/her performance on individual modules or courses. Where appropriate, referees should draw on the comments of external examiners or other external contacts. Where the student has a joint degree, performance in both disciplines should be included. For assessment purposes it is important that **all marks** are given and not only the ones related to the subjects applied for.
91. The assessors are interested in such qualities as the student's conceptual ability, ability to solve problems, independence of mind, potential to develop innovative methods, communication skills, organisational abilities and, where relevant, his/her practical or technical capabilities. Referees should give examples to illustrate their comments.
92. Professional referees should draw on their experience of the student's work to give an appraisal of his/her professional performance to date. They should highlight the student's strengths in the area in which he/she plans to study and note any weaknesses the student may have. Referees should give examples to illustrate their comments.
93. Where a degree(s) has already been awarded the referee should include the **actual degree result(s)** attained by the student.
94. Where the degree has not already been awarded, the referee should provide a forecast of the likely degree result. If the referee is permitted to do so, they should also include details of any formal assessments of the student's work to date. This is important information for the assessors.

### Preparedness for Masters or doctoral study

95. The assessors need to know how well prepared the student is for Master's or doctoral level study (as appropriate to the scheme applied for) and whether he/she can bring it to completion.
96. Referees should provide an assessment of the suitability of the course or project, the student's potential to complete the course or project successfully, and his/her motivation or commitment. Referees should say how the proposed course or their research relates to the student's academic and professional experience to date, and to his/her future plans, specifically for

- continuing in professional practice for the PPM scheme and further research at doctoral level or a career in research in the higher education sector for the RPM scheme. They should make their comments in the context of the proposed course of study or programme of work, as the assessors will be looking at the student's preparedness for the course or project, not just at his/her abilities. Referees may wish to address questions such as how the student has developed and improved during his/her undergraduate and/or postgraduate career.
97. Referees should comment on factors such as the student's intellectual, professional, practical or technical ability; conceptual ability; problem-solving skills; capacity for independent thought; potential for innovation; organisational skills; communication skills; and the student's ability compared to other relevant groups or individuals of which the referee has experience.
  98. In the Doctoral Scheme, if the student has commenced his/her doctoral study, referees should include details of his/her progress to date. They should give an assessment of the student's progress and say on what basis this assessment has been made. For example, there may have been formal monitoring or a review of the student's work upon which they can draw.
  99. In the Doctoral Scheme, if the student has already studied at postgraduate level, referees should give examples of how this study has prepared the student to undertake doctoral research. If the student has no experience at postgraduate level, referees should comment on his/her preparedness to move directly to doctoral research without an initial year of Master's-level training.
  100. Professional referees should also comment on the student's professional commitment, motivation and potential. It would be helpful to say how the professional experience the student has gained has built on his/her academic studies, and how it will prepare him/her to pursue his/her research and meet his/her long-term career aims.
  101. If it is likely that the assessors will be unfamiliar with the research or professional environment to which a referee's comments refer, referees should ensure that they provide sufficient background to enable the assessors to place their comments in context.
  102. It would also help the assessors if referees could mention any additional training that the student will need in order to successfully complete his/her doctoral studies. Are there particular aspects of the course or proposed project of which the student has had no, or little, experience? For example, the student may require language training in order to work on original source material, or IT training to access particular datasets. Constructive observations about training needs will not disadvantage the student since the acquisition of new skills is an important part of a doctoral student's training and development.
  103. Under the Freedom of Information Act, the student may wish to see a copy of the reference. Referees should clearly state if they do not wish their reference to be disclosed.

## **Annex C – Organisational Statement**

104. The Organisational Statement must be typed in no less than 11pt Arial typescript (or equivalent) and be no longer than 2 sides of A4. The AHRC reserves the right to reject applications which exceed this limit.

### **Doctoral Scheme**

#### Offer

105. The RO should explain briefly the basis on which the student has been offered a place. For example, they may have interviewed the student, or they may have seen a portfolio of the student's work. The assessors will use this information to put the RO's comments into context.

#### Support available to the student

106. The nature of the support available to the student to enable him/her to undertake the proposed research programme. The RO could include resources such as libraries, IT and other equipment. If the student requires specialist facilities or access to specific resources to complete his/her research, the RO should say how these will be provided. If these resources are not available at the RO, how will the student gain access to them? If the student will be undertaking a project of interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary nature, it should be clear how the student will be supported.
107. In this section, ethical issues relating to the student's research project should also be addressed (see the *Guide to Student Eligibility*).
108. If the project is being undertaken with a commercial company, the arrangements regarding disclosure of results should be explained. Will there be any delay or restrictions in making the results public?

