



Research Networking Highlight Notice for UK–US Collaborations in Digital Scholarship in Cultural Institutions

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II. Introduction

The technological shift taking place in the cultural and creative industries as a result of digitisation, mobile access, social media and immersive technologies presents a major opportunity to enhance transatlantic collaboration in digital scholarship. In particular, it offers considerable scope for world-leading museums and other cognate cultural institutions such as galleries, libraries and archives in the US and UK to build new partnerships and develop capacity in the application of digital methods

and technologies through innovative cross-disciplinary projects and new approaches to audience engagement. The initiation of this ambitious transatlantic collaboration provides an unprecedented opportunity to bring together the best of both UK and US research in digital scholarship and the outstanding quality of the combined cultural assets of both countries.

This highlight notice is intended to support the development of networks of researchers, practitioners and wider partners across the UK and US focussed on the development of digital scholarship in museums and cultural institutions in both countries. These networks will initiate a major new programme led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) of the UK, in partnership with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and in expectation of future support from key partner organisations in the US.

The AHRC will provide up to £60,000 full economic cost (fEC) for each funded research network. It is expected that US partners involved with each network will offer additional cash or in-kind support. Each network will start by 1 February 2019 and can be up to 12-months in duration. Proposals will be expected to include at least one museum and / or cultural institution in each country. Whilst interdisciplinary proposals are encouraged, it is expected that applications will be led by arts and humanities subject areas within the remit of the AHRC. More information on the remit of AHRC can be found on [our website](#), and queries about the remit of specific project ideas can be submitted through the [remit enquiry form](#) on the website.

This highlight notice will close at 1600 hours on Thursday 6 December 2018.

III. Context

This major new transatlantic programme responds to the technological shift taking place in the cultural and creative industries as a result of digitisation, mobile access, social media and immersive technologies. It builds on the success of other transatlantic programmes such as ‘Digging into Data’, which have brought data science approaches to bear on large digital libraries of cultural heritage materials to address critical research questions in the humanities and social sciences. It also recognises that, given the variability in the form, standard and contexts of the material they hold, museums and similar institutions have had limited opportunities to explore how they could best make their collections available in digital form for large-scale computational research.

Drawing upon the best of both UK and US research in digital scholarship, the programme seeks to deliver a transformative step-change within museums and cultural institutions by transforming the ways in which material culture can be experienced by global audiences; opening new research frontiers and questions; and advancing collections-based research methods for the 21st century. Specifically, it aims to:

- build capacity through the innovative application of digital methods and research in museums and cultural institutions;
- drive new, cross-disciplinary approaches and accelerate thinking about the potential for digital scholarship;
- facilitate new projects in areas of mutual interest;
- pioneer new approaches to audience engagement and experience;

- support dialogue and outreach about the value and impact of digitisation and digital collections.

This highlight notice is the first step in a broader strategy – developed in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution in the US – to build a community of internationally connected researchers who will take forward and deliver the aims of the full programme.

IV. Aims of the Call

A. Scope

The highlight notice aims to provide a platform for higher education institutions, museums, cultural institutions and other relevant organisations in the UK and US to develop new partnerships, explore key themes and shape priorities in preparation for larger, longer term collaboration in later years. The networks should take innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to explore themes including, but not limited to:

- machine learning / AI, particularly for the description of image-based collections, including ethical issues and technical challenges, as well as the possibilities of crowdsourcing and models of co-creation such as approaches to community engagement and the involvement of marginalised and disenfranchised communities;
- combining multiple data sources to develop better information on museum visitors, including ethical issues relating to, for example, visitor tracking and wider perspectives on the impact of digital resources;
- how we automatically make and interrogate all document types, including, for example: the role of optical character recognition, text extraction and parsing; linking data from digitised records to create richer research data and allow research with collections-as-data at scale through methods such as geo-location and network analysis; the annotation of resources; social networking analysis; and the interrogation of all media types including complex fields such as sound;
- the impact of digitised and digital collections: how are these resources being used by researchers and how might researchers' engagement with museum collections change as a result? This might also include gap and trend analysis to help look to the future of museum-collections-based research;
- investigating the potential for digital tools in areas such as linked data for provenance research, and research into topics including commercialisation and trafficking.

