

Applicant Workshop 2024 Studentship Competition

Autumn 2023



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

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NORTHERN BR—DGE
CONSORTIUM DOCTORAL
TRAINING
PARTNERSHIP

This session is
being recorded
and will be
available on NBC
website

Please ask questions using
the Zoom **Chat** facility.
Recording will stop when
participants join to ask
questions later.

New questions will be
added to webpage of
FAQS.

Programme for today

- Introductions and key contacts
- What is the Northern Bridge Consortium?
 - Vision and strategy
 - Doctoral Training
 - Funded Placement Opportunities
- Competition Overview and timeline
- Subjects covered and eligibility
- Types of NBC studentship award
- The application process
- Maximising your chances of success
- Your priorities from now to January

**The overall
Director of
NBC is based
in Newcastle
University.**

**Each
University
has an NBC
Director and
administrator**

*(These details are
online)*

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What is the Northern Bridge Consortium?

Northern Bridge Consortium (NBC) is a **Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)** funded by the UK **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** to administer Doctoral (PhD) studentship funding via an annual competition.

The NBC partnership is between **all** the universities in the North East of England and Northern Ireland, that is: Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Queen's, Ulster, Sunderland & Teesside Universities.

NBC can fund PGR research in all the AHRC's disciplinary areas except Scandinavian and Australasian Studies. The subjects in each university vary

As well as administering the studentship funding, we run a world-class training programme for our students.

A large orange circular graphic on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

What is the Northern Bridge Consortium?

Vision & Strategy

NBC was competitively funded to run a DTP based on a vision of:

Collaboration

World class research support

Working outside the academy with partners

Employability and the future

Regional development

What is a NBC PhD studentship?

- If successful, you will receive fees & a stipend for 3.5 years (up to 7 years part time). The stipend in 2023/2024 is £18,622 (reviewed annually by AHRC)
- Your supervision will be led by the University you applied to. You will undertake their doctoral training and all the normal PhD cohort activities there, including support and monitoring of your progress, examination and award of PhD.
- As an NBC researcher, you will **additionally** belong to an NBC cohort and have access to NBC funding streams, including for training, annual conference, research activity and placements.
- You may apply to extend your period of NBC funding (though not the candidature of your PhD) by between 21 days and six months (FTE) to undertake a placement.
- You may apply for additional research Training Support Grants for research activities and expenses (Large and Small grants) .
- You may be a doctoral researcher **full or part time-** (part time researchers cannot be in full time employment).

If successful, you will start your PhD in **October 2024**.

The 2024 cohort are expected to complete their PhD within 4 years, **October 2028** (or part time equivalent) even if you availed of 6 month placement.

NBC Doctoral Training

Induction Conference | Annual Summer School | Arts and Humanities Focused Training

As a Doctoral Training Partnership, NBC offers much more than funding of your fees and stipend.

NBC hosts an innovative training programme, with a mix of mandatory events and bespoke optional training.

We aim to support your training in skills suitable for academic and non-academic careers.

We regularly issue calls for training ideas and events from both our students, our colleagues and are alert to sector training needs for your future career.

If you have identified training needs specific to you and your proposal, that should be mentioned in your application- see '*maximising your chances of success*' below.

NBC Placements

As an NBC research student, you will have the opportunity to undertake a placement or placements (totalling a minimum of 21 working days; up to six months FTE).

Placement(s) will support your skills development and training, develop you personally or professionally, widen your experience, and support both your academic and non-academic future career.

Placement is not extra time researching or writing your PhD thesis.

Placement can be in a relevant sector such as a Museums or arts organisation, or a different experience such as policy, broadcasting, event organisation, marketing.

Approved placements are fully funded by NBC.

You or your supervisors can mention relevant placement ideas in your application; it must be feasible, you do not need to have secured commitment at this application stage, nor does mentioning it form a contract for additional funding.

