



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



## Application for AHRC Funding: Master's 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.

These 'Notes on completing the form' apply to both the **Research Preparation Master's scheme** and the **Professional Preparation Master's scheme**. Both Master's and Postgraduate Diploma programmes are eligible for the Professional Preparation scheme.

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 postgraduate study
    - SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: Applicants must include with their application copies of transcripts of marks and degree results. Applicants for Professional Preparation scheme must also include a professional CV. (See 'Part I, Question 6' below.)
  - 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 (transcripts 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 their postgraduate programme will be 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 postgraduate 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. Cardiff invites applications for Research Preparation and Professional Preparation AHRC studentships in the following subject areas for 2012-13 entry.

#### Research Preparation

Archaeology

English Language and Literature

European Language & Culture

History

History of Art, Architecture & Design

Music

#### Professional Preparation

Interpreting & Translation

Journalism and Publishing Studies

### Question 4 - Contact details

- 8 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

- 9 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

#### 10 Research Preparation scheme

Provide information about any employment, work or professional experience (research and/or practice-based) that is relevant to your proposed programme of study, and which you wish the assessors to take into account. Please use the space provided and do not attach additional pages.

#### 11 Professional Preparation scheme

Please append a separate CV that details your relevant employment, work and professional experience.

### 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).

### 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 9 - Programme of study details

- 14 Please give the title of your postgraduate programme. If you are applying for funding under the Research Preparation scheme and are proposing to undertake MPhil research, please provide the working title of the research project.

### Question 10 - Supporting Statement

- 15 Your 'supporting statement' is key to your application. You should discuss the content of this section with the proposed supervisor of your dissertation or research project, or the programme director.
- 16 Assessors will look for evidence of high quality and strong potential for postgraduate study (evidence of intellectual purpose, reasons for, and approach towards, undertaking your proposed study, awareness of the field of study in which you intend to specialise).
- 17 **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 tutor or programme director.**
- 18 Please note there is a strict limit of **500 words**. The number of words used must be provided.
- 19 You may wish to use the subheadings below to set out as clearly as you can the work you intend to undertake. You do not have to answer all the questions detailed below: this section provides guidance on the issues you might cover when making your case for support.

### 20 Research Preparation scheme

(a) How will taking this programme prepare you for doctoral study?

- State briefly why you wish to pursue this programme
- What are the intellectual problems that interest you?
- Why do you wish to proceed to doctoral study and what is the likely focus of your doctoral studies?
- How will this programme prepare you for doctoral study?
- How does it relate to your eventual career aims?

The assessors will be interested in the relationship between the programme and your research and career aspirations.

(b) Brief description of the programme of study

For taught programmes:

- which pathway will you pursue (if applicable), and which subject-specific modules? - this will enable you to convey your interest in the programme of study;
- you should identify your dissertation topic, showing that you are aware of the current state of knowledge and how the research will be pursued (you may find it helpful to read the points below about the 'research project', but note that you are not required at this stage to have a fully worked-out plan for your dissertation).

For MPhil programmes, give a brief synopsis of the proposed research project, addressing the following:

- 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 (including alternative strategies or approaches if you are aware that problems might arise);
- any ethical issues relating to the research project - these should be identified and addressed;
- how the project will develop over the period of the award.

(c) Preparation and previous experience

- a **brief** indication of any previous experience or preparation that is relevant to your proposed programme (e.g. particular aspects of your undergraduate study, or additional training or relevant skills).

## 21 Professional Preparation scheme

(a) How will taking this programme contribute to your career aims?

- state briefly why you wish to pursue this programme
- how will the programme support your future career aims?

The assessors will be interested in the relationship between the programme, and your own academic and professional development, training and career aspirations.

(b) Brief description of the programme of study

- which pathway will you pursue (if applicable), and which subject-specific modules? - this will enable you to convey your interest in the programme of study;
- how does the programme relate to practice in your chosen field and how will it be of benefit to you in developing your career?
- *dissertation topic* - if relevant, give a brief description of the subject area in which you plan to do your dissertation;
- *practical assessment* - if your programme includes an assessed practical element, please give a brief description of the work you intend to pursue.

(c) Preparation and previous experience

- give an indication of any previous professional experience in your field of study (including relevant paid and voluntary work);
- give an indication of the training and preparation you have already undertaken that is relevant to your proposed study, and how this training has prepared you for the programme and your future career.

## Question 11: Your referees

22 You should choose your two referees carefully: between them they should have a good knowledge of your academic record to date and your plans for postgraduate study. They should be in a position to judge your suitability and preparedness for the postgraduate programme. Ensure that you draw their attention to the guidance notes for referees contained within this document.

