

# AHRC application and peer review processes



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

# AHRC's research programme

## Definition of research

- **scholarly research**
- **research process**
  - research questions, issues or problems
  - research context: why are the questions, issues or problems important?
  - research methods: how will you address your questions, issues or problems?
- aims, objectives, milestones
- ultimately, dissemination of research outputs
  - monographs; editions or articles; electronic data; performances; films or broadcasts; exhibitions; catalogues

# AHRC's research programme

## Funding opportunities

### **Responsive mode**

-high-quality research in any subject area, providing it falls mainly within AHRC's remit

Broad subject remit – from ancient history and heritage science to modern dance and digital content

- Research Grants – support for teams
- Research Networking – intellectual exchange
- Fellowships – supports individual researchers

# AHRC's research programme

## Funding opportunities

### Research Grants

- Supports collaborative research
- Up to 5 yrs; up to £1m total fEC
- Currently around 15% success rate
- >500 proposals last year
- 3 main routes including
  - standard route
  - route for speculative research;
  - route for early career researchers; and
- No closing dates

# AHRC's research programme

## Funding opportunities

### Research Networking

- Stimulating intellectual exchange across boundaries (disciplinary, conceptual, methodological etc)
- Supports workshops or networking activities for up to 2 years; up to £30k total fEC
- An extra £15k fEC available for international participation from **any** country/region
- No closing dates
- New amended scheme available from 1 December 2009

# AHRC's research programme

## Funding opportunities

### Research Fellowships

- Allows individual researchers to work on a specified research project or programme
- Provides salary and associated costs for 3 to 9 months
- Applicants can dedicate between 50% and 100% of their time
- Proposals up to a maximum of £120,000 full economic costs
- Early Career Route

# AHRC's research programme

## Funding opportunities

### **Funding Initiatives**

- areas of intellectual urgency and wider cultural, social or economic urgency

### Cross-Research Council initiatives

- Living with Environmental Change
- Lifelong Health and Well-being
- Connected Communities

### Initiatives under which we have made Awards:

- Diasporas, Migration and Identities
- Landscape and Environment (inc Researching Environmental Change)
- Designing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (with EPSRC)
- Religion & Society (with ESRC)
- Beyond Text
- Museums and Galleries Research Programme
- Science and Heritage (with EPSRC)
- DEDEFI (Digital Equipment and Database Enhancement for Impact)
- New Dynamics of Ageing (Cross-Council)

# Postgraduate support

## Funding mechanisms

- **Block Grant Partnerships**

- Awards made to Research Organisations for an allocation of postgraduate studentships in specific subject areas and schemes.

- **Studentship competition**

- Provides postgraduate students studying at ROs in the UK the opportunity to apply for an award.
- Only ROs that do not hold a BGP award are eligible to submit proposals through this route.

- **Collaborative Doctoral Awards**

- Opportunities for doctoral students to gain first hand experience of work outside an academic environment
- Develop collaborations between Higher Education Institution (HEI) departments and non-academic organisations and businesses.

- **Other support**

- Library of Congress scholarship scheme - supports AHRC/ESRC funded doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows and research assistants to access research collection at the Library of Congress.
- NIHU – similar scheme with National Institute for the Humanities in Japan

# Decision Making

## Assessment Process and Criteria

- Most proposals assessed by members of the AHRC's Peer Review College
- Some schemes also have a 'right to reply' or PI response
- Proposals assessed in the context of the aims of the scheme and the AHRC's framework for defining the research process:
  - Quality and importance
  - People
  - Management
  - Value for money and appropriateness of resources requested
  - Outputs, dissemination and impact

# Decision Making

## What makes a good proposal?

- Quality of proposed research
- Significance and importance of project and contribution it will make
- Appropriateness, effectiveness and feasibility of the proposed research methods
- Is timetable realistic?
- Ability of researcher to bring the project to completion
- Dissemination methods
- Will the outputs and outcomes be highly valued and widely exploited?

# Decision Making

## What makes a good proposal?

Understand what is expected & how it will be assessed:

- Choose the right scheme for your research project
- Ensure the aims and criteria of the scheme are met
- PI response – this can be very useful for panel

Recognise that:

- your proposal must be clear and understandable
- it must make the case - why this project and why now

# Decision Making

## Common pitfalls to avoid

- Jargon
- Scheme aims are not met
- The proposal is unrealistic, overambitious or unconvincing

## These activities may be useful....

- Internal peer review of proposals
- Use your research office or equivalent
- Regular meetings with mentors
- Know your contact at the AHRC and ask them for advice

# Decision Making

## Changes to Peer review

- Sifting
- Harmonised grading scale
- Greater emphasis on peer review and PI Response
- Prioritisation Panels
  - Four broad, subject based panels

# **AHRC contacts**

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

**>About Us >Contact Us**

**Telephone Enquiries**

**0117 987 6500**

