



AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) PhD Studentship

Creative Writing and Atlantic Slavery Through Library Collections

Reference number: RS/24/03

Start date: 1 October 2024

Application Deadline: 6 May 2024

Interviews will take place online on **20 May 2024**

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and the British Library are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded Collaborative Doctoral Studentship from 1 October 2024 under the [AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Scheme](#).

This practice-based PhD (via MPhil) opportunity invites an emerging writer to create new work that engages with the histories and legacies of Transatlantic Enslavement, drawing on the collections of the British Library.

This project will be jointly supervised by Dr Raphael Hoermann (Senior Lecturer in English Literature & Senior Research Fellow) and Dr Yvonne Reddick (Reader in English Literature & Creative Writing) at UCLan and by Dr Philip Abraham and Ms Nicole-Rachelle Moore at the British Library. The student will spend time with both UCLan and the British Library and will become part of the wider cohort of AHRC CDP funded PhD students across the UK.

UCLan and the British Library are keen to encourage applications from a wide range of students and particularly welcome those currently underrepresented in doctoral student cohorts, including minoritised students.

The Research Project

Drawing on research into and thinking about the British Library's holdings and further library and archival collections, this creative writing project will engage with Transatlantic Enslavement and its legacies. It is expected to link to the Institute for Black Atlantic Research's focus on uncovering the obscured or silenced histories of the African Diaspora. While we are interested in any aspect of the theme, we would particularly welcome projects that foreground the resistance of enslaved Africans and/or have some links to the Caribbean and the Americas, which is the focus of the British Library's Eccles Institute. We would also particularly welcome any projects linking transatlantic slavery and the Anthropocene.

We will support the candidate in creating:

-A 30,000-word piece of fiction, creative nonfiction, three ten-minute playscripts, or a book-length collection of c.40 written/spoken word poems. We welcome hybrid genres if desired.

And

-A 30,000-word critical essay on the experience of researching and writing imaginatively about Transatlantic Enslavement and resistance and their legacies.

Research questions may include:

- The field of existing creative writing on the legacies of Transatlantic Enslavement and innovations the candidate wishes to make. Which hidden histories of resistance could a project like this uncover? Whose narrative voice is it ethically acceptable to use? How does one's own subject position affect the process of writing about the past? What does the chosen literary form add to the field? What can speculative fiction do that historical fiction cannot, and vice versa? What can poetry do that prose cannot, and vice versa?
- How does one go about the practice of writing with colonial archival and museum material? What are the practical, ethical, aesthetic and emotive issues at play with encountering violence in the archive?
- The researcher will be invited to reflect on how legacies of Transatlantic Enslavement have shaped the present (e.g. racism and colourism, white supremacy, the racial class divide, global inequalities, industrialisation and environmental destruction) and how creative writing could contribute towards our own psychological emancipation and repair.

Benefits and Opportunities

The successful candidate will be registered with the School of Psychology and Humanities at UCLan. They will join the Institute for Black Atlantic Research (IBAR), which has a ten-year track record of conducting research and hosting events on African diaspora culture, and be affiliated with the Research Centre for Migration, Diaspora & Exile (MIDEX), a member of the largest international research network on Migration (IMISCOE). IBAR and MIDEX are part of the new umbrella Research and Knowledge Exchange Institute for Area and Migration Studies (AMIS). The English Literature and Creative Writing team has an exceptionally strong profile for its small size, producing three impact case studies ranked 3-4* at the last REF, including one from the Institute for Black Atlantic Research. The team plays an enthusiastic role in public engagement, collaborating and co-creating with publishing houses, authors, artists, museums, galleries and community groups. Creative Writing at UCLan is nationally leading, ranked 1st in The Guardian 2023 ranking, with many of the staff's publications winning awards from the BBC World Service, Poetry Society, New Writing North and Poetry School. There are dedicated Postgraduate Research student groups in all institutes and centres, offering opportunities to present work and receive feedback, and the Graduate School runs workshops and training catering to the diverse needs of the research students.

The PhD student will be encouraged to pursue publication opportunities to progress their literary career, as well as training in teaching, impact and grant capture for a career in academia, libraries, publishing or high-level university research service. We will offer the student our extensive contacts at publishing houses, literary journals, and literary talent development schemes. If desired, we will be able to offer them teaching experience (up to 6 hours per academic year).

At the British Library, the student will be based in the Eccles Institute for the Americas and Oceania, the Library's collections, research and public engagement centre for studying the region. The British Library has over 170 million items across almost all languages and conceivable formats. As well as offering access to a vast array of secondary sources, it is a globally significant repository for primary documents for the study of Transatlantic Enslavement across printed books, archives, manuscripts,

maps and digital. The Library also has very rich holdings of literary archives, books, magazines and interviews with modern and contemporary authors who have addressed the histories of enslavement, race and resistance in their writing.

