

PG Subject Coverage

Introduction

1 No precise definition of the subject domain of the arts and humanities is possible. The Council funds high quality research and postgraduate training in a huge range of subjects from history and English literature to design and dance. Within that broad definition, there are inevitable overlaps and border territories that are shared with other award-making bodies. We seek to specify where such overlaps are likely to occur in the detailed guidance given below in paragraphs 7-25.

2 In general, we seek to be as liberal as possible in defining and interpreting the Council's domain, to an extent that is consistent with the protection of its core subject areas (where those who are seeking funds for the support of their research have no choice but to apply to the Council). The Council will thus accept any application submitted to it that is eligible on other grounds, unless there are firm grounds for reaching the conclusion that the application falls wholly outside its domain. It will not reach such a decision on the grounds that the application could have been accepted by another body. Rather, the test is whether it would be an unacceptable extension of the Council's domain for it to accept the application in question as falling within it. Such decisions are reached on a case by case basis.

3 Many areas of study in the arts and humanities overlap with other disciplines, and some are inherently interdisciplinary. It is not possible to define what falls within or outside the arts and humanities by reference to the methodologies used, or by simple reference to the subject matter of the study. Rather, the Council takes into account the approach that is to be adopted: whether the research questions or problems to be addressed, the wider context in which those questions or problems are located, as well as the methodologies to be adopted, can most plausibly be regarded as falling within the domain of the arts and humanities.

4 Please note that the AHRC does not fund courses in education.

The mapping of subjects to panels

5 The Council has established eight peer review panels to assess all the applications presented to it, and it operates on the general principle that it should be the responsibility of those submitting the application to determine to which panel or panels the application should most appropriately be directed. Only in very exceptional cases, where there has been a clear misjudgement, will

applications be directed to another panel, and then in consultation with those responsible for the application. It should also be stressed that the panel to which an application is directed need not be determined by the title of the department or other unit within an institution in which you will undertake your work. Rather, you should be guided by the subject matter of the application itself. Some work that is located in a language department, for example, might well be suitable for submission to the Council's history panel.

Interdisciplinarity

6 The Council's structure of panels is based on single disciplines that are in some cases grouped together. But it welcomes and is committed to support work that spans disciplinary boundaries. Wherever possible postgraduate applications should be directed to a single panel, but where appropriate you and your institutional authorities may indicate that you would like a second panel to be approached for a subsidiary assessment.

The Eight Subject panels

Panel 1: Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology

7 **Classics and ancient history** may include:

- the language, literature and thought (including ancient science and philosophy) of Greece and Rome from the earliest times to late antiquity;
- Latin language and literature of the middle ages and subsequent periods;
- the history, art and archaeology of Greece from the Mycenaean period to the Roman empire;
- the history, art and archaeology of Rome, Italy and the Roman provinces from the pre-Roman period to the late Roman empire;
- the language, literature, history, culture, art and archaeology of the Byzantine world;
- Latin and Greek philology and linguistics;
- the reception of classical antiquity and the classical tradition.

In addition, it should be noted that:

- applications for work in medieval Latin should normally be directed to this panel
- applications in ancient philosophy and religion may also be directed to Panel 8 (Philosophy, Religious Studies and Law)
- applications in other ancient languages, such as Sumerian, should normally be directed to this panel

- applications in Byzantine studies may be directed to this panel, or to Panels 2 (Visual Arts and Media: practice, history, theory) or 4 (Medieval and Modern History) or any combination of them
- applications in modern Greek should be directed to Panel 5 (Modern Languages and Linguistics)
- applications in the classical tradition and its reception, should normally be directed to this panel, perhaps in association with another panel such as 2 (Visual Arts and Media: practice, history, theory), 3 (English Language and Literature) or 4 (Medieval and Modern History).

8. **Archaeology** falls within the domain of the humanities scheme and may include:

- archaeological theory;
- archaeology of human origins;
- prehistoric and historic societies on a world-wide basis.

