



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

# **COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL AWARDS 2016**

**Scheme Guidance**

**March 2015 v.1**

# Contents

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Other Opportunities.....	5
<b>Eligibility.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Who Can Apply for a CDA Studentship?.....	6
The Nature of Awards and Funding .....	8
Student Development Fund (SDF).....	8
Collaborating Partners .....	9
Supervision .....	11
Additional Costs.....	11
Partnership Agreements.....	12
<b>Application and assessment processes.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Assessment criteria.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Timetable .....	20
After the Award .....	21
<b>Glossary.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Annex 1: CDA Grade Descriptors.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Annex 2: Developing and Demonstrating a Collaboration .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Web Links .....</b>	<b>32</b>

## At a glance summary

### Aims:

Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs) are intended to encourage and develop collaboration between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and non-HEI organisations and businesses.

Collaborative research studentships provide opportunities for doctoral students to gain first hand professional experience outside the university environment. The support provided by both an HEI and non-HEI supervisor enhances the employment-related skills and training a research student gains during the course of their award.

**It is important that the collaboration brings more to the student than enhanced access to an archive of collection, and that they are afforded real opportunities to develop career enhancing skills in addition to an academic qualification.**

The studentships also encourage and establish longer-term links between the partners that can have benefits for both, providing access to resources and materials, knowledge and expertise that may not otherwise have been available and also provide social, cultural and economic benefits to wider society. Applications which appear to be requesting interns will not be considered favourably.

### No. of Awards:

The AHRC will award up to 50 studentships in the 2016 round of the CDA scheme. (Additional awards made through the related Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) scheme will be announced in June 2015.)

Each HEI can submit up to **two proposals** to this call. Each proposal may request funding for multiple, linked PhD studentships, but a strong justification is required if more than one studentship is requested in a single

proposal. Exception applies partner organisations that are unsuccessful in the 2015 CDP competition.

**Scheme Format:**

An HEI and non-HEI organisation collaborate on a project that falls within the AHRC's subject domain and that can provide demonstrable benefits to both partners. The project is carried out by a research student (or students) that are recruited by the partners, jointly supervised by members from each partner organisation and who will gain a doctoral qualification by the end of the award. The PI and lead HEI supervisor can be an Early Career Researcher (definition can be found in the AHRC's Research Funding Guide) but an experienced supervisor is required to act as mentor.

**Level of Grant:**

The AHRC will offer a standard doctoral studentship in line with the Council's eligibility requirements e.g. full time, part time or fees only at the maintenance/fee levels set for 2016/17. CDA student award holders also receive an additional payment of £550 per annum.

**Cost to Non-HEI:**

The Council recommends that the non-HEI partner should make a cash contribution directly to the student to cover additional personal costs incurred during the collaboration

**Duration:**

Full time studentships will be funded for a maximum period of 3.5 years - analogous to AHRC's Doctoral Training Partnership scheme. It should be noted that the 3.5 years is the length of the studentship award, and not of the project. The additional 6 months duration of the PhD studentship is intended to allow time for the student to take up further development opportunities during their PhD. Examples of the types of development activity are included under the Student Development Fund section. Whether the studentship is offered for longer, the students need to submit their thesis no later than 12 months after the end of the award and no more than 4 years from the

start of the award for a full-time student. Part time award holders will be funded for a maximum period of 6 years and need to submit no later than 24 months after the end of the award.

**How to apply:** You must submit an application through the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission (JeS) System. If you need any assistance to use the system please contact the JeS helpdesk on 01793 444164 or on [JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk)

**Scheme enquiries:** All queries regarding eligibility for funding should be directed to AHRC Enquiries ([enquiries@ahrc.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ahrc.ac.uk)).

**This guidance is intended for UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) wishing to apply with their partner organisations for a collaborative doctoral award to start in October 2016.**

**Proposals are to be submitted via the JeS system, which includes electronic help text to accompany the application form.**

Please note that for ease of reading the guidance below refers to CDA doctoral candidates as the "student" irrespective of the number of studentships being applied for in a single application. Please consider this guidance as the same for single or multiple studentship applications.

### **Other Opportunities**

In May 2015 the AHRC will allocate a number of CDA Studentships per year, up to and including 2018, to be awarded through the **Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP)** organisations. These organisations will manage their own application and assessment processes – applicants wishing to work with CDP organisations should apply to them directly. Applications submitted to the open call in collaboration with a CDP organisation will not be eligible for the open call and will be rejected. Applications through the CDP route must meet the same eligibility criteria as for the CDA Open call.

## Eligibility

### Who Can Apply for a CDA Studentship?

- 1 Applications should be made jointly by a department in a recognised HEI and a non-HEI organisation from the private\*, public or voluntary sector. (\*A private sector company is defined as being at least 50% privately owned with a 'wealth creation' base in the United Kingdom). **Guidance on building collaborations can be found in Annex 2: Developing and Demonstrating a collaboration.**

Applications are permitted from HEIs with a partner organisation who are unsuccessful in the 2015 **Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP)** scheme. The organisations applying under this scheme will be made aware of the outcome of their application in June 2015.

