

QUEEN'S AHRC DOCTORAL LANDSCAPE AWARDS

2025/2026

This guide may be updated throughout the year. Ensure that you are reading the most recent version by checking our website for any updates: see the lower left-hand corner of each page for the latest version number and date of issue.

HOW TO APPLY IN 5 STEPS

STEP 1. REVIEW & REFLECT

There will be a lot of competition for these awards. This does not mean you would not be a strong candidate and remember one of the aims of these awards is to widen participation in doctoral study across the arts and humanities. However, you should spend time thinking about whether this is the right funding for you and your project, and the right time for you to apply.

We recommend you review and then reflect on:

- **The basic eligibility requirements.** For example:
 - Is your proposed doctoral project within an [area funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council](#)? The list of AHRC-funded areas can be found in the annex at the end of this guidance.
 - Is most of the proposed research, i.e., the main focus of the research question, within the arts and humanities?
 - Would you be able to start your doctoral project in October 2026? It is not possible to defer these awards.
 - Would you be able to be resident in the UK, living within a reasonable distance of Queen's, for the duration of your studies?
 - Would you be able to commit to either full- or part-time study?
- **Your preparedness for doctoral study**, including how you would demonstrate this in your application.
- **Queen's University Belfast as the best place to support your doctoral project.** For example:
 - Is there an expert with relevant knowledge to supervise your project?

- How precisely is the wider research and training environment at Queen's suitable for your doctoral project?
- **Feasibility.** For example:
 - Is your doctoral project designed to be completed within 3.5 years full-time (or 7 years part-time at 20 hours per week) commencing from October 2026, while also leaving time for training activities during the study period?
 - Would your doctoral project require specific resources and facilities, such as fieldwork overseas or specialist equipment? Additional costs, for which no funding is guaranteed under these awards, may influence the assessors' view of the feasibility of the project. If you have such costs, you must outline them in your proposal and explain how they would be met.
- **The fit between the aims of the award and your profile and project.** These awards are designed to boost the strength and impact of doctoral research in the arts and humanities across the UK, and they aim to widen participation in doctoral study.

Will Queen's help me to make an informed choice about whether I should apply for this funding award?

Yes, Queen's will help you. Here's a list of where to go for different types of questions you might have.

For questions about Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards: the application process and what the awards offer

Join our online session on MS Teams on Tuesday 18 November 2025, 12.30-13.30 GMT. The link to register for the online session is on the main Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards page. This session will outline the awards. It will not cover more general issues such as other PhD funding awards for which you might be eligible, visas or English language requirements. A recording of the session will be available on the main awards page.

For questions about general eligibility requirements for PhD study at Queen's

Queen's online information about [Research Degrees](#) and [How to Apply](#) may be good starting points for information about issues such as visas and English language requirements. If you have a general question about PhD study at Queen's, you can contact: askAHSS@qub.ac.uk

For questions about this guidance

If you have a question concerning this guidance, you can contact: pgrstudentships@qub.ac.uk

For questions about being an AHRC-funded arts and humanities PhD student at Queen's

From the final week of November 2025, you will be able to get the views of current AHRC-funded PhD students at Queen's. These students have volunteered to support prospective applicants in different ways. More details about these 'application friends' will be available from the main Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards page from mid-November 2025.

STEP 2. CONTACT A POTENTIAL SUPERVISOR

Before applying for a Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape award, you must contact a potential supervisor via email. To find a potential supervisor, you can use [Find a PhD Supervisor](#).

Early career supervisors, and supervisors with less experience of PhD supervision, are welcome. Queen's expects the School where the supervisor is based to provide appropriate support for less-experienced supervisors.

Potential supervisors will be based in one of five Schools at Queen's:

- [School of Arts, English & Languages](#)
- [School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy & Politics](#)
- [School of Law](#)
- [School of Natural & Built Environment](#)
- [School of Social Sciences, Education & Social Work](#)

Each School has useful general information online, including profiles of individual academics, as well as guidance on what to include in your introductory email to a potential supervisor.

When emailing a potential supervisor, make sure to mention that you are interested in the Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards.

