



# Collaborative Skills Development Call 2013 Call Guidance

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## Introduction

1. The Collaborative Skills Development call is aimed at supporting Research Organisations in developing innovative, collaborative training events and activities for PhD students and early career researchers in the arts and humanities.
2. The call asks for collaborative proposals between Research Organisations (ROs) or between an RO and non-academic partners. It is our expectation that through this collaborative approach an enhanced quality of training and student experience can be provided. The call has three strands, as follows:
  - The Organisation-led strand will enable Research Organisations (ROs) to offer a programme of training and skills development activities to groups of students and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in several institutions, involving a variety of different partners.
  - The Early Career Researcher (ECR)-led route will support ECRs to establish and run collaborative training and researcher development activities primarily for the benefit of other ECRs.
  - The Student-led strand will support doctoral students to establish and run smaller-scale collaborative activities.

The call will offer funds of up to £60,000 for Organisation-led skills development packages, up to £5,000 for ECR-led programmes (which can include salary costs for the ECR), and up to £3,000 for Student-led programmes. Proposals must involve collaboration between at least two ROs, or between ROs and organisations from other sectors.

3. The 2013 Skills Development call has three strategic areas:
  - Partnership working, including public engagement
  - Entrepreneurship and the Creative Economy
  - Research skills enrichment

**Proposals must fit at least one of these three areas. They can involve, or draw on, any subject area in the AHRC's remit.**

If applicants are unsure of whether a potential programme or activity fits within one of the three areas, please contact the office for an informal discussion (contact details at the end of this guidance).

## Aims of the Collaborative Skills Development Call

4. This call aims to:
  - Support ROs and researchers in developing innovative skills development packages which will enable them to meet capacity and training issues in strategic areas of the arts and humanities.

- Encourage collaboration between ROs and other sectors and through such collaborations, to enhance the quality of training and student/ECR experience.
- To foster and promote dialogue, knowledge exchange and co-creation between postgraduates/ECRs and the wider community, whether that is across disciplines, or with potential beneficiaries of their research in the public, private or third sectors, or in the wider public.
- Provide opportunities for students and ECRs to broaden their experience beyond academia, and to widen their understanding of the ways in which research training can add value to their employability within a range of sectors beyond academia.
- For the student-led and ECR-led routes, to enable researchers to gain experience of organising activities and programmes, thereby creating opportunities for researchers to develop and put into practice a range of professional skills (e.g. communication skills, project management, facilitation, networking etc.).

## Funding Available

### Organisation-led route

5. Funding of up to £60,000 is available for each award, depending on the scale and number of activities proposed in each skills development package.
6. Awards will be for up to 18 months' duration, allowing time for development of the proposed programme and delivery. We request that all awards start on or before 1 February 2014. This will allow 6 months of development time in order for training provision to be delivered to students and ECRs in the 2014/2015 academic year. ROs can propose a shorter length of award than 18 months, but this must be suitable to the scope of the programme outlined. Funding will be paid in one lump sum at the start of the award.
7. Proposals should be for collaborative programmes involving departments of at least two separate Research Organisations, or a Research Organisation and a non-academic organisation.
8. **Proposals can be submitted by any UK Research Organisation (RO) including Independent Research Organisations (IROs).** Where proposals include non-academic organisations as partners, they must be led by an RO.
9. There is no limit to the number of partners that can be involved in a Collaborative Skills Development proposal, although the lead applicant should consider how the partners involved will contribute to a coherent and manageable programme. A variety of different ROs and organisations can be involved in collaborations, such as museums, charities, local authorities, media organisations, government bodies and business. As well as organisations involved in developing the package, there may be others named in the proposals whose students and ECRs will benefit from the provision. The training package developed may be open to students and ECRs outside of the organisations involved in developing and delivering the package.

## **ECR-led route**

10. Funding of up to £5,000 is available for each award, depending on the scale of the activity proposed.
11. Awards will be for up to one year in duration. This period is intended to allow time for development and preparation of the proposed programme of activity, as well as delivery. The funding for the award will be paid in one initial payment at the start of the award. Awards must start within 6 months of notification of funding; applicants will be notified of the outcome of their proposal by December 2013.
12. Proposals should be for collaborative programmes, involving at least two separate ROs, or an RO and a non-academic organisation. The activities proposed must be for the benefit of a cohort of other ECRs or doctoral students; activities that are solely linked to the training and development of the lead applicant are not eligible.
13. Proposals can be submitted by any ECR working in the arts and humanities who meets the eligibility requirements referenced in the [Research Funding Guide](#) (Section 3: Eligibility), including those specifically detailed for ECRs, at the time of application. **Eligibility requirements for ECRs are also outlined in Annex B of this document.** In summary, ECR applicants must be within eight years of the award of their PhD or equivalent professional training, or within six years of their first academic appointment. ECR applicants must also have a contractual arrangement with a UK RO which meets the requirements as set out in the Research Funding Guide. ECRs do not have to hold AHRC funding in order to apply.

## **Student-led route**

14. Funding of up to £3,000 is available for each award, depending on the scale of the activity proposed.
15. Awards will be for up to one year in duration. This period is intended to allow time for development and preparation of the programme proposed, as well as delivery. The funding for the award will be made in one initial payment at the start of the award. Awards must start within 6 months of notification of funding; applicants will be notified of the outcome of their proposal by December 2013.
16. Proposals should be for collaborative programmes, involving at least two separate ROs, or an RO and a non-academic organisation. The activities proposed must be for the benefit of a cohort of other doctoral students and ECRs; activities that are solely linked to the training and development of the lead student applicant are not eligible.
17. Proposals can be submitted by any doctoral student studying the arts and humanities at any UK Higher Education Institution. Student applicants do not have to hold AHRC funding, nor is the Research Organisation required to hold AHRC studentship funding.

Individuals who have submitted their thesis, but have not yet had their degree formally conferred by their University (e.g. they may be awaiting their viva), should submit to the Student-led route, rather than the ECR-route. Potential applicants must hold some form of student registration status at their University in order to apply.

