

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentship – Power and partnerships – principles, values and structure with British Museum

Start date: 1st October 2024

Application Deadline: Friday 14th June 2024

Shortlisted candidates will be notified by 28th June 2024

Interviews will take place on Tuesday 9th July 2024 and will take place in person in London at the British Museum

The University of Leicester and the British Museum are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded Collaborative doctoral studentship from October 2024 under the AHRC's [Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships \(CDP\) scheme](#)

With the British Museum (BM) reimagining its future through institutional collaborations and co-curation, this practice-centred PhD asks how can partnership working in museums support ethical, mutually beneficial relationships and successful outcomes. The resulting research has the potential to make a hugely important contribution to the cross-sector professionalism and best practice approach to this essential area of work.

This project will be jointly supervised by Professor Suzanne MacLeod and Maria Bojanowska and the student will be expected to spend time at both the University of Leicester and the British Museum as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

The studentship can be studied either full-time (4 years) or part-time (7 years).

We encourage the widest range of potential students to study for this CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming students from different backgrounds to apply. We particularly welcome applications from minority ethnic backgrounds as they are currently underrepresented at this level in this area.

Students should have a Master's Degree in a relevant subject or be able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting.

The studentship is open to both home and international applicants.

Project Overview

Partnership working within the museum sector is encouraged and celebrated. Many national museums are committed to broadening reach and access to their collections across the UK, something that is only possible through local projects developed in partnership. These partnerships are not just one to one, museum to museum partnerships but often ask the non-national partner to mediate a relationship between the national and all their subsequent stakeholders e.g., community groups, audiences, wider networks and subsidiaries. The mechanisms for this work however, and the principles for its delivery are not fully understood. Whilst there is a growing body of research on co-production and co-curation, there is a distinct lack of academic literature on arts and heritage partnerships. There is also a need for a more formalised definition of partnerships, currently a catch-all phrase. There is a need for 'deep work' and a move beyond case-studies and anecdote and 'shallower' evaluation.

With the British Museum (BM) reimagining its future through international collaborations and co-curation, the proposed research presents a timely opportunity to generate new insights around what it means to partner well that can significantly impact the BM's partnership strategy and drive new understanding and practice in the sector more widely. The resulting research (and thesis) has the potential to make a hugely important contribution to the cross-sector professionalism and best practice approach to this essential area of work.

The topic of investigation relates to an area of museum practice and the methodology is practice-centred – new insights will be generated in and through practice. This is crucial for research that seeks to both understand but also drive inclusive organisational transformation. The intention is to bring scholarship (this might include theory but isn't limited to theory) and critical thinking to bear on practice and to learn through doing. It is an approach that opens up a space for critical thinking and data generation within an organisational culture that might otherwise be in '*doing*' mode. This is a model frequently used and seen much success at the Leicester Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG).

This approach to the research presents the student with an option for a practice centred PhD where rather than submitting an 80,000-word thesis the student will be able to decide whether they submit a shorter – 60,000-word thesis and a portfolio. This alternative approach will award the student with the same qualification PhD in Museum Studies.

Research questions include:

While the student will ultimately decide on the focus of the research, the body of work will likely explore:

- What approaches to partnership working in museums can support ethical, mutually beneficial relationships and successful outcomes?
- How does partnership working in museums differ to other sectors and how might we generate Key Principles for Partnership Working at the BM that are rooted in the specifics and future ambitions of the organisation?
- How might confidence and routes to best practice be generated for the Museums and Galleries sector to support better partnership working through tried and tested guidance and a new body of evidence-based research?

Application procedure

Candidates should submit an online University of Leicester PhD application form, attaching a statement. The statement should outline the applicant's:

- Academic qualifications and/ or relevant professional experience and expertise (max 300 words)
- Motivation to pursue this Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (max 500 words)
- A provisional outline of a research topic within the thematic parameters given above. The outline should set out indicative aims and objectives, research questions, scholarly context, methods and sources (max 750 words)

Candidates must also arrange for two references to be submitted to the University of Leicester by the deadline, including at least one academic reference.

Please indicate source of funding as 'CDP (British Museum)'.

Research with the British Museum

This research studentship is one allocated to the University of Leicester by the AHRC to support the work of the British Museum. The successful student will be expected to spend time carrying out research and gaining relevant experience with the partner in London and at a number of partner locations in the UK as part of the studentship.

Details of Award

CDP doctoral training grants fund full-time studentships for 4 years or part-time equivalent up to a maximum of 7 years.

The award pays tuition fees up to the value of the full-time home UKRI rate for PhD degrees. Research Councils UK Indicative Fee Level for 2023/2024 is £4,786*. The University of Leicester will waive the difference between this fee and the overseas fee should an international candidate be successful.

The award pays full maintenance for all students both home and international students. This is £20,837 for 2024/25 (comprising of The UKRI National Minimum Doctoral Stipend for 2024/2025 is £19,237, *plus a CDP maintenance payment of £600/year and an allowance of £1000/year as the museum partner is based in London).

The student is eligible to receive an additional travel and related expenses grant during the course of the project courtesy of the British Museum worth up to £1500 per year for 4 years.

The successful candidate will be eligible to participate in events organised for all Collaborative Doctoral Partnership students who are registered with different universities and studying with cultural and heritage organisations across the UK.

Eligibility

- This studentship is open to both Home and International applicants.
- International students are eligible to receive the full award for maintenance as are home students.
- We encourage the widest range of potential students to study for this CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming students from different backgrounds to apply. We particularly welcome applications from minority ethnic backgrounds as they are currently underrepresented at this level in this area.
- Applicants must hold a UK undergraduate (Bachelors) degree with at least first class or upper second class honours or an equivalent qualification from a recognised overseas institution AND a first class or 2:1 equivalent at Masters degree and/or relevant work experience.
- Candidates should have a good awareness of key issues in museums and the wider cultural sector; however applications are welcome from students from a range of academic

backgrounds relevant to the research questions are at the heart of this studentship. This might include, for example, museum studies, community development, international development, health and social care, social work, management, organisation studies, public history, political science.

- Applicants should have some level of practical experience of partnership, participatory or collaborative work. This could be professional or voluntary experience in the museum and cultural sector or in the public and charitable sectors more broadly including, for example, public health, community development, social work.
- As a collaborative award, students will be expected to spend time at both the University and the British Museum.

NB. All applicants must meet UKRI terms and conditions for funding. See:

<https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

Project details and how to apply

For more information and how to apply see <https://le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/research-subjects/museum-studies>

Informal enquiries

To submit questions about the project and funding, contact: rcmg@le.ac.uk