



AHRC Theme Large Grants Care for the Future Call for Outline Proposals

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Executive Summary

The AHRC is pleased to announce a call for outline proposals for Large Grants under the ***Care for the Future: Thinking Forward Through the Past*** strategic theme.

This call for Large Grants provides an opportunity to develop ambitious, transformative research agendas addressing major research questions and problems highlighted by, and arising out of, the Care for the Future theme description. The Care for the Future large grants are expected to act as beacons for the theme, building new communities of scholars around the theme's central research challenges and concerns, promoting the collaborative ways of working the theme is seeking to encourage and developing strategic partnerships between Research Organisations and across disciplines, sectors and internationally. They are expected to leave a significant legacy in terms of the longer-term development of the research field, and in terms of providing opportunities for doctoral and early career researchers to engage with the theme. Successful projects will be expected to make a significant contribution to thematic activities and events and to work closely with the Theme Leadership Fellow, the Theme's Advisory Group and AHRC staff.

This call represents the first of two stages in the application process. In this first stage we are inviting Outline Proposals from research teams for Large Grants to promote innovative and collaborative research across arts and humanities disciplines and, where appropriate, beyond, that will make a central contribution to the development of the Care for the Future Theme. Funding of between £1m and £2m is available on a full economic costs basis with AHRC meeting 80% of the FEC. Awards should last for a minimum of 36 months and a maximum of 60 months and will be expected to start between 1 September 2014 and 1 April 2015. The closing date for outline proposals is **4pm on 10 October 2013**.

This Large Grants call represents one of a range of funding opportunities within the Care for the Future Theme. Successful proposals under this call are expected to support research activities of a scale and ambition beyond that normally required for a standard AHRC grant. Applications for projects of less than £1m addressing the themes can still be submitted through our responsive mode schemes, including, where applicable, responses to highlight notices.

AHRC Care for the Future: Thinking Forward Through the Past Theme

The relationship between the past, present and future shapes our understanding of the world around us. Whether it is the perceived consequences of past events, the urgency

of present concerns, or the challenges of real or imagined futures, the structures of time intersect with and inform our sense of ourselves in myriad ways. 'Care for the Future: Thinking Forward through the Past' affords an opportunity for researchers in the arts and humanities ***to explore the dynamic relationship that exists between past, present and future, and how they interact with and shape each other, through a temporally inflected lens.***

The 'Care for the Future' theme will encourage critical reflection upon the concepts that are used to join together past, present and future – including memory, legacy, heritage, and progress; upon different creative, artistic and literary modes of engagement with the past and the passage of time; and upon different emotions evoked by reflecting on the past – such as denial, forgetting, trauma, nostalgia, mourning and celebration. In exploring the question of whether and how understandings of the past – distant as well as recent – may provide pathways to the future, the theme will further consider the consequences of selectivity – whose voices are heard and whose are silenced by the past, as well as those which questions are asked about the past and those which are not. It will encourage researchers to explore different approaches to writing the past and how these may extend or restrict the possibilities of historical and critical interpretation.

This call should be read in close conjunction with the full theme description which can be found on our website: [Care for the Future Theme Descriptor \(PDF 44KB, opens in a new window\)](#). Before progressing through the application guidance and process we recommend that you read this document carefully and consider where the synergies with your proposed research lie and what contributions it will bring to the theme.

Through this call we wish to encourage outline applications addressing a wide range of research issues and involving a wide range of subject areas and approaches, and to be open to creative responses to the theme, provided that they can demonstrate how they will make a substantial contribution to the development of the Care for the Theme. However, it is intended to complement the highlight notice within the research grants scheme which closed in October 2012 for applications up to £1.5m addressing the Theme's Environmental Change and Sustainability area of engagement. Given the substantial cluster of projects due to be announced shortly in this area, we do not anticipate funding large grants applications through this call that are solely or primarily focused on this area of engagement within the theme. Of course applications addressing other aspects of the Theme which include an element relating to environmental change and sustainability dimension may still be submitted and applications focused on environmental change and sustainability may still be submitted through responsive mode funding schemes. Similarly this call is intended to complement the joint Care for the

Future / Connected Communities call launched in May 2013 for co-ordinating Centres to support community engagement around the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War.

This call is open to applications from any researchers eligible to apply for AHRC funding. Prior engagement with, or funding as a part of, the theme, is not a requirement for applying under this call and will not be one of the criteria for funding.