**Please note that applications submitted to the open call in collaboration with a successful CDP organisation will not be eligible and will be rejected.**

2. The word 'organisation' is used as a generic term and should be interpreted as widely as possible. The AHRC wishes to encourage collaborations from any area within its subject remit and with a full range of organisations, bodies and businesses, including the creative, cultural and heritage industries, both large and small and to include sole traders and partnerships.
3. In most cases the non-HEI partner must have an operating base in the UK.
4. In exceptional cases the assessors may consider a collaboration with a company or organisation based outside of the UK. The AHRC recognises that given the distinctive nature of its subject domain there may be potential for reciprocal research collaborations outside of the UK. Applicants will need to state what additional benefits are to be gained from the collaboration and demonstrate clearly that value from the project will be accrued to the UK and how the collaboration will deliver long term lasting benefits. In such cases the overseas partner must specify a minimum contribution and would be expected to cover additional costs of travel to and from the UK. The logistics of running such a partnership should be carefully considered in order to demonstrate that the project is both viable and feasible.

5. University museums and galleries or organisations that are deemed to be a spin-off or are supported by an HEI are eligible to apply as project partners in this scheme **providing that the application is not a collaboration with the parent institution**. Organisations with 'IRO' status can only apply to this scheme as a non-HEI partner (but not where they are a CDP award holder).
  
6. **The number of applications any lead HEI can submit to the scheme are limited. The maximum number of applications that can be submitted by any HEI through the open call is two.**

However, in the CDA open call this cap will not apply to studentship proposals with an organisation which was previously a CDP holder but which has been unsuccessful in the 2015 CDP round. Exceptionally, this means that an HEI can submit two CDA applications plus additional CDAs applications with organisations which were previously CDP holders (or part of previous CDP consortia) but which have been unsuccessful.

7. In view of the cap on the number of proposals that can be submitted by an HEI to the CDA call, the institution may wish to put in place internal arrangements to rank collaborative PhD studentship proposals from across the organisation, and to ensure that only the institution's agreed choices of project are submitted to the AHRC. Single proposals may have *up to* **four linked** studentships running concurrently within capping levels.

An Extended CDA Programme is also offered as an option, for multiple studentship applications only, whereby a doctoral student can be recruited to the project for each of the next two/three years without having to apply in a future round. The AHRC would encourage applicants to consider the benefits of consolidating multiple applications with the same collaborators into single applications for multiple **linked** studentships to run concurrently or consecutively. Proposals should ensure a strong justification is made for the number of studentships proposed, if more than one is requested.

## **The Nature of Awards and Funding**

8. Full-time collaborative awards will normally be for 3.5 years' duration and part-time for six years' duration, leading to the submission by the student of a doctoral thesis based on the work carried out within the project. Thesis submission is expected no later than 12 months after the end of the studentship, and no later than 4 years after the start of the award, or 24 months if part time.
9. Applications should focus on the overarching project and the methodology employed that will allow the student(s) to develop their own thesis within the project framework. This is particularly important for applications submitted for multiple studentships as all proposals are subject to the same word limits irrespective of number of studentships applied for. The assessment panel will be considering this when assessing applications and will be looking for workability and potential.
10. Any topic within the AHRC's subject domain is eligible. Selection of successful applications will not be subject to quota systems and there are no priority areas, however, PhD proposals which address AHRC's strategic research themes are encouraged.
11. Applications for CDAs will need to demonstrate that the proposed studentship project represents a *real* research collaboration between the partners, and is not based merely on accessing resources or archives held by a non-HEI partner. The assessment panel will be asked to assess whether the proposed collaboration is mutually beneficial, CDA proposal should not be used as a process to appoint interns.

## **Student Development Fund (SDF)**

12. Studentships under the CDA 2016 scheme will be funded for 3.5 years, to enable longer PhDs to be supported. The funding for this additional 6 months compared to a standard studentship is referred to as the 'Student Development Fund'. The expectation is that the additional 0.5 year period supported by the funding will enable the student to undertake new development opportunities *as part of their PhD programme*, and supervisors should discuss with the student at an early stage what form these might take. For example:



- A further placement period with an organisation other than the collaborating partner organisation, developing public outreach resources based on their research which will offer additional development opportunities.
- International placements (other than the collaborating partner organisation) – where a student could benefit from an extended period overseas to develop the language skills needed to undertake their research project successfully. Such a placement might be taken early in the PhD project, but the 3.5 years of funding will mean that the period of language learning does not have to be fitted within the normal 3 years of PhD funding, and the PhD can be extended at the end.
- Enhanced Skills development (other than with the collaborating partner organisation)– where extended time is used to enable students to acquire additional skills, for example, high-level methodological skills, or significant and demanding new discipline-specific skills, such as palaeographical, papyrological or epigraphical skills.

The 3.5 years of funding **will be paid over 3.5 years**, but there is potential flexibility for the funding to be deployed flexibly (up to the cash-limit of the training grant), for example, when higher costs are incurred earlier in the studentship. This will require the agreement of the HEI holding the grant to allow expenditure against the training grant ahead of the payment schedule from the AHRC. However, with agreement from the HEI, funding could exceptionally be used to cover specific high-cost training courses which would benefit the student's research training. Clearly if some or all of the additional 0.5 year of funding is used in this way, the studentship itself will have to be shorter (i.e. less than 3.5 years) but it cannot be less than 3 years.

