



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



## Application for AHRC Funding: Doctoral Programmes Notes on completing the form

Applicants should read 'Application for AHRC Funding: General Information' and check their eligibility for funding before completing their application.

All forms and supporting documents can be downloaded from: [www.cardiff.ac.uk/ahrcawards](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/ahrcawards)

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### *General Notes on completing the form*

- PART I - to be completed by the applicant
  - PART II - to be completed by the applicant's referees
  - PART III - to be completed by the Head of School (or nominee), to which the applicant has applied for doctoral study
  - SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: Applicants must include with their application evidence of marks and degree results
- All sections of the form must be word-processed using at least 10pt font. Text should be confined to the spaces provided. **Please ensure that the format of the form is preserved and that the text boxes do not run over onto subsequent pages.**
- The completed application form and supporting documentation (evidence of marks and degree results) must be securely fastened (e.g. with a paperclip), but not bound or stapled.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to monitor the progress of the completion of the application.** The applicant should keep in regular contact with all those who are involved in completing the application to ensure that all Parts are completed and submitted by the appropriate deadlines. The table in Appendix 1 may be of assistance in tracking the progress of the application.
- Application assessment criteria are provided in Appendix 2.

***PART I of the form: Information from the applicant  
- Notes for the applicant***

**Question 1: AHRC Subject Area**

*Applicants are advised to seek advice from the School in which the PhD will be primarily located when completing this section.*

- 6 Please refer to [Appendix 3](#) which provides descriptions of the AHRC subjects. Your project must lie within at least one of these subjects.
- 7 Some PhD programmes may span across AHRC subject areas, in which case all subject areas should be listed on the form, to allow the application to be fully considered. For example, a multi-disciplinary PhD may cut across more than one AHRC subject area and also be eligible to be considered by more than one Subject Panel (e.g. History and Music).
- 8 Cardiff invites applications for doctoral level AHRC studentships in the following subject areas for 2012-13 entry.
  - **Archaeology**
  - **Celtic Studies**
  - **English Language and Literature**
  - **History**
  - **History of Art, Architecture & Design**
  - **Philosophy**
  - **Religious Studies**

**Question 4 - Contact details**

- 9 The academic School in which you propose to study, the University Graduate College and/or the Registry may need to contact you between March and August 2012. Please provide contact details that will cover that period.

**Question 5 - Current funding applications**

- 10 Please indicate if you are also applying to other institution(s) for an AHRC studentship. Please be aware that if an applicant is offered more than one studentship place by different institutions s/he must choose which one to accept before the nomination is confirmed with the AHRC.

**Question 6 - Professional experience**

- 11 Provide information about any employment, work or professional experience (research and/or practice-based) that is relevant to your proposed programme of study and will therefore strengthen your application. Please use the space provided and do not attach additional pages.

**Question 7 - Career in higher education to date**

- 12 If you have more than one qualification at the same level, please provide details of the one most relevant to this application (this may not be the most recent qualification).

**Question 8 - School details**

- 13 Please liaise with your School to ensure that you supply the correct details for the School AHRC point of contact. The referees will be asked to send their references to this contact.

## Question 10 - Proposed research project

- 14 Please give the title of your proposed research project (or current research project if you have already begun your PhD).
- 15 Your 'supporting statement' is key to your application. You should discuss the content of this section with your proposed supervisor(s). Assessors will look for evidence of high quality and strong potential for doctoral study (evidence of intellectual purpose and originality, reasons for, and approach towards, undertaking your proposed study, awareness of the research context).
- 16 Use clear and concise language, avoiding jargon. Bear in mind that the members of the Subject Panel may not be experts in your particular specialist field: you should write your 'supporting statement' with this audience in mind, not your proposed supervisor.
- 17 Please note there is a strict limit of **500 words**. The number of words used must be provided.

18 You should consider the following points:

a) Your research project and your reasons for undertaking it

You should consider addressing the following:

- key areas/issues of the project, and why you wish to pursue this research;
- the research problems or questions you intend to address;
- the research context in which those problems or questions are located;
- the particular contribution to knowledge and understanding in this area that you hope to make, explaining why the work is important;
- the methods and critical approaches that you plan to use, and the sources, if appropriate;
- how the proposed work relates to what you have studied already (- where there is overlap between your Master's dissertation and your doctoral research, you should demonstrate how the project will go further and state the added value of continuing to research in this area);
- any ethical issues relating to the research project - how these will be identified and addressed;
- how the project will develop or over the period of the award;
- how the doctoral research relates to your eventual career aims.

