



AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentship with National Museums NI

Rewind, Play and Fast Forward: Tracing the evolution of Irish-English from sound archive to web

Queen's University Belfast (School of Arts, English and Languages) in partnership with National Museums NI, invites applications from suitably qualified applicants for a [Collaborative Doctoral Partnership \(CDP\)](#) studentship, fully funded (fees and living allowance) by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, to conduct research leading to a PhD on the theme: *Rewind, Play and Fast Forward: Tracing the evolution of Irish-English from sound archive to web*.

Start date: 1 October 2026

Application Deadline: 20 April 2026 at 5pm

Applications received after this date cannot be considered. Candidates will be notified of the outcome of their application by the end of day on the 1 May 2026.

Interviews will take place on **12 May 2026**. All interviews will be **online**.

This project will be jointly supervised by lead supervisors Prof Joan Rahilly (Queen's University Belfast) and Dr Dónal McAnallen (Library and Archives Manager, National Museums NI); and second supervisors Prof Karen Corrigan (Newcastle University) and Kerry Sinnerton (Digital Media Manager, National Museums NI). The student will be expected to spend time at Queen's University Belfast, National Museums NI HQ (Northern Ireland) and Newcastle University, as well as being part of a wider cohort of CDP-funded students across the UK.

The studentship is available for full time (4 years) or part time (8 years) study.

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

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

Language embodies national and personal identity, but it also plays a key role in the expression of local cultures, community affiliation and living heritage. However, language is in a constant state of flux, propelled by incremental changes adopted by individuals during their lifetimes and induced by various factors including attitude, education and migration. These changes (and their impact both on the preservation of older linguistic forms and the continuity of intangible cultural heritage) are underexplored in an Irish context. This CDP – a collaboration between National Museums NI (NMNI), Queen's University Belfast and Newcastle University – aims to address this knowledge gap by undertaking the first ever longitudinal study of Irish-English. Key objectives are to trace how dialects evolve from childhood and to explore not only what they reveal regarding the forces driving lifespan changes but also what the consequences may be for preserving intangible cultural heritage between generations. At the heart of this CDP lies one of NMNI's most significant all-island collections, the 'Tape-Recorded Survey of Hiberno-English Speech' (TRSHES). It was initiated in the 1970s at the height of the so-called 'Troubles' era. The conflict had widely different impacts north and south of the Irish national border and its effects persist today. The TRSHES had a highly innovative methodology (particularly the adoption of analogue tape-recording and the collection of data from three age groups living in communities all over Ireland). The CDP will locate and re-record a sub-sample of the original survey respondents who were recorded as children (aged 9-12). The goal is to create an unprecedented record of how individual linguistic repertoires developed and adapted across decades of societal change. Naturally, a key benefit will be the enhancing of scientific knowledge about how language evolution operates, but the CDP also has a wide range of other applications. In particular, the project's capacity to observe and preserve the dynamics and living heritage of Irish-English over time allows the collaborators to develop best practices in transforming static sound archives into dynamic, growing web-based resources that connect past and present voices across generations in museum and heritage contexts.

The key research questions of the project are as follows:

1. How do features of Irish-English develop and change as speakers move from childhood into adulthood, and which linguistic variables remain stable or shift most over the lifespan?
2. In what ways have major societal changes – north and south of the Irish border – shaped the linguistic trajectories of individuals first recorded in the 1970s?
3. How do patterns of linguistic change relate to identity, community belonging, and the transmission of intangible cultural heritage across generations?
4. How can the TRSHES sound archive be transformed into a dynamic digital heritage resource, and what ethical and technical challenges arise in reconnecting historical voices with newly recorded data?
5. What broader insights into mechanisms of language variation and change can be drawn from this unprecedented longitudinal study of Irish-English?

Application procedure

Candidates should submit an online Queen's University Belfast PhD application here:

<https://myportal.qub.ac.uk/SignIn?ReturnUrl=%2Fpg-admission-application-list%2F>

You should include the project title in the section of the application form relating to funding.