This includes:

- early civilisations of near east;
- Egyptology;
- classical archaeology;
- medieval and post-medieval archaeology;
- colonial and industrial archaeology.

Also included are:

- landscape and environmental archaeology;
- public archaeology;
- archaeological aspects of heritage management and museum studies.

9. The Council shares responsibility for the funding of research in archaeology with the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), which supports primarily science-based archaeology. The distinction between science-based and other archaeology is not always easy to make, but where the focus of the work to be undertaken (in terms of the research questions or problems to be addressed, and the context for those questions, as well as the methodologies to be employed) is primarily archaeological, applications should be directed to the Council; and where it is scientific, they should more appropriately be directed to the NERC.

10. The Council will use its discretion and does not seek to discourage applications on the borderline of the humanities and science side of archaeology, but follows these guidelines:

- The AHRC will not normally accept applications from students who have applied for Master's courses that are explicitly supported by NERC studentship awards.
- In Competition A, applications seeking funding for MSc programmes should use the Institutional Support Statement section of the application form to demonstrate that the programme in question contains a significant proportion of structured work in the humanities, emphasising the archaeological context in which scientific techniques are to be applied. The AHRC will also consider applications to fund Master's courses of a predominantly scientific nature, however, if it can be shown that the course is designed to equip the candidate with skills required for a PhD of the type that AHRC would fund in its doctoral competition.
- In the doctoral competition, projects must address research issues and problems of substantive archaeological significance. If a proposal focuses on an archaeological question (for example about trade, cultural history or identity) that can be answered with science, then it falls within the remit of AHRC. The AHRC will not normally support projects that are mainly concerned with technical or scientific questions that have an application within archaeology.

11. Applications in cultural resource management are within the subject domain of Competition P. Where they have a clear archaeological base, they should be directed to this panel. But other applications may be more appropriately directed to other panels, such as Panels 2 (Visual Arts and Media: practice, history, theory), 4 (Medieval and Modern History) or 6 (Librarianship, Archives and Information Science).

Panel 2: Visual Arts and Media: practice, history, theory

12. This panel covers studies relating to contemporary practice, history or theory in art, design and media.

Art and design may include:

painting, public art, sculpture, performance, installation, time-based art, printmaking, photography, screen productions, virtual reality, multimedia, digital and interactive art and design, software design for visual artefacts, animation, illustration, graphic and communication design, art and design in the landscape, environmental and interior design, theatre design, exhibition and events design, fashion, textiles, jewellery and metalwork, ceramics, glass, automotive design, product and furniture design, art and design management, pedagogy in art and design, cultural, theoretical and historical studies (where this is principally contextual to contemporary practice and culture within art and design).

The Council will also support research in architecture that concerns building design (but not structural or civil or other aspects of engineering)

Arts management research will be supported where there is a clear focus on the requirements of the visual or media arts. (Support for such research may also be sought from the Arts Councils.) Alternatively, where the focus is on arts management within music and the performing arts, applications may be more appropriately directed to Panel 7 (Music and the Performing Arts). You should also bear in mind that the ESRC supports work on the socio-economic foundations and impact of the creative and cultural industries.

13. History of art, architecture and design may include:

- history of art, architecture, and design, in the widest chronological and geographical framework;
- theory and aesthetics of the visual arts;
- museology, museum studies, and conservation;
- history of film, photography, and visual media;

together with work in cognate fields such as cultural and gender studies, archaeology, and anthropology, where these relate to, or are grouped with, study of the visual arts. In addition, it should be noted that:

- applications in museology, curatorship and conservation should be directed to this panel only where the focus is on curating visual arts exhibitions. Other such applications should normally be directed to Panel 6 (Librarianship, Information and Museum Studies), except where the focus is archaeological, when they might be more appropriate for Panel 1 (Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology)
- applications in some aspects of cultural geography may be appropriately directed to this panel, covering matters such as the iconography and interpretation of the cultural landscape; cultural constructions of nature and environment; creative and imaginative aspects of geographical thought and practice, including the arts of mapping; relationships between space, place and cultural identity. In some cases, applications could be directed to Panel 4 (Medieval and Modern History). The Council does not, however, accept applications that are clearly anthropological in nature.