23 Applicants for the Professional Preparation scheme are advised to nominate one professional and one academic referee.

## Form header

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

### Notes on supporting documents

- 25 An important aspect of your application is evidence of your academic performance to date in your undergraduate programme. If your undergraduate programme has been completed, you should provide a transcript of marks and confirmation of the degree classification awarded.
- 26 If you have not pursued your degree at Cardiff University, it would be useful if you could provide a description of the classification criteria.
- 27 If you are currently pursuing your degree you should include evidence of confirmed marks of individual modules, where you are able to do so. If this information is not available, you should include a statement to that effect.
- 28 (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 cited above 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 "Application for AHRC Funding: Master's Programmes - Notes on completing the form" and "Application for AHRC Funding: General Information";

(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 (transcripts of 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:**

**Friday 2 March 2012 (for all subjects except Journalism and Publishing Studies)**

**Monday 16 April 2012 (for Journalism and Publishing Studies)**

**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.

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

- 29 The applicant should have provided you with a copy of the completed Part I of the application and copies of the supporting documents (transcripts of marks and degree results). It should be clear from Part I whether the application is made under the Research Preparation or the Professional Preparation scheme.
- 30 This applicant has applied for a postgraduate award. As a referee, you should try to comment in detail on the applicant's recent work and his/her preparedness for postgraduate study. It is helpful to the panel if you provide evidence both of the skills that the applicant possesses and, importantly, how they relate to the proposed study (as described in the applicant's 'supporting statement').
- 31 **Academic referees** are asked to draw on their experience of the applicant's work as a whole. Where the degree has not already been awarded, please complete the box that asks for a forecast of the likely degree result. It should be clear from the information provided in the rest of your report why you are predicting this grade.
- 32 **Professional referees** should state how long the applicant has worked with them and in what capacity. Please detail the type and range of duties that were performed, and how this may have prepared the applicant for the proposed study.
- 33 **References that do not provide a detailed appraisal of the applicant's academic development and suitability for his/her proposed study, but are simply a general statement of support, may disadvantage even the strongest applicant.** Please do not make inappropriate comments such as personal remarks.
- 34 Please type your report in no less than 10pt typescript and keep within the allocated space.
- 35 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.
- 36 Please comment under the headings indicated below.

(i) Applications for the **Research Preparation scheme**

*The aim of the scheme is to support the student on a programme that focuses on advanced study and research training explicitly intended to provide a foundation for further research at doctoral level. We ask you to bear this aim in mind when providing your reference.*

(a) **Previous performance**

For academic referees, please provide a realistic appraisal of the applicant's abilities, based on the quality of his/her academic performance to date. Include comments on the applicant's overall performance in his/her degree and his/her performance on individual modules or courses. Please give examples to illustrate your comments.

If the student is currently undertaking his/her undergraduate degree, and if you are permitted to do so, please include details of his/her marks.

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 (and any weaknesses) that are relevant to the area in which he/she plans to study and work.

(b) Potential for postgraduate study

Please provide an assessment of the applicant's aptitude and preparedness for the proposed programme, their potential to complete the programme successfully, his/her motivation and commitment, relevant intellectual skills the applicant possesses, and the potential for continuing to doctoral study.

You might wish to comment on factors such as the applicant's conceptual ability, problem-solving skills, capacity for independent thought, potential for innovation, organisational skills, communication skills, and the applicant's ability compared to other relevant groups or individuals of whom you have had experience.

Professional referees should also comment on the applicant's professional commitment, motivation and potential.

**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:**

**for the Research Preparation Scheme, the deadline for the receipt of both references by the School is Friday 2 March 2012.**

(ii) Applications for the Professional Preparation scheme

*This scheme aims to provide support for students undertaking Master's or Postgraduate Diploma programmes that focus on developing high-level skills and competencies for professional practice in a field relevant to the content of the programme. We ask you to bear this aim in mind when providing your reference.*

(a) Previous performance

For academic referees, please provide a realistic appraisal of the applicant's abilities, based on the quality of his/her academic performance to date. Include comments on the applicant's overall performance in his/her degree and his/her performance on individual modules or courses. Please give examples to illustrate your comments.

If the student is currently undertaking his/her undergraduate degree, and if you are permitted to do so, please include details of his/her marks.

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 (and any weaknesses) that are relevant to the area in which he/she plans to study and work.

(c) Potential for postgraduate study

Please provide an assessment of the applicant's aptitude, ability and preparedness for the proposed programme, their potential to complete the programme successfully, his/her motivation and commitment, relevant intellectual and practical skills the applicant possesses, and the potential to continue in professional practice.

