CHASE studentship competition for October 2020 entry
Briefing note for staff

This document is to assist and inform all staff involved in the CHASE studentship competition. Enquiries may be directed to your institutional CHASE leads, or to enquiries@chase.ac.uk

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Introduction

CHASE will offer up to 56 AHRC studentships for entry in October 2020. This will be the second round of studentship funding offered under the new DTP2 block grant. This grant will offer studentship awards via the following institutions:

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

The Open University is part of a different consortium for DTP2 awards.

All studentships will be allocated on merit, with no pre-allocation to any CHASE institution or discipline. As previously, candidates will apply to the institution at which they wish to study; at this stage, they also need to indicate if they would like to be considered for CHASE AHRC funding.

Each CHASE institution (at departmental level or equivalent) remains responsible for reviewing applications, interviewing candidates, making offers and allocating supervisors. CHASE institutions will follow best practice in equal opportunities, ensuring that all potential applicants have fair access to funding. Proposed candidates will be forwarded to a ‘Primary Selection Panel’ at the institution to which they are applying.

Candidates put forward for CHASE funding must have been interviewed at their home institution, and a main contact supervisor (or two supervisors in the case of co-supervision between institutions) must be identified before the application can be considered by the Primary Selection Panel. All interviews and selection at home institutions must take place before 28 February 2020.

Candidates for CHASE funding must apply using the online application portal at www.chase.ac.uk/apply

The Primary Selection Panels have responsibility for making nominations to one of the CHASE selection panels. CHASE will run 4 selection panels to consider applications forwarded from institutions, as follows:

A. History, Thought and Systems of Belief
B. Art History and Visual Cultures
C. Media and Creative Practice
D. Literature, Language and Culture

Each panel will include a range of expertise and one subject specialist from each CHASE institution (i.e. normally a panel of 8, with quoracy set at 5-8); panels will be chaired by a member of the CHASE Management Board (on rotation, with 4 different institutions providing the Chairs each year). The recommendations of the panels will be combined into a single ranked list by the CHASE Management Board at its meeting on 3 April 2020 and offer letters sent out by 7 April 2020.

CHASE will also offer a Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme alongside the main competition. Please see the separate call for projects for details.
Changes for 2019-20

In response to feedback on the 2018-19 recruitment round, the following changes have been made:

1. The studentship application form has been separated into three separate tasks:
   - Contact details
   - Preparedness for research
   - Project proposal
   This is to enable reviewers to read the project proposal first, and to reduce the chance of bias affecting decision-making.

2. Applications will be identified by project title rather than name. This is to reduce the chance of bias affecting decision-making.

3. In the project proposal, ‘research environment’ has been added as a required section heading, which clarifies a previous ambiguity.

4. The supervisor statement request now includes a field for supervisors of creative practice projects to provide contextual detail of programme regulations (e.g. thesis length). This is to allow for better comparison of these projects between different institutions.

5. A new Equality Diversity and Inclusion monitoring form has been introduced. This will reduce the work for administrators to report to AHRC on EDI data. The form will not be shared with reviewers and does not contain any identifying information.

The Management Board will keep the selection process under review during 2019-20 and a working group will consider more substantial changes to the process. The working group would welcome your observations or suggestions; please send these to Rob Witts, CHASE DTP Manager at robert.witts@chase.ac.uk

Advertising

The CHASE studentship competition will be launched on Monday 7 October 2019, and will be advertised as follows:

**Centrally** – via the CHASE website, and via the @CHASE_DTP Twitter feed.

**Externally** – Advertisements will be placed in FindaPhD.com and jobs.ac.uk, the most widely used resources for students seeking doctoral funding. CHASE will also have a presence at the ‘FindaPhD Live’ events in Oxford and London.