Subject to the quality and fit of the applications received, we anticipate funding approximately eight-to-ten high-quality research networks through this highlight notice.

B. Variations from the standard AHRC Research Networking scheme

Applications to this highlight notice should follow the standard requirements for the Research Networking Scheme as set out in the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#), with the following exceptions:

- the maximum amount that can be applied for is £60,000 (fEC);

- there is no restriction to the percentage of the costs that need to be spent on UK/non-UK elements of the project;
- projects must start by 1 February 2019, and run for a maximum of 12-months¹;
- project Principal Investigators must meet standard AHRC UK eligibility rules;
- more than one Co-Investigator/International Co-Investigator is permitted;
- each application must include a minimum of two museums and/or cultural institutions of whom at least one must be from the UK and one from the US;
- each application must include at least one project partner in the US who is making a cash or in-kind contribution to the proposed network;
- the case for support must include a statement at the start outlining how the proposed networking activities fit within the aims and scope of this highlight notice.

V. Eligibility

Standard eligibility criteria (see section 3 of the AHRC's [Research Funding Guide](#)) will apply to this highlight notice for both investigators and research organisations. This means the Principal Investigator must be resident in the UK and contracted to a UK institution eligible to receive funding from the Research Councils.

International Co-Investigators are eligible for this highlight notice, in-line with AHRC's standard policy (see [Research Funding Guide](#), section 2, p. 35).

A. Museums and Cultural Institutions

In addition to applicants and their organisations meeting the standard AHRC eligibility criteria, all applications must involve at least one museum and / or other cultural institution in each country (i.e. at least one in the UK and one in the US). For the purposes of this call the term 'cultural institution' is conceived broadly to also include organisations related to the museum sector such as libraries, galleries and archives.

Where appropriate, and in line with the eligibility criteria for each, museums and cultural institutions can be listed as named applicants, project partners, or collaborating organisations. Please see the guidance in Section 2 of the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) for the difference between collaborating organisations and project partners.

VI. Guidance on Costs and Project Timescales

With the exceptions noted in Section IV B (above) the standard requirements for the Research Networking Scheme, as set out in the [AHRC's Research Funding Guide](#), apply.

A. US contributions

Each research network must demonstrate some cash or in-kind contribution included from a US project partner. It is anticipated that this will take the form of direct funding for US-based elements

¹ It is a requirement of this call that all funded research networks must start on 1 February 2019 and no flexibility can be offered on this requirement. However, AHRC will give sympathetic consideration to extension requests where the networks face delays at the start due to the quick turnaround between the funding decision being communicated to successful applicants and the networks starting.

of the project, or in-kind project partner contributions, such as staff costs or use of facilities, as per standard AHRC Project Partner contributions (see [Research Funding Guide](#), section 2, p. 37).

The US contribution does not need to equal the UK contribution but it is expected that it should constitute a meaningful commitment, broadly commensurate with the balance of the project, the distribution of responsibilities, and the relative standing of the organisations involved.

Full details of all project partner organisations should be included in the application and be accompanied by a Project Partner Letter of Support. Guidance on what needs to be included in a Project Partner Letter of Support is provided on page 53 of the AHRC [Research Funding Guide](#).

Please note that any cash or in-kind contributions from US partner organisations do *not* count against the (fEC) £60,000 maximum funding limit of this highlight notice.

VII. Application Process and Format

The application process and format as published in the AHRC *Research Funding Guide* will apply for this highlight notice, apart from the specific requirements outlined in Section IV B of this document.

Applications should be submitted through the Je-S system at the latest by **4pm on 6 December 2018**, and will need to go through the appropriate institution submission process. 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' from the menu;
- then select 'New Document';
- 'AHRC' as the Council,
- 'Standard Proposal' as the Document Type;
- 'Research Networking' as the Scheme;
- 'Research Networking Highlight FIC Digital Scholarships 6 December 2018' as the Call/Type/Mode; and
- '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.