Care for the Future Large Grants

The Care for the Future large grants are expected to act as **beacons for the theme**. They should be of a **scale and ambition** beyond that normally required for a standard AHRC grant; address major research questions and problems highlighted by, and arising out of, the theme description; and, display significant **transformative potential within a relevant theme area**. They should play a significant role in **building new communities of scholars around the theme's central research challenges and concerns**, as well as promoting the collaborative ways of working the theme is seeking to encourage. They should have a significant **legacy in terms of the longer-term development of the research field**, and in terms of providing opportunities for doctoral and early career researchers to engage with the theme and participate in its activities and events.

Large grant proposals should clearly demonstrate the value of the proposed research in the context of and in response to the broader **aims of the theme**. The potential 'sites of engagement' set out in the theme description are not to be interpreted narrowly or rigidly, but are designed to stimulate researchers to come forward with their own perspectives and priorities for investigation. Work that places these elements into international and comparative contexts is particularly welcomed, as are projects in partnership with non-HEIs which co-produce new knowledge and ideas.

Large Grants are expected to be highly **collaborative** - across institutions, across disciplines and with partners outside the higher education (HE) sector (e.g. private, public and third sector). The theme lends itself strongly to collaboration. Applicants should therefore consider opportunities for working across disciplines – both within the arts and humanities and, where appropriate, beyond – and in partnership with organisations from outside the academic sector whose input will enrich the intellectual content and potential pathways to impact for the proposed research. Applicants are encouraged to consider how the Care for Future theme offers the potential for the arts and humanities to make a distinctive contribution in areas such as **knowledge exchange, public policy and/or public engagement**. It is also expected that projects will include a significant amount of cross-institutional collaboration.

Where appropriate, proposals with a substantial **international component** are also strongly encouraged, whether in terms of the subject matter of the research, or collaboration with scholars overseas, or both. Overseas co-investigators may be included within large grant applications, where appropriate.

The large grants that are funded will be expected to play an important role in **building research capabilities** and expertise within areas relevant to the Care for the Future theme and leave a significant legacy in terms of the longer term development of the research field. For example, this might include linked project / associated PhD studentships, training and skills development for PhD students and project research staff, support for early career researchers and broader academic networking and engagement activities.

Large grant proposals should actively explore and include specific plans for supporting **collaborative activities with other researchers funded through the theme**. Successful projects will also be expected to work with the Care for the Future Theme Leadership Fellow to provide foci around which a community of scholars can be developed in thematic areas. They will also be expected to work closely with the relevant theme's Advisory Group and AHRC staff. This close working will allow for a greater element of flexibility, agility and risk taking in responding to evolving research agendas and partnership opportunities under the theme.

The various activities within the Large Grants must be carefully and closely **integrated** so that together they speak to a bigger research agenda and the 'whole is more than the sum of the parts'.

In addition to standard research excellence criteria, contribution to the theme and fit to this call specification will be essential criteria. Through this call we wish to be **open to innovative, adventurous and ambitious applications** that may entail a certain amount of risk, provided that such proposals clearly and convincingly address these potential risks and how they will be managed

Number and Value of Awards

Funding for each grant awarded will be between **£1m** and **£2m** (fEC) over a period of **between 36 and 60 months**. Approximately 2-4 Large Grants are expected to be funded under this Care for the Future large grants call.

Application and Assessment Process

Overview

The application process for the Care for the Future Large Grants call will be in two stages: an outline proposal stage and a full proposal stage. The outline proposal stage is open to any applicants that meet the eligibility criteria outlined below; it is not necessary for applicants to have previously received an award through the Care for the Future theme. The AHRC recognises that some proposals might address subjects relevant to other AHRC themes in addition to Care for the Future. Where this is the case, applicants should focus on their contribution to the Care for the Future theme but also, where appropriate, acknowledge overlap with any other themes in the Case for Support. It is not possible to submit the same proposal, or an amended version thereof, to more than one theme large grants call. Therefore, if you have already submitted your proposal to one of the earlier theme large grants calls it cannot be resubmitted to this call.

Stage1: Outline Proposals

Outline proposals will be assessed and shortlisted by a specially convened assessment panel involving members of the Care for the Future theme Advisory Group and the AHRC's Peer Review College. Proposals will be reviewed against the assessment criteria set out below. It is expected that approximately 6-8 proposals will be shortlisted. In addition to assessing the potential of the proposed research and fit to the call, the panel will consider the spread of proposals across subject disciplines within the theme when determining the number and range of outline bids that will be invited to proceed to full proposal stage.

