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# Raising the profile of your research through the media

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A guide for AHRC award holders



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

“The arts and humanities touch people’s lives at every level. They contribute to our quality of life because, once our basic subsistence needs have been satisfied, they encompass those things that make life worth living.”

*Leading the World, AHRC 2009*

## Why should you communicate with a wider audience?

**The AHRC invests over £100m a year of public money in research in the arts and humanities. Your research is a part of that public investment and we have a duty to tell people about it.**

**The need to demonstrate the value of publicly-funded research is growing all the time and public support is crucial to long-term investment in research.**

## Who is interested in your work?

The media has a huge need to find interesting, unusual and ‘human’ stories and almost any research subject in the arts and humanities will be of interest to people outside of academia and therefore to the media.

Arts and humanities research touches the lives of all of us and in ways that we sometimes don’t always recognise. The challenge is to present the subject or the results of your research in such a way that those aspects of your work which might resonate beyond academia are brought to the fore and presented in ways that are understandable to a broader audience.

## How can the AHRC help?

Working with the press may seem daunting to some academics. But the AHRC press team is here to help, and in a number of ways:

- We provide one-day training events designed specifically for the needs of academics and AHRC grant holders
- We provide advice and guidance in writing and distributing press releases and contacting journalists and broadcasters
- We offer support and guidance in dealing with interviews and in communicating complex messages effectively
- We work with your university’s press office to maximise coverage

Or you may just want to have a very informal discussion with us; in which case, we’d be very happy to hear from you.



“Everyone has a story to tell and part of the telling of any story is knowing who wants or needs to hear that story and how best to reach them.”

## What makes a good story?

Take a look at any broadsheet newspaper and you'll see that the vast majority of its articles conform to the TRUTH test. In other words, they will generally be:

- **Timely**
  - **Relevant**
  - **Unique**
  - **Topical**
  - **Human**
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All of these are important but the most important is the final one – the Human aspect.

Luckily, for arts and humanities researchers, this should be relatively straightforward. Other aspects, such as relevance and uniqueness, should also be general characteristics of your research. Qualities such as topicality and timeliness will need some planning. With all of them, advice and guidance will be needed to ensure that your research is presented in the most engaging and compelling way possible, whilst of course ensuring that it loses none of its rigour and excellence as research.

Remember that the press and media are extremely broad and cover the full spectrum of outlets from documentaries and prime-time television programmes, to highly specialist and niche publications. Not every piece of research will be featured on News at Ten. But everyone has a story to tell and part of the telling of any story is knowing who wants or needs to hear that story and how best to reach them.

## Being prepared

You could be asked questions about your research by the media at short notice and with little time to prepare. One way to be prepared for this is to draft a series of bullet points when you begin your project that clearly articulate what is unique about it. By posting this list on the wall next to your PC you can add to or amend the list as your project develops. It also enables you to keep fresh in your mind what might be the most important aspect of your research for the wider non-academic world.

Once again, if you would like further information, please contact the AHRC press team or sign up for one of our training courses.



“The AHRC press team is always on the look-out for stories for its online case studies, the AHRC magazine PODIUM and a range of other publications. We welcome ideas for articles and features.”

## Other opportunities

As well as contacts with a wide range of newspapers, publications, television and radio programmes, the AHRC press team is always on the look-out for stories for its online case studies, the AHRC magazine PODIUM and a range of other publications. We welcome ideas for articles and features.



## Contact

The AHRC press team

Tel: 01179 876 777

[www.ahrc.ac.uk/press](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/press)

## Keeping in touch with the AHRC

To receive regular email alerts and other updates from the AHRC, please join our mailing list at:

<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=AHRC>

or join the list via the link at the bottom of our home page: [www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk)

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