AHRC Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTP2)

Call Specification
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1. Summary

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is pleased to announce a call for the next phase of Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs). These DTPs will provide training for research students across the full range of the arts and humanities, as well as across areas of interdisciplinary research located at the boundaries with the sciences and social sciences.

The AHRC expects to invest in approximately 10 DTPs, subject to the quality of the applications, each supporting five annual cohorts of students with the first of these starting in 2019. This call (‘DTP2’) will use a partnership funding model, with consortia being required to provide a mandatory financial commitment (a ‘Consortium Contribution’) to complement the AHRC’s funding.

We invite applications from consortia of eligible UK-based Research Organisations (ROs) who can demonstrate excellence in the delivery of arts and humanities postgraduate training. Applications must be submitted from a consortium of at least two eligible ROs; there is no upper limit on the number of ROs which can be involved in a consortium. All applications must set out a clear case for the collaboration. An RO can only be involved in one application.

Each consortium must submit a Statement of Intent (SoI) by 4pm on 13th April 2017, outlining which ROs are involved in the application, the balance of disciplinary areas the consortium will cover and the total number of notional studentships the DTP will cover. Applicants should submit the Statement of Intent through SmartSurvey using this link:
http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/DoctoralTrainingPartnershipsDTP2/

The deadline for full DTP2 applications is 4pm on 19th October 2017. Applications must be submitted through the Research Councils’ Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system. Please note that the JeS form will be available in early 2017.

Award outcomes will be announced in July 2018 and the first cohort of students will start in October 2019.

This document should be read in combination with the following documents:

- **AHRC Doctoral Training Partnerships 2016 Application Guidance** (http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/calls/dtp2-application-guidance/) which sets out the detailed requirements for applicants to the call


- **RCUK Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training**: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/skills/statementofexpectation-pdf/
2. Background

As the UK’s largest funder of postgraduate training in the arts and humanities, the AHRC plays an essential role in supporting the next generation of highly capable researchers. These researchers will go on to careers in a diverse range of sectors where their research expertise and skills will be an asset to them and their employers.

We are committed to excellence in postgraduate research training and maintaining both national capacity and capability in the research base. The AHRC’s Delivery Plan 2016-2020 outlines our commitment to delivering highly skilled researchers and the allocation of one third of the AHRC’s current budget on postgraduate support. This investment in high-quality training provision will be made through a refined doctoral funding model focused on two main channels of delivery: Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) and Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDPs).

This DTP2 call takes place against a backdrop of change in the research funding landscape. The outcomes of the 2015 Spending Review mean that the AHRC is operating in a more constrained financial environment, and this is reflected in the new architecture for Doctoral Training Partnerships. The AHRC is therefore introducing elements into this new phase of DTP funding which ensure the best use of public funds and a deeper commitment to partnership between the Council and the Research Organisations (ROs) it supports through the scheme.

The outcomes of the DTP2 commissioning process will be driven by excellence and we will invest only in the highest quality applications, as determined by peer review. In this call, AHRC funding requires DTPs to be collaborative across two or more ROs. We want to encourage strong consortia with a compelling strategic case for the proposed collaboration. DTP applications should be bold in their vision, bring together only the very best provision in the arts and humanities across a breadth of subject areas and research training environments, and provide a sound foundation for innovation and creativity in doctoral support. In addition to providing high-quality training provision in the arts and humanities, all AHRC DTPs will be encouraged to facilitate interdisciplinary research training both across the arts and humanities and at the boundaries with other disciplines, including using different funding sources where appropriate.

The AHRC aims to work closely with the DTPs and CDPs to ensure that the future capability of the arts and humanities research base is built upon a cogent case for future investment. The AHRC will support this through the development of a Partnership Framework to guide how we work with DTPs and CDPs in the delivery of a strong and collaborative vision for postgraduate training. This will be initiated with successful DTPs within the first 12 months of their operation, in conjunction with the CDPs.