The AHRC acknowledges that projects may not necessarily be fully formed at the point of submitting the outline proposal and it is permissible for components such as costs and partnerships to be provisional at this stage. The main purpose of the outline stage is to assess the potential of proposals to realise the aims of the Care for the Future Large Grants call. Individual feedback will not be provided for proposals that are unsuccessful at the outline stage.

Stage 2: Full Proposals

Shortlisted applicants from Stage 1 will be provided with feedback from the assessment panel and invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be peer reviewed and the applicants will be interviewed by a multi-disciplinary panel, which will make funding recommendations to the AHRC as to the proposals of highest quality which meet the aims and objectives of the relevant theme. It is expected that 2-4 Large Grants will be

awarded (subject to quality and overall balance of activities within the Care for the Future theme).

Timetable

- May 2013 - Launch of call (proposals available in JeS from 5th June)
- 10 October 2013 - Closing date for outline proposals
- December 2013– Notification of shortlisting outcomes
- March 2014 - Closing Date for full proposals
- May / June 2014 – interviews with shortlisted applicants
- June 2014 – Notification of funding outcomes
- Between September 2014 and April 2015 – Large Grants to start

International Collaboration

International collaboration is encouraged for these theme Large Grants. Where appropriate international partners may be named as co-investigators, or included as collaborators or consultants, fully justifying their role in the project and the experience they will bring to the team. Costs for the time of any consultants, overseas travel/subsistence; international phone calls and/ or video conferencing; overseas events/activities can be included within the grant. Please see AHRC's Funding Guide for further information on international co-investigators. The added value and contribution of the international collaboration to the research must be clearly explained and justified in the proposal. Costs for international collaboration must be included within the £2m (fEC) limit.

Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships

Theme Large Grants should encourage partnership working where it serves to strengthen and diversify research activities and/or enhance their pathways to impact. We wish to encourage creative thinking about how the Care for the Future theme might open up opportunities for knowledge exchange with the creative, cultural, heritage or other sectors and/or stimulate distinctive contributions in areas such public policy and/or public engagement. Co-production of new knowledge and understanding through interactions between academic and non-academic individuals and communities is therefore encouraged. Partnerships should demonstrate how they will, by a wide range of interactions, add value to, and widen the audiences for, the proposed research. In addition, opportunities for Knowledge Exchange and/or public engagement activities, both large and small scale, may arise at any point in the research lifecycle and projects should be alert and open to exploiting such opportunities that are offered.

Building Capacity

Theme Large Grants offer an opportunity to develop the next generation of researchers within the thematic areas and applicants are encouraged to think imaginatively about how this might be achieved. Applicants should outline how they will support the development and training for any project/associated students or early career researchers engaged in the project. This should include both the skills required to undertake the research and wider skills, such as public engagement and / or public policy activity, which might benefit the project as a whole. It will be important to develop a cohort of researchers within the theme and award holders might consider how they will facilitate engagement beyond their immediate project. In respect of any doctoral students, applicants may also wish to consider what additional development opportunities would be appropriate within the scope of the award. This might include a period of research or an internship in a non-academic organisation or where appropriate, the inclusion of a second supervisor from a different department to enable them to develop the skills and experience required for cross-disciplinary research.

Similar consideration should also be given to the support provided to early career researchers involved in projects, for example by considering the opportunities for cross-disciplinary mentoring, for gaining experience of working in a different disciplinary context or setting or using different research tools and methods.

Funding for Research across Research Council Boundaries

The nature of the Care for the Future theme means that proposals under this call may cut across the remits of the Research Councils. While proposals should sit substantially within the Arts and Humanities, the AHRC is willing to adopt a flexible approach to funding contributions to Large Grants from research fields outside the arts and humanities as an integral part of developing these areas. Some funding also may be requested for researchers from outside of Arts and Humanities to contribute their time to projects as co-investigators, team members, collaborators or consultants and to cover other costs such as travel and subsistence. For further details of AHRC subject remit please see section 7.3 of the [Research Funding Guide \(PDF 609KB, opens in a new window\)](#).

