



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

AHRC Doctoral Training Partnerships - Developing the Next Phase

Discussion meetings

London 4th / Leeds 5th November 2015



Overview

- We are holding two discussion meetings to help communicate our proposals and provide further background to help inform responses to our feedback survey.
- Brief background to the development of AHRC Doctoral Training Partnerships.
- The main proposals for change.
- Time for questions and discussion.

Overview

- This is very much an opportunity for input on the shape of the next call for DTPs.
- Equally the draft call sets out the broad direction of travel – evolution, not radical change to the current model.
- They are based on discussions with AHRC Advisory Board and Council.
- This is part of a wider dialogue about the evolution of PhD training in the arts and humanities.

Some brief background...

AHRC's Move to Doctoral Training Partnerships

- The first 'Block Grant Partnership' (BGP) awards started in Oct 2009
 - These were awarded to HEIs on the basis of a competitive assessment of an HEI's A&H research training provision and strategy.
- The “**BGP2**” call in 2011 sought to create PhD research training environments which had breath and critical mass - by specifying that the minimum size of bids would be 40 studentships p.a. (and max. 60)
 - These were announced as 'Doctoral Training Partnerships'
 - Seven specialist 'Centres for Doctoral Training' were also funded.

Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) & Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs)

- 11 DTPs and 7 CDTs awarded – first students started October 2014
- DTPs are mostly consortia, and each covers a broad range of the arts and humanities.
- The CDTs offer specialist training in the areas of languages, design and heritage (and these are all consortia).

Doctoral Training Partnerships & Centres for Doctoral Training

- Five cohorts of studentships (2014-18)
- Total AHRC investment of £163m; equating to 495 studentships p.a. at average of 3.5 years each.
- An additional £63m matched funding has been committed from the HEIs over the period.
- A total of 75 HEIs involved, and 155 non-HEI partners

Key Dimensions of Current DTPs

- Funding excellence in research training and wider research student development.
- No ring-fencing of funding for specific disciplines or institutions.
- Enhancement of **partnership**:
 - within, between and across ROs;
 - with cultural, creative and civic partners;
 - and with the AHRC as funder

Key Dimensions of Current DTPs

- Fostering the development of new and enriched PhD programmes.
- Fostering collaboration between HEIs, and between HEIs and wider cultural and civic partners.
- Flexibility in arts and humanities research methods, approaches, and outputs. For example, supporting practice, performance and design-based research.

Key Dimensions of Current DTPs

Student Development Fund

- The training grants are calculated on the basis of an average PhD duration of 3.5 years, but with the idea that the 0.5s are pooled to create a flexible pool for supplementing studentships.
- Studentships can be up to 4 years in duration, and DTPs have developed a rich variety of ideas and plans for what opportunities students might take up.
- Most DTPs / CDTs have a student-driven and responsive approach with at least part of the funding.

Key Dimensions of Current DTPs

Cohort Development Fund

- Proposals could include up to 5% of the total studentships costs applied for 'cohort development' activities.
- Plenty of exciting ideas for bringing students together from across a DTP/CDT.
- For example, student conferences, student-led subject workshops, virtual environments for sharing ideas, etc.

Key Dimensions of Current DTPs

- A key dimension has been the ability of DTPs and CDTs to articulate and promote their own vision of what a PhD with them involves.
- In other words, DTPs have the flexibility to create their own distinctive vision of their PhD training – e.g. involving specific regional or national partners, or distinctive supervisory or cohort aspects to PhDs.

Key Dimensions of Current DTPs

- We want to see further evolution of high quality, innovative research training, with strong emphasis on the opportunities for individuals to make an impact outside of academia, alongside academic career tracks.

Progress so far...

Progress so far...

- It is still early days – the DTPs and CDTs have just taken in their second cohorts.
- Our sense is that the programmes are working really well – due to the hard work and dedication of a large number of staff whose time is funded by the institutions involved.
- Working with a smaller number of DTPs and CDTs has enabled AHRC to engage more strategically with them.
- We visit Management Boards, and run an annual conference for Directors.