## Priority areas for proposals

### Partnership working, including public engagement

18. Proposals in this area should support postgraduate students and ECRs to engage in participatory research with partners outside of academia, including community groups and the public, private and third sectors.

Programmes can be in support of particular activities or events, or to give dedicated training to researchers in skills they need to connect with a non-specialist public, but we would expect all proposals in this area to incorporate an element of partnership working, and provide opportunities for students and ECRs to put their learning in this area into practice.

Programmes should not be limited to skills or activities supporting one-way research dissemination at the end of a researcher's project, but instead should explore the benefits of collaborative working and knowledge exchange throughout all stages of research; consider how dialogue and interaction with partners outside of academia can contribute to and impact on a researcher's work; and work with audiences or research users to understand their needs and requirements in co-creation and co-design of research. Careful attention and support should be given to the ethical issues involved in undertaking participatory research.

Within this area we particularly encourage ROs and researchers to explore the development of long-lasting public and community partnerships. We hope a wide range of organisations will be drawn upon to engage in participative research, such as community groups, third sector organisations, museums and galleries, etc.

We would encourage applicants to consider the kind of activities that have been supported through our [Cultural Engagement Fund](#). Organisation-led applicants may wish to build on their experience of managing this scheme, and the feedback from the individuals supported.

Student and ECR applicants considering applying within this area are advised to seek the appropriate support and guidance from offices within their institutions which coordinate knowledge exchange, partnerships or research innovation (where applicable). Such offices should be able to advise if institutions have existing partnerships or collaborations that could be developed in these researcher-led projects.

All applicants to this route may find the AHRC's new guide to partnership working in the arts and humanities helpful; this will be available on our website from mid-July (see the 'Useful Resources' section on p.11).

### Entrepreneurship and the Creative Economy

19. Collaborative proposals in this area will deliver activities that enable postgraduate students and ECRs to develop entrepreneurial approaches to using their research for wider economic or social benefit, or facilitate enterprise training to equip students with relevant business skills to start a new venture. The activities can be tailored for students and ECRs in any arts and humanities subject area, but we particularly encourage proposals in design and the creative sectors, including proposals that

reflect the aim of the Digital Transformations theme to explore the exploitation of digital technologies in the arts and humanities.

Digital technology has challenged the basis of much conventional business thinking, especially where small creative businesses are concerned, in areas such as the changing relationship between producer and consumer, open source IP, new co-working models and spaces and the concept of 'talent as asset'. Therefore proposals which explore and develop the skills required in the 'disruptive' digital business environment are strongly encouraged.

Entrepreneurial skills are relevant to all parts of the economy and society. Entrepreneurship and enterprise training, particularly within the Creative Economy, should offer a mix of creative and business skills. It should aim to develop capacity to be entrepreneurial in any context, seeking out or recognising opportunities for enterprising activity, to be able to adapt to future changes in a fast-changing and competitive global market, to self-generate commercial and business opportunities, and to contribute to sustainable growth in the creative sector.

Programmes may include training on the commercialisation of arts and humanities research and business and management competencies, including areas such as financial awareness, leadership, commercial communication, problem solving, and intellectual property. Students should be able to explore both theory and practice and be able to develop the full range of entrepreneurial and enterprise skills and attributes.

We wish to encourage development of entrepreneurship and enterprise skills in an environment of innovation, creativity and collaboration, where techniques and skills can be applied in a wide variety of settings. We will therefore particularly welcome programmes that focus on action or experiential learning that give students and ECRs opportunities to put their training and skills development into practice and that facilitate external engagement, interaction and mentoring with creative practitioners working in the Creative Economy.

We would particularly encourage Research Organisations to think about how such training can be developed in relation to institutional Business Gateway and/or Knowledge Exchange Offices, alongside Graduate Schools and Research Offices. The importance of new models of entrepreneurship in the arts and humanities can often be overlooked in favour of conventional 'technology transfer' approaches. More innovative interactions between researchers and knowledge models used within the creative sector would be especially welcome.

Student and ECR applicants considering applying within this area are advised to seek the appropriate support and guidance from Business Gateway and Knowledge Exchange offices within their institutions (where applicable). All applicants may also wish to consult the AHRC's new guide to partnership working in the arts and humanities; this will be available on our website by mid-July (see the 'Useful Resources' section on p.11).

## **Research skills enrichment**

20. Proposals in this area will support new collaborative activities that will enable postgraduate researchers and ECRs to enhance their research skills. We encourage applications that facilitate researchers engaging with disciplines outside of their own in order to add value to their current research and/or develop their research in a new direction. We would also particularly encourage applications within the following areas:

- Technical skills;
- Understanding of ethical and legal issues;
- Copyright and IPR;
- Specialist IT skills.

Also:

- Skills needed in the context of the Digital Transformations theme to exploit the opportunities presented by 'big data' and digital technologies to enable arts and humanities researchers to address existing research topics in new ways. We encourage programmes that will support researchers across the arts and humanities whose studies would benefit from the development of skills in this area, including in areas such as: data mining, mash-ups, analysis, interpretation, representation, visualisation; open data formats, standards and protocols; and other related skills and/or underpinning or related skills in areas such as quantitative, qualitative or statistical data analysis and/or legal or ethical issues related to data use.
- Modern languages: supporting postgraduate researchers to develop new language skills that will enhance their research. A broad range of language skills training is welcome, encompassing minority languages and the major modern languages. Skills Development packages can be aimed at researchers across the arts and humanities who (for example) need to develop skills in reading, writing and listening in another language in order to progress their research, or to give advanced and specialist training to existing language researchers in areas such as quantitative and ethnographic skills.

## **Further Guidance**

### **The institutions and organisations involved**

21. All applications must involve at least two Research Organisations, or an RO and an organisation from another sector. We welcome and encourage larger collaborations.
22. A lead organisation and a lead applicant must be identified to coordinate the proposal and to act as the contact for correspondence. If the application is successful, the award will be made to the lead organisation, which will be responsible for transferring any funds to partner organisations. Funds for successful awards will be paid through a new training grant for this scheme.