### **Collaborating Partners**

13. Experience so far has shown that collaborations proposed under the scheme are often based on relationships that have already begun on an informal or ad hoc basis and the CDA scheme then provides the opportunity to formalise these links. This does not mean that there has to be a history of working previously with a proposed partner and **with one of the key aims of the scheme being to encourage new links** the Council strongly encourages applicants to consider submitting a proposal with a partner that they may not have previously worked with. However it should be recognised from the outset that to build a genuine,

well thought out, collaboration with genuine mutual benefits to all parties can take some time making it advisable to start development sufficiently in advance of submitting an application. CDAs should be genuinely collaborative with mutual benefits and CDA partnerships which appear to be an internship will not be considered favourably.

14. Partners should consider that one of the main aims of the Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme is to offer students enhanced benefits to their research, experience, training and skills development. As mentioned above there will be different skills to be offered, and varying contributions to be made, by the HEI and non-HEI organisations and supervisors. There are also potentially greater demands placed upon students in that they will be involved with two sets of supervisors, colleagues and working environments. Having clear lines of communication and an understanding of requirements and responsibilities by all parties should help to minimise any conflict or tension that could potentially arise.
15. A good collaborative partnership and project will be one that sets up the framework so a doctoral student can undertake the research with all the necessary support and resources readily available and procedures in place to monitor and manage the project.
16. Partners may find it useful to look at the previous collaborations that have successfully applied to the CDA scheme. [A full list of projects funded from 2005-2014 may be viewed on the AHRC website \(opens in a new window\).](#)
17. It is important that all those involved in the collaboration reach a common understanding of what the project is trying to achieve and are clear about the expectations and responsibilities of each partner. When assessing the application indication of the strength of the collaboration is one of the key elements the panel consider – and you are strongly advised to refer to the assessment criteria section below. Additional advice and guidance on forming effective partnerships for doctoral research collaborations is given in the Annex to this document.
18. It is vital that both parties understand that the student and their doctoral thesis are central to the project. In line with current submission rate policy full-time doctoral award holders are expected to submit their thesis within 12 months of the end of their award, and no later than 4 years from the start of the award. The

student must be in a position to present their thesis at this time and non-HEI partners must be aware that any restrictions on access to information or data or on publication of such material, may affect a student's ability to submit.

### **Supervision**

19. It is recommended that collaborative projects have, if not a supervisory team, at least one other named supervisor and in some cases it may also be considered appropriate to establish a project group or committee to monitor or oversee the project.

#### Early Career Researchers

Where the lead academic supervisor is an Early Career Researcher and cannot demonstrate sufficient prior supervisory experience, then it is a requirement that a second experienced supervisor at the HEI be included to act as a mentor. Details on the mentoring arrangements for the Early Career Researcher are required and should be included within the application as an additional attachment (see JeS Helptext).

### **Additional Costs**

20. As these are collaborative projects, it is expected that there will be additional costs incurred by the student. The non-HEI partner is, as standard, required to provide supervisory time and desk space for the student as in-kind contributions. **In addition** to this, the collaborating non-HEI partner organisation will also be required to make a cash contribution to the student over and above the maintenance grant provided by the AHRC. The non-HEI partner cash contribution should be used to cover the costs incurred by the student in undertaking the collaborative project. Applicants need to provide full details of what is covered in this cost, and details of the additional costs which the student will incur as part of the collaboration.

Full details of the non-HEI partner cash and in-kind contributions must be provided within the proposal. This should include details of the non-HEI partner cash contribution which should be used to cover items such as: materials, travel and subsistence, accommodation, conference fees, etc. Details of the non-HEI partner's in-kind contribution should also be provided, including an estimated

monetary value for these contributions, this will include items such as: desk space and supervisory time, etc. A note to indicate what in kind contribution it is, e.g. supervisory time and any other additional benefits to the student should also be included.

Where a non-HEI partner is unable to provide an in-cash contribution, the PI is required to provide full justification of those reasons and an explanation of how any additional costs associated with the collaboration will be covered by the HEI.

**Please note: the student is not expected to cover these additional costs from their maintenance stipend.**

Where the studentship is held by a fees-only student, the non-HEI collaborating organisation can choose to pay this cash contribution at their discretion.

### **Partnership Agreements**

(Applicants are also advised to read Annex 2: Developing and Demonstrating collaboration alongside this section.)

21. Experience has shown not only the value but also the necessity of establishing a *written agreement* to provide a framework for a clear understanding of the operation and management of the project. The AHRC strongly advises that such an agreement is put in place so that all parties, and in particular the student, are aware of and understand the responsibilities and requirements that partners have signed up to in setting up and entering into the partnership.
22. If a collaboration has been set up correctly this should not prove difficult for the partners, as all such elements that might be included in an agreement should have been discussed and agreed before making an application. It is up to partners to decide how formal or informal they wish to make the agreement and they should seek advice from their respective organisations about this, but in all cases the AHRC recommends that it forms the basis of a working project plan that is regularly reviewed and updated.
23. The partnership agreement should set out the mechanisms for the supervision and training of the student and for the monitoring of the project. The AHRC will expect partners to ensure that adequate levels of supervision are available and maintained to support each student throughout the project. As a minimum they

will be expected to have one lead university supervisor and one lead non-university supervisor.