3. AHRC Role and Vision for Postgraduate Research Training

We recognise the value of doctoral study for the individual, for the research environment within and across ROs, and for UK capacity and capability to undertake high-quality disciplinary and interdisciplinary research to address complex challenges. Equally, it is vital that the AHRC’s investment reflects the importance of building and enabling partnership opportunities between.
researchers and the wider creative, cultural, civic and commercial sectors. Many areas of the UK economy derive benefits from the talented and capable individuals working towards or holding advanced training qualifications in the arts and humanities.

AHRC funding for doctoral training does multiple things. It supports the highest quality doctoral students as determined by academic review and judgement, while also acting as a more powerful influence on the improvement of training, skills development and career enhancement for the arts and humanities doctoral community as a whole.

The AHRC’s investment in Doctoral Training Partnerships is centred on delivering the following core objectives:

- **Advancing a shared vision for world-class arts and humanities postgraduate training** – working in partnership with DTPs and CDPs to facilitate collective strategic planning for the long-term strength of the arts and humanities, including maintaining the national capability and nurturing both vulnerable and emerging fields of enquiry;

- **Investing in strong collaborative research and training environments** - that promote high-quality training, and develop highly capable and innovative arts and humanities researchers for a wide range of careers;

- **Enhancing opportunities for students to collaborate and interact with non-HEI organisations** - both within the UK and internationally, including strong engagement with the cultural and creative sectors;

- **Facilitating a student-centred training experience through flexibility of funding and collaborative delivery of training** – which maximises the benefits of closer interaction with peers that the support of cohorts enables.

DTPs will need to demonstrate a strategy and vision for contributing towards these high-level objectives, and work closely with the AHRC to ensure a healthy and innovative UK arts and humanities research community.

Furthermore, DTPs will need to ensure the provision of training that prepares researchers for engaging not only with other researchers but with a broader range of stakeholders. To achieve this, successful DTPs will wish to interact more directly with each other, with CDPs, and with the multiple stakeholders who might benefit from arts and humanities capabilities either through engagement with, or the employment of, trained doctoral researchers.

Our overall aim is to support a portfolio of DTPs that reflects the AHRC’s breadth of subject coverage, a diversity of training environments and institution types, and encompasses leading-edge, innovative research training in the arts and humanities.
4. DTP2 Funding

The AHRC is committed to ensuring that its investment supports bold and ambitious doctoral training. The funding model for DTP2 is intended to reflect this:

4.1 Studentship Funding

Underscoring the partnership approach that is key to this DTP2 call, and the desire to maximise the benefits of AHRC investment, consortia will be required to contribute complementary funding for DTP2 studentships. This mandatory commitment, to be known as the ‘Consortium Contribution’, can include funds from both the ROs within the consortium as well as leveraged funding from non-RO partners.

The Consortium Contribution is a percentage of the ‘AHRC Core Studentship Funding’ (based on the three core elements of stipend, tuition fees and RTSG). The Consortium Contribution must be at least 50% of the value of the AHRC Core Studentship Funding (i.e., a third of the total DTP studentship costs). As outlined in the Application Guidance, the Consortium Contribution can be higher than 50% of the AHRC Core Studentship Funding, but cannot exceed the value of the AHRC Core Studentship Funding.

Taken together, the AHRC Core Studentship Funding and the Consortium Contribution will result in a partnership funding arrangement, so that all students within the DTP are co-funded by the AHRC and the consortium. The application therefore needs to demonstrate the strategy, approach and capacity to support the total number of studentships funded in the DTP.

As in previous rounds of AHRC postgraduate funding, we are asking consortia to bid for a number of notional studentships to be covered by the AHRC Core Studentship Funding. At award stage, the AHRC will make a financial award based on a notional number of studentships.

Please see the Application Guidance for more detail regarding the AHRC Core Studentship Funding, the Consortium Contribution and the information required in the application form.

4.2 Number of DTPs

The AHRC expects to support approximately 10 Doctoral Training Partnerships and anticipates that its funding will be able to support a total of c. 375 notional students in each annual cohort. The Consortium Contribution will mean that the actual number of students supported under the DTP will, however, be higher.

