

2017 CHASE AHRC Studentship Application: Guidance

1. General notes

The CHASE DTP member institutions are as follows:

- The Courtauld Institute of Art
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- The Open University
- University of East Anglia
- University of Essex
- University of Kent
- University of Sussex

SOAS and Birkbeck are associate member institutions and do not currently award CHASE studentships.

Applicants should read the [RCUK Terms and Conditions for Training Grants](#) and check their eligibility for funding before completing their application.

Applicants must consult with their proposed supervisor when completing the CHASE Studentship Application form.

Applicants must complete the following tasks:

- Studentship Application Form
- Reference 1 - provide referee details
- Reference 2 - provide referee details
- Supervisor Statement - provide supervisor details

Application deadlines vary by CHASE institution. It is essential that you check the deadlines of your CHASE institution, as late applications will not be accepted.

Applications shortlisted by the institution will be put forward to the relevant CHASE selection panel. The scope of each selection panel is as follows:

A: History, Thought and Systems of Belief

Applications to: History; Law and Legal Studies; Philosophy; Theology, Divinity and Religion; Archaeology; Classics.

B: Art History and Visual Cultures

Applications to: Art History; Conservation; Visual Art History and Theory; Digital Arts & Photography History, Theory and Practice; Visual Arts (covering Art Theory & Aesthetics; Community Art including Art and Health); Museum Studies; Ethnography and Anthropology

C: Media and Creative Practice

Applications to: Creative Writing; Music (Practice-based, composition, musicology); Visual art practice; Installation and Sound Art History, Theory and Practice; Film-Based and Time-Based History, Theory and Practice; Media: New Media/Web-Based Studies; Media: Film History, Theory and Criticism; Media: Television History, Theory and Criticism; Drama and Theatre Studies Practice; Information and Communications Technologies; Media and communication studies; Journalism and Publishing.

D: Literature, Language and Culture

Applications to: Drama and Theatre Studies Theory; Languages and Literature (including American Studies, Life writing, History and Development of English Language, Literary and Cultural Theory, Post-Colonial Studies, Comparative Literature, Medieval Literature, Comparative Studies, Gender and Sexuality); English Language and Literature; Popular Culture; Cultural Studies (Policy, Arts Management and Creative Industries); Interpreting and Translation; Linguistics; French Studies; German Studies (including Dutch and Yiddish); Italian Studies; Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin Studies

Selection panels will grade applications according to the following criteria:

<p>1. Research proposal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is clearly-written and demonstrates engagement with an academic field at a high level of sophistication. • The project demonstrates original thinking in its field. • The methodology proposed clearly demonstrates the viability of the planned research. • The planned research is described in a way that inspires confidence that it will definitely be completed within three years.
<p>2. Preparedness for research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant demonstrates understanding of appropriate research skills required for successful completion of the project. • The applicant has appropriate training at Master's level or equivalent to undertake the project. • The applicant's references fully support the applicant's preparedness for doctoral study.
<p>3. Suitability of research environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research environment (as constituted by the proposed supervision, the home department(s) or equivalent, the institutional support (including available archives, sources, research centres), any external organisations) is appropriate to the project. • The applicant has given clear thought to the fit between their project and their proposed research environment. • The supervisor statement fully supports the project's fit with the proposed research environment.

A full set of grade descriptors is included as an annex to these notes (page 7).

Selection panel grades will be moderated and combined into a single ranked list by the CHASE Management Board for allocation of funding.

2. Notes on completing the application form

You can save your progress at any time

Section 2 Contact details

Please provide contact details to cover the period of your application.

Section 3 The CHASE institution at which you propose to study

Please identify one CHASE institution and provide details of the department or school of study to which you have applied. CHASE discourages applications to multiple member institutions if the research proposal is similar, as there will be one institution that provides the best fit for the project. CHASE encourages cross-institutional co-supervision where appropriate to provide the best combination of supervisory expertise; please discuss this with your main supervisor.