2024 NBC Competition overview

- The 2024 competition is now open for applications.
- NBC will be awarding up to **67 studentships** per annum:
 - **52 standard** studentships
 - **13 collaborative doctoral studentships** (*Staff-led + Student-led*)
 - **2 Equality Action Award Studentships**
- If successful, you will receive 3.5 years of full-time fees & stipend (up to 7 years part time).
- You will have access to additional funding streams, including for training, research activity and placements.
- You may apply to extend your period of funding (though not the candidature of your PhD) by between 21 days and six months (FTE) to undertake a placement.
- If successful, you will start your PhD in October 2024.
- You are expected to complete within 4 years, that is in autumn 2028, (or part time equivalent) even if you undertake 6 months of placement.

2024 NBC Competition Timeline

9 October 2023 Competition opened

Tuesday 14 November 2023 Staff-led Collaborative Doctoral Awards will be advertised on the NBC webpages

9 January 2024 applicants for Standard and Student-led CDA awards must have applied for a PhD place at their chosen NBC University, using that University's PHD application process.

You can apply **once** in any year, to **one** NBC university.

Internal sifts take place to confirm eligibility and decide which applicants will be nominated by the university. Applicants develop the nomination form with advice from supervisors.

20 February 2024 (by 4pm) Your nomination form is submitted to NBC by the NBC administrator at your chosen University. There may be a slightly earlier deadline to submit nomination to that administrator

15 March 2024 subject panels will have scored nomination forms

25-26 March 2024 Moderation process and Studentship Committee

From **28 March 2024** (subject to individual institutional processes)

Results announced

Subjects in
which
Northern
Bridge offers
studentships
*Panel A =
Histories,
Cultures, and
Heritage*

- Archaeology
- Classics
- Criminal Law and Criminology
- Cultural and Museum Studies
- Cultural Geography
- Development Studies
- History
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Law and Legal Studies
- Library and Information Studies
- Philosophy
- Policy, Arts Management and Creative Industries
- Political Science and International Studies
- Theology, Divinity and Religion

Subjects in
which
Northern
Bridge offers
studentships
(contd.)
*Panel B =
Creative and
Performing Arts*

- Applied Arts: History, Theory and Practice
- Architecture History, Theory and Practice
- Design
- Digital Arts: History, Theory and Practice
- Drama and Theatre Studies
- Film-based Media: History, Theory and Practice
- Fine Art: History, Theory and Practice
- Media and Communication Studies
- Music
- Photography: History, Theory and Practice

Subjects in
which
Northern
Bridge offers
studentships
(contd.)
*Panel C =
Languages and
Literatures*


- Asiatic and Oriental Studies
- Celtic Studies
- Creative Writing
- English Language and Literature
- Ethnography and Anthropology
- French Studies
- German Studies (including Dutch and Yiddish)
- Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin American Studies
- Interpreting and Translation
- Italian Studies
- Linguistics
- Russian, Slavonic and East European Languages and Culture

Eligibility (from the AHRC's Training Grant Funding Guide, Version 3.0, January 2020)

- 'Academic eligibility: Those applying for a doctoral studentship should normally have, or be studying for, a Master's degree or similar postgraduate qualification. They should have met all the course requirements prior to the start date of their AHRC doctoral studentship.'
- 'If a student does not have experience of formal postgraduate study, they may be eligible for a studentship only if they can demonstrate evidence of sustained experience beyond their undergraduate degree level that is specifically relevant to their proposed research topic, and could be considered equivalent to Master's study. The RO must have evidence as to how the training and development the student has received is equivalent to that obtained through a Master's course and, therefore, prepares them to continue to doctoral study.'

Eligibility
(from the
AHRC's Training
Grant Funding
Guide, Version
3.0, January
2020)

- 'Every student, their subject, course of study, and the RO at which they are studying must meet the eligibility criteria set out in the *UKRI Terms and Conditions of Training Grants* and *UKRI Training Grant Guide*, along with any scheme-specific guidance. Information on the AHRC's subject domain can be found in the *AHRC's Research Funding Guide*.'



Different types of NBC award have been mentioned...