24. The list below covers some of the areas partners might want to consider in putting together an agreement.

- Specific objectives, obligations and responsibilities of each party
- Provision of resources, such as desk space and additional contributions
- Issues of ethics and/or confidentiality
- Ownership of research results and intellectual property
- Outcome(s) of studentships
- Recruitment
- Supervision
- Training
- Monitoring and reviewing
- Timescales and project plans
- Milestones and outputs
- Financial contributions & mechanisms for payment
- Working hours, arrangements and workplace inductions (including student access to buildings, security passes etc.)
- Risk Assessment
- Conflict resolution mechanisms
- Process for termination of collaboration
- Reporting requirements for each organisation
- Maintaining contact and developing the partnership

25. These are elements that should be discussed not only between the partners, but also with the nominated student before the final agreement is put in place. Practice has also shown that whilst the formal agreement is important, it is also

vital that the partners spend time together to develop a full understanding of each other's values and create the right environment and culture in which the project can succeed.

26. **We strongly recommend that you discuss IP issues** and agree a joint position at the outset of your collaboration. A number of advisory documents and template agreements for collaborative research have been developed by the [Intellectual Property Office \(opens in a new window\)](#) which may be helpful if a formal contract is needed for your project. Collaborators may wish to explore a softer approach to developing contractual agreements and you might consider developing a document which agrees the principles that are specific to your project. [An example of agreeing shared value in a cross-cultural partnership can be found here \(opens in a new window\).](#)
27. Whilst projects need to have definition and focus, the AHRC is keen to ensure that the selected student(s) also has some involvement in the final formulation of research questions and methods.

## Application and assessment processes

28. Applications to the scheme are made through Je-S by the HEI organisation, citing the collaborating organisation. Those partnerships successful in being allocated one or more collaborative studentships will then be responsible for appointing appropriately qualified research students.
29. Applications must be submitted by the person who will lead the project as Principal Investigator, and act as the lead supervisor. Applications submitted directly from the doctoral candidate, partner organisation or HEI research office will not be considered eligible.

All HEIs receiving studentship funding from any AHRC scheme must adhere to the AHRC's standard eligibility criteria for student residency and academic qualifications. [The AHRC publishes a 'Training Grant Funding Guide' which is available to download from the website \(opens in a new window\)](#). The 'Training Grant Funding Guide' should be read alongside the 'Terms and Conditions of RCUK Training Grants' and the 'RCUK Training Grant Guide' which are both available to download from [the RCUK website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

30. A lead applicant who will act as supervisor from both the HEI and the non-HEI organisation must be identified and both must have the permission of their Head of Department and their respective organisations to enter into a collaborative working arrangement and provide the support, access and resources required. Partner non-HEI organisations will be required to attach a letter of support as authorisation to enter into and support the proposed collaboration.
31. For the purpose of the application the Principal Investigator (PI) should be based at the HEI and will be the main point of contact for the AHRC. The AHRC would expect the PI to co-ordinate the project and ensure that all parties take responsibility for the progress, management and leadership of the project as well as the academic progress of the student. The PI will act as lead supervisor and should be able to demonstrate supervisory experience or provide a second supervisor and outline how they will act as a mentor.

32. Applicants will also be required to provide information about the supervisory and research training arrangements, and about any previous experience either party has of collaborative working. The application form will ask for information on context, usefulness, beneficiaries and possible applications of the research, looking at plans for impact, dissemination and the anticipated outcomes of the research, highlighting the intellectual as well as the commercial or public service benefits envisaged.
33. An important element of the application will be the description of the supervisory and training arrangements for each studentship sought and you should be aware that the AHRC has an established Research Training Framework which it expects HEIs to follow for its funded doctoral students. [Details of the framework can be found on the website \(opens in a new window\)](#). RCUK has now issued a statement of expectations for doctoral training setting out common principles for the support of all Research Council funded students – with an additional joint vision for collaborative training, both documents can be found on [their website \(opens in a new window\)](#).
34. Applicants are required to demonstrate how supervision will be co-ordinated throughout the project and how the student's progress will be monitored. The AHRC would expect to see plans for joint meetings ensuring the student(s) receives consistent advice and that all parties are able to monitor the progress of the project, work through any problems and plan future work. This may include project management tools, facilitation of communication between HEI and non-HEI partners and an advisory group or committee. The AHRC will also expect to see contingency plans for any changes to roles within the supervisory team and applicants should demonstrate that they have considered how consistency in supervision will be maintained should any member of the project not be able to fulfill their original role either temporarily or permanently.
35. The application will also provide information about the non-HEI organisation's relevant areas of activity including, where applicable, any current or previous research activities. The area of activity that is to be the subject of the collaborative studentship must fall within the Council's subject domain.
36. Applications should make clear the plans to deliver research training that is relevant to the student and their topic and to encourage development of key and transferable skills. Satisfactory information will also have to be provided about



the systems for monitoring the student's progress, assessing their continuing development needs, and delivering and reviewing the provision of agreed training. The Council will also wish to see evidence that the collaborating organisation will make available to the student any other relevant support and facilities.