DTP2 Proposals...

DTP2 Proposals...

- There are a number of changes proposed for the next round of DTPs – relating to:
 - the bidding process
 - the nature and structure of the bids
 - the nature of the PhD training they provide.

DTP2 Proposals...

- We have also announced changes to the Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme:
 - We are asking current DTPs to introduce a 'CDA route' within their recruitment for awards starting in October 2017.
 - And ending the stand-alone scheme.
 - There are full FAQs about this change here:
<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/newsevents/news/nextphaseoffundedstudentships/>

Application Process

- We are proposing not to have an Expressions of Interest stage.
- The call is scheduled for launch in November 2016, with a deadline in October 2017.
- Though we will offer 1:1 meetings with groups as they finalise their proposals in February – March 2017.

DTP2 Proposals

Subject Breadth

- We will expect DTPs to demonstrate subject range and capacity across all three AHRC disciplinary clusters:
 - Creative and Performing Arts
 - Histories, Cultures and Heritage
 - Languages and Literatures
- While we will not require DTPs to demonstrate identical capacity in each area, it will be necessary to demonstrate a significant capability to support high quality studentships across a broad range of the arts and humanities within the AHRC's remit.

DTP2 Proposals

Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs)

- We are proposing not to invite bids for Centres for Doctoral Training.
- We currently fund 7: in languages (2), heritage (1) and design (4).
- But we now feel there would be value in having these areas embedded within DTPs.
- We are proposing to provide funding to support specialist subject networks across DTPs after the next round, and invite bids for these.

DTP2 Proposals

Cohort Development Funding

- We are proposing to continue provision of a separate 'Cohort Development Funding' line for DTPs – set at the level of an additional 5% of the studentship funding.
- We feel that this additional funding line has done much to enable DTPs to provide events and activities which bring students together as a group – either altogether or in subject networks between the institutions involved.
- Is the current level (5%) still appropriate?

DTP2 Proposals

Maximum size of bids

- We are proposing not to specify a pre-determined maximum for the number of studentships that can requested.
- We do not wish to restrict the growth of DTPs in taking on new institutional members.
- But equally we do not want current DTPs to feel that they have to grow – fit with their own strategy and ethos is key.
- We are asking for views on what metrics would help inform an appropriate allocation of studentships between DTP2 proposals which are successful in the quality ranking.

DTP2 Proposals

Minimum size of bids

- We are however keeping the minimum threshold for numbers, in order to avoid any move towards fragmentation, and recognising the economies of scale in terms of administration.
- Feedback indicates that the collaborative work between institutions has brought real value already in terms of shared resources, expertise, and opportunities for PhD students.

DTP2 Proposals

Multi-Institutional

- Nine of the eleven current DTPs are multi-university consortia.
- Expectation that all proposals to the next round of DTPs will need to be collaborative between HEIs – given:
 - the breadth of AHRC's subject remit
 - the increasing emphasis on collaboration across other aspects of the AHRC's activities
 - the perceived benefits of collaborative provision of training within the existing DTPs and CDTs.

DTP2 Proposals

Co-Investment

- We are proposing to ask for a required level of co-investment alongside AHRC funding.
- The first round brought about considerable co-investment from Universities, leading to more AHRC-labelled studentships.
- We want to encourage this again – but set a more level playing field in terms of the co-investment required.
- We are proposing 50:50 (ie ‘match’ funding) – but this could include plans to attract non-HEI contributions.

The Nature of the PhD

External Funding

- Alongside the move to embed Collaborative PhD projects within DTPs, and building on the extensive partnership working of DTPs, we envisage greater engagement between DTPs and non-academic bodies.
- Should targets be set for leveraging external funding for studentships? (i.e. jointly funded AHRC studentship with charitable trusts, business, etc)

**Proposals... also relate to the
nature of PhD training in the arts
and humanities**

The Nature of the PhD

4-Year Funding

- We are proposing to move to a 4-year 'unit of funding' for the PhD.
- That is, we will use a 4-year studentship unit in calculating the award to a DTP (compared to 3.5 years currently).
- But we would not expect every studentship to be 4 years, and there might be a range of approaches here:
 - A 1+3 approach
 - 3.5 year initial offer, plus potential to extend to 4 years if other development opportunities are taken up.