Read the guidance on NBC webpages

- **Standard Award** – you, the researcher, with advice from potential supervisors, develop a proposal.
- **Equality Action Awards**
- **Student-led Collaborative Doctoral Awards**
- **Staff-led Collaborative Doctoral Awards** will be advertised from 14th November and recruit a researcher to undertake that project.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Northern Bridge is an inclusive community, where everybody – staff and students – are treated with dignity and respect.
- This is part of our vision of how research excellence comes about.
- We aim to ensure that no-one is at a disadvantage – whether at application stage or as part of our cohort – because of who they are, and we undertake Positive Action to support this aim.
- We welcome all applicants irrespective of your gender, socio-economic background or ethnicity.
- We explicitly encourage assessment panels to recognise this in their assessment of a candidate's preparedness for doctoral study.
- As part of our annual competition, we include a critical friend in the form of an EDI champion, who reviews our competition process, paperwork and outcomes to help us be as inclusive as we can be.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Examples

Northern Bridge Consortium is committed to tackling inequality, promoting diversity and fostering inclusion within postgraduate research

- EDI Action Plan (endorsed by the AHRC)
- EDI Together – co-created working group consisting of students from across the Consortium and Academic Director (an outcome of the above)

Examples of actions

- Revisions to guidance provided to Referees and introduction of a Reference template
- Enhancements to EDI monitoring processes – data on low-income background / household to be captured from 2022-23 onwards
- Launch of Equality Action Award Studentships 23 Competition
- NBC awards up to 2 studentships per annum.

Collaborative Doctoral Awards

Student-led Collaborative Doctoral Awards CDA is an award in which:

- You identify a non-university organisation and your proposal is developed in close collaboration between you, them and your academic supervisors; You proposed research should be relevant to their work, resources and sector needs
- It is essential that conversations between you, the non-university organisation and the university supervisors begin as soon as possible.

Staff-led Collaborative Doctoral Awards are similar but are developed by supervisors a researcher is then recruited to undertake that project.

For all CDAs

Supervision and training are provided by both a university and the non-university organisation.

There is no charge to the non-university organisation; they provide access, training, supervision and benefit from defined outcomes as a result of your doctoral research.

You should normally anticipate spending a substantial portion of your of doctoral study period at the non-university organisation – it must be accessible within available resources. There is an annual allowance in recognition of this – currently £600.

What makes a strong CDA application?

Generally speaking:

- An application/project that has clearly been developed with the partner and its theme at its heart (i.e. not an afterthought! Make it clear that you could not do the project without this partner).
- That this is expressed very clearly in defined outcomes (try to avoid vague, sweeping statements); e.g. an exhibition, a digital database – whatever it might be.
- That these outcomes articulate benefits to you, and to the partner.
- Think about the whole course of the life of the PhD – what are your priorities e.g. in training, skills, your career after the PhD? Build this in as much as possible.
- It is worth going back to the key objectives of Northern Bridge too ...



What we are looking for

- An excellent academic track record: a first or high upper second first degree, and performance at or around distinction level in a master's qualification.
- For those who have been out of academia for a period and may not have a formal master's qualification, evidence that equivalent knowledge and research skills have been acquired through professional practice.
- An excellent research proposal that addresses 'clearly-articulated research questions, issues or problems, set in a clear context of other research in that area, and using appropriate research methods and/or approaches' (AHRC research funding guide);
- A research proposal articulated in terms that are accessible to non-specialists;
- A comprehensive assessment of the training needs;
- An absolutely professional approach to all aspects of the completion and presentation of the application.

The Application Process

STAGE 1 APPLICATION to an NBC University

Apply to ONE of the seven Northern Bridge Consortium universities using that University's PhD application system (online).

Guidance on how to apply is available at:

www.northernbridge.ac.uk/apply

The following paperwork should be attached to your application:

- (i) Current CV (2 sides of A4 maximum);
- (ii) Research proposal -read the NBC guidance. The University may also have guidance on how they want things like bibliography handled.
- (iii) Contact details of two referees;
- (iv) Transcripts of your previous qualifications.

The Application Process (ctd)

Stage 2 **NOMINATION**

- The University you apply to will check eligibility and suitability of your application.
- If your application is eligible and deemed to be sufficiently strong, you will be informed that you will be nominated by that university for consideration by the Northern Bridge Consortium.
- You will complete an NBC Nomination Form.
- Section A of the nomination is completed by you, the applicant; it includes your academic track record, research proposal and, if relevant, evidence of practice.
- Section B is completed by the supervisory team and Subject Area Contactor research leaders; They complete sections on the supervisors, your anticipated training & development needs, and the research environment that will support you and your doctoral research activity.
- You must have some availability (remotely or face-to-face) to develop a strong nomination form with your chosen university from mid -January to mid February.