#### About the supervisor

109. Details should be provided about the supervisor's research and supervisory experience to date. If it is a supervisory team, details should be provided for all those involved. The RO should say how the supervisor's expertise and experience equip him/her to meet the needs of this particular student, to complete this particular thesis. The RO might wish to include details of the supervisor's key publications and some indication of the number and destination of previous students he or she has supervised. If the supervisor has had little supervisory experience, it should be clear what mechanisms are in place to support him/her. If the supervisor's expertise does not cover the breadth of the student's proposed research programme, it should be clear who will supply the additional expertise, and on what basis, e.g. co-supervisor.

#### The research environment

110. Details should be provided about the research environment and the support mechanisms in place to enable the student to complete the research programme and gain high quality training. This could include the strengths of research-active scholars or specialist staff working in the relevant field(s) within the department, and any collaborative interactions with other departments or ROs, in the UK or overseas. It would be helpful to be specific, i.e. where appropriate, naming staff and their areas of expertise, rather than just giving numbers or making general statements. The RO should also mention other students and researchers within the department and any interactions there are between students. ROs should include an indication of the contribution they expect the student to make to the academic life of the department.

#### Assessment of the student

111. A realistic assessment of the student's preparedness and suitability for the planned programme of study should be provided. The assessors are asking for factual information based on what the student has done and how this relates to the work he/she will be undertaking. If the student does not have a formal Master's degree this section should be used to indicate the research training the student has received to enable him/her to pursue his/her doctoral study successfully. Please note that the length of a degree is not a sufficient evidence for student's preparedness to undertake research. In completing this section, please bear in mind that the assessors will have seen the referees' comments about the student's undergraduate and postgraduate performance. This section should be used to provide further relevant information, but the assessors are not asking for an additional reference.

#### Extended period of study

112. If the student is requesting extended doctoral funding, a case will need to be made for the additional period of funding. Please refer to the *Guide to Student Eligibility* for details of the criteria under which the additional period will be considered. Details should be provided of the support that will be provided to ensure that the additional skills and knowledge are acquired, including any training that will be made available and how any additional costs will be met. The details provided will form part of the assessment of the case for extended funding.

#### Training provision

113. The assessors need to know briefly what training provision will be made for this student. By 'training' we mean the development of knowledge, understanding and skills that the student needs to undertake his/her studies, to complete a high-quality thesis and prepare him/her for future employment. The expectation is that all students will require some level of training. The assessors will be looking for evidence of an assessment of the student's needs and provision of training appropriate to match those needs. When completing this section, you should refer to the information on Research Training in the *Guide to Student Eligibility*.

114. In this section, the assessors are interested only in the training needs and provision for this student, so it is important that comments in this section are specific to this individual. The following should be addressed:

- It should be clear what the student's immediate and medium-term training needs are. This should be based either on meetings with the student or on assessment of the student's previous experience and training. Reference should be made to both core generic skills, e.g. presentation, bibliographic and IT skills, and to skills specific to the student's programme of study. The need for specific skills training is considered to be an integral part of doctoral training, so assessors will expect to see a balance between generic and specific training. If the student has already completed a Master's-level degree, we assume that he/she will have received some research training as part of the course. Comments should be made here on what additional training is needed, over and above that provided through the Master's-level degree.
- It should be clear how the training needs identified above will be met, e.g. through courses or training programmes. Will training be in-house or provided elsewhere? For programme-specific training, please say briefly how the specialist training will be provided.
- It should be clear how this student's training and development needs will be reviewed and assessed on an ongoing, at least annual, basis. For students who have already completed at least one year of doctoral study, continuing training needs should be identified and how they will be met and monitored described.

### **Research Preparation Master's and Professional Preparation Master's scheme**

#### Additional details of the course

115. In this section the RO should highlight any details about the course which have not been covered by the student and that are considered to be relevant to his/her application. It should be clear how the course or programme of study will meet the student's needs, particularly in terms of the student's long-term research and career aims and how it meets the aims of the Research Preparation Master's or Professional Preparation Master's Scheme (as appropriate).