Unable to locate a potential supervisor using [Find a PhD Supervisor](#)? Unsure whether Queen's has experts in your AHRC subject area?

Look at the list below, decide which School is the best general fit for your proposed PhD, then decide which contact in the list from that School is the best general fit and email them. The people listed below will be able to direct you to the academics at Queen's who work in AHRC subject areas in which we have expertise.

School of Arts, English & Languages	English	Dr Justin Livingstone j.livingstone@qub.ac.uk
	Film, Broadcast, Drama & Arts Management	Prof Aoife McGrath aoife.mcgrath@qub.ac.uk
	Languages	Prof Gabriel Sanchez Espinosa g.sanchez@qub.ac.uk
	Music	Dr Miguel Ortiz m.ortiz@qub.ac.uk
	Translation & Interpreting	Dr Abdel-Wahab Khalifa a.khalifa@qub.ac.uk
School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy & Politics	History	Prof Marie Coleman m.coleman@qub.ac.uk
	Anthropology	Prof Maruska Svasek m.svasek@qub.ac.uk
	Politics	Prof Alfredo Saad Filho a.saadfilho@qub.ac.uk
	Philosophy	Dr Rebecca Bamford R.Bamford@qub.ac.uk
School of Law	Law & Legal Studies, including Criminology	Dr Alice Panepinto a.panepinto@qub.ac.uk
School of Social Sciences, Education & Social Work	Criminology	Dr Teresa Degenhardt t.degenhardt@qub.ac.uk
		Dr Julia Viebach j.viebach@qub.ac.uk
School of Natural & Built Environment	Archaeology	Dr Patrick Gleeson p.gleeson@qub.ac.uk
	Architecture History, Theory and Practice	Prof Tom Jefferies t.jefferies@qub.ac.uk
	Cultural Geography	Dr Oliver Dunnett o.dunnett@qub.ac.uk

STEP 3. BUILD YOUR APPLICATION

There are many steps in building a strong application. These include:

- Corresponding with your prospective supervisor
- Gathering evidence of previous and ongoing qualifications, as well as transcripts that show the subjects studied and marks awarded
- Obtaining English translations. All content of your application must be in English.
- Gathering evidence of professional or practitioner experience (as relevant), for example in the creative arts
- Deciding if your doctoral project will be interdisciplinary
- Deciding if your creative practice-based project meets the AHRC's requirements.

Creative output can be produced, or practice undertaken, as an integral part of a research process [that defines a series of research questions and specifies both a research context for these questions and an appropriate set of research methods to answer them]. The [AHRC] would expect, however, this practice to be accompanied by some form of documentation of the research process, as well as some form of textual analysis or explanation to support its position and as a record of your critical reflection. Equally, creativity or practice may involve no such process at all, in which case it would be ineligible for funding from the [AHRC]

Source: AHRC Research Funding Guide, Version 6.0 (2023) p 15

- Researching the wider training and research environment at Queen's
- Refining your application so that it is in clear, precise English and expresses your ideas in a way that is accessible to non-specialists
- Contacting individuals who might be suitable referees, sharing the guidance below with them, getting accurate and up-to-date contact details from them and ensuring they will be available from 13 January to 13 February 2026 when Queen's will request references.

You do not include references as part of your application. Instead, you will be asked to provide names and contact details for two referees, who will then be contacted by the university. To avoid conflict of interest, where possible, name referees who will not be part of your proposed supervisory team for the PhD. If you are returning to university education after a period of professional practice and you cannot provide academic referees, please ensure that your referees are able to comment on your preparedness for doctoral study.