Communication, cultural and media studies constitutes an area of study for which the AHRC shares responsibility with the ESRC. It includes:

- communication studies, including electronic communications;
- cultural studies;
- film studies;
- and media studies.

Study in these areas may fall within the domain of this panel, particularly where the focus is practice-based and on images. Other applications may be appropriately addressed to Panel 3 (English Language and Literature), Panel 5 (Modern Languages and Linguistics) or Panel 7 (Music and Performing Arts). Where the focus of the proposed work is on social or economic issues, applications may be more appropriately addressed to the ESRC.

Panel 3: English Language and Literature

14. **English language and literature** may include:

- Old and Middle English language and literature;
- Old Norse and Icelandic;
- renaissance literature;
- 17th and 18th century literature;
- romantic literature;
- Victorian literature;
- 20th century literature;
- American literature;
- colonial and postcolonial literature;
- comparative literature;
- women's writing;
- creative writing;
- children's literature;
- critical and cultural theory and history;
- gender and gay studies;
- bibliography, textual criticism and history of the book;
- Irish literature in English;
- Scottish Literature in English and Scots;
- and Welsh Literature in English.

In addition, the following points should be noted:

- applications for studies in the history of the English language, and stylistic and discourse analysis should be directed to this panel. Other English language studies, including studies of speech and pragmatics, lexis and grammar, may be directed to this panel or to Panel 5 (Modern Languages and Linguistics)
- applications in critical theory and cultural or communications studies may be appropriately directed to this panel, especially where the focus of the study is on the interpretation or analysis of texts in English. You should also bear in mind that the ESRC supports work in cultural and communications studies.
- applications in creative writing fall within the domain of this panel at both doctoral and Master's level. Those wishing to undertake a Master's-level course in creative writing should apply in Competition P.

- applications in publishing studies fall within the domain of Panel 6 (Librarianship, Information and Museum Studies) rather than this panel, at both doctoral and Master's level. Those wishing to undertake a Master's-level course in publishing studies should apply in Competition P to Panel 6.

Panel 4: Medieval and Modern History

15. The AHRC shares responsibility with ESRC for the support of postgraduate work in history. The AHRC supports work in all periods of history from ancient times to the recent past, and in all parts of the world. Similarly ESRC has a funding interest in the social and economic history of all periods and in all parts of the world. Applications in ancient history should normally be directed to Panel 1 (Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology), all other applications to Panel 4. The AHRC is primarily responsible for: biography; administrative, cultural, diplomatic, legal, military, political and religious history; the history of science, of medicine, and of ideas; and historiography.

As a working definition, and for the purposes of eligibility for the Postgraduate Competition, the AHRC takes 'modern history' to end in the late twentieth century. It does, of course, recognise that 'contemporary history' is a valid field of study. However, applicants whose study focuses primarily or exclusively on the last two decades of that century will need to show in their proposal how, and why, their focus is indeed predominantly historical (rather than contemporary, cultural or political etc) for example, how the study will focus on change over a defined period of time or will make predominant use of historical modes of analysis. Applicants should note that proposals which focus on contemporary or near-contemporary political theory or analysis or on economic or geographical themes should normally be directed to ESRC, since these studies form part of its remit. Proposals which focus exclusively or predominantly on the early twenty-first century will not normally be admissible.

