



AHRC Beyond Text: Performances, Sounds, Images, Objects Programme

Collaborative Research Training Scheme 2008 Student-Led Initiative (£2,000)

1. Introduction

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is inviting applications to the first round of Student-Led Initiatives specific to the Beyond Text: Performances, Sounds, Images, Objects Programme. The details of both the Beyond Text Programme and the Student-Led Initiatives scheme are outlined below.

Applications can be submitted to a maximum value of £2,000 and the AHRC aims to make between 10 - 15 awards in this round, depending on value.

2. Beyond Text: Performances, Sounds, Images, Objects Programme

The **Beyond Text** strategic programme was developed in 2007 following a period of consultation with the arts and humanities research communities which identified visual communication, sensory perception, orality and material culture as key concerns for 21st century scholarship and the wider community. It recognises that today's digital culture means that communication is more rapid and often more transitory than ever before; performances, sounds, images and objects circulate swiftly on a global scale only to be replaced by even newer versions. Who controls and manages this material and its dissemination is now a key political, economic and legal question. Yet these are not new problems but ones with long historical roots. **Beyond Text** will create a collaborative, multi-disciplinary research community to work with those outside Higher Education on these issues. The programme will help inform and inflect public policy relating to our cultural and creative heritages and futures; it can also, for example, help inform educational practice at a time when traditional notions of literacy are being challenged by advances in communication technology. The programme will also foster public understanding of the many oral/aural, material and visual forms in which creativity has been generated and used. Finally, in bringing together those who create works and those who preserve, display and study them, the programme will break down traditional boundaries between practice-led or practice-based research and other forms of investigation. The £5.5 million programme will run for 5 years until May 2012.

3. Beyond Text Programme Specification

Forms of non-textual communication and creativity have long been, and indeed remain, vital and widespread in many cultural contexts, and the visual, material and aural records of the past and present offer very different insights from those found in written documentation. This means that hierarchies which have conventionally prioritised the written word over other forms of production are being challenged from many different directions.

The programme centres on five thematic, interdisciplinary areas which take up these challenges:

- Making and Unmaking
- Performance, Improvisation and Embodied Knowledge

- Technology, Innovation and Tradition
- Mediations
- Transmission and Memory

Attending to the full range of sensory perceptions, these themes provide a framework to investigate the formation and transformations of performances, sounds, images, and objects in a wide field of social, historical, and geographical contexts, tracing their reception, assimilation and adaptation across temporal and cultural boundaries. By building on work that is already underway and developing new activities, the aim is to treat these phenomena as objects of inquiry in their own right and to engage in research involving processes and practices that go beyond those associated with the written word and other forms of inscription.

Emphasising both the past and the contemporary, **Beyond Text** will bring together an international, multi-disciplinary community to consider the processes of creating and communicating cultural values through sound and sight, recognising that these often depend for their continuation and realisation on a range of textual practices. Thus **Beyond Text** does not mean 'Without Text'. While the creation and interpretation of performances, sounds, images and objects on both special and every-day occasions is the central concern, their translation, mediation and recreation through text remains key to their investigation. This is an issue that is increasingly important with the rapid transformation of new forms of recording and digital dissemination. Because of these aims, **Beyond Text** is of interest to those within the arts and humanities in Higher Education Institutions but also to those responsible for making, monitoring, preserving and disseminating performances, sounds, images and objects elsewhere and in other contexts. Here, **Beyond Text** provides a key opportunity to build on the strengths of collaborative and interdisciplinary work in the arts and humanities to develop and support collaboration with non-academic stakeholders, and to develop new research techniques and outcomes.

The aim of the programme is to support a multi-disciplinary community of scholars and practitioners drawn from Higher Education, museums, galleries, libraries and archives, business, policy, media, technology and the law to explore how human communication is articulated through sound, sight and associated sensory perceptions in both the past and the present. It aims to enhance connections between those who make and preserve works and those who study them, bridging divides that have often hampered effective scholarship, policy debates and discussion. It aims to have outputs which generate new questions and research and to provide a platform for future investigations. In doing so, it aims to be deliberately international and comparative in order to encourage innovative forms of research.

For additional information on the Beyond Text Programme, please refer to the full Beyond Text Programme specification which can be downloaded from the AHRC website at <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/BeyondText.aspx>. If you are considering applying to this Beyond Text specific round of Student-Led Initiatives, you are strongly recommended to read the programme specification as it will provide you with important thematic information that may affect the eligibility of your application.