To support the widening-participation aim of these awards, we request that you share the following guidance with your referees:

Our guidance for individuals writing references for applicants for Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards

- We all hold unconscious bias. This bias can affect how references are written, e.g., there is research showing that references for female and/or Black and Minority Ethnic applicants are shorter, more likely to invoke stereotypes and less attentive to achievements. One way to address unconscious bias is to review the adjectives and nouns you use in a reference.
- Provide a reference of 750 words max, focused on doctoral preparedness, which answers these questions:
 - How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?
 - What is your view of the applicant's preparedness for doctoral research, in terms of skills and experience, and the likelihood of timely completion of the doctoral project?
 - Use observations and specific examples or achievements rather than inference.
 - As appropriate, comment on how the applicant's professional or practice experience has prepared them for doctoral study.
 - As appropriate, comment on the applicant's predicted Master's result, including information on individual modules where relevant to the subject of the doctoral project.
- Are there contextual factors that are relevant to the applicant's performance and potential? Such factors might include, e.g., being the first in their family to go to university or being a carer. If the contextual factors could be seen as personal information, should you seek the applicant's consent before including them?

STEP 4. SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION BY TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2026

To submit your application, you must use the [Queen's Portal](#).

We welcome you to share information with us about the reasonable adjustments you may need during the application process. To do this, select the [Need Support](#) button on the Portal and follow the guidance there.

The Portal asks the same basic questions of PhD applicants across the university. If you are applying for a Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape award, there are two additional requirements with which you must comply during the Portal application process. It is your responsibility to ensure that all questions, including the additional requirements, are answered in full, and that any required supporting evidence is provided.

- **Additional requirement no. 1: When you reach the Funding page during your Queen's Portal application, you must select Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards**

Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards are one entry in a longer list of awards on the Portal's funding page. You must tick the box beside Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards. If you do not, your application may not be considered for these awards.

The Portal funding page says, 'Note that you will need to apply for funding separately'. This does not apply to the Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards. For these awards, you make a one-step application via the Queen's Portal, following the competition guidance given on this page.

- **Additional requirement no. 2: When you reach the Documents page during your Queen's Portal application, you must upload ONE document with the three parts outlined below (proposal; CV; environment statement). If you do not, we may not be able to consider your application for an award.**

❖ **Part 1 of the document you upload: A research proposal**

Before commencing the text of your research proposal, answer two short questions:

- (1) the primary AHRC subject area under which your proposed PhD would fall;
- (2) the name of the prospective supervisor with whom you have been in contact.

The research proposal must:

- Be 1,500 words maximum, including any footnotes or endnotes but excluding any bibliography. Applicants with a doctoral project in a creative practice area are

permitted to include a URL: see below. All other applications must be self-contained: assessors will not review URLs or material accessible via a link.

- Use minimum 12-point font
- Be accessible to a reader who may not be a subject specialist
- Indicate if your proposed doctoral project is interdisciplinary, its primary AHRC subject area, what further subject area(s) are involved, and how the proposed methodology is interdisciplinary. The text box below has further details about interdisciplinary applications.
- Include a URL to a portfolio of outputs if your proposed doctoral project is in a creative practice-based area. The aims of the portfolio are to demonstrate how your creative work is an appropriate methodology for addressing the research questions in your doctoral project, as well as your preparedness for doctoral study.
- Use four headings, in the following order:
 - Question(s). Define the questions, issues or problems that will be addressed during the doctoral project. Also, define the aims and objectives in terms of enhancing knowledge and understanding relating to the questions, issues or problems to be addressed.
 - Context. Specify a research context for the questions, issues or problems to be addressed. This includes explaining why it is important that these questions, issues or problems are addressed, what other research is being or has been conducted in this area; and what contribution your doctoral project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in this area.
 - Methods. Specify the research methods for addressing and answering the questions, issues or problems. Explain how, over the course of the doctoral project, you will seek to answer the questions, address the issues or solve the problems. Also explain the rationale for your chosen research methods and why you think they provide the most appropriate means by which to address the questions, issues or problems.
 - Feasibility. Explain why the doctoral project can be completed in the funded period, highlighting any potential difficulties that might arise and how you would deal with these. Outline and justify any costs necessary for the research (e.g., fieldwork, special training or specialist equipment) and explain how these would be funded (given that such funding is not guaranteed by Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards).

Information for interdisciplinary applicants

Applications for interdisciplinary doctoral projects are welcome.

For the purposes of these awards, interdisciplinary research is the integration of distinct methodological approaches from two or more distinct subject areas, generating outcomes that could not be achieved from within one subject area.