37. Following changes to RCUK study visit funding and feedback from previous CDA panels it is important to consider financing arrangements for any overseas study, and related costs, that is essential to the completion of the project. While it is acceptable for applicants to propose applications to other funding sources for this purpose, it is important that contingency plans are demonstrated if further funding applications are not successful.
38. Applications will be assessed by panels convened on the basis of subject areas and made up of members of the AHRC's peer review college. Each panel will assess, grade and rank each application.
39. As with previous assessment panels for the CDA scheme the AHRC will endeavour to provide the broadest spread of subject expertise across all of the panels along with non-HEI experience where possible to ensure a robust review process.
40. The final grades and rank across the panels will be decided at a chairs' meeting and a recommendation will be made to the office for an allocation of awards.
41. Applicants will be informed of outcomes electronically with an automatic notification sent via JeS which will be sent to the person named as the JeS final submitter for the application, who must then forward this to the PI. Successful applicants who wish to accept the award must do so via JeS and agree to the terms and conditions which will be included in the offer letter. The award holding institution will also be required to send electronic notification via JeS confirming the start of the award once this has taken place.

It is a requirement that successful applicants add details of the students via the Student Details Portal in JeS once the studentship has started.

42. Unsuccessful applications will be directed to feedback within the grade descriptor assigned (see grade descriptors in annex 1) to give more appropriate feedback. Narrative feedback will only be exceptionally provided where the panel cannot

articulate their reasoning adequately through the grade descriptors.

## **Assessment criteria**

43. Applications must meet the aims of the Collaborative Doctoral Awards Scheme, which are:

- to support excellent collaborative research training.
- to provide opportunities for doctoral students to gain first- hand experience of work outside a university environment, with the student supported by both an HEI and non-HEI supervisor, and to enhance the employment related skills and training a research student gains during the course of their award.
- to allow doctoral students to undertake research that could not be completed without the proposed collaborative framework.
- to encourage and develop collaboration between HEI departments and non-HEI bodies and organisations.
- to establish links that can have benefits for both collaborating partners, providing access to resources and materials, knowledge and expertise and which also provide social, cultural and economic benefits to wider society.
- to encourage collaborations from any area within the AHRC's subject remit and with a full range of organisations, bodies and businesses, including the creative, cultural and heritage industries and industrial and commercial businesses, both large and small.

44. Applications for collaborative doctoral awards will be judged by the following assessment criteria. **Applicants must demonstrate that:**

- The project provides genuine scope for **high quality doctoral research** within the relevant subject area. Applicants should provide clear research questions and context and provide a framework to enable students to develop their PhD project.
- The collaboration is appropriate and viable and that the proposed project is achievable within the given **timeframe**.
- There are real and **tangible benefits** to be gained from the collaboration not

only for the HEI and non-HEI partners and the student but for a wider audience.

- There is real **added value** in the doctoral research being carried out within a collaborative framework and that it could not be done without it.
- There are clear and feasible procedures for the **recruitment** of a suitably qualified student/students to undertake the research. Where a student is named in the proposal this should be clearly justified and demonstrate that they are eligible and appropriately qualified to undertake the research.
- Both the **HEI and the partner organisation** will ensure that the student receives a high standard of appropriate supervision and support and that **training requirements will be identified, met and regularly reviewed**. Where the student/s will require specialist skills the proposal should identify how these will be ensured through recruitment and/or specific training.
- Full consideration is given to the **ethical implications** of the work proposed and appropriate procedures are put in place. The application should demonstrate that it addresses the specific ethical issues arising from the project.
- Both HEI and non - HEI Partner Organisation identify **strategies for ensuring supervisory support** should there be unforeseen changes, and demonstrate due consideration to, and **organisational support of, supervisors' capacity alongside existing workload and whether appropriate mentoring has been put in place**.
- Both the HEI and non-HEI organisation have arrangements in place for **monitoring** the progress of the project and student(s).
- That any **necessary resources will be made available** to support activities essential to the research such as fieldwork costs, additional skills training, etc.
- A partnership agreement will be put in place and issues such as confidentiality, ethical considerations and **intellectual property rights** have been, or will be addressed.
- A clearly thought through **dissemination plan and outputs**, additional to the PhD thesis, appropriate to the research topic and partnership demonstrating the additional benefits from the collaboration and consideration of the future maintenance of outputs.
- **Where more than one studentship is requested** or an application is made for an Extended CDA Programme attached to a project, the project and

resources available can sustain an increased number, or the requested number, of studentships over an extended period. **It is important to note that the project will be considered as a whole and the panels do not have the ability to remove studentships, therefore all studentships must demonstrate equal quality.**

- Where the non-HEI partner organisation is not based in the UK that **real value and benefits will accrue to the UK** and that sufficient contributions to support the project will be made by the non-UK partner.
- The panels will look to be convinced that **the project is properly resourced**, that partners have considered any cost and resource implications and that arrangements are in place to ensure partners agree their contributions and responsibilities. Applicants should consider how costs will be covered for any specialist equipment or materials that will be required for the project.