23. A lead organisation may lead on and be part of other proposals, and there is no limit to the number of collaborations in which any department or organisation may be involved. We would not, however, expect a Head of Department or equivalent lead applicant to be leading on more than one proposal. Similarly for the Student-led and ECR-led routes, we would not expect the lead student/ECR applicant to lead on more than one proposal. This is due to the time commitment involved in leading an award.
24. All proposals will require authorisation from the relevant authorities at the lead organisation, even if there are multiple proposals from the same RO.
25. We welcome collaborations involving an institution or organisation outside the HE sector or outside the UK; however, the AHRC is only able to make payments in this call to the lead Research Organisation.
26. Only one application should be submitted for each programme of activity proposed. We will not accept multiple applications covering different aspects of a single programme or from different partners involved in the collaboration.

### **Who might benefit from the Collaborative Skills Development funding?**

27. As part of the application process we request information on the approximate number of arts and humanities postgraduate students, early career researchers, and AHRC award holders who are likely to benefit from the provision. We are not looking solely for an estimate of potential interest, but rather evidence that there is sufficient demand for the proposed programme. The assessors will take this information into account alongside the nature and quality of the provision, and the costs sought, when assessing the application. Applicants need to consider how they will advertise the opportunity effectively, to ensure the numbers proposed are achievable, and the mechanism to be used for selecting participants.
28. The skills development and training provided through this scheme should benefit the AHRC funded cohort of students and ECRs in the relevant subject areas at the collaborating organisations, but should also be made available, as appropriate, to wider cohorts of students and ECRs. Priority should be given to doctoral students and early career researchers funded by the AHRC. For the purposes of this call we are using the AHRC's definition of ECRs, i.e. researchers that are within 8 years of the award of their PhD or equivalent professional training, or within six years of their first academic appointment.
29. We would expect the majority of the participants in the activities proposed to be studying or working within the AHRC's subject remit. Applicants can include participants from other disciplines if there will be some benefit to the arts and humanities participants from the cross- or inter-disciplinary interaction proposed.
30. Depending on the nature of the programmes proposed, skills development packages could target smaller groups of students/ECRs with a view to offering tailored, specialist training, or could target larger and more diverse groups, offering more generic training. The funding sought should be appropriate to the size and scale of the programme and the numbers of students/ECRs to be supported. It will be the applicant's responsibility to justify the scale of the programme proposed, the costs sought, and how this best meets the skills gaps being addressed through the proposed package.

31. We strongly advise **organisation-led** applicants to consider the sustainability of their programmes. Applicants should consider how the resources developed will enable training to take place beyond the period of the award, and how any partnerships or collaborations formed could lead to longer term relationships and benefits for the RO. Feedback from existing applicants indicates that programmes that have a clear plan or evidence base for sustainability beyond the initial period of AHRC funding are much more successful in engaging partners and colleagues, and leveraging additional funding.

### **Previous award holders**

32. Existing or previous award holders from the Collaborative Research Training scheme and the 2011 and 2012 Skills Development calls are eligible to apply to this call (if the existing award dates allow). Programmes can build on previous awards but we would expect to see substantial development from the original award. We would also expect to see some evidence that the learning and experience gained in the initial programme has been or will be shared for the benefit of a wider range of partners. This call cannot be used as follow-on funding for an existing programme.

### **Content of applications**

33. Applicants can propose a variety of different activities in order to constitute a skills development package that will address one of the areas outlined above. Activities that applicants may wish to consider include:

- Outreach/Volunteering
- Exchanges
- Networks and workshops
- Partnerships
- Placements, Internships, Secondments
- Mentoring and work based learning
- Entrepreneurs in residence or Enterprise Champions
- Business Plan competitions
- Overseas study visits
- Cross-discipline working
- Dedicated training programmes
- On-line/electronic resources

34. Please note this is not an exhaustive list and applicants are strongly encouraged to develop their own innovative packages for skills development. We are not prescriptive about the types of activities or training that can be proposed. Each

application will be assessed on the basis of the case put forward for how the activities proposed will meet a specific skills gap or capacity building issue.

35. Packages proposed can consist of a mixture of activities or can concentrate on one form of skills development activity. For example one applicant may formulate a proposal consisting of a mixture of work placements, cross-discipline working and a dedicated training programme, whereas another may propose a focussed training programme for PhDs and ECRs in ICT and multimedia.
36. The AHRC would normally expect that each Skills Development proposal would address just **one** of the main call areas. ROs may submit more than one organisation-led proposal if they wish to respond to more than one area. If an applicant wishes to respond to more than one area in one proposal, this may be possible where the areas are closely linked and the applicant can formulate a coherent and manageable programme, (for example a programme that incorporates skills development in both Partnership working and Entrepreneurship). For the purposes of the application form, the applicant will need to select one main strategic area, and then outline any interlinked areas in the Case for Support.

If applicants are unsure about what they can include in a proposal or whether their application meets the capacity issues as outlined in the guidance, please contact the AHRC office to discuss.

37. ROs can support proposals in each of the Organisation, ECR and Student-led strands. These do not have to be linked, but if they are, the applicants should explain, in each separate application, how the relationship between the two (or more) proposals will work.

### **Early Career Researcher (ECR)-led route**

38. Within the scope of the call, we would encourage ECR applicants to reflect on the broader skills they can make use of, and further develop, during the running of their proposed project, e.g. project, research and financial management, and managing and working with others, including leadership skills.
39. ECR applicants will be expected to develop and lead on proposals, and will act as the Grant Holder on the Je-S system. ECR applicants should therefore be fully Je-S registered. Further information on the Je-S application process can be found in Annex A.
40. ECR proposals will require authorisation (through Je-S) from the relevant authorities at the lead applicant's organisation, and applicants are encouraged to discuss the submission of proposals at an early stage with their relevant research office. Applicants will need to ensure sufficient time is built into the application process for all parties to contribute.

