The Asa Briggs PhD Studentship in History
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
The Open University

FURTHER PARTICULARS
The Open University’s Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences is pleased to offer the inaugural Asa Briggs Studentship in History. Made possible by the extraordinary generosity of one of the University’s alumni, this three-year full-time studentship benefits from an enhanced stipend of £17,000 p.a., research funding of £1,000 p.a., and the provision of a laptop computer. Tuition fees are also covered by the award. The successful applicant will be supervised by the current Asa Briggs Professor of History, Dr Paul Lawrence, in conjunction with another historian.

While applications are welcome in any aspect of British history from 1750, the university would be particularly keen to receive applications which pertain to the areas below:

- Social and urban history, broadly defined
- Criminal justice history
- Broadcasting history, particularly the relationship between history and television.

The deadline is **noon 11 January 2017**.

The Asa Briggs Studentship is available for full-time study and to UK-based or EU students. The full-time enhanced stipend rate for 2017-18 is £17,000.

Candidates are strongly advised to make informal contact with Professor Lawrence and/or other potential supervisors in History prior to making a formal application. If contacting Professor Lawrence please email paul.lawrence@open.ac.uk using the subject line ‘Asa Briggs Studentship Enquiry’. The contact details of other members of the department can be found via [http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/history/staff.shtml](http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/history/staff.shtml). Early application is strongly encouraged.

The Open University is a member of the AHRC CHASE consortium, which also funds arts and humanities studentships. Please indicate on the application form if you wish to be considered for the full range of funding opportunities available,
including CHASE or internal funding, as well as for this Asa Briggs Studentship. Interviews will take place in early 2017. Applicants should meet the university’s PhD application requirements (as outlined below) and if successful will need to live within reasonable travelling distance of the university.

**Research in History at The Open University**

The Open University is internationally recognized for innovative research across the Arts and Humanities. History is a particularly strong subject area with over 75% of its research rated as ‘internationally excellent’ or ‘world leading’ in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework. History hosts a number of major AHRC- and ESRC-funded research projects. It has a strong commitment to cross-disciplinary work, to national and international public engagement, and to creative partnerships with a range of cultural organisations. Further details of History research at the university can be found via the link below:

http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/history/research.shtml

**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 an online Graduate School Network bringing together PhD students from across the country.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences is internationally recognized for innovative research across its subject areas. 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. 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. The University’s
iTunesU site has had over 58 million content downloads, while OU 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 Faculty currently has over 170 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: Research Areas and Academic Profiles: [http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/history/research.shtml](http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/history/research.shtml)

The Open University Graduate 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 and humanities students.

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 downloaded from [http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/index.htm](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?

• What are 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

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.

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/research/research-degrees/index.php. For general advice on application procedures please contact fass-research-degrees@open.ac.uk

Completed applications to be emailed to: FASS-PhD-Applications@open.ac.uk no later than noon on 11 January 2017