116. If the course is recognised by ESRC or NERC, it should be clear why this proposal is being directed to the AHRC.

117. If the project is being undertaken with a commercial company, the arrangements regarding disclosure of results should be explained. Will there be any delay or restrictions in making the results public?

#### Resources and support

118. The nature of the support available to the student to enable him/her to undertake the particular course or programme of study should be described. This could include the strengths of research-active scholars or specialist staff working in the relevant field(s) and resources such as libraries, IT and other equipment. It would be helpful if these comments could be specific, i.e.

where appropriate, naming staff and their areas of expertise, rather than just giving numbers or making general statements. If the student requires specialist facilities or access to specific resources to complete his/her course or programme of study, it should be clear how these will be provided. Also, comments should be provided on the teaching and research environment and the support mechanisms in place to ensure that the student is able to complete his/her studies or programme of work and gain high quality training. It should also be explained here how the RO deals with ethical issues, health and safety and misconduct (see the *Guide to Student Eligibility* for more information).

#### Preparedness for postgraduate study

119. Please state whether the applicant has been interviewed which the assessors will use to put the RO's comments into context. If the student has not been interviewed, it should be clear on what basis the comments in this section have been made, e.g. has a portfolio of the student's work been seen?
120. Comment should be made on the student's preparedness and suitability for this course or programme. The assessors are asking for factual information based on the student's academic (or related) experience to date and how this relates to the student's long-term career aims. They are not seeking an additional reference. Please bear in mind that the assessors will have seen the referees' comments about the student's undergraduate performance. This section should be used to make additional comments.
121. It should be clear what additional training the student will need in order to complete the course and to continue on to doctoral study or, in the creative and performing arts, to continue to doctoral study or to a career in research in the higher education sector. A realistic assessment of further training that will be required should be given and what action the RO will take to ensure that this training is provided.

## Annex D – Panel Structure

Please note certain subjects are ineligible in the PPM scheme, you should refer to the *Guide to Student Eligibility* for further information.

### Panel A

- History
- Law
- Philosophy
- Theology, Divinity and Religious Studies

### Panel B

- Architecture: History, Theory & Practice
- Community Arts (including Art and Health)
- Conservation of Art and Textiles
- Cultural Geography
- Cultural Policy, Arts management and the creative industries
- Cultural Studies and Popular Culture
- Dance Studies
- Design
- Drama and Theatre Studies
- Media
- Music
- Visual Arts including:
  - Applied Arts (History, Theory & Practice)
  - Art History
  - Art Theory and Aesthetics
  - Digital Arts (History, Theory & Practice)
  - Ethnography and Anthropology
  - Film-based media (History, Theory & Practice)
  - Fine Art (History, Theory & Practice)
  - Performance and Installation (History, Theory & Practice)
  - Photography (History, Theory & Practice)
  - Time-based media (History, Theory & Practice)

### Panel C

- Archaeology
- Classics
- Journalism
- Librarianship, Information & Museum Studies including:
  - Archives
  - Computational Studies
  - Conservation Science
  - Heritage Management
  - Information Management
  - Information Retrieval
  - Information Science
  - Library Studies
  - Management
  - Museum and Gallery Studies
  - Publishing
  - Records Management
  - User Studies

**Panel D**

- American Studies
- Creative Writing
- Dictionaries and Databases
- English Language and Literature
- Gender and Sexuality
- Lifewriting (including Biography and Autobiography)
- Linguistics
- Literary and Cultural Theory
- Modern Languages including:
  - Interpreting and Translation
- Post-colonial Studies
- Textual Editing and Bibliography

## Annex E - Assessment Criteria

### Doctoral scheme

Evidence of the quality of the student: this will be based on the case made by the student in support of his/her application, and evidence provided by the referees and RO about the student's performance at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and in terms of any relevant professional experience. It is important to note that by performance we do not mean only the final degree results but also any marks received to date. These should be available in the referees' report and in the Organisational statement where appropriate. The assessors are looking for evidence of an ability to articulate a research project, a coherent and well thought-out plan for doctoral study, and a good awareness of the place of his/her research within the current field.

Evidence that the student is well prepared for his/her proposed study and future career: this will be based on the student's description of how his/her previous experience (academic and professional) has prepared him/her for postgraduate study, and the student's description of how the programme of study will contribute to his/her long-term career aims. The assessors will also consider the supporting evidence provided by the referees and the RO, particularly in terms of the student's ability to complete the programme of study.

