



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



Call for Expressions of Interest for Researcher Participation in an International Workshop on 'Development through the Creative Economy in China'

Introduction

The AHRC is pleased to announce a call for researchers to attend a workshop on 'Development through the Creative Economy in China'. The event will bring together academic experts from both countries to explore the potential of the creative and cultural industries in China as drivers for growth and innovation.

The workshop will convene experts from the UK and China and draw on a range of disciplinary perspectives including but not limited to design, cultural studies, the creative and performing arts, heritage, history, museum studies and digital humanities.

The event will be funded through the [Newton Fund](#) – a programme that aims to develop research and innovation partnerships that promote the economic development and social welfare of partner countries. It will take place in the week commencing 23rd October 2017 in Shanghai, China and it is expected that a funding call for collaborative research projects involving researchers from both the UK and China will be launched shortly after the workshop.

Context

The Creative Economy is of growing importance to both the UK and China and has the potential to have a transformative effect on major global challenges. The term 'creative economy' is broadly conceived in this regard to include, for example (but not limited to): the creative and digital industries; intellectual property and copyright; the creative and performing arts; innovation in cultural content; underpinning skills & capabilities and diversity; emerging urban cultural ecosystems, clusters and inclusive urban development; the museum / heritage sector; design, including urban and user-led design. Creativity and innovation are core components of China's 13th Five Year Plan and developing the capacity of mass entrepreneurship and creative thinking are seen as an important driver for regional growth and innovation.

This workshop seeks to provide a catalyst for joint UK/China research into the creative economy that will facilitate collaboration between academics, businesses, policy professionals, community groups and other organisations, with the aim of promoting economic growth and social welfare in China. It is expected that the workshop and subsequent funding call will lead to a greater understanding of the relationship between cultural and creative organisations as stimulators of economic growth; the factors that lead to high-figure growth in the creative industries; and the social value of the creative and cultural sector.

Three key areas for the workshop are **Design, Heritage** and the **Creative and Performing Arts**:

- Design is increasingly being recognised as a fundamental aspect of creativity, innovation and problem solving. Areas of particular interest include how the integration of product and service design into plans for sustainable development can enhance social innovation and social cohesion; how design principles can be applied to the delivery of innovation and public services; how businesses and social groups use design, including innovation through makerspaces and other public creative hubs; and how design, research and digital technologies can converge to build communities of engaged responsible citizens. The arts and humanities also play a significant, but often underappreciated role in the commercial and industrial design sectors. Design historians have made a considerable contribution towards progress and innovation of new methods and approaches, by focussing on the lessons of the past. Hands-on design researchers are investigating the multiple creative, human-centred interventions into industry and manufacturing, including the ethics of production and sustainability; the philosophical implications of the industry 4.0 vision; the potential for a transition to the circular economy and redistributed manufacturing models; the role of open-source access and the need for effective copyright and IP regulations to protect investments.
- Heritage can play a critical role in sustainable economic growth and social cohesion; it forms the collective cultural memory of a society, acting as a source of artistic, literary, and scientific inspiration, creativity and enterprise for current and future generations. This area will consider how new approaches can lead to increased engagement with cultural heritage and a better understanding of how, why and with what results people engage with their cultural heritage. This will include innovative approaches to audience engagement with cultural heritage through the museum sector. It will also explore the role of digital heritage, and how the design of innovative digital methodologies and approaches can assist with the conservation of built heritage and audience engagement as well as interpretation and reconstruction.

- The Creative and Performing Arts can make an important contribution to social cohesion, welfare and inclusivity, as well as bringing economic benefits through a vibrant creative sector. This area will investigate how participation in creative and performing practices such as theatre, music and visual arts can have a positive effect on community cohesion; and explore the potential of the contribution that engagement with creative practices can make to addressing issues such as disconnection and inequalities in society. It will also examine how knowledge exchange within the field of visual arts between east and west can inform the importance of traditional skills balanced with contemporary approaches to practice, and consider different approaches to curation, exhibition and the visual arts economy. In addition to the societal benefits, this theme will also investigate the economic benefits of the Creative and Performing Arts, for example through tourism and the museum sectors, and consider the disciplinary areas involved as a vehicle for driving cross-disciplinary research.

Workshop format

The workshop will take place in Shanghai over three days from Tuesday 24th October until Thursday 26th October 2017. Each day will focus on one of the three areas mentioned above and in order to stimulate practical steps towards future intellectual collaboration, the majority of the workshop will focus on discussion and exploration of the key issues through a series of breakout discussion sessions. The workshop will close with a plenary session featuring reports from the groups, a concluding address, and consideration of follow-up activity.

It is important to note that this workshop is not intended to be a stand-alone event, rather it is an opportunity to network, share experiences and begin discussions that will foster future collaborative activity. As above, it is anticipated that longer term, the workshop will enrich and bring new dimensions to other networks and forums working in this area and involving research collaboration between the UK and China.

Call for Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest to participate in the workshop are invited from UK-based researchers meeting the AHRC's [standard eligibility requirements](#) from all disciplines within the arts and humanities. Applicants should have a particular research interest in the topics noted above and be able to articulate this in their expression of interest.

Expressions of interest are welcome from researchers at all stages of their careers, including early career researchers. The AHRC expects to support the attendance of around 30 UK-based researchers.

To apply to attend, please complete the following Smart Survey questionnaire:

www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/4ESLT/

The AHRC will process the information you send for the purposes of workshop attendance only and the information will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Deadline for submission of EoI: 4pm (BST) Thursday 31st August.

Expressions of interest will be assessed by the AHRC, against the following criteria:

- Fit to call: the strength of the case made to attend the workshop and ability to support the realisation of its aims;
- Track record: a demonstrable history of research excellence appropriate to career stage;
- Development: the potential of the workshop to add value to the research of the applicant, including the benefits of engaging with a wider network of individuals and organisations from the UK and China, and the potential for those parties to benefit from the experience and perspectives of the applicant;
- Legacy: the ability of the applicant to perceive and articulate the longer-term potential benefits of the workshop, including to their own research, their discipline, and in terms of wider activity.

We will aim to inform applicants of outcomes by **22nd September 2017**.

Costs covered

The AHRC will pay for all transport (standard class), accommodation, visa charges and subsistence costs incurred during the event. Detailed information about logistics and procedures will follow upon acceptance.

Please note that you are eligible to apply only if you have a valid passport and do not foresee any problems with obtaining a visa, or with being in China for the duration of this event.

Contacts

For any queries regarding the workshop please contact newtonfund@ahrc.ac.uk or telephone 01793 416060 (available Monday to Friday 8:30-5:00 BST).