Studentships in the Arts and Humanities
AHRC CHASE and Faculty-Funded Studentships
The Open University

FURTHER PARTICULARS

AHRC CHASE FUNDING

The Open University is a member of the Consortium for the Humanities and Arts South-East England (CHASE), which is offering up to 75 studentships across the consortium for entry in October 2018. Applications for studentships are welcome in any of the discipline areas of the Faculty: Art History, Classical Studies, Creative Writing, English, Ethnography and Anthropology, History, Music, Political Science and International Studies, Philosophy and Religious Studies.

The deadline is noon 10 January 2018.

CHASE studentships are available for part-time or full-time study and to UK-based or EU students. EU students are eligible for fees only, while applicants from the UK also have an annual stipend set at Research Councils UK rates. Applicants should look carefully at the AHRC eligibility requirements before making an application.

The standard full-time stipend rate for 2018-19 has not yet been confirmed. In 2017-18 it is £14,553.

Candidates are strongly advised to make informal contact with potential supervisors in the Faculty prior to making a formal application. CHASE applicants should go through the standard Open University application process, with submission of the application form no later than 10 January. Early application is strongly encouraged.

Please indicate on the application form that you wish to be considered for CHASE studentship funding. Once applicants have been considered for admission to the Open University, selected Open University applicants will be contacted with further information about the additional application process for CHASE funding. This is via a further consortium competition in February-March 2018.

The other members of CHASE are: Goldsmiths, University of London; The Courtauld Institute of Art; SOAS; Birkbeck; and the Universities of Sussex, Essex, East Anglia and Kent. For general information about CHASE and to view a sample CHASE application form, please visit: http://www.chase.ac.uk/
Faculty-funded Studentships

The Open University is able to offer some fully funded studentships (at RCUK rates—see above) and tuition waivers for full-time or part-time PhD students. The number of these is dependent on available funding at the time of consideration. EU and overseas applicants will be considered for full awards. Applicants should meet the university’s PhD residency requirements. All applicants will be considered for any available funding.

Research in the Arts and Humanities at The Open University

Open University research engages with some of the major issues facing contemporary society. Via our presence in the nations and regions, augmented by our close links with the BBC and other media outlets, our research informs public opinion and policy, and promotes debate and engagement with key questions of the day.

The Open University offers an intellectually exciting research environment at its Walton Hall campus in Milton Keynes, where the main University facilities are sited. This environment is supported by a network of national offices and a Virtual Research Environment bringing together PhD students from across the country.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences is internationally recognized for innovative research across the humanities and arts. Much work is focused on the United Kingdom (with strong interests in the national histories and cultures of Ireland, Scotland and Wales) but there is also considerable expertise relating to continental Europe, Africa and the Indian subcontinent. Several major AHRC- and ESRC-funded projects are based in the Faculty.

There is a strong vision for developing successful interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, including in the Digital Humanities, and a commitment to ensuring that our research effectively informs our teaching and wider knowledge exchange with cultural and heritage partners.

In the Research Excellence Framework in 2014, Open University departments in the arts and humanities scored very highly: 68% of our research (as an average) was considered to be ‘internationally excellent’ or ‘world-leading’. In History and English this was 76%, in Art History and Design it was 86%, and in Music 94%. For details of REF2014 results please see: http://results.ref.ac.uk/Results/ByHei/1.

The Open University’s freely-accessible repository of research publications, Open Research Online, is now one of the largest university repositories of its kind in the UK. It averages more than 40,000 individual site visits per month, and has had more than 1.6 million visitors (from 200 countries) since 2006. It includes more than 15,275 Open University research outputs. The University’s iTunesU site was launched in 2008 and includes research content. There have been more than 58 million discrete content downloads from that site, while Open University content on YouTube has reached more than 6.7 million visitors.
Doctoral Studies at The Open University

The Open University has an extensive doctoral studies programme, with over 1,000 current postgraduate research students (c.570 studying full-time, the rest studying part-time and combining research degrees with work). The University has therefore developed a rigorous yet flexible portfolio of skills training for postgraduate research students. The programme has a clear focus on transferable skills.