Your application should consist of:

- A research proposal: write around 1000 words outlining - from an academic perspective - the independent research that you anticipate undertaking in relation to this project. Avoid repeating the formal project description but rather identify and extrapolate those aspects that you find particularly interesting.
- A statement of purpose: write up to 750 words explaining how your academic and/or professional experience has prepared you to fulfil the terms of this project (250 words) and your personal and/or academic motivation for pursuing this Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (500 words)
- A current academic/professional CV
- Two references, which should normally be from academics (or other professionals) who are familiar with your recent work in relevant fields. Please ensure that you submit your references with your application.
- Your degree certificates and university transcripts
- IELTS scores (International English Language Testing System), if applicable

Research with National Museums NI

This research studentship is one allocated to Queen's University Belfast by the AHRC to support the work of National Museums NI. Given the site-specific nature of the PhD, the successful student will be expected to spend a significant proportion of their time carrying out research and gaining relevant experience at National Museums NI 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 8 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 2026-27 is £5,238.**

The award pays full maintenance for all students both home and international. The UKRI National Minimum **Doctoral Stipend for 2026-27 is £21,805**, plus a CDP maintenance payment of £600/year.

The student is eligible to receive an additional travel and related expenses grant during the course of the project courtesy of National Museums NI worth up to £2,000 per year for 4 years (pro-rated for part-time students).

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.
- To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:
 - Be a UK or Irish National (meeting residency requirements), or
 - Have settled status, or
 - Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
 - Have indefinite leave to remain or enter

Further guidance can be found [here](#) based on revisions to Training Grant Terms and Conditions for projects starting in October 2026

- International students are eligible to receive the full award for maintenance as are home students. To increase access to international candidates, Queen's, University Belfast has agreed to waive the difference between the UK fee and the international fees for this project.
- We encourage the widest range of potential students to study for this CDP studentship. We encourage applicants from all backgrounds to apply, even if you are not certain that you meet every criterion. We are keen to hear from individuals with varied expertise who can bring unique perspectives to the studentships. Experiences beyond academia, including other experience in a professional setting are also highly valued, this includes diverse lived experiences and those with an understanding of diverse research practices, outputs, impacts and engagement practice.
- We welcome applicants from a wide range of disciplines, including but not limited to: sociolinguistics, phonetics, dialectology, English historical linguistics, Irish studies, social anthropology, heritage studies, museum studies, digital humanities, archival studies, media and communication, human geography, sociology, and fields involving audio analysis and/or digital cultural heritage. It is expected that the successful applicant will be able to clearly explain the relevance of their existing

training/experience/skills with regard to the topic of this CDP, and to indicate how their present research interests relate to the proposed project.

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the [GLAM sector](#) and potential and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in related areas.
- As a collaborative award, students will be expected to spend time at both the Queen's University Belfast and National Museums NI as well as Newcastle University.

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/>

We ask all applicants to complete a voluntary EDI monitoring form [here](#). All responses are anonymous.

All CDP projects are part of a nationwide programme called the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership consortium. The CDP consortium will host an online webinar for prospective applicants on 13 April 2026 at 11:00. These webinars will provide an overview of the CDP funding scheme. To sign up for a webinar, please email cdp@vam.ac.uk with the subject line "Prospective Applicant Webinar" from the email address you would like to join the online meeting from. Sign up will close on 10 April 2026 at 17:00.

Please note, the webinars will not focus on individual projects.

Further information

If you have questions about the project funding and practicalities, please contact cdp@nationalmuseumsni.org

If you would like to ask any questions in relation to your research proposal or statement of purpose, please email the main supervisory team jointly:

- Professor Joan Rahilly – j.rahilly@qub.ac.uk
- Dr Dónal McAnallen – donal.mcanallen@nationalmuseumsni.org