If you have already begun your doctoral study, indicate the work you have undertaken to date, providing information on main pieces of work completed.

b) Preparation and previous experience

- a **brief** indication of any previous experience or preparation that is relevant to your proposed research project (e.g. aspects of your Master's study, additional degrees, qualifications, training or relevant skills);
- for practice-led subjects, you should include details of your relevant professional experience.

### Question 11: Your referees

- 19 You should choose your two referees carefully: together they should have a good knowledge of your academic record to date and your plans for the research project. They should be in a position to judge your suitability and preparedness for doctoral study. It is recommended that one of your referees is your proposed (or actual) supervisor. If you are new to Cardiff University, it is recommended that you ask the supervisor of your Master's dissertation to be one of your referees. Ensure that you draw their attention to the guidance notes for referees contained within this document.

### Form header

- 20 Please insert your initials and last name in the form header boxes, pages 2-4.

### Notes on supporting documents

- 21 An important aspect of your application is evidence of your academic performance to date in your undergraduate and postgraduate Master's programmes. For your undergraduate programme (and for your Master's if it is formally completed) you should provide a transcript of marks and confirmation of the degree classification awarded.
- 22 If you have not pursued your degree at Cardiff University, it would be useful if you could provide a description of the classification criteria.
- 23 If you are currently pursuing your Master's degree you should include evidence of confirmed marks of individual modules/assignments, where you are able to do so. If this information is not available, you should include a statement to that effect.
- 24 (It is recognised that details of marks attained may only be available in respect of programmes pursued in relatively recent years.)

### **When Part I has been completed:**

(a) pass a copy of the completed Part I of the application, along with copies of the supporting documents, to each of the referees you have identified so that they can complete their reports; you should supply each of them with Part II of the application for them to complete; you should also provide them with a copy of this document ("Application for AHRC Funding: Doctoral Programmes - Notes on completing the form") and draw their attention to the importance of the guidance;

*and, at the same time -*

(b) pass the completed Part I of the application to the AHRC contact person in the School in which you propose to study, along with the supporting documents (evidence of your marks and degree results).

The referees should complete their sections and then pass them directly to the School's AHRC contact (as provided at Question 8). **Both referees are asked to return their references to the relevant School by 2 March 2012: this is the deadline by which the School must have Parts I and II of the form along with the supporting documents.**

Please note that it is the applicant's responsibility to monitor the progress of the application and check that all Parts are completed. The University will not request references on your behalf from your referees, and your application will not be considered if both references are not received.

The School has until 16 March 2012 to forward your application to the University Graduate College for consideration by the relevant subject panel.

***PART II: Referee's reports- Notes for the referees***

- 25 The applicant should have provided you with a copy of the completed Part I of the application and copies of the supporting documents (evidence of marks and degree results).
- 26 This applicant has applied for a doctoral award. As a referee, you should try to provide detailed comments on the applicant's recent academic or professional work and an assessment of his/her preparedness for doctoral study. It is helpful to the panel if you provide evidence both of the skills and aptitudes that the applicant displays and, importantly, how they relate to the proposed study (as described in the applicant's 'supporting statement').
- 27 **References that do not provide a detailed appraisal of the applicant's academic (or professional) development and suitability for his/her proposed research, but are simply a general statement of support, may disadvantage even the strongest applicant.** Please do not make inappropriate comments such as personal remarks.
- 28 Professional referees should state how long the applicant has worked with them and in what capacity. You should detail the type and range of duties that were performed, and how this may have prepared the applicant for the proposed study.
- 29 Please type your report in no less than 10pt typescript and keep within the allocated space.
- 30 Please comment under the following headings:
- a) Previous performance
- Please provide a realistic appraisal of the applicant's abilities based on your assessment of his/her academic and, where relevant, professional performance to date. Include comments on the applicant's overall performance in his/her degree(s) and his/her performance on individual modules or courses if you have taught him/her at undergraduate and/or Master's level.
  - For **professional referees**, please draw on your experience of the applicant's work to give an appraisal of his/her professional performance to date. Please highlight the applicant's strengths/weaknesses in the area in which he/she plans to study. Please give examples to illustrate your comments.
- b) Preparedness for doctoral study
- Please give your assessment of the applicant's motivation and commitment and his/her capacity for working independently on the project throughout - mentioning any relevant intellectual, practical, technical or professional skills the applicant possesses that you have not already highlighted. The assessors are interested in such qualities as the applicant's conceptual and problem-solving abilities, organisational abilities and, where relevant, his/her practical or technical capabilities.
  - You should say how the proposed research project relates to the applicant's experience to date, and to his/her future plans. You may wish to address questions such as how the applicant has developed and improved during his/her undergraduate or postgraduate career.
  - If the applicant is currently undertaking a Master's degree, and if you are permitted to do so, please include details of any formal assessments of his/her Master's work. This information should link in to the predicted grade that you have indicated.