The Nature of the PhD

Student Development Fund

- The move to using a 4 year FTE unit of funding as standard reflects our expectation that most studentships will be nearer to 4 years in duration in order to allow for ambitious research projects with time for additional development opportunities.
- But we will no longer use the idea of the 'Student Development Fund' (SDF) as an additional 0.5 year of funding (as in the current round).

The Nature of the PhD

Masters Funding

- Currently 'SDF' funding can be used to fund stand-alone Masters degrees
- We are proposing that this no longer be possible and expect M-level training to be included if necessary in a longer, integrated PhD; or 1+3 approach to be used in strategically important and vulnerable subject areas.

The Nature of the PhD

Research Training Support Grant

- We also propose to provide a higher level of annual 'Research Training Support Grant' (RTSG): £1000 p.a. compared to £200 p.a. currently.
- This is to support direct research-related costs, and we would still want to see RTSG funding used as a single combined pool to support the higher research support costs of individual students.

The Nature of the PhD

Writing-up Period

- Four years FTE will be the maximum funding duration for a PhD, but we will also expect to see thesis submission made *within* the funding period.
- The current position of students routinely completing their PhD during an unfunded 'writing up' period is not ideal. We want all students to aim to submit within their funded period.

Other considerations

Number of Studentships

- We deliberately wanted to start this discussion ahead of the outcome of the current Government Spending Review.
- However, with a fixed pot of funding, the move to fund higher quality PhD training (in terms of duration, funding level, etc), will potentially mean fewer studentships.
- Co-investment from institutions will help, but it is a key question how to balance quality vs quantity.

Next Steps

- The deadline for providing comments is **30 November 2015**.

[http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/newsevents/news/
nextphaseoffundedstudentships/](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/newsevents/news/nextphaseoffundedstudentships/)

- The timeline for the call in November 2016 is here:

[http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/phdstudents/fundingandtraining/
phddevelopmentplans/](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/phdstudents/fundingandtraining/phddevelopmentplans/)

(Deadline for proposals will be October 2017)

- The DTP call will award funding from October 2019.

Next Steps

- We are establishing a Review Group chaired by a member of Council to consider responses to the proposals.
- A report from the Review Group will be considered by AHRC Advisory Board and Council as part of finalising the call.
- We are also meeting with student reps from the current DTPs and CDTs to get their reviews, and a report from these focus groups will also be considered.

Thank you

Comments and Questions...



Comments and Questions...

About the Application Process or the Proposals

- No call for Centres for Doctoral Training – but support for a number of national specialist subject networks across DTPs
- Subject breath across arts and humanities
- All proposals collaborative between HEIs

Comments and Questions...

About the Application Process or the Proposals

- No pre-defined maximum size, but minimum retained
- Metrics which might help appropriate allocation between successful DTP2 proposals
- All proposals to commit to providing 50:50 match-funding against AHRC's.
- This match-funding also to include a target for the funding coming from non-HEI sources.

Comments and Questions...

About the Studentship Funding

- Four-year funding unit (but with flexibility)
- No separate 'Student Development Fund', but flexible approach to studentship duration retained.
- Submission required within period of PhD funding - up to 4 years full-time equivalent

Comments and Questions...

About the Studentship Funding

- Funding to be used for Masters-level only as part of an integrated PhD programme.
- Higher annual Research Student Support Grant
- Retain Cohort Development Funding

Comments and Questions...

About the nature of PhD training in the arts and humanities.

- Strong emphasis on multi-disciplinary environment and cohort development.
- Time for both a challenging and valuable research project, specialist training, and wider development opportunities outside Higher Education and outside the UK.
- Partnership between HEIs, partnership with non-HEI organisations, partnership with AHRC

Finally...

Any other comments or questions?