4.3 Number of Studentships per DTP

All students within the DTP will be funded by a combination of the AHRC Core Studentship Funding and the Consortium Contribution.

In order to ensure an appropriate critical mass of student numbers within each DTP award, and to allow the AHRC to fund an appropriate number of awards across the DTPs, we are setting thresholds for the minimum and maximum total number of studentships per cohort that can be applied for within the AHRC Core Studentship Funding:

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1 Please note that this number may be subject to change and is dependent on future Research Council budget allocations.
• the minimum number of studentships per cohort that can be applied for within the AHRC Core Studentship Funding is 30;  
• the maximum number of studentships per cohort that can be applied for within the AHRC Core Studentship Funding is 80.

This range reflects the potential for diversity in the scale and breadth of the DTPs we might support.

The final number of notional studentships (and therefore funding) awarded to each DTP will be driven by the quality of the application as determined through the peer review process.

The AHRC will calculate DTP2 grants based on the actual number of notional studentships awarded. The commitment from the consortium will also be calculated using this figure, based on the proposed percentage of the Consortium Contribution.

4.4 Duration of Funding

In this DTP call, we want to enable greater flexibility in how DTPs use their funding. With this in mind, we will calculate all DTP2 grants on the basis of a notional 4-year Full Time Equivalent (FTE) studentship. This reflects our expectation that many doctorates will be nearer to 4 years in duration in order to allow for suitably ambitious research projects and time for additional development opportunities.

However, DTPs will have flexibility within this to allocate funding according to the needs of the student; every student does not need to receive 4 years of funding. DTPs will be able to award studentships between 3 and 4 years in duration (or equivalent for part-time students), depending on the needs of the student, the nature of the proposed PhD and the further development opportunities (such as placement time in a non-HEI organisation in the UK or overseas).

The change to funding on the basis of 4 years means that we will no longer have a separate ‘Student Development Fund’ as with the previous DTP call. However, we expect DTP applications to set out clear plans for ensuring that a wide variety of development opportunities are promoted to students. The maximum funding duration permitted will be 4 years FTE (or part-time equivalent), but we will expect doctoral projects to be designed and supervised in such a way that students are able to submit their thesis within the funded period, as defined at the outset of the project.

It will not be permitted to use DTP funds to support stand-alone Masters.

4.5 Research Training and Support Grant (RTSG)

For this DTP2 call, the AHRC has increased the Research and Training Support Grant aimed at covering training support costs for individual students to £500 per annum (RTSG is calculated on a per student, per annum basis). Please see the Application Guidance (p.5) for details.

4.6 Cohort Development Fund (CDF)

The current DTPs have demonstrated the usefulness of the Cohort Development Fund (CDF), employing this funding in a number of innovative and productive ways to support training and development activities for DTP students as a group. We anticipate that the DTPs awarded under this DTP2 call will build on this success, with the CDF being maintained as an automatic additional funding line for all successful DTPs. The CDF will be maintained at 5% of the total AHRC Core
Studentship Funding awarded. For example, if the AHRC Core Studentship Funding costs of an application total £1 million, the AHRC would then add £50,000 to the grant awarded for the CDF.

5. Call Requirements

This section outlines the requirements that DTP applications will need to meet to be eligible for AHRC funding, as well as the costs that can be applied for under the call. This document should be read in combination with the Application Guidance (http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/calls/dtp2-application-guidance/) which sets out the detailed requirements for applicants to the call.

Applications will need to align with the RCUK Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training (http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/skills/statementofexpectation-pdf/), which outlines the common principles for the support of all Research Council-funded students.

DTP awards will be subject to RCUK terms and conditions and guidance (http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/grantstcs/) as well as specific AHRC conditions.

5.1 Organisational Eligibility

The call will be open to all UK-based AHRC-eligible ROs who are directly funded by HEFCE, DEL, HEFCW or the SFC. There is no requirement for ROs applying to this DTP call to be part of an existing DTP.

Applications must be submitted by a consortium of at least two eligible research organisations (ROs).