In addition it should be noted that:

- applications in **historical or cultural geography** that fall within the Council's domain (see under Panel 2) and in the **history of geography** should be directed to this Panel, where there is a demonstrable historical focus
- applications in the **history of science and medicine** and in the **history of ideas** should be directed to this Panel, except in those cases where the philosophical focus of the proposed study is so dominant that it would be more appropriate to direct it to Panel 8 (Philosophy, Religious Studies and Law)
- applications in **area studies** might be appropriately directed to this Panel, where the main focus of the proposed work is historical, or to this Panel, along with another one, when there is a historical component to it. You should be aware that ESRC supports work in area studies

- while the Council supports work in diplomatic history and the history of international relations, applications in **contemporary or near-contemporary international relations** (see chronological definitions given above) or **contemporary or near-contemporary political theory or analysis** should normally be directed to ESRC
- some applications in **communication, cultural and media studies** might be directed appropriately to this Panel, perhaps in association with other panels, such as Panel 2 (Visual Arts and Media: practice, history, theory); Panel 3 (English Language and Literature); or Panel 5 (Modern Languages and Linguistics).

Panel 5: Modern Languages and Linguistics

16. This panel covers areas of work within the following subject areas:

- Middle Eastern and African studies;
- Asian studies;
- European studies;
- Celtic studies;
- French;
- German, Dutch and Scandinavian languages;
- Italian;
- Russian, Slavonic and East European languages;
- Iberian and Latin American languages;
- and linguistics.

The work to be undertaken may include:

- studies in language and literature;
- critical and cultural theory;
- creative writing;
- cultural studies;
- gender studies;
- media studies;
- philosophy;
- and historical studies.

Applications to this panel must, however, include a significant proportion of work on texts, documents or archives or fieldwork in a language other than English; they must also demonstrate competence in that language at an appropriate level. In social, political, cultural and historical studies there are overlaps with the responsibilities of the ESRC.

Applications in communication, cultural, media and gender studies may fall within the Council's domain, especially where the focus of the proposed study is on the study of texts or images; but you should bear in mind that the ESRC also supports work in communications, cultural, media and gender studies. Many applications in these areas of study that fall within the Council's domain may also be directed to other panels, such as 2 (Visual Arts and Media: practice, history, theory); 4 (Medieval and Modern History); and 7 (Music and Performing Arts) as well as to Panel 5.

Applications in **area studies** will generally fall within the Council's domain where the focus of the proposed study is on artistic or creative activities, history, languages, literatures, or thoughts and beliefs; but you should bear in mind that the ESRC also supports work in area studies. Many area studies applications that fall within the Council's domain may also be directed to other panels (including 2, 4 and 7) as well as to Panel 5.

Applications in **modern Greek studies** will be treated as falling within this panel's domain.

Applications to undertake Master's-level courses in **interpreting and translation** should be made to this panel in Competition P.

17. **Linguistics**. The AHRC shares with the ESRC responsibility for the support of research in linguistics. The AHRC focuses on support where research questions bear on the structure, history, theory, description and application of language and languages, including pragmatics and corpus studies, and such matters as translation and lexicography. Applications for such studies of the English language may be directed to this panel or to Panel 3 (English Language and Literature), but all studies of the history of English, stylistics or discourse and analysis should be directed to Panel 3. The ESRC focuses on support for areas of applied linguistics, computational linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and interdisciplinary social science research involving linguistics.

Panel 6: Librarianship, Information and Museum Studies

18. Applications for doctoral research in librarianship, record and archive studies, and information science fall within the domain of this panel; applications for Master's-level courses in these subjects should be directed to this panel in Competition P. This panel covers subjects including:

- information communities and the use and management of information in all forms and in all contexts;
- all aspects of archive administration and records management;
- all aspects of information policy in the information society;
- information systems;

- systems thinking;
- systems development;
- information retrieval (including interfaces and gateways);
- preservation and conservation of recorded information;
- the information industry, including publishing and journalism.

19. Applications from those intending to pursue doctoral research in **publishing studies and journalism**, including electronic publishing and electronic journalism, will also be accepted as falling within the domain of this panel; applications for Master's-level courses in publishing studies and journalism should be directed to this panel in Competition P.