The student will be supported in navigating (and critiquing) the collection by their British Library supervisors, and will have opportunities to contribute to the Eccles Institute's exciting programme of research, community engagement and learning. The Eccles Institute is also home to over 30 visiting researchers and writers each year from across the world, including two annual Eccles Institute / Hay Festivals Writer's Award winners. The student will therefore join an exciting community of writers, artists and academics exploring creative ways of engaging with library collections.

The student will also become part of a vibrant cohort of collaborative doctoral researchers and benefit from staff-level access to the Library's collections, resources and in-house training and development opportunities. They will also be able to join the British Library's staff networks, which include the Cultural, Racial and Ethnic Diversity Network, the LGBTQ+ Network and the Gender Equality Network. CDP students also benefit from a dedicated programme of [CDP Cohort Development events](#) delivered in tandem with the other museums, galleries and heritage organisations affiliated with the AHRC CDP scheme.

This collaborative PhD studentship offers the opportunity to combine academic training with practice-based experience and research behind the scenes of a major cultural institution. This is a unique opportunity to gain a wide range of transferable skills, including researching in archives and libraries, editing, publishing, event planning and delivery, and public speaking.

Details of Award

The PhD studentship can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis.

AHRC CDP doctoral training grants fund studentships for 4 years full-time or part-time equivalent. AHRC CDP doctoral trainings grants also make provision of funding for student development activities to help the student extend their wider skills portfolio and improve their career prospects.

The award pays tuition fees up to the value of the full-time home UKRI rate for PhD degrees. The **indicative fee level for Research Council studentships for 2024/25 is £4,786.**

The award also pays full maintenance for all students, both home and international students. The National Minimum Doctoral Stipend for the academic year 2024/25 is £19,237. This is a tax-free training grant which increases slightly each year.

An additional London allowance of £1000/year will be applied for this studentship.

The successful candidate will also receive a CDP maintenance payment of £600/year.

Further details on UKRI funding for doctoral training can be found on the UKRI website: <https://www.ukri.org/skills/funding-for-research-training/>

In addition, the successful student will be eligible for an additional research allowance courtesy of the British Library, up to £1,000 per financial year or part-time equivalent, for the duration of the project.

Eligibility

This studentship is open to both home and International applicants. For international applicants, UCLan will waive the additional international fees.

To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have settled status, or
- Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have indefinite leave to remain in or enter.

Further guidance on international eligibility can be found here:

<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/UKRI-030221-Guidance-International-Eligibility-Implementation-training-grant-holders-V2.pdf>

Applicant Information

Applicants should have a good 2:1 BA (Hons) degree or expect to receive a Masters-level qualification in a relevant discipline or equivalent experience in a professional setting (e.g., evidence in the form of a portfolio of work or prior professional practice will be acceptable as 'non-standard entrance qualifications')

Relevant disciplines include, but are not limited to, Creative Writing, History, Literary and Cultural Studies. Equivalent experience might include, but is not restricted to, a strong track record of employment in a library, museum, or heritage institution that includes responsibility for relevant archival research, collections curation, and/or public engagement activity. A track record of creative writing outputs assembled in a portfolio will also be accepted.

Collaborative doctoral students are expected to spend time at both the University and the British Library.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate a commitment to research-based creative writing, and an interest in galleries, libraries, archives and museums as sites of inspiration or provocation for creative practice. We will also request a short writing sample (1,000 words of prose or drama, or 4 poems).

Applicants must satisfy the standard UKRI eligibility criteria. For further information please see:

<https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

UCLan and the British Library are keen to encourage a wide range of applicants from different backgrounds and particularly welcome applications from students currently underrepresented in doctoral student cohorts, including minoritised students.

How to Apply

Applications should be completed on our [online application system](#), selecting the following options:

- **Type of Study** - Research Degree (Postgraduate)
- **Course** - Master of Philosophy/Doctor of Philosophy
- **Campus** - Preston Campus
- **Mode of Study** - Full Time/Part Time

Applications received after this date (6 May 2024) cannot be considered.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an online interview on 20 May 2024

Informal Enquiries

If you are interested in applying, you are welcome to contact the following for an informal discussion about this opportunity: **Dr Raphael Hoermann, Senior Research Fellow** (rhoermann@uclan.ac.uk) or **Dr Philip Abraham, Interim Head of Programming at Eccles Institute for the Americas at the British Library** (philip.abraham@bl.uk)