**Locally** – via institutional funding webpages. We also welcome notifications on subject-specific mailing lists, and appropriate post-holders in faculties or departmental areas are invited to use the template in the appendix to this document.
### Timetable for recruitment and selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 7 October 2019</td>
<td>Applications open for 2019-20 studentship competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 7 October</td>
<td>CDA project call opens to supervisors at CHASE institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 30 October</td>
<td>Online applicant Q&amp;A session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 20 November</td>
<td>Online applicant Q&amp;A session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11 December</td>
<td>Online applicant Q&amp;A session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 13 January 2020</td>
<td>Deadline for candidates to apply for PGR study at their home institution(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 15 January</td>
<td>Deadline for CDA project proposals from supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 7 February</td>
<td>Management Board meets and selects Collaborative Doctoral Award projects for advertisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 14 February</td>
<td>CHASE team notifies Collaborative Doctoral Award project applicants of outcomes - opportunity to revise and resubmit if necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 21 February</td>
<td>Online briefing session for CHASE panel members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 28 February</td>
<td>Deadline for institutional nominations to be sent to CHASE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 2 March</td>
<td>CHASE panel members receive applications for consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 9 March</td>
<td>Collaborative Doctoral Award studentships advertised on CHASE website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11 March</td>
<td>Deadline for panel members to return individual rankings to CHASE to collate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 16 - Thursday 19 March</td>
<td>CHASE selection panels convene - selection panels to return scores within 24 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel A: Monday 16 March</td>
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<td>Panel B: Tuesday 17 March</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Panel C: Wednesday 18 March</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel D: Thursday 19 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 23 March – Thursday 2 April</td>
<td>CHASE Management Board members read selected applications for moderation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 3 April</td>
<td>CHASE Management Board meets and agrees final list for funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 7 April</td>
<td>All applicants informed of outcome (Successful, waiting list, unsuccessful)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Range</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 10 – Monday 13 April</td>
<td>Easter Bank Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 17 April</td>
<td>Deadline for offer-holders to respond</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 1 May</td>
<td>Deadline for applications to CDA studentship projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4 – Friday 22 May</td>
<td>CDA supervisors assess applications and make recommendations to Management Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 25 May</td>
<td>Management Board ratifies CDA recommendations via email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 27 May</td>
<td>CDA applicants notified of outcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Equal opportunities

In line with UKRI expectations for equality and diversity, CHASE promotes equality of opportunity for all eligible doctoral candidates. Academic colleagues across CHASE are asked to ensure that they promote equality and diversity in their nominations for CHASE funding. This includes taking advantage of equality and diversity training offered at CHASE member institutions, to address disincentives and indirect obstacles to recruitment. The CHASE Management Board supports the Research Councils Action Plan for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Selection criteria

Applications will be judged against the following criteria:

1. Research proposal (50%)
   - 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 the funded period.

2. Preparedness for research (25%)
   - 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, including experience gained outside of higher education, to undertake the project.
   - The applicant’s references fully support the applicant’s preparedness for doctoral study (see below).

3. Suitability of research environment (25%)
   - 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 (see below).

A set of grade descriptors for each of these criteria is attached as an annex to these notes.
References and supervisor statement

Candidates are asked to nominate two referees. Referees will be asked to comment on the academic record of the candidate, on the quality of their research proposal and on their preparedness for doctoral study. References from non-academic sources (e.g. publishers) are welcome but must cover these areas. One or both referees may be the candidate’s prospective supervisors.

In addition, as in previous years, the primary supervisor will be asked to provide a statement in support of the candidate’s application for funding for their proposed project (in addition to any reference supporting the candidate’s application for a place at the home institution).

While references will focus on the quality of candidates, the supervisor’s statement should focus on the quality of the proposal, including the research environment (at both ‘home’ institution and, where possible, within CHASE) and the ‘fit’ with supervisor’s expertise and interests. This statement does not need to be lengthy (500 words) but it does need to address the candidate’s proposal directly in terms of its strength, interest and feasibility. It may draw on interview performance.

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. Supervisor statements should support the necessity of any period of language study applied for.

Supervisors of creative practice projects are asked to provide details of the regulations under which the project will be assessed (e.g. relationship between creative work and critical commentary). This will help reviewers to compare projects from different institutions.

Process for recruitment and selection using the online application system

Stage 1: Application

As previously, access to the application form will be controlled by CHASE institutions. Candidates must have submitted an application for study to their chosen institution to be given access to the CHASE application form. Institutions will allow access to the form at different stages in their selection process; please check your institutional process and deadlines. Please note that as last year there is a single deadline for all parts of the process, rather than separate deadlines for applicants and supervisors/referees.

1) Once a candidate is approved, administrators can send them the access code for the system. (Note: candidates can create an account on the system without the access code, but they will not be able to complete or submit an application.)

2) Once registered, the candidate will create an application with six tasks to complete:
   - Contact details
   - Project proposal
   - Preparedness for research
   - Equality monitoring form
   - Reference request form
   - Supervisor statement request form
These must be done in sequence: the project proposal task must be complete before the candidate can request a supervisor statement. All tasks must be completed before the application can be submitted, including receipt of references and supervisor statement.

**References**
Candidates must nominate two referees to provide references via the system. The candidate completes referee details (name and email address), and the referee receives an email with instructions to complete their reference. The candidate may resend this email as a reminder if necessary. Referees may copy and paste an existing reference if preferred. References should describe the qualities of the candidate and their project, and their preparedness for research. Candidate is notified by email when references have been submitted.