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- If the applicant has commenced his/her doctoral study, please include details of his/her progress to date. You should give an assessment of the applicant's progress and say on what basis this assessment has been made.
- If the applicant has no experience at postgraduate level, please comment on how he/she has been exceptionally prepared to move to doctoral research without an initial year of Master's-level training.
- **Professional referees** should also comment on the applicant's professional commitment, motivation and potential. It would be helpful to say how the professional experience the applicant has gained has built on his/her academic studies, and how it will prepare him/her to pursue his/her research and meet his/her long-term career aims.

31 The applicant might request to see a copy of their references. If you wish to **withhold** your consent to release your report to the applicant, please tick the box. If the box is not ticked, we will assume that you have given your consent.

### **When the reference has been completed:**

- (a) please inform the applicant that you have completed your reference;
- (b) pass the reference to the AHRC Contact in the School (see details supplied at Part I, Question 8, completed by the applicant).

**Please note that the deadline for the receipt of both references by the School is 2 March 2012.**

***PART III: School Endorsement***

***To be completed by the Head of School (or his/her nominee) in which the applicant proposes to study***

- 32 You should have been supplied with Part I (completed by the applicant), Part II (the two references) and the supporting documents (evidence of marks and degree results).
- 33 You are asked to provide confirmation that the applicant and their proposed project can be appropriately supported by the School - in terms of supervisory 'fit', facilities, resources and specialist research skills training.
- 34 There is a space to provide any specific additional comments if you wish to do so. For the majority of applications, additional comments are not generally expected here. The Selection Panel will be asked to assess the application on the basis of the applicant's statement, referees' reports and academic record, and not a further statement from the School. However:
- If the applicant's undergraduate and/or Master's qualification is from a non-UK HEI, the School is required to provide an assessment of equivalence.
  - If the applicant will not have completed a postgraduate Master's programme, the School is required to provide evidence that will allow the Selection Panel to determine whether the applicant's experience beyond their undergraduate study relates to the proposed PhD, and if this experience qualifies the applicant, exceptionally, as prepared for doctoral study without prior formal postgraduate training.

**When the School Endorsement has been completed:**

Actions for the School AHRC point of contact:

(a) please pass the completed application (all three parts) with the supporting documents (transcripts of marks and degree results) to the University Graduate College Office, 60 Park Place, **16 March 2012**, for consideration by the relevant Subject Panel(s);

(b) please inform the applicant that you have done this.

Please note that the photocopying and distribution to the Panel will be done by the University Graduate College Office. Please do not bind or staple the application, but use paperclips or individual envelopes or plastic wallets.

## Appendix 1: application process and timetable

This timetable checklist is intended to help the applicant track the progress of his/her application.

| Application Stage  | Time-line<br>(where specified)   |
|--|--|
| Completion of Part I of the application by the applicant. The applicant must ensure that evidence of marks and degree results are appended.  |  |
| Applicant sends copies of completed Part I and the supporting documents to the two referees, with Part II of the form for the referees to complete. Applicants should include the Notes on completing the form and highlight the guidance provided for referees. | <b>Late February/early March 2012</b><br><i>(Applicant to agree date with referees - must be in good time for the referees to meet their deadline of 2 March 2012)</i> |
| Applicant sends Part I and supporting documents to School AHRC contact.  | <b>Deadline:</b><br>2 March 2012   |
| Both referees send their references to the School Contact.   | <b>Deadline:</b><br>2 March 2012   |
| Head of School/nominee completes Part III (School Endorsement)   |  |
| School passes complete application (Parts I, II and III with supporting documents) to the University Graduate College Office.  | <b>Deadline:</b><br>16 March 2012  |
| Application checked for eligibility, and copied and distributed to the relevant Subject Panel(s).  | <i>Week commencing 19 March 2012</i>   |
| Subject Panels meet.   | <i>Late March/early April 2012</i>   |
| Recommendations of Subject Panels are collated and presented to the meeting of Heads of Humanities.  | <i>April 2012</i>  |
| Registry is informed of the outcomes of the assessment and award process, and notifies applicants.   | <i>April 2012</i>  |