You should say how the proposed programme relates to the applicant's academic and professional experience to date, and to his/her future plans.

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You might wish to comment on factors such as the applicant's professional, practical or technical ability, conceptual ability, problem-solving skills, capacity for independent thought, potential for innovation, organisational skills, communication skills, and the applicant's ability compared to other relevant groups or individuals of which you have experience.

Professional referees should also comment on the applicant's professional commitment, motivation and potential, and how undertaking the programme will help the applicant to meet his/her long-term career aims.

### **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:**

- for Interpreting and Translation, the deadline for the receipt of both references by the School is Friday 2 March 2012;
- for Journalism and Publishing Studies, the deadline for the receipt of both references by the School is Monday 16 April 2012.

***PART III: School Endorsement***

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

- 37 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).
- 38 You are asked to endorse the application. In doing this you are confirming that the applicant can be appropriately supported on this programme. In the case of MPhil applicants, this means you are undertaking to provide and/or address the following: supervisory expertise; resources and facilities; ethical issues; any specific training needs.
- 39 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 qualification is from a non-UK HEI, the School is required to provide an assessment of equivalence.**

**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, by:

**Friday 16 March 2012 (for all subjects except Journalism and Publishing Studies)**

**Monday 23 April 2012 (for Journalism and Publishing Studies)**

- 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 (where specified)
Completion of Part I of the application by the applicant. The applicant must ensure that transcripts and evidence of degree results are included.	
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> <i>(Applicant to agree date with referees - must be in good time for the referees to meet their deadline of: 2 March 2012 16 April 2012 (Journalism and Publishing Studies only)</i>
Applicant sends Part I and supporting documents to School AHRC contact.	<b>Deadline: 2 March 2012</b> <b>16 April 2012 (Journalism and Publishing Studies only)</b>
Both referees send their references to the School Contact.	<b>Deadline: 2 March 2012</b> <b>16 April 2012 (Journalism and Publishing Studies only)</b>
Head of School/nominee completes School endorsement	
School passes complete application (Parts I, II and III with supporting documents) to the University Graduate College Office).	<b>Deadline: 16 March 2012</b> <b>23 April 2012 (Journalism and Publishing Studies only)</b>
Application checked for eligibility, and copied and distributed to the relevant Subject Panel(s).	<b>Week commencing: 19 March 2012</b> <b>23 April 2012 (Journalism and Publishing Studies only)</b>
Subject Panels meet.	<b>Late March/early April 2012</b> <b>Early May 2012 (Journalism and Publishing Studies only)</b>
Recommendations of Subject Panels are collated and presented to the meeting of Heads of Humanities.	<b>April 2012</b> <b>May 2012 (Journalism and Publishing Studies only)</b>
Registry is informed of the outcomes of the assessment and award process, and notifies applicants.	<b>April/May 2012</b>

## Appendix 2: AHRC Master's Awards (Research Preparation and Professional Preparation) - 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 level, and in terms of any relevant professional experience. Reference will be made to transcripts for individual module marks and degree results. The assessors will be looking for:

- a well thought-out plan for the proposed study and evidence of an ability to articulate and undertake a research project (**Research Preparation scheme**); or
- clearly articulated reasons for pursuing the chosen programme, and evidence of the ability to successfully pursue and complete the programme (**Professional Preparation scheme**).

### 2. Evidence that the applicant is well-prepared for his/her proposed study 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 postgraduate study, and the applicant's description of how the programme will contribute to his/her long-term career aims. The assessors will also consider the supporting evidence provided by the referees, particularly in terms of the applicant's ability to complete the programme.

For the **Research Preparation** scheme, there must be evidence that the applicant intends to proceed to doctoral study (or, in the creative and performing arts, to proceed to doctoral study or a career in research in the higher education sector).

For the **Professional Preparation** scheme, there must be evidence that the applicant intends to proceed to practice in the field for which the programme will prepare them.

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

This will be based on the applicant's account of and reasons for pursuing the proposed programme.

### Appendix 3 - AHRC Subject Area Descriptions (for which Cardiff has Research Preparation and Professional Masters AHRC awards to offer in 2012-13)

#### 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.

#### European Language and Culture

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 relevant languages other than English and students must also demonstrate competence in that language at an appropriate level.

#### 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).

**Interpreting and Translation**

*(Modern languages)*

**Journalism and Publishing Studies**

Includes all forms of journalism such as broadcast journalism, newspaper journalism, periodical journalism, and includes journalism transmitted through new media (multimedia and online journalism) and publishing studies.

**Music**

Includes 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). Responsibility for *ethnomusicology* is shared with ESRC. The AHRC may support courses in *music psychology* where the predominant focus of the study is based in the arts and humanities.