4. Student-Led Initiatives

The Student-Led Initiative category is part of the Collaborative Research Training (CRT) Scheme and provides awards of up to £2,000 towards the costs of setting up the programme of training. The CRT scheme was developed as part of the AHRC's research training framework. It continues to provide seed money to support institutions in establishing new, or enhancing existing, specialist research training provision for doctoral students in the arts and humanities, in collaboration with at least one other institution.

The aim of this scheme is to support the establishment of innovative collaborative research training programmes, originated by and run for postgraduate doctoral students.

To ensure that the scheme is of benefit to as wide a range of postgraduate students as possible, the Initiative category is open to any postgraduate students in the arts and humanities. Exclusive priority will not be given to AHRC award holders, although where possible, AHRC award holders should be involved in the organisation of the project, and included in the audience. Funding will be provided on a competitive basis to applications that succeed in meeting the criteria of the CRT scheme, demonstrate a clear training and development focus that will benefit postgraduate researchers and that demonstrate a strong fit to the Beyond Text Programme.

Examples of possible initiatives are as follows: (please note that these are only examples and we welcome other proposals as long as they meet the aims and criteria of the scheme):

- Conferences (as long as the activities are led by and for research students)
- Career Development Initiatives
- Networks or Research Forums
- Journals or on-line web resources, which could include students both submitting, reviewing and editing papers, as well as students organising and administering the journal
- On-line video resources
- Roundtable events with academics and practitioners in the relevant field to discuss career pathways and career development issues
- Showcase/Demonstration Events, where students can present their research to local or national employers, government bodies, community organisations, media, primary and secondary educational pupils, etc.
- Knowledge Transfer Activities, involving interaction between students and non-academic organisations.

The AHRC is keen to see proposals outlining innovative practices that will benefit a wide range of postgraduate researchers, either by their involvement in the organisation of or participating in the project.

5. Aims of the scheme

The Student-Led Initiative should meet the aims of the Collaborative Research Training Scheme:

- To support the provision of specialised, subject- or discipline-specific research training
- To support higher education institutions throughout the UK to establish new or enhance existing specialist research training provision for doctoral students in the arts and humanities on a collaborative basis
- To enable institutions to offer this training to groups of students in several institutions, where it is not possible or not cost-effective to provide the training to students in a single department or institution, or where collaboration will provide a higher quality of provision and experience than a single institution could achieve
- Through such collaborations, to enhance the quality of training and student experience, which can be provided.

In addition to this, the Student-Led Initiative aims to:

- Enable doctoral students to gain experience of organising academic activities and to develop the broad range of generic skills involved in doing so
- Give doctoral students the opportunity to develop and broaden their knowledge in their area of research

- Provide doctoral students with the opportunity to put into practice a range of transferable skills (e.g. communication skills, project management, networking, facilitation etc) that have been or will be developed during postgraduate study
- Provide students with the opportunity to raise awareness of their research and promote themselves to their academic peers and the non-academic community
- Foster and promote Knowledge Transfer dialogue between researchers and the wider non-academic community
- Develop postgraduate students' ability to convey their research to non-specialist audiences
- Create a sense of community among the population of research graduates.

The AHRC believes that the experience of organising, developing and administering these initiatives is an excellent opportunity for students to enhance the development of both specialised, research-related skills and broader organisational and networking skills. Proposals should explain the benefits the students will gain through attending or interacting with the initiatives. Research students are invited to submit their proposals through their RO, which should support and endorse each proposal.

If you are interested in applying to the scheme but would like information on existing student-led activities and programmes, then the UK Grad's Database of Practice may be a helpful resource for you. This is an on-line resource where institutions can post information on good practice in training programmes they wish to share with the community. The Database can be found at:

http://www.grad.ac.uk/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/Resources/Database_of_practice/plcXbcXXc

If you would like further information on the AHRC's research training framework and the skills training it expects its award holders to receive please see our website at:

http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/university_staff/postgrad/research_training_framework.asp

This page also provides a link to the Research Councils' Joint Statement of Skills, which provides a useful guide to the generic and subject-specific skills postgraduate researchers should expect to develop during their studies.

6. Aims and Objectives of the Beyond Text Programme

Your application must meet at least one of the following selected aims and objective of the Beyond Text Programme to be eligible in this round:

- Stimulate high-quality research in the thematic areas, and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, in and beyond Research Organisations.
- Make distinctive contributions to the theoretical, conceptual, thematic, practice-led and empirical study of these thematic areas.
- Create an arena for shared debate both within and beyond the academic community on how to use evidence, approaches and methods to generate new questions and issues for those working with performances, sounds, images and objects.
- Facilitate connections, communication and exchange between researchers and a wide range of individuals and organisations outside academia with an interest in the research and its outcomes, including but not limited to those in the ICT, public policy, legal, creative and cultural sectors, museums, galleries, libraries and archives, performance spaces and the media.