### **Timetable**

45. Applicants will be able to submit proposals in JeS from **Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015. The closing date for applications is 4.00pm on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015** – if the wrong call is selected you will not be able to submit your application.

You should submit your proposal using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>). To prepare a proposal form in Je-S log-in to your account and choose **Documents** then choose **New Document**, then select **AHRC** as the Council, **Studentship Proposal** as the Document Type, **Collaborative Doctoral Awards** as the Scheme, **Collaborative Doctoral Awards Open Call 7 July 2015** as the Call/Type/Mode and then 'Create Document'. Je-S will then create a proposal form, displaying the relevant section headings. Using the 'Help' link at the top of each section will provide guidance relevant to that section of the form.

46. A list of the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership awarded organisations can be found here: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/funding/opportunities/current/collaborativedoctoralawards/> Any proposals involving a successful CDP non-HEI partner should be sent directly to that organisation. Any proposal with a successful 2015 CDP organisation will be deemed ineligible for the purposes of the CDA call.

47. The results will be announced by early January 2016. Successful applicants will be required to recruit a suitable student and enter their details onto the JeS Student Details Portal within one month of the start of the award.
48. The studentship will commence on **1 October 2016**.
49. **Applicants are reminded that their project must be within the remit of the Council to which they are applying. Applicants may not have the same application under consideration by more than one Research Council at any time.**

**If in doubt, applicants should consult the relevant Council's contact well before the submission deadline to confirm which Research Council is best placed to consider their proposal.**

**AHRC, MRC, STFC, NERC and BBSRC have aligned their annual call dates to allow applicants time to re-submit their proposal to the current round and to the specified Research Council should their proposal be considered to be out of remit.**

#### **After the Award**

50. The AHRC recommends that in order to meet the requirements of equal opportunities policy, and to ensure that the best applicants are attracted, the selection of students should be made through open competition by advertisement of the studentship. Experience has shown that collaborative studentships are often attractive to high quality graduates with an interest in research that is of direct relevance to the non-HEI workplace and who might not consider pursuing a PhD in the conventional way.
51. It is recognised that some projects will have originated with a particular student and where that student has the appropriate ability, and meets the eligibility criteria, it would be unfair and inappropriate for the project to be advertised. There may also be instances where a very particular knowledge or skill-set is required which means a project is developed with a student in mind. In such

cases, nomination of the student without competition may be justified, but it is considered advisable that the majority of collaborative studentships should be advertised.

52. Studentships are usually advertised in the educational press or through jobs.ac.uk, but successful applicants may also want to consider targeting their recruitment at specific subject communities via subject associations, relevant websites or university departments.
53. Partners need to consider the nature and location of the interview or selection process, for example, whether it should take place at the university or at the non-HEI organisation's premises or, ideally, a combination of both.
54. Students need to be made aware of the context in which they are taking on their research, but equally they must be allowed scope to help shape their thesis and have input into how the project will operate. Please bear in mind that collaborative studentships can potentially place particular and extra demands on a student. They will have to balance two sets of supervisors, colleagues and working environments and deal with the conflicts, tensions and stresses that may arise from that.
55. By their very nature, because these are pre-determined projects, some collaborations will have a more limited pool of potential applicants and whilst a few of the previously funded projects have found it harder to recruit than others it is important to note that there has been an extremely high take-up of studentships in the scheme so far.
56. Nominated students must meet the same eligibility criteria as any AHRC doctoral research student. Full details of these criteria can be found in the ['Training Grant Funding Guide' available on our website \(opens in a new window\)](#), which should be read alongside the 'Terms and Conditions of RCUK Training Grants' and the 'RCUK Training Grant Guide' which are both available to download from [the RCUK website \(opens in a new window\)](#).
57. Details of the selected candidate must be entered against the award via JeS no later than one month after the start of the award.

58. Fees-only students will be eligible for tuition fee payments from the AHRC but not for maintenance grant payments (including the additional CDA maintenance contribution). The AHRC will not require the non-HEI partner to make the additional maintenance payment to fees-only students, but they may do so if they wish.
59. During the studentship a collaborative doctoral student will spend time working in the non-HEI organisation's premises. During this time the student must be engaged in activities which are an integral component of the research to be presented in the thesis. The recommended minimum is three months and the maximum eighteen months, although when and how this time is spent will vary according to the nature of the project and is subject to negotiation between the partners and the student. It is recommended that this forms part of the formal agreement.
60. It is recommended that the student receives an induction programme in the non-HEI organisation similar to that provided for new employees, although this will vary depending on the nature of the project and the size of the organisation. Induction should be tailored to the needs of the student and the project and if necessary should also be offered to the academic supervisor where it might serve the needs of furthering trust, understanding and effective working relationships.
61. Information on terms and conditions for postgraduate studentships award holders and how studentships are administered can be found in the ['Training Grant Funding Guide' available on our website \(opens in a new window\)](#), which should be read alongside the 'Terms and Conditions of RCUK Training Grants' and the 'RCUK Training Grant Guide' which are both available to download from [the RCUK website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

## Glossary

**Higher Education Institution (HEI):** An institution that is recognised and funded by one of the four UK higher education funding councils, or an institution whose postgraduate courses are validated by a recognised HEI.