### **Student-led route**

41. Student-led proposals must be submitted through Je-S. Although we expect a lead student applicant to develop the content of the application, an appropriate RO staff member must be chosen as the Grant Holder on Je-S. This could be the student's supervisor, Head of Department or Graduate School, or a contact from the RO's

Career Office or Knowledge Exchange / Business Support office. The Grant Holder should be the most appropriate staff member to support the project that is being proposed. It is likely during the application and award process that student applicants will need advice on budgeting, the Je-S application process, financial accounting within the RO, administrative processes such as booking rooms, and accessing technical or specialist advice. The Grant Holder should be able to provide advice on these issues and help the student to access the support he/she needs within the organisation.

Correspondence relating to the award will be issued through Je-S to the Grant Holder; this includes award notification, terms and conditions of the award, and financial reconciliation at the end of the award. The Grant Holder should ensure that this correspondence is shared with the lead student applicant to enable the student to undertake the project successfully.

42. Although an RO staff member will be nominated as Grant Holder, the lead student should still develop the application, including compiling and editing the application on the Je-S system. Please include details of the lead student applicant, including email address, in the 'Organisations involved' section of the form. Further Je-S guidance can be found in Annex A.
43. Student proposals will require authorisation through Je-S from the relevant authorities at the lead applicant's organisation, and applicants are encouraged to discuss the submission of proposals at an early stage with their relevant research office. Applicants will need to ensure sufficient time is built into the application process for all parties to contribute. Applicants from a BGP, BGP CB or CDP award-holding organisation may wish to make the BGP / BGP CB / CDP coordinator aware that they are submitting a Collaborative Skills Development application, but there is no requirement for the coordinator to approve the application.

#### **Support from the organisation: Student and ECR applicants**

44. For student and ECR applicants, it is likely that advice will be required on the Je-S system, financial accounting within the RO, and accessing specialist and technical advice and support, and this will be needed during the application and award process. Applicants should ensure they are able to access the appropriate support at the RO(s) involved. We would advise applicants to investigate the support available from their Research Support office, Knowledge Exchange / Business Gateway offices, and Career Development and HR offices within the organisation, as appropriate to the content of the project.
45. Potential applicants to these routes should discuss their application with the appropriate manager or supervisor, and should consider if their role and workload at the RO can support the time commitment required to manage the proposed project. Applicants should ensure they have the full support of their organisation and have sought the appropriate advice needed to plan and deliver the programme successfully. In student-led proposals, the supervisor will be required to confirm support of the project via an attachment on the Je-S application. If a potential applicant or manager wishes to know more about the scheme and the benefits it has brought to previous award holders, please see our website for case studies on previously funded programmes.

46. For student and ECR proposals, the RO should appoint a mentor who will provide support throughout the development, operation and evaluation of your programme. We envisage that this mentor will be able to provide advice on the practical issues outlined above, on the intellectual content of the programme, and on other issues such as managing teams. The mentor should be a colleague within the applicant's institution, but it is up to the applicant to appoint the most appropriate contact to meet his / her needs and the needs of the proposed programme. This could be a colleague in the department, or someone from a Career Development or HR office (for example). For student-led applicants, the mentor can be the same person as the Training Grant Holder, or the student's supervisor, if appropriate. Applicants may also wish to consult previous Organisation-led award holders at the institution, if applicable. Mentors will be required to submit a 'mentor statement' as part of the Je-S application, outlining the support that will be given. Further details can be found on page 20.

## **Other Useful Resources**

47. Please see the website page for this scheme which has case studies on previously funded Skills Development programmes, and an advice page for student and ECR applicants compiled from feedback from previous student award holders

The AHRC will be launching a new guide in July: 'Partnership Working in the Arts and Humanities: A Good Practice Guide'. This will be available from the Knowledge Exchange pages of our website:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/innovation/knowledgeexchange/>

If you would like further information on training and development activities for students and ECRs, then please see the AHRC's Research Training Framework:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/phdstudents/researchtrainingframework/>  
<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/earlycareerresearchers/researchtrainingframework/>

The Vitae website is also a helpful resource:

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/>

In particular, we would encourage all applicants to be aware of the Researcher Development Statement (RDS), which sets out the knowledge, behaviours, and attributes of effective and highly skilled researchers appropriate for a wide range of careers:

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/275981/Researcher-Development-Statement-RDS.html>

There is an Enterprise 'lens' and a Public Engagement 'lens' on the Research Development Framework which applicants may find helpful. These resources provide a snapshot of the skills, attributes and behaviours that researchers will develop through taking part in such activities:

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/1393-474361/Public-engagement-lens-on-the-Researcher-Development-Framework.html>

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/1393-474341/Enterprise-lens-on-the-Researcher-Development-Framework.html>

The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) is a key resource for applicants in the area of Partnership working including Public Engagement. Their website provides guidance on public engagement activities from the point of view of students undertaking these activities, and organisations that wish to support training and learning in Public Engagement:

<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/>

ROs considering Internships and Placements as part of their proposals may wish to consult a recent best practice guide published by BIS:

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/BISCore/higher-education/docs/C/11-1068-common-best-practice-code-for-quality-internships.pdf>

## **Application and Assessment Processes**

### **Assessment process**

48. Organisation-led applications will be reviewed by an assessment panel consisting of specialists in training and development for postgraduates and ECRs, partnership working, and entrepreneurship and enterprise. Student-led and ECR-led applications will be assessed by the AHRC executive.

We envisage we will make in the region of 10 Organisation-led awards, up to 10 ECR-led awards, and up to 15 Student-led awards, although this will depend on the quality of the proposals received and the amount of funding requested.

### **Timetable**

49. The Je-S application form will be released by mid-July 2013. Please check the web page for this scheme for up-to-date information.