**Supervisor statement**
The candidate completes supervisor details and the supervisor receives an email, as above. Supervisor statements should complement the references, commenting on the project’s fit with the supervisor’s interests, and the institutional/CHASE research environments, as well as providing context for technical proposals. Candidate is notified by email when the supervisor statement is submitted.

3) Once all tasks are complete, the candidate may submit the application. The application automatically transfers to Stage 2 on submission. The candidate receives an email confirming submission.

4) Submission deadline will vary depending on institutional processes.

**Stage 2: Institutional Selection**
This stage is managed locally by CHASE academic and administrative leads. Due to factors of size and institutional policies and procedures, CHASE institutions will have different processes to arrive at the shortlist to progress to Stage 3. Please check your institutional process and deadlines.

1) Institutional selection processes will result in a shortlist to go forward to Stage 3, and will also identify the panels to which they will be submitted.

2) The administrative lead completes an online form to identify candidates to progress, and provides a list via email for the central CHASE team to double-check. Central CHASE team manually transfers these candidates to Stage 3 after 28 February 2020.

**Stage 3: CHASE selection panels**

1) Panel members attend a briefing webinar on 21 February (or view online afterwards). This will include a calibration exercise to help reviewers use the grading scale consistently.

2) Panel members log in to SM Apply and view applications assigned to their panel, and score them against the criteria.

3) The CHASE team collates all scores and circulates to panel members in advance of the panel meetings. Scores are only circulated once all panel members have ranked the applications.
4) At the panel meetings, panels consider a list of applicants ranked by average scores, and amend scores based on discussion.

5) The Management Board receives a consolidated list of applications with panel scores for each, ranked by score. The Board also receives a sample set of applications across the scoring range to assist with moderation across panels.

6) At its meeting, the Board considers the consolidated list. It receives a report from the external observer who has attended all four panel meetings, and reports from the four panel chairs. Based on these reports, and on consideration of the sample set of applications, the Board is able to moderate the scores assigned by the panels as it sees fit.

7) The Board issues a final list. AHRC funding is applied to the highest-scored applications. Institutions will contribute 1/3 of each studentship in matched funds.

8) Successful candidates will be informed of the initial outcome of the process on 7 April 2020.
### Application process – roles and responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>CHASE</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promoting the opening of application period</strong></td>
<td>Ensure relevant information on website and provide link for CHASE website.</td>
<td>Ensure relevant information on CHASE website, pointing towards institutional contact/application pages.</td>
<td>Produce template for institutional website pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application enquiries</strong></td>
<td>Log and answer enquiry (according to institutional procedure).</td>
<td>Forward any enquiries to relevant institution.</td>
<td>Automated emails will be sent to supervisors/referees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applicant registration on online system</strong></td>
<td>Provide approved applicants with access code.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technical support available from <a href="mailto:tech@fluidreview.com">tech@fluidreview.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional selection</strong></td>
<td>Download applications (if selecting based on CHASE form) and circulate.</td>
<td>Check and transfer selected applications to CHASE panel stage.</td>
<td>Emails will be sent out automatically informing applicants of outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHASE panel assessment</strong></td>
<td>Manually create logins for all panel members – send email to panel members inviting to view and rate applications.</td>
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Frequently Asked Questions

Can I apply to more than one AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)?
Yes. There is no limit on the number of DTPs to which you can apply.

What does CHASE stand for?
Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts South-East England.

Can I apply to more than one institution within CHASE?
CHASE discourages applications to multiple institutions within CHASE. Candidates are advised to research which CHASE member institution offers the best fit for their project, in terms of supervision and resources. CHASE also supports co-supervision between institutions.

Can I apply directly to CHASE?
No, you must apply through and with the support of the CHASE institution at which you have applied to study.

Does CHASE fund Master’s programmes?
No, but there are a number of non-CHASE scholarships for Masters available at the member institutions.

Can I apply if I have started a PhD?
Yes, you may still be eligible for an AHRC studentship funding providing that, at the start of the award, you will have at least 50% of your period of study remaining.

If I am unsuccessful this year, can I reapply for funding in 2020-21?
Yes, providing that, at the start of the award, you will have at least 50% of your period of study remaining.

Can I apply this year (2019-20) for deferred entry in 2021?
No, candidates seeking AHRC funding for 2021 entry should apply to the 2021 CHASE studentship competition.