**Academic Supervisor:** A member of the teaching or research staff employed by a HEI who is providing academic input, supervision and guidance to the project.

**Lead Applicant:** The lead applicant must be the primary academic supervisor and PI on the project and an employee of the HEI who will coordinate and make the application for funding, and who subsequently has overall responsibility for the management of the project. This person must be JeS registered.

**Principal Investigator:** The lead applicant, as above.

**Early Career Researcher:** Definition of an Early Career Researcher can be found in the AHRC Research Funding Guide.

**Non-HEI Organisation:** Organisations may be based in any field or area but the project must utilise research in the arts or humanities. They also must normally be a UK-based operation and may be in the private, public or voluntary sectors. Please note that the interests of the organisation may still be academic in nature e.g. a museum or research group, but they should not have degree awarding powers.

**Non-HEI Supervisor:** An employee of the non-HEI partner organisation who will supervise the student in conjunction with the academic supervisor. The non-HEI supervisor's role is predominantly to assist with access and information on their organisations facilities that are relevant to the



project and to bring the specific expertise of their organisation to the collaboration.

**Partners / Partnership:**

Refers to the two organisations leading the collaboration i.e. the HEI and the non-HEI organisation.

**Award:**

The award is made to the HEI so the CDA award holder is the PI and lead applicant on behalf of the HEI and their partner organisation. An award consists of one or more studentships attached to the project.

**Studentship:**

That granted by the AHRC to fund a nominated research student as part of a Collaborative Doctoral Award. The studentships are based upon the same eligibility and regulations as standard AHRC doctoral studentships.

**Project:**

The project is the central aspect of the collaboration and will be based upon the activities and research outlined in the proposal section of the application form.

**Student Development Fund:**

Studentships under the CDA 2016 scheme will be funded for 3.5 years. The funding for this additional 6 months compared to a standard studentship is referred to as the 'Student Development Fund' and will enable the student to undertake new development opportunities *as part of their PhD programme*.

**CDP Scheme/Organisations**

Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships scheme is a route for non-HEI organisations or consortia to become Collaborative Doctoral Partners with the AHRC to support and provide high-quality doctoral training. CDP organisations hold a number of CDA studentships and manage their own application and assessment processes. CDP organisations are not eligible to be collaborating partners under the CDA Open call.

**Research Student:**

The student who will be receiving financial support (i.e. the holder of the studentship) to carry out the research on the project with the key aim of being awarded a doctoral level qualification by the end of the award.

**Extended CDA Programme:**

A large project or collaboration with enough scope to support up to four individual studentships over an extended period in which one studentship may be attached to the collaboration each year for the next three years without the partnership having to apply in each individual year's round.

**CASE/CASE Awards:**

The term used by some of the Research Councils to refer to their schemes and awards for collaborative doctoral projects.

## Annex 1: CDA Grade Descriptors

Grade	Descriptor (Collaborative Doctoral Awards 2016)
6	<p>An outstanding proposal meeting the highest quality and standards of research collaboration and likely to provide significant mutual benefits and outputs. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme and provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of the very highest priority.</p>
5	<p>An excellent proposal meeting the highest quality and standards of research collaboration and likely to provide significant mutual benefits and outputs. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme and provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of priority, but does not merit the very highest priority rating.</p>
4	<p>A good proposal meeting a high quality and standard of research collaboration and likely to provide some significant mutual benefits and outputs. It meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme, and provides good evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management.</p> <p>It is suitable for funding.</p> <p><b>For unsuccessful applications:</b> the submission demonstrated weakness in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) its capacity for the student to make an original contribution to knowledge in and engage with ongoing scholarly debates in a field or fields within the AHRC remit;</li> <li>b) the nature of the collaboration and its timeliness for the non-HEI partner;</li> <li>c) the appropriateness and fit of the supervision team, its members skills and experience;</li> <li>d) the feasibility and project management of the collaboration with the Non-HEI partner, and/or the extent to which the collaboration brings added value to the research.</li> </ul>

Grade	Descriptor (Collaborative Doctoral Awards 2016)
3	<p>A satisfactory proposal in terms of the overall quality and standard of research collaboration, mutual benefits and outcomes which meets the assessment criteria for the scheme and provides reasonable evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management but which in a competitive context is not a priority.</p> <p>It is not recommended for funding.</p> <p>Specifically, the submission demonstrated weakness in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) its capacity for the student to make an original contribution to knowledge in and engage with ongoing scholarly debates in a field or fields within the AHRC remit;</li> <li>b) the nature of the collaboration and its timeliness for the non-HEI partner;</li> <li>c) the appropriateness and fit of the supervision team, its members skills and experience;</li> <li>d) the feasibility and project management of the collaboration with the non-HEI partner, and/or the extent to which the collaboration brings added value to the research.</li> </ul>
2	<p>A proposal of an inconsistent quality and standard of research collaboration, mutual benefits and outcomes which has some strengths, but also contains a number of major weaknesses or flaws in its conceptualisation, design, methodology and/or management. It does not meet all the assessment criteria for the scheme.</p> <p>It is not suitable for funding.</p> <p>Specifically, the submission demonstrated weakness in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) its capacity for the student to make an original contribution to knowledge in and engage with ongoing scholarly debates in a field or fields within the AHRC remit;</li> <li>b) the nature of the collaboration and its timeliness for the non-HEI partner;</li> <li>c) the appropriateness and fit of the supervision team, its members skills and experience;</li> <li>d) the feasibility and project management of the collaboration with the non-HEI partner, and/or the extent to which the collaboration brings added value to the research.</li> </ul>