**4pm 19 September 2013** Deadline for Applications

**Early November 2013** Assessment Panel meeting

**December 2013** Outcomes sent out

**February 2014** Latest start date for successful Organisation-led awards

### **Assessment criteria**

50. The Grading Scale for the scheme is provided in Annex C. Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Whether the proposal meets one or more of the aims of the scheme (see paragraph 4):

- In supporting an innovative skills development package which will meet capacity and training issues in strategic areas of the arts and humanities
  - In supporting a collaboration between ROs and other sectors which will enhance the quality of training and student/ECR experience
  - In fostering dialogue, knowledge exchange and co-creation between postgraduates/ECRs and the wider community
  - In providing opportunities for students and ECRs to broaden their experience beyond academia
  - For the student-led and ECR-led routes, enabling researchers to gain experience of organising activities and strengthening their professional skills.
- The quality of the proposed skills development package, including what opportunities will be available for the participants to put learning into practice.
  - Whether the skills development package offers an innovative and specialist programme which is not currently widely available to research students and ECRs.
  - Whether a realistic timetable, including milestones, is presented which will achieve the proposal's aims and objectives within the proposed timescale.
  - Evidence that the activities proposed can be delivered to an appropriate group of researchers, that there is demand for these activities, and that effective plans are in place for the programme to be publicised to these researchers.
  - The extent to which the skills development package will represent value for money, including plans for any longer-term use of resources developed beyond the duration of the award.
  - Evidence that procedures are in place at the ROs and other organisations involved for evaluating and ensuring the high quality of the skills development to be developed and delivered.

### **Monitoring**

51. Funds will be awarded on the basis of the information provided in the application form. The lead organisation must be in a position to alert the Council to any significant deviation from the planned project or discrepancy between the actual spend and the costs awarded.

Award holders will be required to submit a short report as well as a final expenditure statement at the end of the award. These will provide details on how the funds have been spent and the extent to which the original aims and objectives detailed in the application have been met.

### **Award Holder Event**

53. Recipients of awards in all routes will be expected to attend an award holder event in spring 2014. This event will be an opportunity for award holders to share

experiences, challenges and best practice, and to meet hear and from previous award holders of the scheme. Further details will be sent to award holders in early 2014.

## **Contact Details**

54. Applicants are welcome to get in touch with any queries. Please contact:

### **Programmes Coordinator**

Myriam Volk                      email: [m.volk@ahrc.ac.uk](mailto:m.volk@ahrc.ac.uk)                      Tel: 01793 41 6076

### **Portfolio Manager**

Jessica Bacon      e-mail: [j.bacon@ahrc.ac.uk](mailto:j.bacon@ahrc.ac.uk)                      Tel: 01793 41 6071  
(Working days Monday – Wednesday)



## **Annex A – Guidance notes on completing the application form**

### **The Je-S application process**

Applications must be submitted online via the RCUK's Je-S system, for which applicants will require a Je-S account: <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk>.

The Je-S form will be available by mid July 2013, although we do not yet have an exact release date. Please check this scheme's web page for up-to-date information.

Once the application has been submitted by the RO, the Je-S system will send an email confirmation to the contact entered as the "Training Grant Holder" (see below – this will normally be the lead applicant) within 24 hours. The AHRC will check the application and if any errors are found, we will return it for amendment via the Je-S system. An email will be sent to the RO and the Training Grant Holder should this occur.

There is a dedicated Helpdesk that provides telephone and email support for the Je-S application process. Support is available between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, via [jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk) or 01793 444164.

### **Creating the application form**

Once applicants have set up a Je-S account they should select 'Documents' from the left hand menu then follow these steps:

- Select 'new document'
- In the 'add new document' page select as follows:
  - Council: AHRC
  - Document Type: standard proposal
  - Scheme: Collaborative Skills Development
- Select 'Create Document'.

A document menu will be presented displaying a list of sections that need to be completed. In addition to these sections there are a few functions available to help during or after the completion of the form. These are accessible from the Document Actions option at the top of the screen.

#### *Check Document Validity*

Selecting this will display at the bottom of the screen a list of any sections which have not yet been completed or have been completed incorrectly. Applicants will not be able to submit their form to their RO's approver/submitter pool until these issues have been addressed.

#### *Print Document*

Applicants can print their application at any time using this function and can also save a non-editable version of the form to their computer for future reference.

#### *Administer User Access*

Applicants can allow other people to edit the form by using this function and selecting 'Add Editor'. If a student applicant initiates an application (please see below) he / she will need to use this function to allow the Grant Holder access to the form.

**For the student-led route:** students can select a 'student' Je-S account from the 'Je-S Account Type' administration options, which will allow them to complete and edit sections of the application form, following the instructions above. The individual specified as the Training Grant Holder for the proposal must, however, be an appropriate member of staff at the lead organisation, and must hold a full registered Je-S account.

Once the student applicant has completed the relevant sections of the application form, they must allow enough time for whoever is listed as the Training Grant Holder to review and submit the form. Applicants should contact their institution before they begin the application process to confirm the details of the institution's internal submission process.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that applications made on their behalf by their organisation are submitted by the deadline. Applications received late, even if not the fault of the applicant, will not be accepted.

In submitting an application on behalf of a student applicant, the Grant Holder and Research Organisation are confirming their support of the application and undertaking to provide support, advice and guidance throughout the student's proposed programme.

In submitting an application on behalf of an **ECR applicant**, the Research Organisation are confirming their support of the application and confirming that the ECR applicant meets the eligibility criteria as outlined in Annex B of this document.

### **Individual sections of the form**

Je-S help-text will be available throughout the form to guide applicants on the exact detail required. In addition, please see the following guidance which has been provided in order to help applicants start to formulate their proposals before the Je-S release date. The Je-S form is still in development so the guidance below may be subject to some amendment when the final form is released on the Je-S system. Applicants should check the Je-S help-text throughout each section of the form to ensure they are accessing the most up-to-date guidance.

#### Project Details

##### *Submitting Organisation*

Please select from the list the organisation that will lead / host the grant. This is the organisation that will receive funds from the AHRC. Applicants are required to select a department; this is for administrative purposes only and we suggest selecting the department of the Training Grant Holder.

Any collaborating partners will need to decide which organisation is best placed to lead the bid, but should bear in mind the following:

- all AHRC correspondence will be sent to the lead organisation;

- if the bid is successful then the award payments will be made to the lead organisation and that organisation must be in a position to administer the award on behalf of all partners;
- the AHRC will monitor successful awards so the lead organisation must be prepared to update the Council on progress with the project.