- Contribute to public awareness of this research through programme and project-based outputs and events.
- Developed a vibrant research community whose activities will continue beyond the life of the **Beyond Text** programme.
- Build capacity in this field, in part by supporting early career researchers and postgraduate students.

6. Themes of the Beyond Text Programme

The proposed Student-Led Initiative must also demonstrate its fit to the programme by meeting at least one of the five programme themes:

- **Making and Unmaking**
This theme marks an important shift from studying the finished object to investigating the processes through which things are either generated, changed, dissolved or destroyed. This involves issues of power and authority as well as questions of creativity.
- **Performance, Improvisation and Embodied Knowledge**
This theme emphasises the multi-media concept of the performative and the spectacular; questions of improvisation and its relation to a script; and the issues of sensory, tacit forms of knowing and their transmission in a range of cultural practices and technologies. It looks at how education and the passing on of knowledge occur without textual transmission. It also considers the politics of performance. Who controls performances and what acts of resistance or subversion are possible in different social and cultural contexts?
- **Technology, Innovation and Tradition**
New materials, instruments, systems of production, distribution and reception have all had an important impact on our understanding of creativity and its development. But while recent technological advances have ostensibly transformed global communications, linking peoples of different economic circumstances, political systems, and geographical location, how much has really shifted in terms of reception, social networks and the trust and value placed in communication? What can we learn from cultural practices in earlier technological eras?
- **Mediations**
The dichotomies posed by the traditional contrasts between 'text and image', 'notation and music', 'script and performance' suggest unhelpful divides. This theme goes beyond binary divisions to look at mediated relationships which may include text but could also concern the interaction between images and sounds, images and objects, or sounds and objects. These relationships may be both enabled and constrained by the material forms in which they are communicated and increasingly by the developments in technology and the management and the legal environment that shape their potential for distribution and redistribution.
- **Transmission and Memory**
Written texts have been, and are, crucial to the processes of social memory and to the transmission of knowledge across generations and between societies. Yet other media and forms have played an equally important and often neglected role. This theme focuses on the work of memory in terms of objects, oral cultures and performance, and the ways in which it brings about transmission across time and space.

7. Applying to the scheme

Applications can be made in this scheme by postgraduate students attending a Research Organisation (RO) in the UK, directly funded by HEFCE, DEL, HEFCW or SFC. Applications should be submitted by a lead student. It is expected that organising the project should be led by research students, and the application will be expected to demonstrate that this is the case and to involve the input of a named lead student.

It is not necessary for you to collaborate with students at other ROs, although this may be appropriate for some projects, but doctoral students from a range of institutions should be invited to participate. As the lead student, you must be supported by your RO, i.e. endorsed by your Head of Department and supervisor.

Where more than one RO or student is involved in organising the project, one lead student and one lead institution must be identified to coordinate the proposal and to act as the contact for correspondence. If the application is successful, the award will be made to the lead institution which will be responsible for transferring any funds to partner institutions. Applications may involve collaboration with non-RO organisations, such as museums, libraries or galleries, but such organisations cannot lead a bid in this scheme.

You should discuss your proposed application with your supervisor and with any other relevant institution staff, and should consider whether your studies can support the time commitment required in organising the proposed project. You should ensure that you have the full support of your institution and have sought the appropriate advice needed to plan your project successfully, including any specialist or technical guidance needed.

Only one application should be submitted for each project. We will not accept applications covering different aspects of a single initiative or separate applications from the different partners involved in any collaborative bids.

8. Who Should Benefit From The Student-Led Initiative?

As part of the application process we request information on the number of arts and humanities doctoral students and AHRC award holders who are likely to benefit from the project. We will take this information into account alongside the nature and quality of the proposal and the costs sought when assessing the proposal.

Projects funded through this scheme should be open to all relevant arts and humanities doctoral students where appropriate. The project must be of direct benefit to research students primarily. Whilst we would not discourage Master's level students or students from other disciplines from benefiting from an initiative, priority must be weighted to doctoral students in the arts and humanities.

Where students or parties other than arts and humanities doctoral students participate in AHRC-funded projects, the costs arising from their participation cannot be covered. Funding should only be used by and for arts and humanities research students.

Support from the AHRC for the project should be acknowledged at any event or in conjunction with any material developed.