Each DTP consortium will need to identify a single Director for the DTP and a Lead Research Organisation Contact who will be the AHRC’s contact during assessment and thereafter, if awarded; this includes being the contact for the Right of Reply stage of the assessment process.

5.2 Consortia Strategy and Vision

Each DTP consortium must be a strategic and coherent partnership that maximises the collective expertise, resources and opportunities that the partner ROs offer and is deemed appropriate to deliver the vision and ambitions of the DTP.

Applications should reflect a clear rationale for the collaboration across ROs and with other non-RO partners, including how the DTP will benefit the partners involved and add value to the experience of the students undertaking doctoral study. They will need to demonstrate the RO partners’ experience in creating and nurturing strong postgraduate training environments in the arts and humanities and outline a clear strategy for the delivery of high quality research training. Importantly, a consortium will need to demonstrate very clearly in its strategy that the collaboration is adding value beyond just bringing together of a range of institutions into a single application. There will need to be evidence of a real and shared sense of a vision for collaborative enhancement that enriches the experience of students in the arts and humanities and stimulates higher quality provision.

We require consortia to bring together and prioritise the very best training in the arts and humanities from across their partner ROs to create a distinct DTP training environment. We are encouraging DTP applicants to build in a breadth and diversity of research environments into their
consortium arrangements, to bring together the very best training across disciplines and across ROs; and to encompass leading-edge, innovative research training in the arts and humanities and at the interfaces with the sciences and social sciences.

Consortia will need to outline their shared strategy for delivering postgraduate research training in their application. This will need to align with AHRC's high-level objectives for postgraduate training outlined on pp.3-4 of this document, and should also detail how the DTP fits within the overall vision and goals of the partner organisations, particularly their strategies for arts and humanities research. Applicants will also need to indicate how the DTP will be embedded in the wider research and training environment within the ROs. This might include provision provided in other discipline areas and support for interdisciplinary working; knowledge exchange; and wider skills development and careers advice, for example.

5.3 Coverage, Content and Delivery of Training
Applicants will need to demonstrate subject range and capacity across all three disciplinary clusters that form the AHRC’s remit: Creative and Performing Arts; Histories, Cultures and Heritage; Languages and Literature (see Application Guidance for further detail). While we will not require individual DTPs to demonstrate equivalent capacity in each area, it will be necessary to demonstrate a significant capacity to support high-quality studentships across a broad range of the arts and humanities within the AHRC’s remit.

The AHRC recognises that students enter doctoral study with a diverse range of skills and experience and their ongoing needs will vary considerably according to the nature and demands of their research project. It is vitally important therefore for DTPs to put structures in place that allow for training needs to be identified and enable flexibility in the delivery of training provision.

DTPs are encouraged to collaborate with their partners to provide opportunities for training, placements, visits and similar activities that will enhance the overall provision of studentship training.

5.4 Collaboration with Non-HEI Partners
AHRC recognises the value of collaborative working with non-HEI partners, to both the student and the organisations involved. These relationships and exchanges will ensure that the next generation of arts and humanities researchers develop the skills and experience necessary to succeed in doctoral research and have a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills within and outside the academy.

The provision of innovative opportunities for DTP students to collaborate with non-HEI partners is an important requirement for all DTP applications. We will be looking for DTPs to use their flexibility of funding to develop productive and interesting partnerships that provide a variety of opportunities for students across different research, public sector, business and third sector environments. Applications will need to detail any current partnerships and outline how they will develop these and/or new relationships during the course of the award.

The AHRC recognises that collaborative training can take many forms both in terms of possible partners and also the nature of the collaboration that develops. Collaboration might include: access to organisational resources, collections or archives; input into training or careers events; provision of
short-term student placements; supervisory input on specialist areas of a student’s project; or support for a fully Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) involving a jointly developed project and co-supervision from the non-HEI partner.