Assessment Criteria for Outline and Full Proposals

- The following criteria will be used to assess the potential of the project at the outline stage and the full detail at the full proposal stage.
- the quality, innovation and transformative nature of the proposed research in contributing to the Care for the Future theme

- the case made for developing skills and expertise to ensure the long-term future of the area;
- fit with the call specification and potential contribution to the development of the Care for the Future theme, including the extent to which key research questions and issues relevant to the theme are addressed;
- demonstrable expertise in depth and breadth across the relevant areas of the arts and humanities and where applicable, beyond;
- the extent to which the proposed activities will generate genuine and productive interaction across boundaries (e.g. disciplinary, conceptual, theoretical, methodological, institutional, sectoral and, if appropriate, international);
- the potential for external engagement (including the development of non-academic partnerships and embedding of knowledge exchange activities) and the demonstration of a robust and appropriate strategy for the active dissemination and exploitation of the outcomes and the development of pathways to impact;
- the extent to which there are effective plans for the management and integration of the activities and the monitoring of progress, including the strength of the expertise, skills and experience of the Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators and other team members to manage and deliver the proposed activities and outputs and whether a feasible timetable and realistic costs are presented;
- the plans and aims for sustainable and enduring outcomes and legacy from the research;
- the plans for: collaborating with other researchers under the Care for the Future theme; working with the Theme Leadership Fellow to develop a community of scholars around the theme; and working with the theme's Advisory Group;
- the strength of the support and commitment offered by the collaborating institutions;
- value for money

In addition the balance of coverage across different research areas within the theme may also be taken into account when prioritising between high quality proposals.

Peer Review

The approach to Peer Review will be flexible in order to respond appropriately to the work proposed through the applications. In addition to peer reviewers within AHRC's Peer Review College, and the potential to supplement these with reviewers from overseas and beyond the HE sector, AHRC may also, where proposals cross Research Council remits, seek advice from other Research Councils on the peer review of proposals.

How to apply

You should submit your proposal using the Research Councils' [Joint electronic Submission \(Je-S\) System](#). To prepare a proposal form in Je-S, log-in to your account and choose **New Document**, then select the following options:

Council: AHRC

Document Type: Outline Proposal

Scheme: AHRC Outline

Call/Type Mode: Care for the Future Large Grants Outlines 10 October 2013

Then click 'Create Document'; Je-S will then create a proposal form, displaying the relevant section headings. Using the 'Help' link at the top of each section will provide guidance relevant to that section of the form. **Please take care when choosing the Call/Type/Mode as other similar options will be presented in the drop-down list.** Please note that the proposal form for this scheme will be available in Je-S **from 5th June 2013.**

Note that clicking 'submit document' on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation's administration, not to AHRC. ***Please do not leave submission to the last minute and remember to allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the Call closing date.*** All proposals must be completed and submitted by the host organisation by **4pm on Thursday 10 October 2013.** Once the call closes for submission it will not be re-opened and institutions will not be able to submit the application.

In addition to the standard Je-S Outline Proposal form, applicants are expected to provide:

- a Case for Support addressing the headings in Annex 1 below;
- CVs for the PI, Co-Is and any named Research Assistants

The page limits defined in this document (see annex) must not be exceeded. If you have any queries about setting up your proposal form in the Je-S system please contact the Je-S helpdesk:

Telephone: 01793 444164

Email: JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk

Preparing an Outline Proposal

This document should be read in conjunction with the AHRC's [Research Funding Guide \(PDF 609KB, opens in a new window\)](#) which gives details about applying for AHRC funding, including eligibility requirements, information about costings and completing the proposal form. Exceptions are described below.

Start date and duration: The earliest start date for theme Large Grant awards is **1 September 2014** and the latest date is **1 April 2015**. The maximum duration that can be applied for is **60 months**.

Additional Proposal Criteria:

- Lead Research Organisation – there should be one lead RO with the capability to support a Large Grant;
- Principal Investigator (PI) – should have a demonstrable track record of research management.
- Co-Investigators (Co-I) – should have demonstrable expertise within the range of disciplines required to undertake the project. Due to the collaborative nature of the call, we recognise that more Co-Investigators may be required than for our standard schemes. The number of Co-Is should be commensurate with the scale and ambition of the research and reflect the requirements for successfully delivering the boundary crossing collaborations outlined in the proposal.
- Research Assistants – it is expected that projects will include Research Assistants who have the required expertise to undertake the research proposed.
- PhD project students – grants can include up to three PhD studentships, whose projects must be completed within the duration of the award and whose work will contribute to the project as a whole. Each studentship must provide added value to the project and must be relevant to the theme area, but also allow the student sufficient independence to make their own original contribution to scholarship. Students must not be recruited to undertake the administrative or management tasks on the project.
- PI and Co-I commitment – this should be commensurate with the scale and ambition of the proposed project, the challenges of managing and integrating activities within complex large grants and the broader expectations of the large grants as 'beacons' for the theme.
- Project /Administrative support – the time and cost of any administrative support should be included within the proposal.