Section 4 Proposed mode of study

Please select your preferred mode of study. CHASE supports both full and part-time study. Part-time study is offered at 0.5 FTE, for a period of six years.

Section 5 Eligibility

CHASE AHRC funding is only available to Home or EU students. Both Home and EU students must satisfy the standard research council eligibility criteria. Please see page 11 of the [RCUK Terms and Conditions for Training Grants](#) to check eligibility. EU students not resident in the UK for three years prior to 30 September 2017 may be eligible for a fees-only award. If you have any questions about your eligibility for a CHASE studentship, please contact enquiries@chase.ac.uk.

Section 6 Current funding applications

Please indicate if you are also applying to another AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership. Please note that only one AHRC studentship offer can be accepted.

Section 8 Relevant professional experience

Please provide information about any professional experience (research and/or practice-based) that is relevant to your proposed programme of study. Use only the space provided. You can use your research proposal to elaborate on how this experience supports your project.

Section 9 Relevant education and training

Please indicate whether you have already started your PhD, i.e. if you are applying for funding as a current student. Students who have already commenced doctoral study are eligible to apply for AHRC funding, provided that, at the start of the AHRC award, they will have at least 50% of their period of study remaining (excluding the 'writing up' period).

Please provide full details of all your higher education qualifications. If you tick 'Other' please ensure that you include details in the text box provided.

Please see page 17 of the [AHRC Training Grant Funding Guide 2015-16](#) for guidance on relevant education, training and experience.

Section 10 Research proposal

You are advised to discuss your research proposal with your main supervisor. You should treat the proposal as an opportunity to show that you have begun to explore an important area of study, and that your research has the potential to challenge and develop that area. It is also important to demonstrate that you can express your ideas in clear and precise English, accessible to a non-specialist.

The selectors who read your proposal know that it is a provisional statement and that your ideas, questions and approaches will change during the course of your research.

You should include the following sections:

1. Title of proposal

Be as concise and explicit as you can. (We know this is provisional.)

2. Abstract

Please provide a brief abstract (c.200 words, and not more than 1,000 characters). This should be a complete but concise description of the project that will allow a non-specialist reader to quickly ascertain the purpose of your project. Most CHASE panellists will not be expert in your disciplinary area.

In 'Description of proposal':

3. Introduction

Use this section to introduce the questions and issues central to your research. Identify the field of study in broad terms and indicate how you expect your research to intervene in the field.

4. Research background and questions

Use this section to expand your Introduction. What are the key sources, texts and approaches in the field? How does your proposal differ from existing lines of argument? What does your project contribute to existing work in the field? How does it extend our understanding of particular questions or topics? You need to set out your research questions as clearly as possible. Identify the problems that you want to explore and explain why it is important to do so.

Please use this section to indicate how your previous studies, professional and/or other experience contribute to your understanding of the field and your preparedness for research. In other words, think about how to situate your project in the context of the university and its disciplines. If appropriate, you can also discuss the relevance of your research to non-academic institutions and audiences.

5. Research methods

Give a brief statement detailing how you will achieve the aims set out in the previous sections. Your focus here will depend very much on your discipline(s) and research topic. You can consider the following questions (no one project will require you to answer them all): Does your project involve archival sources, particular databases or specialist libraries? Will you need access to facilities at another institution? Is your study interdisciplinary? How does your creative practice contribute to your research? What theoretical resources do you intend to use and why? Is your research based on the work of a single author or a group of writers or texts? What forms of textual, historical, visual or material analysis are relevant to your topic? Is there a 'gap' in established approaches to your field of study that you want to explore? Are there ethical issues that you need to address in undertaking your research? Will you be involved in fieldwork?

6. Schedule of work

Use this section to show that you have a realistic plan for completion of the project within the period of the award. You may want to think here about dividing the proposal into sections (not necessarily chapters at this stage) with a timetable for researching and writing up each section.