5.4.1 Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs)

Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs) are doctoral studentship projects which are developed by a university based academic working in collaboration with an organisation outside of higher education. They are intended as a way of facilitating collaboration with a diverse range of non-HEI partners including, but not limited to, smaller, regional partners and spreading capacity for non-HEIs to work with HEIs in focused, mutually beneficial ways. CDAs provide important opportunities for doctoral students to gain first-hand experience of work outside the university environment and enhance the employment-related skills and training which a student may gain during the course of their award.

In this DTP2 call, CDAs will continue to be embedded within DTPs. To facilitate this, consortia will have the option of ring-fencing a proportion of their studentships for CDAs (up to a maximum of 20% of the total studentships). DTPs will be responsible for ensuring that funding is allocated to the best students by designing a recruitment process that enables this, or moderating across more than one recruitment process. Consortia will need to provide an estimate of the percentage of CDAs in their DTP which are likely to be CDAs as part of their application.

Applicants should note that additional funding will be made available by the AHRC per CDA studentship awarded (equivalent to an additional £550 stipend per annum) as a contribution to the additional costs which may be incurred for a student in working with a non-HEI partner in this way. We would also encourage DTPs to negotiate leveraged funding from CDA partners, where this is possible, to contribute towards the additional costs incurred from CDA studentships. Please see the Application Guidance (Annex E: Collaborative Doctoral Awards) for more information on this, and for criteria which a studentship must meet to qualify as a CDA.

Organisations belonging to Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships (CDPs) (http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/funding/opportunities/current/collaborativedoctoralpartnerships/) can be partners for Collaborative Doctoral Awards, however we would strongly encourage DTPs to use the CDA scheme as an opportunity to engage with a broad range of partners, including local and regional organisations.

5.5 Consortia Leadership, Management, Governance and Student Recruitment

Applicants will need to explain why the Director and other senior members of the management team are well-placed to lead the consortium. It is important that the Director has appropriate experience and institutional standing in order to deliver the vision for the DTP and promote the interests of the DTP within and across the ROs and beyond.

DTP applications will need to clearly outline the governance and management structures, including the resource provision made for the Director post and co-ordination of the consortium.

DTPs will be expected to have an appropriate management and governance structure that enables effective planning, decision-making, monitoring and communication with all relevant stakeholders in the consortium, including the students themselves.
We acknowledge that it may take time for these structures in new collaborative arrangements to evolve and become established; however, at a minimum we expect applications to detail the vision and rationale for the intended structure and a plan for implementation.

The AHRC wishes to support the most talented students. DTPs will be required to put in place a recruitment strategy that ensures they will attract and recruit outstanding high-quality candidates. This should include a robust set of processes that include transparent decision-making structures and an appropriate and open advertising strategy. The AHRC will require that DTPs put in place monitoring of these arrangements, across the consortium partners, for both application and award stages, to enable it to review the effectiveness and openness of its recruitment process and demonstrate the value of the DTP mechanism in attracting the highest quality researchers.

Furthermore, the AHRC will expect DTPs to have robust monitoring arrangements in place to track subject intake, equality and diversity monitoring, and doctoral students’ progression beyond the studentship, amongst other categories for annual reporting to the AHRC. We will work with consortia to identify the types of data to be gathered as part of the Partnership Framework we put in place. This data will be aggregated with the overall purpose of helping the AHRC to refine its support for postgraduate training, to understand the full impact of its investment and to build a case for further investment in doctoral training in the arts and humanities.

6. How to Apply

6.1 Statement of Intent
The lead RO for each consortium must submit a ‘Statement of Intent’ (SoI) for the consortium by 4pm on 13th April 2017.

The information provided in the Statement of Intent is not binding, and we understand that some details might change, but it is necessary to help the AHRC to plan the peer review and panel representation for the assessment process. The SoIs will not be assessed, but the AHRC may get in touch with feedback if it has questions about what is being proposed.

Details of what to include in the SoI and how to submit it are outlined in the Application Guidance. Applicants should submit the Statement of Intent through SmartSurvey using this link: http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/DoctoralTrainingPartnershipsDTP2/

6.2 Full Application
Full applications must be submitted by 4pm on 19th October 2017 through the Research Council’s Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system. Further details for applicants are set out in the Application Guidance available on the AHRC website: http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/calls/dtp2-application-guidance/.