Note that selecting 'Submit document' on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation's administration, not to AHRC. ***Please remember to allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the Call closing date.***

Applications should address the aims of the highlight notice as listed in Section IV of this document.

The following are a list of attachments that are permitted for this highlight notice. Please see Section 4 of the AHRC's [Research Funding Guide](#) for further information about these attachments:

Attachment	Requirement and maximum page limits (sides of A4)
Case for Support	Compulsory. Maximum of four sides of A4 PLEASE NOTE: In addition to the standard requirements set out in Section 4 of the AHRC <i>Research Funding Guide</i> , all applications must include a statement at the top of the Case for Support outlining how the proposed networking activities fit within the aims and scope of this highlight notice.
Curriculum Vitae	Compulsory for the PI, each Co-I and any named researchers. Maximum of two sides of A4 each
Publication Lists	Compulsory for the PI, each Co-I and any named researchers. One side of A4 each
Justification of Resources	Compulsory. Maximum of two sides of A4
Pathways to Impact	Compulsory. Maximum of two sides of A4
Project Partner Letter of Support	Compulsory. Maximum of two sides of A4
International Co-I Head of Dept Statement	Compulsory if there is an international Co-Investigator(s). Maximum of two sides of A4 each
Letter of Support	Optional. Maximum of two sides of A4
Visual Evidence	Optional. Maximum of two sides of A4

VIII. Assessment Process and Criteria

Proposals will be considered by a cross-disciplinary expert assessment panel drawing on members of the AHRC's Peer Review College and other experts as appropriate. There will not be a separate stage of individual peer review for each application prior to consideration by the Panel and therefore applicants will not receive feedback on their applications in the form of individual peer reviewers' comments. The assessment panel will agree grades for each proposal, agree a ranked priority list of applications and make funding recommendations to the AHRC.

Proposals submitted under the highlight notice will be assessed on their quality and individual merits according to standard networking scheme criteria but with panelists also asked to consider issues of fit to the highlight notice. The panel may also take into account issues around the balance of the portfolio of funded projects in agreeing priority rankings amongst proposals given the same grade on quality. Subject to the quality and fit of the applications received, we anticipate funding approximately eight-to-ten research networks through this highlight notice

IX. Call timetable

Activity	Date
Call opens	Monday 8 October 2018
Application form available in Je-S	Monday 22 October 2018
Deadline for submissions	Thursday 6 December 2018
Assessment Panel meeting date	w/c 7 January 2019
Funding decisions to be issued	w/c 14 January 2019
Start date of awards	1 February 2019
End date of awards	31 January 2020

X. Scheme Requirements and Post-Award Reporting

Research Networking scheme requirements and post-award reporting as stated in the AHRC *Research Funding Guide* will apply to this highlight notice.

Award holders will be required to submit outputs, outcomes and impacts that arise from AHRC's funding through the Researchfish system. Information can be added to Researchfish at any point once the award has started but award holders will also be required to 'submit' this information to AHRC at one 'Submission Period' each year. Award holders will receive an email with log-in details shortly after their award has started. More details on Researchfish are available on the UKRI website here: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/research-outcomes1/>

Applicants should note that award holders funded under this highlight notice will form part of a wider UK-US partnership around digital scholarship, therefore, additional reporting requirements, including those used by US partners, might also apply. Successful applicants will be expected to join a launch and scoping workshop to be held in London or Washington DC in February or March 2019. Award holders may also be required to participate in further cross-disciplinary and collaborative partnership events, workshops, reports, knowledge exchange and synthesis activities organized as a part of this partnership.

Contact Information

For queries about this highlight notice, such as eligible activities and costs or remit of the call, please contact AHRC at enquiries@ahrc.ac.uk or telephone: 01793 416060 (available Monday to Friday 8:30-16:30).

For queries on using Je-S such as creating and submitting the application form or Je-S account creation, please contact the Je-S Helpdesk on 01793 444164 or jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk (available Monday to Friday 08:30 – 5:00).