

Open-Oxford-Cambridge AHRC DTP Collaborative Doctoral Awards

Call for CDA proposals

Faculty members of the OU, Oxford and Cambridge are invited to submit proposals for Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) projects in arts and humanities subject areas. Selected projects will be advertised in the Open-Oxford-Cambridge AHRC DTP's next studentship competition.

We would particularly welcome proposals that may help support our aim to:

- increase the number of applicants from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, which are under-represented in postgraduate research in the humanities;
- increase the number of applications for doctoral study in modern languages and design;
- encourage and support practice-based research at doctoral level.

Proposals must be submitted using the application form, along with a letter of support from the collaborative partner.

If you have any questions about CDAs or your application, please get in touch with the OOC DTP Manager on manager@oocdtp.ac.uk.

Please email your application materials to enquiries@oocdtp.ac.uk by midday **Thursday, 2nd May 2024**.

What is a CDA?

CDAs are doctoral studentship projects that are developed by a university-based academic working in collaboration with an organisation outside of higher education. They are intended as a way of facilitating collaboration with a diverse range of organisations in focused, mutually beneficial ways. CDAs provide important opportunities for doctoral students to gain first-hand experience of work outside the university environment and enhance the employment-related skills and training which a student may gain during the course of their award.

Students in receipt of a CDA receive support in the form of a full award (fees and maintenance grant at UKRI approved rates), an additional stipend of £600/annum to help cover the cost of working with the partner organisation (e.g. for travel to the partner's premises), the provision of training and access to additional funding for individual research expenses or training needs.

Partner organisations

The partner organisation can be from the private, public or voluntary sector. The word 'organisation' is used as a generic term and should be interpreted as widely as possible. The AHRC wishes to encourage collaborations from any area within its subject remit and with a full range of organisations, bodies and businesses, including the creative, cultural and heritage industries, both large and small, and including sole traders and partnerships.

Please note:

- In most cases the partner organisation must have an operating base in the UK. Please get in touch with the OOC DTP Manager on manager@oocdtp.ac.uk if you wish to collaborate with an organisation outside of the UK.
- If you do wish to partner with an organisation outside of the UK, you will need to make a case for this, summarising (i) how the additional benefits are to be gained from the collaboration, (ii) that demonstrable value from the project will be accrued to the UK, and (iii) that the collaboration will deliver long-term, lasting benefits. The overseas partner must specify a minimum contribution towards the direct costs of the project and would be expected to cover additional costs of travel to and from the UK. The logistics of running such a partnership should be carefully considered in order to demonstrate viability.
- While University museums, libraries and gardens can act as a partner organisation for a CDA, they may not partner with a faculty member at their parent university.
- A collaboration agreement should be drawn up between the university and the partner organisation before a CDA commences, so as to ensure that all parties, including the student, are aware of, and understand, the requirements and responsibilities underlying the partnership. Your home university will manage this.

How to submit a proposal

Please download the application form (Word doc) from the link at the bottom of the page. The form has five sections. In addition to a completed application form, you must submit a letter of support from the partner organisation, confirming its understanding of the collaboration and its commitment to the project.

1. University supervision

All proposals must be submitted by a supervisory team including a lead university supervisor, who takes administrative responsibility for the project. By submitting the proposal the university supervisor confirms that they are eligible to supervise doctoral students at their institution. They also agree to allow us to include their university email address in the CDA advert to facilitate enquiries from prospective applicants.

2. Partner organisation

CDA projects should be developed in collaboration with an external partner organisation, which should also identify a member of staff who will join the CDA student's supervisory team. Use this section of the form to give details of the organisation and partner supervisor.

3. CDA project and benefit to partner organisation and to student

In this section of the form you will need to include a title and summary of no more than 500 words of the proposed doctoral research project. Research areas defined by project proposals ought to be broad enough to enable an applicant to develop an individual project within the field proposed, but have enough detail to reassure the DTP panel that it is suitable for a doctorate.

You should also use this section to explain the benefit of the collaboration and proposed project to both the partner organisation and student. CDAs must meet AHRC expectations for collaboration:

- Research should be relevant to the organisation's priorities and objectives;

- Project should be based on a truly collaborative approach;
- Partner organisation must commit to providing access to training, facilities and expertise not available in an academic setting alone;
- The CDA should enable the student to develop valuable skills and significantly enhance their future employability.