20. Most applications in **museology, curatorship and conservation** should be directed to this panel. Where the focus is archaeological, they may be more appropriate for Panel 1 (Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology); where the focus is on curating visual arts exhibitions, they may be more appropriate for Panel 2 (Visual Arts or Media: practice, history, theory). Alternatively, in some cases, Panel 4 (Medieval and Modern History) may be the most appropriate panel.

Panel 7: Music and Performing Arts

21. **Music** may include:

- composition and performance (including classical, commercial and popular);
- history and criticism of music;
- ethnomusicology;
- theory and analysis, including empirical approaches;
- technology and computer applications (in doctoral research in these areas, digital and electronic outcomes as well as a written thesis may be possible).

The following points should be especially noted:

- both Master's-level courses and doctoral research in composition are eligible for funding; Master's-level applications in composition should be directed to this panel in Competition A.
- both Master's-level courses and doctoral research in performance are eligible for funding (previously the Council was unable to fund Master's courses in performance). Applications for Master's-level courses should be directed to Competition P if performance constitutes the major element in the final assessment, and to Competition A if the majority of assessment is on written work.
- responsibility for ethnomusicology is shared with the ESRC.

22. **Drama, dance and performing arts** may include:

- drama, theatre, dance and performance analysis;
- drama, theatre, dance and performance history;
- drama, theatre, dance and performance practice;
- film, TV and video analysis;
- film, TV and video practice;
- dramaturgy and theatre translation;
- gender and performance;
- scenography;
- new technologies and performance;
- theatre performance;
- performance documentation and reconstruction;
- live art;
- choreography;
- dance education and health;
- community performance;
- performance anthropology;
- drama and dance/movement therapies;
- related specialist areas.

It should also be noted that:

- Applications from those wishing to undertake a Master's-level course in these subjects whose focus is predominantly historical or theoretical study should be directed to this panel in Competition A, while applications for Master's level courses with a practice-based focus should be directed to Competition P
- responsibility for ethnochoreology and theatre anthropology is shared with the ESRC.

Panel 8: Philosophy, Religious Studies and Law

23. **Philosophy** may include all the main areas, styles of and approaches to philosophy including:

- history of philosophy including ancient, medieval, modern and recent;
- metaphysics;
- epistemology;
- logic;
- philosophy of science;
- philosophy of mind;
- philosophy of language;
- philosophy of religion;
- 19th and 20th century European philosophy including phenomenology, existentialism, critical theory, hermeneutics and deconstruction;
- ethics including applied ethics;

- political and social philosophy;
- applied philosophy;
- feminist philosophy;
- aesthetics.

In addition, the following points should be noted:

- applications in ancient philosophy may be directed appropriately either to this panel or to Panel 1 (Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology), or both
- applications in the history of science and the history of ideas should normally be directed to Panel 4 (Medieval and Modern History)
- some applications in aesthetics may be directed also to Panel 2 (Visual Arts and Media: practice, history, theory).

24. **Religious studies** may include the study of the world's religions, specific or comparative, including their scriptures, thought, history, ethical teaching, social and cultural impact, practices and related areas. It embraces theological, textual, philosophical, sociological, anthropological and applied approaches. It is not intended to exclude any of the areas normally studied under the rubric of theology, divinity, religious studies or biblical studies.

25. **Law** may include doctrinal, theoretical, empirical, comparative or other studies of law and legal phenomena. The AHRC has a particular responsibility for studies where the focus is on the content or procedures of the law. It shares responsibility for studies in law with the ESRC, which has particular responsibility for work in socio-legal studies and on the socio-economic impact of the law. It should also be noted that the Council does not provide support in any competition for postgraduate students undertaking conversion courses in law, or for courses that aim to provide them with training for legal practice (for example, courses such as the CPE, LPC and BVC are not eligible for funding).