This means that two types of interdisciplinary doctoral projects are eligible:

- Projects that engage with two or more AHRC subject areas;
- Projects that engage both with one or more AHRC subject areas and with a STEM or social sciences subject area. In this case, you must make it clear that your project falls predominantly within the AHRC subject area(s).

❖ **Part 2 of the document you upload: A CV**

The CV should:

- Be 2 pages maximum (unless using widening participation option below)
- Use minimum 12-point font
- Where relevant to the proposed doctoral project and your preparedness for doctoral study, it can include professional practice, exhibitions, shows, work in galleries, awards, commissions, residencies, publications, internships, volunteering, placements and paid employment
- Be clear and accessible and allow the reader to see the timeline of your achievements. In line with this, you can adopt the style that is most appropriate, e.g., narrative, conventional or hybrid CV.
- The Portal application process requires you to enter basic information about previous educational qualifications, employment and professional experience. The CV is an opportunity to put this basic information in a wider context.

Option to add 500 words relevant to widening participation

In line with the widening participation aim of these awards, you have the option to add an extra 500 words to provide context for the rest of the CV. This is background information that you may wish to be considered during the assessment process. For example, you might outline how factors such as sex, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation

or socio-economic background, or the intersection of two or more of these, have impacted your achievements to date.

This optional additional material will be seen by the assessors. Focus on how the context affected your achievements to date, rather than describing sensitive material.

Do not use this optional additional section for any other purpose. If you do, the material will not be assessed.

❖ **Part 3 of the document you upload: A statement on the research and training environment at Queen's**

The statement should:

- Be 2 pages maximum
- Use minimum 12-point font
- Explain why Queen's is the best place to complete your proposed doctoral project.
This explanation may include the strength of the subject area at Queen's and the expertise of your proposed supervisor(s), including their ability to develop your skills.

STEP 5. AFTER THE APPLICATION DEADLINE

We are unable to accept late applications for the Queen's AHRC doctoral landscape awards.

Eligible applications will be assessed in two stages. At the first stage, they will be assessed within subject areas. The top-ranked applications will progress to the second and final stage, at which the assessors will span several AHRC subject areas.

At each stage, the assessors will rank applications in light of the aims of the awards and using three criteria: (1) preparedness; (2) proposal; and (2) environment.

We anticipate that offers will be sent in March 2026. You will have two weeks to consider and then formally accept the offer. A reserve list will operate.

ANNEX: Taken from AHRC Research Funding Guide Version 7.2 (May 2025)

AHRC Disciplines

For a proposal to be eligible for consideration by the AHRC, the choice of Primary Research Area must come from the list below.

HISTORIES, CULTURES AND HERITAGE

Level 1 - Archaeology

Level 2

- Prehistoric Archaeology
- Archaeology of Literate Societies
- Archaeology of Human Origins
- Archaeological Theory
- Maritime Archaeology
- Landscape and Environmental Archaeology
- Industrial Archaeology

Level 1 – Classics

Level 2

- Classical Literature
- Classical Reception
- Philosophy, Thought and Religion
- Epigraphy and Papyrology

Level 1 – Cultural and Museum Studies

Level 2

- Gender and Sexuality Studies
- Museum and Gallery Studies
- Cultural Studies and Pop Culture
- Policy, Arts Management and Creative Industries
- Cultural Geography
- Heritage Management
- Conservation of Art and Textiles

Level 1 – Development Studies

Level 2

- Development Studies

Level 1 – History

Level 2

- Cultural History
- Political History
- Imperial/Colonial History
- History of Science/Medicine/Technology
- War Studies
- Religious History
- Economic and Social History

- American Studies
- Post-Colonial Studies

Level 1 – Human Geography

Level 2

- Historical Geography

Level 1 – Information and Communication Technologies

Level 2

- Information and Knowledge Management

Level 1 – Law and Legal Studies

Level 2

- Jurisprudence/Philosophy of Law
- Human Rights
- Criminal Law and Criminology
- International Law
- EU Law
- Public Law
- Comparative Law
- Common Law, including Commercial Law
- Law Regulated by Statute
- Law Relating to Property
- Legal History