7. Town Hall Meetings and Surgeries

7.1 Town Hall Meetings
The AHRC will be holding Town Hall meetings to discuss the detailed requirements of the call on Thursday 26th January 2017 in London and Wednesday 1st February 2017 in Leeds. Places are
limited to 3 per proposed consortium. To register your intention to attend, please email dtp@ahrc.ac.uk. Full details of the event will then be provided. Interested parties will need to register by Friday 13th January 2017.

7.2 Surgeries
The AHRC will be offering consortia the opportunity to attend a one hour 1:1 surgery with AHRC staff. The purpose of these surgeries is to provide applicants with the opportunity to discuss specific elements of their applications ahead of the deadline for the Statement of Intent submission, and to ask questions about the process.

These surgeries will be taking place at the Medical Research Council offices in London on 1st and 2nd of March 2017. Consortia wishing to attend one of the surgeries should email dtp@ahrc.ac.uk using the subject line ‘DTP2 Surgeries. They should indicate their preferred date and whether am or pm is preferred. There will be space for consortia to bring up to four people. The deadline for registering for these 1:1 surgeries will be 6th February 2017.

8. Assessment Process

The outcomes of the commissioning process will be driven by the quality of the applications. Each application will be assessed against specific criteria by up to 5 reviewers from within the AHRC’s Peer Review College.

Reviewers will have a good strategic overview of arts and humanities in the UK and have experience of postgraduate delivery at departmental level or above. Every effort will be made to select reviewers to ensure that each DTP application will be assessed by a range of reviewers from different subject backgrounds.

Reviews (including peer review grades) will be sent to the DTP Contact for the application, and the DTP applicants will be given the Right of Reply. Please note the timescale for the application response (see Section 10 below).

A Moderating Panel made up of experts with a range of experience from the academic and stakeholder communities will be convened to moderate the peer reviews and the applicants’ responses. This panel will be responsible for awarding a final grade to each application and making recommendations to the AHRC on the ranked order of proposals. This will include advice on the funding levels for successful applications.

The Moderating Panel’s recommendations will form the basis for a final decision on awards to be made by the AHRC. Final decisions will be based on the quality of the applications, and will take into account the overall balance of breadth and coverage across the DTP applications.

9. Assessment Criteria

The peer reviewers will assess the application looking for evidence of the following:
• A strong and innovative vision and strategy for the delivery of arts and humanities postgraduate training, including evidence that the application has engaged with AHRC strategy and core objectives for its DTP investment

• A strong and coherent partnership across the consortium with evidence of how each member adds value to the breadth and provision of high quality training

• The quality and diversity of the research environment, resources and expertise which will inform the research training and career development of students across the three disciplinary clusters that form the AHRC’s remit: Creative and Performing Arts: Histories, Cultures and Heritage: Languages and Literatures

• The quality of the training approach, including supervisory practice, cohort level support, and processes and monitoring arrangements for the recruitment and ongoing support of individual students

• Ambitious plans for partnership and engagement, including with a range of non-HEI partners

• Strength of the proposed DTP leadership and appropriateness of the intended governance and management infrastructure for the DTP programme

• Evidence that the breadth and spread of studentships supports the consortium vision and strategy for postgraduate funding, and can be delivered through the planned infrastructure.

• Clear rationale for the number of studentship proposed/requested under the DTP and demonstration of that the consortium has the capacity to support that number.

10. Commissioning Timetable

28th November 2016
DTP2 call launched

26th January & 1st February 2017
Town Hall meetings in London & Leeds

1st and 2nd March 2017
1:1 surgeries across 2 days, London

13th April 2017
Statement of Intent deadline

19th October 2017
Deadline for Applications

November - December 2017
Peer review

January - February 2018
Applicant Response

April 2018
Moderating Panel Meeting

July 2018
Announcement of Awards

11. Contacts

If you have any queries about this call, please email dtp@ahrc.ac.uk. Please use ‘DTP2’ at the start of the subject line of your email.