Interdisciplinary Applications

We recognize the important role of interdisciplinarity in arts and humanities research. NBC strongly welcomes interdisciplinary applications.

•Applications to NBC must be mainly based in the arts and humanities (see AHRC list of disciplines). Proposals may be interdisciplinary within AHRC subjects or with other non-AHRC discipline(s) in a minority role.

We advise applicants to be careful in scoping a proposal across multiple disciplines— in most cases focusing on two disciplines formally is sufficiently complex, although others can be brought out in the project proposal.

•The interdisciplinarity should be evident in the supervisory team, whose experience represents & bridges disciplines.

We expect to see the interdisciplinarity of any project expressed in the methodologies as well as the research description or questions.

Creative Practice applications

- In the context of Doctoral training creative Practice is research-focused.
- Your proposal will explore intellectual and research questions that your creative practice-
 - Can illuminate
 - And /or*
 - Enable insights and advancement
 - And /or*
 - Contribute to new technical knowledge
- Your proposal will be underpinned by existing bodies of research and critical work, referenced in the application.
- Methodologies are important too: think about how your creative practice will help you explore your research questions and advance insights.

Maximising your chances of success

- Familiarise yourself with the NBC application procedure (reading everything including the marking scheme and assessment criteria).
- Speak to Subject Area Contacts and contact the NBC administrator in your chosen University about your intention to apply as soon as possible.
- Maintain contact throughout with prospective supervisors;
- Applicants should sketch out the research proposal early to allow time for refinement and revision.
- Do you have any placements in mind? *
- Discuss your training needs with your prospective supervisors: “what will I need be able to do in order to complete my project? Do I need any specialist or technical skills? Do I need language training? How will I meet these training needs?” Prospective supervisors or subject area contact will complete this portion of the nomination form, but it is important to have discussed training so that they can complete it fully and effectively.*

**inclusion of feasible training and placement is evidence of thinking through your doctoral experience. An indication of costs and providers is helpful, if known. You do not need formal commitments at the application stage and mentioning it does not form a contract for financial support.*

Reminder: Northern Bridge Consortium objectives

- Prepare award-holders to undertake **world-leading research**;
- Enhance award-holders **skills and employability**;
- Address recognized **national skills shortages**;
- Enable NBC students to contribute to our Consortium's identity and direction;
- Prepare award-holders to be a **future leader**;
- **Raise the profile** of Arts & Humanities research within our universities and outside them (in our cities, regions, the UK and internationally)

In your application:

- **Communicate how you, your project, specific training or placement ideas will do these things.**
- **Do you have a track record/experience – however small – that will support your case?**

Your Priorities from now to January

Work with your **proposed academic supervisors** to shape:

- the methodology
- the research context
- identify any training you might benefit from to complete the project

If you are applying for CDA:

- Look at current partnership awards on our website for ideas.
- Work with your **proposed partner** to develop the strongest possible application.
- Think about:
 - **benefits** of your project to you and to the partner
 - What access or resources will they provide?
 - What is their strategic plan? Are any relevant events or milestones occurring during the period of your PhD?

For all applications: Is what you are proposing to do **feasible**?

DRAFT, DRAFT AND DRAFT AGAIN! 😊

**Read the
Guidance.**

**There are
more FAQs
on the NBC
webpages**

- We welcome applications from International applicants.
- The AHRC is a UK research Council and limits the number of international awards NBC can make to a maximum of 30% of NBC studentships.
- All NBC studentships are part-funded by each University – consult your chosen University’s webpages for advice for international applicants.
 - For example, ROI applicants may be treated as as ‘home’ applicants in some Universities.
- You can apply for an NBC studentship if you are early in a PhD at one of the NBC universities. Currently registered PhD students are eligible to be nominated only if they will have completed no more than 18 months of full-time or 36 months of part time study at the point at which they would take up the award.
- Part-time students cannot also work full time.

Questions?

Reminder:
Stop Recording

New questions will be added to NBC webpage of FAQs.