### Project Title

Please state the title of the proposed skills development package.

The title may be used for publicity purposes so should be meaningful and accessible to a non-specialist audience.

### Proposal Call

Please select the appropriate route: Organisation-led, ECR-led or Student-led.

### Start Date and Duration

**Organisation-led:** Awards must start on or before 1 February 2014 and can be up to 18 months' duration.

**ECR and Student-led:** Awards will be announced in December, and we will expect programmes to start within 6 months of this notification of funding. Awards can be for up to 1 year; this period is intended to allow time for planning and development of the student-led programme as well as delivery and the start date should reflect this.

### The Training Grant Holder / Lead applicant

**Organisation-led:** Please identify an individual from the host organisation to lead the application (this should normally be a Head of Department or equivalent) and give his / her details in this section.

**ECR-led:** the Training Grant Holder should be the ECR who is leading on the development and management of the programme. We expect ECR applicants to be fully Je-S registered.

**Student-led:** the Training Grant Holder should be an appropriate member of staff at the applicant's institution.

### Summary

A summary of the activities / programmes / resources that will make up the skills development package, and what capacity issues or skills gaps the proposal will address. The summary may be used for publicity purposes so should be meaningful and accessible to a non-specialist audience.

### Organisations involved / Planning teams

Please list the organisations involved in planning, developing and delivering the skills development package, and describe their individual roles and contribution to the overall programme.

Describe briefly what provision is available currently through the participating partners, and set out what difference the provision would make. Please list partners' responsibilities for coordinating each stage of development, and what stage discussions with partner organisations have reached.

**For Student-led proposals**, please include details in this section of the lead student applicant. Please outline the lead student's name, year of PhD study, and email address. Details can also be included here of any other members of the student planning team who will be involved in developing and managing the proposed programme.

**For ECR-led proposals**, please outline here how the applicant meets the eligibility criteria as outlined in Annex B of this document, including details of the applicant's nature of employment at the RO and the type and length of contract held.

### Strategic Area

Applicants will have to select which Strategic Area they are responding to (either: Partnership working including Public Engagement; Entrepreneurship and the Creative Economy; or Research Skills Enrichment).

### Proposal Classification

Applicants will be asked to select one primary subject area and up to 4 others. If the proposal is a cross-cutting programme that will be open to many diverse areas at an RO and applicants cannot choose five areas that will represent the subject spread of the intended participants, this section can be left uncompleted. We would only expect applicants to leave this section blank in exceptional circumstances, and if applicants do so they should outline their reasons in the Case for Support.

### **Costs**

Please specify the costs which will fall under each heading as below.

The first payment for all awards will be made in the quarter following the start date.

Indexation costs cannot be applied to any category.

### Travel and Subsistence

This should include all funds that are allocated towards the costs of students and ECRs attending training, events or placements within the programme (including travel, accommodation and subsistence for both participants and speakers etc.). You may include costs for staff to travel to planning and coordination meetings. Refreshments provided at events may also be included here.

Costs for travel and accommodation can be estimated but any funds that are not spent as outlined in the original proposal will be reclaimed at the end of the award.

Subsistence rates should be recorded as a flat rate, per person, per day, e.g. *3 people for 2 days @ £20 per day = £120.00.*

Overseas subsistence costs for students and ECRs should be highlighted under this heading where the RO is proposing overseas language training or placements.

This heading may also cover room and accommodation costs for events and workshops, but if claiming for these costs please make a case as to why this resource cannot be provided by the participating organisations.

OTHER – all following costs should be outlined under this heading

#### *Consumables*

Examples of items to be included under this heading are research training materials such as: stationary, conference packs, name badges, development and reproduction costs etc. Publicity costs should not be included here.

#### *Equipment*

Any specialist equipment required for the programme should be included here. Please note we would not expect costs to be claimed for generic equipment which could reasonably be expected to be provided by the collaborating organisations.

#### *Staff Costs*

**Academic costs:** Applicants to the organisation and ECR-led routes can claim for a contribution toward the cost of the time spent by the lead applicant in establishing and managing the programme. This cost must be proportional to the size and scope of the programme proposed, and must be fully justified. We would not expect the lead applicant to claim for administration time which should be provided by the appropriate administrative or secretarial staff at the organisation (see below). Please also briefly describe how in practice the organisation will enable the lead applicant to devote the time requested to the programme. **Proposals may not include costs for academic staff, from any of the collaborating organisations, to provide postgraduate or ECR training, and we will not provide replacement teaching costs for academics to work on or contribute to the skills development package.**

**Administrative, secretarial or technical support:** We will pay for the costs of administrative, secretarial, or technical support on a per hour basis. The nature of the support they will provide, the need for it, the cost per hour, and the number of hours they will be required should be specified. We would expect any administrative support applied for to be commensurate with the appropriate administrative salary grade at your organisation. We would not expect to see costs claimed for the lead applicant or academic staff at the RO to carry out administrative duties.

As this is a training call, and not research funding, successful awards **will not** be paid under FEC guidelines. This means that indirect and estates costs will not be funded on the basis of the staff time involved, and it would be expected that these indirect costs will be met by the Research Organisation(s) concerned.

#### *Other Costs*

The 'Other' category will also cover costs such as publicity and marketing, 'bought in' services such as web design, external trainers and consultants.

**External trainer or consultant costs** should be outlined under this heading. Funding for this will be provided only in exceptional cases, for example where the expertise

available within the collaborating organisations does not include a highly specialised but crucial area. Please state their role and the period of time their services will be required.

**Costs relating to placements and internships:** Please note for researchers undertaking placement or internship activities only costs that fall under the headings outlined above are eligible. We envisage the majority of costs for these activities will fall under the Travel and Subsistence heading. We will not contribute additional stipends or salaries for students or researchers on placements.