4. Studentship costs

The practical implications of conducting the proposed collaborative doctoral project should be considered in advance. An award through the DTP includes payment of university fees and a tax-free maintenance grant at the UK Research and Innovation minimum rate (£18,622 per annum for 2023/24). Students are also eligible to apply for Additional Funding for research-expenses (RTSG), e.g. study visit and conference participation. RTSG **cannot** be used to cover the cost of working with a CDA partner though.

CDA students receive an additional stipend of £600 per annum, as a contribution towards costs incurred by working at and/or with their partner organisation. Depending on the location of the CDA partner premises and the planned collaborative working, some CDA students seek to relocate themselves to live near the partner for the second year of the doctorate, so as to reduce the cost of commuting to the partner organisation.

Costs arising from the proposed project that cannot be covered by the basic studentship and CDA stipend should be outlined below. You should also use this section to detail any direct or in-kind contribution offered by the partner organisation, e.g. hours of staff time delivering specialised training or direct costs for additional impact activities.

The contribution of direct costs is required for any CDA where the partner is based outside of the UK. UK-based partner organisations are not required to provide financial resources to support the proposed doctoral project but are encouraged to consider whether they could provide any additional funding in support of the proposed project to ensure its viability.

The DTP may be able to contribute limited additional funding where this is required for the success of the collaboration. Use this section of the form to request and justify additional support.

5. Advert text

Projects selected by the OOC DTP will be advertised on the OOC DTP's website from early September. Applicants are asked to submit draft advert text (of 500-700 words) at the same time as their application form. This will not be used for the evaluation of proposals, but will assist with the administration of selected CDA projects. When drafting the advert text, we recommend that you use the template below and:

- Keep it concise and avoid jargon and/or overly technical language;
- Include details of the collaborative partner and what they bring to the project;
- Flag any training opportunities or professional experience that might be available to the student through the collaboration;
- Encourage applications from a wide array of candidates by indicating which disciplinary backgrounds could be suitable;

Include links to the university supervisor's departmental webpage and the partner organisation.

CDA Partner Letter of Support

The letter should be dated and should be written when the CDA proposal is being prepared. It should be targeted specifically to the project and should:

- Detail the name, address and website for partner organisation;
- Confirm the organisation and proposed supervisor's commitment to the proposed CDA project;
- Explain the value, relevance and possible benefits of the work to the project partner;
- Give the nature and equivalent value of any in-kind contribution, and/or declare the value of a cash contribution, and period of support; and
- Describe the added value to the project of the project partner's involvement.

Selection of CDA projects

Successful proposals will have clear plans for how a joint doctoral project can be supported, and how the project will benefit the partner organisation as well as fulfil the requirements for a doctorate and the AHRC's expectation that the collaboration will benefit the student in terms of skills development and employability. Proposals will be assessed as part of a gathered field and in relation to the following criteria:

1. Quality of the proposed doctoral research, as demonstrated by clearly articulated research aims, focus, and potential impact;
2. Quality of collaboration, as demonstrated by: evidence of relevance of research to the partner organisation's priorities and objectives; commitment by the partner to provide access to training, facilities and expertise that would not otherwise be available to the student; benefit to student in terms of skills development and employability;
3. Feasibility and viability of the project for a studentship.

Recruitment of students

We cannot guarantee that a student will be appointed to every CDA project selected for advertisement, as success ultimately depends on the number and quality of studentship applications received for any one project, and on the total number of studentships that the DTP is able to award in any one year. CDA applications will be reviewed by the DTP's Studentship Selection Panels in a selection process that runs parallel to that for standard route studentships.

Prospective students are encouraged to contact supervisors before submitting an application in order to discuss how they might shape their own research proposal from the outline CDA project advertised by the DTP. Supervisors are asked to be available to answer enquiries from prospective students in the autumn.

Outline schedule

May	Review and selection of CDA proposals for advertisement
1 September	Deadline for final version of advert text

September	Selected CDA studentships advertised
January	Deadlines for student applications for CDAs
March	Review of student applications for CDAs
April	Studentship offers sent out