Level 1 – Library and Information Studies

Level 2

- Archives
- Records Management
- Information Science and Retrieval
- Library Studies
- Information and Knowledge Management
- Computational Studies

Level 1 – Philosophy

Level 2

- Political Philosophy
- Philosophy of Mind
- Aesthetics
- Metaphysics
- History of Ideas
- Language and Philosophical Logic
- Epistemology
- Ethics
- History of Philosophy
- Philosophy of Science and Mathematics and Mathematical Logic
- Philosophy of Religion

Level 1 – Political Science and International Studies

Level 2

- Diplomacy and International Relations

Level 1 – Theology, Divinity and Religion

Level 2

- Old Testament
- Modern Theology
- Judaism
- Islam
- Liturgy
- Systematic Theology
- Church History and History of Theology
- New Testament
- East Asian Religions
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Jainism
- Sikhism
- Alternative Spiritualities/New Religious Movements
- Atheism/Secularism
- Inter-faith Relations
- Contemporary Religion

CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS**Level 1 – Dance****Level 2**

- History of Dance
- Dance Performance
- Dance Notation
- Social Dance
- Choreography

Level 1 – Design**Level 2**

- Architecture History, Theory and Practice
- Design History, Theory and Practice
- Digital Art and Design
- Product Design

Level 1 – Drama and Theatre Studies**Level 2**

- Theatre and Society
- Dramaturgy
- Scenography
- Performance and Live Art
- Theatre and History
- Theories of Theatre
- Drama and Theatre - Other

Level 1 – Media**Level 2**

- Media and Communication Studies
- Journalism
- Publishing

- Television History, Theory and Criticism
- New Media/Web-Based Studies
- Film History, Theory and Criticism

Level 1 – Music

Level 2

- Traditional Music
- History of Music
- Music and Society
- Popular Music
- Composition
- Classical Music
- Musical Performance
- Musicology

Level 1 – Visual Arts

Level 2

- Fine Art History, Theory and Practice
- Photography History, Theory and Practice
- Art Theory and Aesthetics
- Community Art including Art and Health
- Installation and Sound Art History, Theory and Practice
- Ethnography and Anthropology
- Digital Arts History, Theory and Practice
- Applied Arts History, Theory and Practice
- Art History
- Design History, Theory and Practice
- Film-based media (History, Theory and Practice)
- Time-based media History, Theory and Practice

LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

Level 1 – Languages and Literature

Level 2

- American Studies
- Interpreting and Translation
- Life writing
- History and Development of the English Language
- Literary and Cultural Theory
- Post-Colonial Studies
- Scandinavian Studies
- Asiatic and Oriental Studies
- Middle Eastern and African
- Italian Studies
- Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin Studies
- English Language and Literature
- Creative Writing
- Comparative Literature

- French Studies
- Celtic Studies
- Medieval Literature
- Ethnography and Anthropology
- Australasian Studies
- Comparative Studies
- German, including Dutch and Yiddish
- Russian, Slavonic and East European Languages and Literature
- Gender and Sexuality

Level 1 – Linguistics

Level 2

- Textual Editing and Bibliography
- Syntax
- Semantics and Pragmatics
- Phonetics
- Language Variation and Change
- Lexicon
- Linguistic Theory
- Morphology and Phonology
- Applied Linguistics
- Linguistics (General)

Subjects where the AHRC and the ESRC share interests and responsibilities

The following is a list of some of the main areas of study where the AHRC and the ESRC share interests.

Area studies

AHRC supports research that is concerned with the culture, history, language and religion of specific regions. ESRC supports research that is concerned with the society, economy, politics and human geography of specific regions.

Communications, cultural and media studies

AHRC supports research that seeks to understand communications, culture and media through the study of phenomena such as the visual arts, film and television, history, language, literature and performance. ESRC supports research that approaches communications, culture and media through the study of sociology, social theory, social anthropology, politics and economics. Note that there is also an important interface between AHRC, ESRC and EPSRC in this area where proposed research projects include a significant engagement with, or advancement of, communication technologies. In the case of relevant research applications, the AHRC and/or ESRC will liaise with EPSRC when consulting reviewers and making funding decisions.