## **Attachments**

### Potential student and ECR participation

Please give an outline of the groups of students and ECRs the skills development package will be of benefit to, and the departments, institutions and organisations in which these students/ECRs are based. Please give indicative figures of the number of doctoral students and ECRs who will be participating in the skills development package and how these numbers have been established. We are not looking solely for an estimation of potential interest, but rather **evidence that there is sufficient demand for the proposed programme**. Please distinguish in the information between the numbers of AHRC funded students and researchers that will have access to the programme and students/ECRs supported by other means. Please also outline here how researcher commitment will be encouraged and maintained throughout the programme. This should be no longer than 1 side of A4 and should be uploaded using attachment type 'Other'.

### Mentor Statement

This attachment is required for applications to the Student-led and ECR-led routes. Please include details of the mentor (including name and role within the institution), how the mentoring relationship will work, and the nature of the support that will be offered. Please outline what time commitment is being offered by the mentor, and the programme of meetings and communication that will take place.

For **student-led** proposals, this attachment should also include **a statement of support from the lead student's supervisor** (if the mentor is not the supervisor). The supervisor should outline how the student will be supported in delivering the proposed activity, and how the student will be assisted in evaluating the impact of the project on his/her doctoral research and wider career development and progression.

Both the proposed mentor, and the student's supervisor, if applicable, should sign and date their statements. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

The Mentor Statement, including the supervisor statement if applicable, should be a maximum of 2 sides of A4 in length. This should be uploaded using attachment type 'Letter of Support'.

### Case for Support

The case for support is limited to four sides of A4 for the Organisation-led proposals, and three sides of A4 for the ECR-led and Student-led. We recommend that the case for support is structured under the following headings:

### *Content of Skills Development Package*

Please describe which capacity or skills gap issue the proposal will address, and the different activities, programmes and events that make up the skills development package. If you consider the programme has relevance to one of the AHRC's themes, please give details here.

### *Aims and objectives*

Describe clearly how the proposed package meets the aims of the scheme; the objectives of the programme; what is hoped will be achieved within the period of the AHRC award; and what is planned to be achieved in the longer term. Please outline how it is envisaged the proposed programme will meet the skills gap identified.

### *Programme Management*

Indicate how the skills development package will be developed (for example, outline who will be involved and what each of their roles will be).

If applicants plan to run a training programme or series of events, they should set out:

- how often these events will run;
- where they will be held;
- their duration;
- the content of programme or event;
- how it would be decided who should attend if only a limited number of students/ECRs can be accommodated.

If applicants are planning to run internships and placements or similar activities, please outline how applicants will approach the formation and development of partnerships through which the placements etc. will be delivered. For example, why have these particular partners been chosen, why will they provide a suitable environment for students or ECRs? How will students/ECRs be supervised and mentored during their placements? Please also state what the nature and duration of the placement will be. Applicants will also need to indicate how students and ECRs will be selected to undertake a placement with a particular partner.

If the package involves other elements of partnership working with organisations outside of the RO, how will these partnerships be established and maintained throughout the programme?

If the package involves software or an on-line resource then specify: what the software will be; who will be involved in the software's development; when, how, and to whom it will be made available.

**For ECR and Student-led proposals:** please outline the support (for example technical, financial, support from a Knowledge Exchange or Career Development office etc.) that will be available from the institution and the form this will take throughout the programme. Applicants should also indicate how this programme will help in their own development (and in the development of the wider project teams) and state how their

supervisor, and/or manager and mentor will support them in planning, delivering and monitoring their development.

#### *Timetable and targets*

What is the timetable for the development and delivery of the proposed skills development package? Give an idea of the timescale (for example, whether the provision will be made available as a single package, phased in or available through a series of events). Indicate how long it will take to establish the provision or particular units. Indicate specific targets for the programme, preferably including milestones (targets should be relevant, achievable and measurable – for example, they could be set in terms of numbers of students and ECRs trained).

Please mention any foreseeable barriers to developing the provision or making it accessible. Do applicants foresee any problems in attracting the appropriate students and ECRs to the training programme? Please say how any barriers identified will be overcome. Generally, any risks should be clearly identified and the case should state how any risks would be managed.

#### *Added Value*

Describe in what ways the skills development package will provide training and career development opportunities that would not otherwise be available to research students and ECRs in the relevant field. Applicants should be mindful of the costs requested in making the case that the training provided represents value for money.

#### *Publicity*

Set out any plans for making the skills development available to the widest possible audience, for example describing the planned marketing or publicity strategies. Do these already exist? If not, how will they be developed and on what timescale? If the programme will be at a fixed location, how will equitable access for all eligible students and ECRs be assured? Assuming the access is limited, on what basis will access to the programme be decided, i.e. what will be the selection process?

#### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Outline the quality assurance procedures that will be put in place to ensure that high quality training is developed and delivered through the proposed skills development package. (We would expect this to involve some form of formal reporting to a Research Degrees Committee or similar at the lead institution, and some form of financial monitoring.) Please also describe any plans for evaluating the programme. One such method could be in the form of gaining feedback from all participants on their involvement in the programme.

#### *Dissemination*

In the process of developing the skills development package, we would encourage applicants to consider how materials or resources from the programme might be made available to the wider arts and humanities postgraduate community. If applicants are planning to disseminate these materials, please give details of these plans.



If such dissemination involves the use of a website or other electronic formats, please describe how its quality, accuracy and sustainability will be maintained throughout the course of the provision, and beyond if appropriate. This may involve working with the IT department or equivalent at the lead institution.

### *Ethical Information*

Please indicate if there are any ethical implications arising from the proposed training programme. These might arise if the programme involves working with public groups for example, or if it requires travel to countries where the safety of project participants might be in jeopardy. If there are ethical implications, give brief details of what they are and how it is intended to address them.

**ECR and student applicants** should indicate here that they have sought the appropriate guidance and advice from their institutions on this area, and the form this has taken.

**All applicants** should make a statement that ethical implications have been considered. If they do not consider that any ethical concerns are raised, they should say why this is the case.