The Faculty currently has over 180 postgraduate research students, registered either for a PhD or for an MPhil prior to doctoral study. Of these about a quarter are registered for full-time study and the rest are part-time.

Students will be assigned two supervisors from among members of the academic staff. For more information about the interests of staff and current students, please see: http://fass.open.ac.uk/people and navigate to your discipline pages.

The Open University Research School provides an induction programme for new research students and a training programme for students. The student will receive training in (for example): bibliographical databases and other IT skills and in managing a research project through its different stages. The Faculty then provides additional study skills training days focussed on the particular needs of arts students. Students will also get access to the Open University’s world-class library with particular strength in online resources.

Candidates with studentships will have access to desk space in Milton Keynes.

Student progress is regularly monitored through six-monthly reports. At the end of the first year students undergo a thorough probation review process and mini-viva, and their continued registration is conditional on a satisfactory outcome. For further information see the research degree prospectus, which can be requested via email from http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/index.htm

Framing a Studentship Proposal

You are strongly advised first to consult someone with relevant interests in the department with which you wish to be affiliated. Potential supervisors expect to exchange ideas with applicants to help develop the research proposal before submission of the application.

When framing a research proposal, you should initially conduct a survey of existing work in your chosen field. When writing your proposal, there is no set format, although the proposal itself should not be longer than 1,500 words at most. You should also make sure that you include:

1. The title of your project
2. A clear summary of the proposed research. Drawing on your own review of the literature already existing in your field, you need to set out the questions you wish to pose and answer. Your summary should also cover the following points:
   - Why is this an important subject? (A thesis needs to add something to the sum of our knowledge – how would yours do this?)
   - What is new about your thesis (this could be new questions posed, new sources previously not used, a new approach etc.)
• How does your thesis relate to other publications in the field? Do you plan to confirm certain points of view, or to refute them?
• What sources might you need to use?
• Can you give an indication of the methodology and time frame you will propose for your research?

3. A bibliography. You do not need to have read everything you list here, but you should give an indication of your awareness of the primary and secondary sources available to you for future research

CHASE

CHASE will cover tuition fees for UK/EU students for 3 years (full time) and will pay a maintenance grant at the national standard level to UK-based students. In 2017-18 this is £14,553 per year. Part-time candidates are also eligible. CHASE offers considerable training and project-related research costs for the CHASE cohort and for individual students funded by CHASE. In addition it is expected that the student will have access to training provision across the consortium. CHASE also has a special section of the VRE, allowing networking with other students across the member institutions.

The CHASE application system requires a successful application to the host institution first. Following this, applicants will be given login details for the online CHASE form.

Open University Admission Requirements

It is essential that the candidate has:

• Good academic qualifications in an arts and humanities subject (ie a 1st or 2:1 degree from a UK institution or equivalent from a non-UK institution and/or a Master’s degree)
• Demonstrable ability to produce high-level academic writing
• Evidence of the self-discipline and organizational skills required to complete a major academic project in three, or at most four, years
• Willingness to participate in the broader intellectual community of The Open University (and, if selected, CHASE community as well)

In addition, it is desirable that the successful candidate has:

• a Master’s degree in a relevant subject

Please apply on the standard research degree application form (which can be downloaded from the Research Degrees Prospectus available online at http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/how-to-apply

For specific information about AHRC terms and conditions, including eligibility rules, please see: http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/skills/phdstudents/fundingandtraining/training-grants-and-training-grant-funding-guides/
For advice on Open University applications, please contact the Research Degrees Team FASS-Research-Degrees@open.ac.uk. As already mentioned, applicants are also strongly advised to contact potential supervisors within the chosen department prior to making a formal application.

If seeking information about a department or potential supervisor, please look at the relevant departmental websites, or contact the academic support indicating your subject area in the title of your email: FASS-PhD-Applications@open.ac.uk.

CLOSING DATE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS: NOON 10 JANUARY 2018

*Equal Opportunity is University Policy.*