Cultural policy and management

AHRC supports historical, comparative and empirical research that addresses questions of human value in creativity and culture, including both the individual and collective experience of creativity and culture. AHRC also supports research in museum studies. ESRC supports research into the psychological processes involved in creativity and the social and economic

influences on and consequent impacts of creativity and culture, and public policy and management in this area.

Education

ESRC is the primary funding body for educational research across all subjects, including the arts and humanities. AHRC supports research where the imperative for the research questions resides in the arts and humanities, but there may be an educational element. Examples include research into the history of education, children's literature, creative art and performance in (but not for) educational environments, religious teaching and scholarship, and the role of education in librarianship and museums practice.

Gender studies

AHRC supports research that is concerned with sex and gender as they relate to the creative and performing arts, language, law, literature, religion and history of all periods. ESRC supports research that is concerned with sex and gender as they relate to society, the economy and politics.

Human geography

ESRC is the primary funding body for human geography. However, AHRC supports research in cultural geography, which includes research into the interpretation of the cultural landscape; cultural constructions of nature and environment; creative and imaginative aspects of geographical thought and practice; relationships between space, place and cultural identity. AHRC also supports research in historical geography, which includes geographical change over time, connecting the local to the global; histories of geography and cartography; and the study of past geographies and their legacies.

History

AHRC supports historical research covering all periods of history from ancient times to modern, and in all parts of the world. Applicants whose research focuses primarily on the very recent past will need to show in their proposal how and why their focus is indeed predominantly historical, for example how the study will focus on change over a defined period of time or will make predominant use of historical modes of analysis.

ESRC supports historical research across all periods that seeks to understand the development of social and economic arrangements over time and applies social and economic theories. Research focusing on contemporary or near-contemporary social, political, economic or geographical themes should normally be directed to the ESRC.

International relations

ESRC is the primary funding body for international relations, but AHRC supports research that is concerned with the relationship between international relations and the culture, history, language and religion of specific countries and regions.

Librarianship and information science

AHRC supports research into the practice and techniques of information and knowledge management as they relate to librarianship, archives and records management, information science and information systems, storage and retrieval, and professional practice in journalism and the media. AHRC also supports research into information use and users in specific organisational environments. ESRC supports research into the broader socio-economic context of information use and policy, information flows within and between organisations, and

the shaping, use and potential of information and communication technologies. The ESRC also supports research on knowledge management and on forms and structures of knowledge, as they relate to the wider socio-economic context. Note that there is also an important interface between AHRC, ESRC and EPSRC in this area where proposed research projects include a significant engagement with, or advancement of, technologies dealing with information management. In the case of relevant research applications, AHRC and/or ESRC will liaise with EPSRC when consulting reviewers and making funding decisions.

Linguistics

AHRC supports research into the structure, history, theory and description of language and languages. This includes the development and exploration of theories of language, the elucidation of the historical development of languages and the production of descriptions of languages or features of languages. ESRC supports research in areas of computational linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and interdisciplinary social science research involving linguistics. Both Councils also fund research into phonetics and applied linguistics relating to the areas for which they are responsible.

Law

AHRC supports research into the content, procedures, theory, philosophy and history of the law. This includes studies of legal systems and legislation in all periods of history and in all parts of the world. ESRC supports socio-legal studies, which are concerned with the social, political and economic influences on and impact of the law and the legal system.

Philosophy

AHRC supports research in philosophy, covering all topics, methods and periods. This includes research into ethical theory and applied ethics, for example bio-ethics, professional ethics and environmental ethics. ESRC supports research into the social political and economic influences on and effects of ethical positions of institutions and individuals.

Religious Studies

AHRC supports research into religions and belief systems of all kinds, in all periods of history and in all parts of the world. This includes research into the ethics of religions and belief systems, and their application in socio-economic, scientific and technological contexts. ESRC supports research that is concerned with the social and economic influences on and the impacts of religious beliefs and groups.