### *Sustainability*

What plans, if any, are there to continue the skills development package beyond the period of the AHRC award and how will this be financed? If it is intended to continue the provision, please say either how the provision will continue to be financed, or outline plans for seeking additional funding to ensure sustainability. If the programme in its current format cannot be continued, are there elements of the programme or resources that could be sustained for the benefit of the RO - and if so, how will this be achieved? If new partnerships will be set up during the programme, how will these partnerships be turned into longer-lasting relationships for the RO?

For **Organisation-led bids**, it is expected that there will be some continuity once the project has ended. This is not a requirement for student-led or ECR-led bids but, where there is the possibility for activities to be continued, this should be specified in the application.

### Justification of resources

Please make a case for the resources requested, addressing the points below. This attachment should be no longer than 2 sides of A4.

Please Note: While we appreciate that some unforeseen changes may arise, any substantial changes will need to be cleared in advance with the AHRC. The AHRC reserves the right to reclaim any unspent funds.

Take each heading from the budget section and explain why the resources requested are necessary. Ensure a breakdown of costs is provided and an explanation of how figures were arrived at.

If applying for costs for an external trainer or consultant, applicants should explain why this expertise is not available from the collaborating organisations. Applicants will need to justify why they are needed and provide a rationale for the costs requested.

If funds will be divided between two or more organisations, please detail the costs to each organisation under each budget heading. Please also explain how the transfer of funds will be organised; we do not need details, but we do need reassurance that funds will be allocated to the collaborating organisations as specified in the application.

If there will be additional funding from the lead organisation or other bodies involved, please provide details. It is our expectation that the organisations involved may contribute to the costs through staff time (and associated indirect and estates costs), space, generic equipment etc. Applicants do not need to provide details of this provision but may do so if it will support elements of your proposal. We are looking for the AHRC-funded provision to give added value so applicants may wish to give an indication of 'background' support as a way of making the case for added value. Please also include details of any support from other bodies - for example, support from private, public or third sector bodies that will be involved in the training package. We do not need full details just an indication of any financial or other support provided.

### **Contact Details**

If applicants have any queries about their proposals, please contact:

#### ***Programmes Coordinator***

Myriam Volk                      email: [m.volk@ahrc.ac.uk](mailto:m.volk@ahrc.ac.uk)                      Tel: 01793 416076

#### ***Portfolio Manager***

Jessica Bacon                      email: [j.bacon@ahrc.ac.uk](mailto:j.bacon@ahrc.ac.uk)                      Tel: 01793 416071

Please note that queries about using the Je-S system and the Je-S application process should be directed to the Je-S Helpdesk via [jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk) or on 01793 444164 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm).

## **Annex B – Eligibility for applicants to the ECR-led route**

To be eligible for the ECR route, at the point of application, applicants must be either

- within eight years of the award of their PhD or equivalent professional training, or
- within six years of their first academic appointment.

(Please note: these durations should exclude any period of career break, e.g. for family care or health reasons. 'First academic appointment' is considered as a paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, which includes research and/or teaching.)

Applicants must be studying or working within the AHRC's subject remit.

Applicants must have a contractual arrangement with a Research Organisation that is eligible to apply to the AHRC. These organisations are:

- Higher Education Institutions (HEI) that are directly funded for research by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Department for Employment and Learning, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales or the Scottish Funding Council.
- Independent Research Organisations that have received Research Council recognition to apply to the AHRC's responsive mode schemes:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/funding/research/iro/>

Applicants must be either employed by the Research Organisation submitting the proposal; or be scheduled to be employed by the RO before the proposed start date of the project (whether or not the proposal is successful).

Applicants must have a contract of employment that extends to beyond the duration of the proposed project, or an assurance from the RO that, if the proposal is successful, the contract of employment will extend to beyond the end date of the award.

ECR applicants must be resident in the UK.

ECR applicants to this scheme do not have to be AHRC funded.

Full details on eligibility criteria can be found in our Research Funding Guide, Section 3: Eligibility.

By approving the submission of an ECR-led application via Je-S, the RO is confirming that the ECR applicant meets the eligibility criteria as outlined above, and has the appropriate contractual arrangement in place.

**ECR applicants should outline how they meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in this annex, including details of the applicant's nature of employment at the RO and the type and length of contract held, in the Organisations Involved / Planning Teams section of the proposal.**

## Annex C – Grading Scale

Grade	Descriptor
6	<p>An outstanding proposal. The applicant has detailed an excellent and innovative approach and researchers will benefit from exceptional training and skills development. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme and excels in many or all of these. It provides full and consistent evidence and justification, demonstrates very strong institutional support, and management arrangements are clear and convincing.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of the very highest priority.</p>
5	<p>An excellent proposal. The applicant has fully justified the approach taken and researchers will benefit from excellent training and skills development. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme. It provides full and consistent evidence, demonstrates strong institutional support, and management arrangements are clear and convincing.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of priority, but does not merit the very highest priority rating.</p>
4	<p>A very good proposal. The applicant has a suitably justified approach and researchers will benefit from good training and skills development. It meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme. It provides good evidence, demonstrates good institutional support, and management arrangements are clear and sound.</p> <p>It is worthy of consideration of funding.</p>
3	<p>A satisfactory proposal. The applicant has an adequately justified approach and researchers will have adequate training and skills development. It satisfies in a basic way the assessment criteria for the scheme, provides reasonable evidence, demonstrates institutional support, and management arrangements are adequate overall.</p> <p>In a competitive context, the proposal is not considered of sufficient priority to recommend for funding.</p>
2	<p>An inconsistent proposal. The applicant has poorly justified his/her approach and there are some significant weaknesses in the training and skills development proposed. As a result of the weaknesses identified the proposal is not considered to be of a fundable quality. A proposal should also be graded 2 if it does not meet all the assessment criteria for the scheme.</p> <p>It is not recommended for funding.</p>
1	<p>An unsatisfactory proposal which falls significantly short of meeting the assessment criteria for the scheme. Applicant has not justified approach and there is no evidence that adequate training and skills development will be provided.</p> <p>It is not suitable for funding.</p>