Submitting More Than One Proposal:

A PI may submit only one proposal under the Large Grants scheme. It is, however, acceptable for a PI on one proposal to be named as a Co-Investigator on others where it can be demonstrated that sufficient time is available to dedicate to all projects.

Other Thematic Funding Opportunities

In addition to the funding opportunities offered through AHRC's responsive mode grants (including provisions for cross-Council research through the Cross-Council Funding Agreement), Fellowships and Networking schemes, we also plan to work with the Theme Leadership Fellow to discuss other Care for the Future opportunities to complement the Large Grants Call. This might include a workshop and funding opportunity for early career researchers, or a further Exploratory Awards call, or other similar activity. The AHRC are currently considering further plans which will be informed by the awards made within the theme so far. Details will be made available on the Care for the Future page of the AHRC's website in due course.

Contacts

Enquiries regarding the type of activities that can be supported through this call should be directed to either:

Hattie Allsop, Programmes Coordinator (Cultures and Heritage) h.allsop@ahrc.ac.uk or 01793 416038

or

Natalia Rowlands, Portfolio Manager (Cultures and Heritage) n.rowlands@ahrc.ac.uk or 01793 416030

or

Susan Hanshaw, Strategy and Development Manager (Cultures and Heritage) s.hanshaw@ahrc.ac.uk or 01793 416063

The AHRC works with the RCUK Shared Services Centre (SSC) to deliver all of our funding activities. Enquiries about Je-S registration or completing the proposal form should be directed to grants@ssc.rcuk.ac.uk or 01793 444 164

Annex: Guidance for completing attachments

The following documents should be completed in a font no smaller than size 11. Please also note the permitted document lengths. **Proposals containing attachments exceeding the stated limits, or not adhering to the specified format, will not be considered.**

Case for Support

The Case for Support should be no more than **4 sides of A4** outlining the rationale for the proposed activity, how it will add value to current activities, a description of the proposed activities to be undertaken, and an outline of the expected outputs and dissemination plans. If you choose to include footnotes or a bibliography (you are not required to do so) these must be included within the page limit. Within this page limit you should aim to make the Case for Support as concise, specific and clear as possible. You are advised to focus your proposal and to provide sufficient evidence to enable members of the shortlisting panel to reach a considered judgment as to the overall quality and potential significance of your proposal, its innovation, its feasibility and potential overall value for money. If you are invited to proceed to full proposal stage then you will be given the opportunity to provide further details. Your Case for Support should demonstrate the potential of the proposed activities to achieve the innovative, boundary-crossing, transformative aims for these Large Grants as set out in the Assessment Criteria and should be structured using the following headings:

Fit to the Call and Contribution to the Care for the Future Theme

You should ensure that it is clear to the reviewers how the proposed activities will meet the ambitions outlined in this call for Large Grants, fit with the Care for the Future theme and make a significant contribution to the theme's development.

Research Questions

You should give a brief, clear description of the core research questions that you intend to address and identify the contribution these will make to the thematic area.

Research Context

You should briefly describe the research context for your project/programme of work. Why is it important that these questions or issues are explored? What other research is being or has been conducted in this area? What contribution will your research make to improving, enhancing, or developing creativity, insights, knowledge or understanding in the thematic area?

Research Methods

You should briefly describe the research methods you will be using to address the questions described above, or to explore the issues that will be investigated. Why have you chosen this approach? Why is it the best way to answer the research questions identified?

Management and Co-ordination

How will the activities be managed, coordinated and delivered? If the application includes additional assistance or administrative support, please provide brief details of the activities to be undertaken.

Timetable

You should provide a brief timetable to show the feasibility of the major planned activities within the proposed timescale, indicating key milestones.

Outcomes, impact and dissemination

What are the plans for publication or other public output? Please provide examples of any outputs you propose to produce during the award and their proposed focus. How will you identify the key audiences, beneficiaries and interest groups for the research and how will they be engaged in the process? How will any outputs be discussed with, and/or communicated and disseminated to, those audiences? How will you aim to engage with the relevant theme Fellow and other theme award holders? You should also indicate any pathways to impact outside academia, for example in relation to policy and/or practice.

Resources requested

You should briefly explain why the indicated resources are needed. Please note that it is not sufficient merely to list what is required.

Curriculum Vitae

Summary curriculum vitae should be attached as separate documents for the Principal Investigator and any Co-Investigators and named postdoctoral researchers. These should be **no more than two sides of A4 paper**. CVs should include basic information about education, employment history, academic responsibilities and any relevant publications and research grants.