Please note that applications for annually recurring activities are not eligible for this Beyond Text Student-Led Initiatives round. Proposals for the second year or the continuation of a relatively new initiative may be considered but must demonstrate a robust argument for funding.

9. Application and Assessment Processes

The deadline for this Beyond Text Programme Student-Led Initiatives round is **Thursday 9 April 2009**. Outcomes will be announced week commencing **4 May 2009**.

We require the original application form (i.e. with original signatures) and three photocopies.

You are required to select a lead student who will be responsible for reporting on the activity and who will act as the main point of contact for proposals. While it is understood that a team may be responsible for organising, conducting and running the initiative, we will still expect a lead student to be nominated (although details of the organising team should be included elsewhere in the proposal). Applications must be sanctioned by the head of department and the supervisor of the lead student.

The proposed start date of the initiative must fall after **31 May 2009** and must begin within one year of the offer of funding.

If you have previously been awarded funding as the lead student of a CRT conference, you may submit an application in the Student-Led Initiative.

10. Unsuccessful Applications and Resubmissions

The Council normally defines a resubmission as the submission of an unsuccessful application to a later round of the scheme, within an allotted time-scale (normally by the closing date of the next round of the scheme). For the purposes of this round, however, if you are unsuccessful, proposals may be resubmitted to the second Beyond Text Student-Led Initiatives round which will be announced in late 2009. The purpose of the resubmission policy is to allow projects which are inherently worthy of funding a second chance of success. There is, however, no guarantee that a resubmitted application will be successful second time round, as it will be in open competition with an entirely new group of applications.

If your application is unsuccessful you will only be permitted to make **one** resubmission. You are strongly advised to take note of any feedback you received when preparing to submit your application for a second time.

When resubmitting an application for a Student-Led Initiative award, the project should remain essentially the same, and should bear the same title. The resubmission allows you to give due consideration to any comments or feedback provided by the Council's assessors and/or to make any improvements which you consider would enhance your application, and/or to update the application in light of any significant changes that may have happened since the original application was submitted.

If you are resubmitting an application you **must** complete a new application form and state clearly that it is a resubmission.

11. Assessment Criteria

Applications submitted in the Beyond Text Student-Led Initiative round will be assessed by the AHRC Executive and the Beyond Text Programme Director.

Applications will be judged by the following criteria:

- The fit to the Beyond Text Programme themes, aims and objectives.
- The quality of the proposed project, e.g. whether the project demonstrates intellectual coherence and is of appropriate scope

- That the project will be truly collaborative, involving a variety of researchers from different institutions either in organising the project or as the audience
- The extent to which the project is explicitly being organised by and for research students
- Evidence of the extent and quality of the training and skills development to be gained by the organisers and the doctoral students who will benefit from the project
- Evidence of the support that will be provided by the host department or institution and that specialist advice has been sought where needed (e.g. technical advice for an on-line resource)
- Evidence that procedures are in place for evaluating and ensuring the high quality of the project developed and delivered
- Evidence that realistic plans are in place for the project in terms of its costs and timescales
- Evidence that the long term sustainability of the project has been considered
- Evidence that effective plans for disseminating the outcome of the project have been considered and will be pursued after the AHRC award has ended

Please note that priority will be given to proposals for new projects; however we will consider proposals for the second year or the continuation of a relatively new initiative

Guidance notes on completing the application form

The lead applicant should complete the form. It should be word-processed in at least 10 pt font.

All sections of the form should be completed; we are unable to accept applications that are incomplete. Please ensure that you preserve the format of the application form and that the text boxes do not run onto subsequent pages. Small boxes may be completed by hand if you are unable to complete them electronically.

Please do not include additional pages.

Please staple the completed application form.

Section 1: Title of provision

Please include a title for the initiative. This is for ease of reference and might include, for example, the subject area involved. The title will be used for publicity-purposes if the award is successful so should be meaningful to a non-specialist audience.

Section 2: Details of the Lead Applicant and Institution

You should be a doctoral student studying in the arts and humanities, at a UK Institution. Please give details of the area and year of your study. **You do not have to be an AHRC award holder.** Applications should be sanctioned by your Head of Department and supervisor of the lead student.

Where the proposal involves collaboration between a number of ROs, we ask that you identify one individual to lead the application. Any collaborating organisations will need to decide which institution is best placed to lead the bid, but should bear in mind the following:

- All AHRC correspondence will be sent to the lead student
- If the bid is successful then the award payments will be made to the finance office of the RO at which the lead student is based
- The lead institution must be eligible to receive funding from the AHRC, i.e. be a UK RO funded by one of the four UK Higher Education Funding Councils.
- The AHRC will monitor successful awards so the lead student must be in a position to update the council on progress with the project.