## Appendix 2: AHRC Doctoral Awards - Cardiff University Assessment Criteria

### 1. Evidence of the quality of the applicant

This will be based on the Supporting Statement made by the applicant in his/her application, and evidence provided by the referees about the applicant's performance at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and in terms of any relevant professional experience. Reference will be made to transcripts, individual module marks and degree results.

The assessors will be looking for evidence of the applicant's ability to articulate a research project, a coherent and well thought-out plan for doctoral study, and a good awareness of the place of his/her research within the current field.

### 2. Evidence that the applicant is well-prepared for his/her proposed research and future career

This will be based on the applicant's description of how his/her previous experience (academic and professional) has prepared him/her for doctoral study and research, and their description of how the programme will contribute to their long-term career aims. The assessors will also consider the supporting evidence provided by the referees, particularly in terms of the applicant's suitability for doctoral research and this research project.

### 3. Evidence of the quality and feasibility of the proposed study

This will be based on the applicant's account of the proposed research project and their reasons for pursuing it.

### 4. Confirmation of the suitability of School support, resources and supervisory fit

The assessors will seek assurance that the requirements of the project, in terms of supervisory expertise, resources, facilities, technical and other specialist support, including specialist research skills training, have been fully considered and addressed. Assessors will also want to know how any training gaps that have been identified for this particular applicant will be met, and will be interested in seeing that any ethical issues have been addressed.

### Appendix 3 - AHRC Subject Area Descriptions (for which Cardiff has Doctoral AHRC awards to offer in 2012-13)

#### Archaeology

Includes archaeological theory; archaeology of human origins; prehistoric and historic societies on a world-wide basis. This also 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 and archaeological aspects of heritage management and museum studies.

#### Celtic Studies

Includes studies in language and literature; critical and cultural theory; creative writing; cultural studies; gender studies; media studies; philosophy; and historical studies. Work must include a significant proportion of work on texts, documents or archives or fieldwork in a relevant language other than English and students must also demonstrate competence in that language at an appropriate level.

#### English Language and Literature

Includes 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; 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. This subject area also includes:

- the history of the *English language*, and stylistics and discourse analysis (other English language studies, including studies of speech and pragmatics, lexis and grammar, may be directed to Linguistics)
- *critical theory and cultural or communications studies* where the focus of the study is on the interpretation or analysis of texts in English.

#### History

The AHRC supports work in *all periods of history* from ancient times to the recent past, and in all parts of the world although applications in ancient history should normally be directed to Classics & Ancient History. 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.

The AHRC funds work in 'modern history' which it defines as ending in the late twentieth century. It recognises that 'contemporary history' is a valid field of study, but study which focuses primarily or exclusively on the last two decades of that century will need to show how and why the 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. This subject area also includes:

- *historical or cultural geography* and the *history of geography*, where there is a demonstrable historical focus
- *history of science and medicine* and the *history of ideas* 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 Philosophy

- *area studies* where the main focus of the proposed work is historical
- *diplomatic history* and the *history of international relations* (the AHRC does not support work in *contemporary or near-contemporary international relations* or *contemporary or near-contemporary political theory or analysis*)

### **History of Art, Architecture and Design**

Includes history of art, architecture, and design, in the widest chronological and geographical framework; theory and aesthetics of the visual arts; history of photography, and visual media; 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. The AHRC will also support research in architecture that concerns building design (but not structural or civil or other aspects of engineering).

### **Philosophy**

Includes 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; and aesthetics. The following points should be noted:

- *ancient philosophy* may also fall under Classics & Ancient History
- *history of science* and the *history of ideas* would normally fall under History
- where the focus of the study is on empirical surveys of current *political practice*, rather than philosophy, this falls within the domain of the ESRC; *contemporary politics and political theory* fall within the domain of the ESRC.

### **Religious Studies**

Includes 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 includes all of the areas normally studied under the rubric of theology, divinity, religious studies or biblical studies.