How does the CHASE AHRC studentship selection process work?
There will be two stages to the selection process. The first will take place within the CHASE institution(s) to which you are applying for a PhD place during February 2020. If you are shortlisted by the CHASE institution, your application will then be submitted to a second selection process at CHASE level.

If I already have a PhD from an overseas university can I still apply?
If, by the start date of a studentship, you will have already gained or completed the requirements for a doctoral degree in any subject, however funded, you will not be eligible to receive doctoral studentship funding under any scheme.

I am from the EU, can I get a full award?
Subject to their academic eligibility, students from EU countries other than the UK are generally eligible for awards restricted to the payment of tuition fees only and no maintenance award. However if you have been resident in the UK throughout the 3–year period preceding the start of the course (including full time education) you may be eligible for a full award. See the Guidance Notes for further information on eligibility.

I’m an international student studying at a UK University / Higher Education Institution—am I eligible?
No, international students are unfortunately not eligible for AHRC funding. Please contact your institution for other funding opportunities.
SOAS and Birkbeck are part of CHASE in DTP2. Can I apply for a studentship at either of these institutions?
Yes, CHASE studentships are now available to candidates at SOAS and Birkbeck.

How many references do I need altogether?
You need two references to be completed via the application system. These can be from the same referees that supported your PhD application. One or both of your proposed supervisors can also be your referees if appropriate. Further information about what is needed to support your CHASE funding application can be found in the Guidance Notes.

When will I know if I have funding?
CHASE will inform all applicants of the outcome by 7 April 2020.

Is there an appeals process?
The decision of the CHASE Management Board is final and there is no recourse to any further appeal process.

Does the CHASE DTP promote interdisciplinary research?
Yes, we welcome proposals that work between disciplines.

What makes a good application?
Please see our Guidance Notes and discuss with your supervisor.

Is my personal information secure on the CHASE application system?
The system is UK GDPR compliant.

Does CHASE offer London weighting for stipends?
As per the Research Councils Training Grant Guide, CHASE offers London weighting to eligible students who are studying at London institutions (Birkbeck, SOAS, Courtauld Institute or Goldsmiths). It is not applicable where students are studying at other institutions but choosing to live in London.

Version tracker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>
Annex A: Sample posting to subject mailing list

Subject: CHASE AHRC PhD Studentships at [institution]

The Department of [department] at [institution] invites applications for October 2020 entry to our PhD programme.

[institution] is part of the CHASE AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership (alongside The Courtauld Institute of Art, the Universities of East Anglia, Essex, Kent and Sussex, Goldsmiths, University of London, Birkbeck, University of London and SOAS University of London [delete your own institution!]) and successful applicants for PhD study will be able to apply for studentship funding.

Our intellectual environment fosters the problem-driven and cross- and interdisciplinary research vital to addressing the new challenges of a world shaped by the speed of technological innovation and global change. Understanding and promoting the value of human culture and creativity in addressing such challenges is central to the CHASE vision of postgraduate research and professional development.

We support discipline-based projects, but also specialise in interdisciplinary research and research in emerging fields of study and creative practice. Our research and training environment encourages our doctoral students to develop interdisciplinary methodologies and to explore how to integrate their research with developments in digital technologies. In addition, our network of partnerships with leading arts and humanities organisations and creative industries provides an outstanding resource for future CHASE scholars.

Applications for funding will be considered by [institution] with the best applicants put forward to four CHASE selection panels. Applications will be considered on a competitive basis.

For UK students, these awards cover both fees and maintenance, and for EU residents awards are on a fees only basis. The funding will cover professional development opportunities, including the enhancement of public engagement skills and placements with CHASE partner organisations in the UK and overseas.

To be considered for one of these awards, please note that you need to have applied to a PhD programme by 13 January 2020. We encourage you to contact us as early as possible to discuss your proposal.

For any enquiries to the PhD programme of the Department of [department] please contact the PhD admissions tutor, [admission tutor name and email]; and to see staff expertise please consult our website [URL for staff directory].

For full details of the subject areas covered, and how to apply, please see the CHASE website: www.chase.ac.uk
## Annex B: Grade descriptors for use by CHASE panels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Selection criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reviewers should consider the application’s excellence in the field of study, not just against applications submitted for this particular panel meeting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Research proposal (note: this category is double-weighted)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Preparedness for research</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Suitability of research environment</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>The proposal has merit but falls short in relation to originality, methodology or literature review. This is not a priority for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>The proposal does not display originality and there are flaws in the methodology or literature review. This should not be funded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>The proposal has significant and serious flaws such that it should not be funded.</td>
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