Section 3: Details of the Student-Led Initiative

You may bid for up to £2000 for the costs of your project. Please give as much detail as possible about the subject matter and how it will be organised, and on the structure and aims of the project. You should not exceed the 2,000 word limit for section 3 of the form. Applications exceeding the word limit may be made ineligible.

Please use the following headings when completing the form:

3.1 Type of initiative

Please briefly indicate the type of project e.g. round table event, conference, web resource etc.

3.2 Dates/Duration of the Project

Please state dates/duration of the project and indicate if it is intended as a one-off event, a series, or a continuing programme of work.

3.3 Location

If the project takes the form of an event, please state where it will be held.

3.4 Describe the aims and objectives of the project, including goals for both the organisers and participants and how these reflect the aims and objectives of the Beyond Text Programme.

Please describe the objectives of the project and how it will fit within the Beyond Text Programme. Outline what you hope to achieve in organising it and what benefits attendees/audiences will gain from it. These may be subject specific but should also include generic aims. Please also briefly describe the outcome intended for participants in the project.

You should also describe briefly how your subject area(s) fit within the themes of the Beyond Text Programme. We welcome single subject and inter-disciplinary topics. You should also state who might utilise or participate in the project, including non-student participation. Please give an estimation of the number of projected participants in the project.

3.5 Describe the project and the training needs that will be met for both the organisers and participants.

Involvement in the project should meet the specialist, subject specific training needs of the participants, so please outline how they will be met.

3.6 Describe the collaborative elements of the project.

We expect the organisation to be conducted by research students, but aside from the named student organising the work, please indicate who else might be involved and in what capacity; how will the programme be collaborative in nature and what different institutions and organisations will be involved in the initiative? If there are complimentary activities, such as workshops, poster sessions, responsive-mode feedback, or other events as part of the initiative please include them in the description.

3.7 How will you publicise the project?

Please outline how it will be publicised to your target audience. If applicable, please indicate any plans to publish proceedings or outcomes once the project has ended.

3.8 How will the success of the project be evaluated and how will you disseminate any outcomes?

Please also outline how you will evaluate the success of your initiative, and that the programme met the training needs of those involved.

3.9 How will you sustain this activity after the AHRC funding has ended?

The aim of the CRT scheme is to support the arts and humanities community in establishing new research training provision. The AHRC is keen to see that successful programmes of training initiated through this scheme become embedded in the community and are of long-term benefit to postgraduate researchers. Please indicate how your programme might be sustained after the AHRC funding has ended.

Section 4: Beyond Text Programme Themes, Aims and Objectives

Please indicate which of the Beyond Text Programme's themes, aims and objectives will be met by your proposal.

You can select as many of the themes, aims/objectives as you feel is appropriate but you must select at least one theme **and** one aim/objective. If you are unable to select at least one from each section, **your application will not be eligible** and you should consider applying through the standard route for Student-Led Initiatives.

Section 5: Costs

Please provide a detailed breakdown of how costs will be allocated and what added value the AHRC funding will provide. If the project is likely to cost in excess of £2,000 please state what other funding has been appropriated or sought.

Costs that are **not eligible** are:

- Academic staff time
- Costs of hiring or refurbishing rooms within participating higher education institutions or internal space charges
- Costs for generic equipment which could reasonably be expected to be provided by the collaborating institutions.

Section 6: Institution's Authorisation

Someone with appropriate authority within the institution should authorise the application by signing the form and stamping it with the institution's stamp.

In signing the form the institution agrees to abide by the terms and conditions of the scheme and to inform the AHRC of any changes. Where the application has specified a transfer of funds to another institution, the lead institution agrees to transfer funds, as specified.

If you have a proposed initiative in mind and would like to discuss it further please do not hesitate to contact us for an informal discussion.

Please send the completed application form with original signatures, plus three copies, to the AHRC before **4pm on 9 April 2009**. We cannot accept applications sent by fax or email, nor can we accept late, incomplete or unauthorised applications.

The contacts for the Beyond Text Programme are:

Professor Evelyn Welch (Beyond Text Programme Director)

Please contact Professor Welch if you have any queries regarding whether your proposal will fit the themes or aims and objectives of the Beyond Text Programme.

e.welch@qmul.ac.uk

Susanne Hart (AHRC)

Please contact Susanne Hart if you have any queries regarding applicant eligibility or the application process.

Tel 0117 9876633

Email s.hart@ahrc.ac.uk

Please send all completed applications to:

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