7. Bibliography

Include a bibliography, in a standard format such as Harvard, listing any books and articles to which you refer in the proposal. This is indicative, not exhaustive (and is included in the character count).

Please note that there is a strict limit of 10,000 characters (not including spaces) for the research proposal. (This does not include title or abstract.) Assessors will not be able to consider material over that length.

3. Your referees

Once you have completed the application form, please complete the two online forms with your referees' details. Each referee will receive an email inviting them to supply a reference.

You should choose your two referees carefully: together they should have a good knowledge of your academic record to date, your research plans and your preparedness for doctoral study. One or both referees may be your supervisors.

Please note that it is the applicant's responsibility to monitor the progress of the application and check that all parts are completed on time. You will not be able to submit your application until both references have been received.

4. Supervisor details and supervisor statement

Once you have completed the application form, please provide your main supervisor's details via the online form. They will be asked via email to provide a statement of support for the proposed project (in addition to any reference supporting the candidate's application for a place at the home institution).

While references should focus on the quality of candidates, the supervisor's statement should focus on the quality of the proposal, including the research environment (at both the 'home' institution and within CHASE), and its 'fit' with the supervisor's expertise and interests. If the proposal is highly technical and its significance unlikely to be fully appreciated by a non-specialist reader, the supervisor statement should be clear on the proposal's merits within its disciplinary field.

5. Notification and acceptance of awards

CHASE will inform candidates of the outcome of their application by 6 April 2017. Acceptance of an award constitutes an agreement between you and your CHASE institution as set out in the offer letter.

Annex: grade descriptors for use by CHASE panels

Grade	Quality	Selection criteria <i>Reviewers should consider the application's excellence in the field of study, not just against applications submitted for this particular panel meeting</i>		
		Research proposal (note: this category is double-weighted)	Preparedness for research	Suitability of research environment
6	Excellent	The proposal excels in originality, sophistication and ambition. The literature review is of highest quality and the project is well designed. This is highest priority for funding.	The applicant demonstrates outstanding potential and preparedness in relation to skills (such as languages), training and previous research or fieldwork experience. All skills gaps have been identified, and there is a plausible plan to address them.	The application demonstrates that the proposed research environment has been considered carefully. There is an excellent, mutually beneficial fit between the project and the proposed research environment in all respects.
5	Very good	The proposal is original and rigorous to a high degree, with a strong literature review. It is feasible within the time-frame. It is a high priority for funding.	The applicant demonstrates strong potential and preparedness in relation to skills, training and previous research or fieldwork experience. Any crucial skills gaps have been identified and there is a plausible plan to address them.	The application shows that the proposed research environment has been considered and is a strong fit for the project in all important respects.
4	Good	The proposal has originality and rigour but could be better designed or elaborated. Despite good potential, there are one or more areas for obvious improvement. This is a medium priority for funding.	The applicant shows satisfactory potential and preparedness in relation to skills, training and previous research or fieldwork experience. Most of the small and large skills gaps have been identified and there is a plausible plan to address them.	There is a good fit between the project and the proposed research environment in most respects, such that the project is on balance likely to be successful.
3	Fair	The proposal has merit but falls short in relation to originality, methodology or literature review. This is not a priority for funding.	The applicant shows some potential and preparedness in relation to skills, training and previous research or fieldwork experience. Some skills gaps have not been identified or the plans for addressing such gaps may not be plausible within the timeframe.	The research environment is unsuitable in some respect (eg potential lack of access to an essential resource)
2	Weak	The proposal does not display originality and there are flaws in the methodology or literature review. This should not be funded.	The applicant has not identified the skills or preparation necessary to the project, and there are significant gaps that mean the project is unlikely to reach a successful conclusion.	There are reasons for concern that the research environment is unsuitable in several respects.
1	Poor	The proposal has significant and serious flaws such that it should not be funded.	The applicant does not meet the criteria (eg requirement for M-level study or equivalent has not been met).	The application does not meet the criteria for supervision or access to essential resources.