Grade	Descriptor (Collaborative Doctoral Awards 2016)
1	<p>A proposal of an unsatisfactory quality and standard of research collaboration, mutual benefits and outcomes which does not meet the assessment criteria for the scheme and does not provide satisfactory evidence and justification for the proposal.</p> <p>It is not suitable for funding.</p> <p>Specifically, the submission demonstrated weakness in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) its capacity for the student to make an original contribution to knowledge in and engage with ongoing scholarly debates in a field or fields within the AHRC remit;</li> <li>b) the nature of the collaboration and its timeliness for the non-HEI partner;</li> <li>c) the appropriateness and fit of the supervision team, its members skills and experience;</li> <li>d) the feasibility and project management of the collaboration with the non-HEI partner, and/or the extent to which the collaboration brings added value to the research.</li> </ul>

## **Annex 2: Developing and Demonstrating a Collaboration**

1. The first step in setting up a collaboration is to establish who may be a suitable partner for the project. Non-HEI organisations may wish to contact a HEI's Research, Development or External Liaison Office to discuss how their activities may benefit a project or HEIs may seek to find a non-HEI organisation which could utilise a particular area of research or knowledge. HEI departments should also contact the appropriate office/person in their organisation for guidance and support and they may be particularly useful with regard to setting up agreements or contracts.
2. Colleagues who are already running successful CDAs may also be a good source of help and information in setting up a partnership and we would encourage new collaborators to seek them out and utilise their expertise.
3. Initiating or joining a network of partnership projects can be useful in developing new partnerships as well as providing a forum for discussing ideas, problems and good practice. Anecdotal feedback has also shown that CDA students find real value in networking opportunities amongst themselves.
4. Collaborative working can be extremely rewarding and exciting but it is not an easy option as it takes effort, hard work and most of all commitment to make it work and to manage it successfully. Partners should not underestimate this in setting up a project and should not enter such a partnership if there is any doubt that they will be able to make that commitment. Academic supervisors should expect that the supervision of research students who are working on a CDA project involves an increased workload in comparison to the supervision of a standard doctoral student(s). In relation to the length of the commitment, partners must be prepared to commit to the project for the full length of the award at least up to the submission of the research students thesis.
5. Non-HEI partners should not be discouraged from entering a collaboration because they consider they do not have the capability or capacity to offer academic supervision to a PhD student. The responsibility for academic supervision lies with the university supervisor and whilst some organisations/individuals may be able to offer some academic support the non-university supervisor role offers something different in providing specific training and access to resources, people,

collections, processes, knowledge and expertise that are vital to the success of the research project and which would not be possible without the collaboration. It is imperative however that the non- university supervisor has the full support of their organisation and is able to co- direct the project and ensure that not only are the organisation's objectives being met but that the student's research is fully supported and kept on track.

6. Non-HEI organisations may also wish to approach a CDA with the view that involvement in collaborative projects provides good opportunities not just for students but for their own staff development and skills training. In all cases the AHRC would encourage both the HEI and non-HEI partners to make good use of the opportunities afforded by collaborating to share their skills and knowledge and learn about each other's organisations and ways of working.
7. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that a true/real relationship exists between the partner organisations and that it is established as an equal partnership. Whilst the student and their PhD are central to the award and the PhD must meet the requirements and regulations of the HEI concerned, one of the main aims of the collaborative scheme is to establish and maintain links between academia and external partners that have some real, tangible and long-lasting benefits.
8. The main indicators of a strong collaboration are listed below and should be considered both in the formation of a collaboration and development of a proposal:
  - Do we agree what the project is about, will it make a good doctoral project and what are the wider benefits?
  - Does the project meet the needs of both collaborating partners?
  - What is the 'bottom-line' in terms of expectations?
  - Is it feasible within the period of an AHRC studentship?
  - Do we have a common understanding of language – do we agree what the terms *supervisor* and *training*, for example, mean?
  - Do partners have the necessary time and resources to commit to the project?

- Are we clear on:
  - The arrangements for joint supervision of the project/student
  - The arrangements for sorting out confidentiality or ethical issues and intellectual property rights
  - The means for identifying an appropriate student
  - Provision for training, monitoring and review of the student/project
  - Provision of and access to the required resources, collections etc.
  - Financial commitments, contributions & procedures
  - Expected outcomes, timing and availability of research results
- Do we have a mechanism for establishing a formal agreement setting out expectations and responsibilities for the above
- Is there clear agreement that it is an **equal partnership with mutual benefits**

## Web Links

The websites listed below may have further useful information and suggestions for building and maintaining collaborations:

<http://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/cross-sector-working>

<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/how/guides/working-partnership>