Evidence of the quality and feasibility of the proposed study: this will be based on the student's account of and reasons for pursuing the proposed programme of study. The assessors will also consider the supporting information provided by the RO about the programme of study and how it relates to the student's current and long-term goals.

Evidence of the quality and appropriateness of RO support and resource: this will be based on the RO's and department's account of the preparation and training that will be provided to meet the student's needs, in terms of his/her doctoral study and future career. The assessors will consider information provided on the resources and support provided for the student that will enable him/her to successfully pursue his/her studies and complete a high quality thesis. They will also look for evidence that there is appropriate research expertise within the department, in particular, that the supervisor(s) expertise is relevant to the student's proposed study. Assessors will also be interested in seeing that appropriate procedures and processes have been put in place in relation to research ethics, health and safety and misconduct.

## **Research Preparation Master's scheme**

Evidence of the quality of the student: this will be based on the case made by the student in support of his/her application, and evidence provided by the referees and RO about the student's performance at undergraduate level, and in terms of any relevant professional experience. It is important to note that by performance we do not mean only the final degree results but also any marks received to date. These should be available in the referees' report and in the Organisational statement where appropriate. The assessors are looking for evidence of an ability to articulate a research project, a coherent and well thought-out plan for the student's studies and evidence of an ability and well thought-out plan for the student's studies and evidence of an ability to articulate and undertake a research project.

Evidence that the student is well prepared for his/her proposed study and future career: this will be based on the student's description of how his/her previous experience (academic and professional) has prepared him/her for postgraduate study, and the student's description of how the course or programme of study will contribute to his/her long-term career aims. The assessors will also consider the supporting evidence provided by the referees and the RO, particularly in terms of the student's ability to complete the programme of study. There must be evidence that the student intends to proceed to doctoral study or, in the creative and performing arts, to proceed to doctoral study or a career in research in the higher education sector.

Evidence of the quality and feasibility of the proposed study: this will be based on the student's account of and reasons for pursuing the proposed course or programme of study. The assessors will also consider the supporting information provided by the RO about the programme of study and how it relates to the student's current and long-term goals.

Evidence of the quality and appropriateness of RO support and resource: this will be based on the RO's and department's account of the preparation and training that will be provided to meet the student's needs, in terms of his/her course or programme of study and future career. The assessors will consider information provided on the resources and support provided for the student that will enable him/her to successfully pursue his/her studies. They will also look for evidence that there is appropriate expertise within the department relevant to the student's proposed study. Assessors will also be interested in seeing that appropriate procedures and processes have been put in place in relation to research ethics, health and safety and misconduct.

## **Professional Preparation Master's scheme**

Evidence of the quality of the student: this will be based on the case made by the student in support of his/her application, and evidence provided by the referees and RO about the student's performance at undergraduate, and in terms of any relevant professional experience. It is important to note that by performance we do not mean only the final degree results but also any marks received to date. These should be available in the referees' report and in the Organisational statement where appropriate. The assessors are looking for clearly articulated reasons for pursuing the chosen course of study, and evidence of the ability to successfully pursue and complete the course.

Evidence that the student is well prepared for his/her proposed study and future career: this will be based on the student's description of how his/her previous experience (academic and professional) has prepared him/her for postgraduate study, and the student's description of how the programme of study will contribute to his/her long-term career aims. The assessors will also consider the supporting evidence provided by the referees and the RO, particularly in terms of the student's ability to complete the course. There must be evidence that the student intends to proceed to practice professionally in the field for which the course will prepare them.

Evidence of the quality and feasibility of the proposed study: this will be based on the student's account of and reasons for pursuing the proposed programme of study. The assessors will also consider the supporting information provided by the RO about the programme of study and how it relates to the student's current and long-term goals.

Evidence of the quality and appropriateness of RO support and resource: this will be based on the RO's and department's account of the preparation and training that will be provided to meet the student's needs, in terms of his/her Master's-level study and future career. The assessors will consider information provided on the resources and support provided for the student that will enable him/her to successfully pursue his/her studies. They will also look for evidence that there is appropriate expertise within the department relevant to the student's proposed study. Assessors will also be interested in seeing that appropriate procedures and processes have been put in place in relation to research ethics, health and safety and misconduct.

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