The ‘Funder Quick Guides’ are intended to provide a brief introduction to key funders. They provide an overview of the funder’s strategy, interests and approach to funding; in addition to embedded links to more detailed information about the funder.

If you would like more information or support about applying to AHRC, please contact rso.caahss@ed.ac.uk

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1. Overview
The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) was established in current incarnation in 2005 (previously it was a Research Board), and is supported by the government through the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. It is one of seven Research Councils in the UK. Its annual budget for financial year 15/16 was £103m, of which approximately £62m was invested in research with a further £36m spent on postgraduate support.

2. Vision and Strategy
The AHRC’s vision is to:

- Fund excellent research projects not fully supported from other sources, including those of field-defining or transformative potential and deploying interdisciplinary and thematic approaches
- Take an overview of research in the arts and humanities in order to support new areas and important but vulnerable disciplines
- Provide opportunities for outstanding researchers at key stages of their careers to develop intellectual leadership in their own disciplines and beyond
- Support postgraduate research to ensure that capability across the disciplines is maintained and the best possible training is provided
- Enable the exchange of knowledge to deliver civic, cultural and economic benefits
- On behalf of the UK, develop international opportunities for further arts and humanities research

Its current Strategic Plan runs from 2013-2018 and is structured around six priorities which are intended to deliver their vision and fall under the headings:
1. Research
2. People
3. Partnerships and Knowledge exchange
4. International
5. Advocacy and leadership
6. Savings and Efficiency

The current four year Delivery Plan 2016/17-2019/20 provides the ‘how’ of the strategic plan, and is a valuable source of insight for the funding plans for the years ahead. For example, three strategic priority areas for support in the Plan are design, heritage and modern languages and we have/are seeing themed and directive calls that directly respond to this.
3. **Disciplines:**
AHRC supports around 50 disciplines, which are assessed under four panels:

- **Panel A:** history, philosophy, religious studies and law
- **Panel B:** contemporary arts practice, theory in art, design and media, architecture, visual arts, creative writing, music, dance, drama and theatre studies
- **Panel C:** art history, conservation of art and textiles, dictionaries and databases, cultural geography, archaeology, classics and ancient history and library, information and museum studies
- **Panel D:** journalism, media and communication studies, American studies, cultural studies and popular culture, gender and sexuality, life writing, literary and cultural theory, post-colonial studies, text editing and bibliography, English language and literature, linguistics and modern languages.

There are also disciplines where the AHRC and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC - see separate guide) share interests depending on the nature of the research being undertaken including areas studies, communications, cultural and media studies, cultural policy and management, education, gender studies, human geography, diplomacy and international relations, law, philosophy, religious studies, science and technology studies, social anthropology.

Further details about the AHRC disciplinary remit can be found in the [Research Funding Guide](#) (also available as a PDF) and where research interests are shared or there are concerns about fit to funder, please contact us at rso.cahss@ed.ac.uk for advice.

4. **Research Scheme Funding Allocation and Statistics:**
As an indication of the way the AHRC’s research funding is distributed UK-wide, in financial year 15/16 according to their Annual Accounts, of the £62.5m spent on research:

- 56% (£34.7m) was spent on responsive research grants,
- 31% (£19.3m) on themed research,
- 9% (£5.7m) on knowledge transfer.

A further £541k (0.8%) was invested in international engagement and £300k (0.5%) on cross-council responsive mode awards.
Below is a table showing the applications and awards made to the Responsive Mode schemes from across the UK showing success rate (based on applications to number of awards). The success rates are considerably higher than many schemes offered by other funders and whilst 25% of research grants (standard) are funded, it receives by far the highest number of applications (219), accounting for around 64% of the total value of awards.

**Competition Statistics for 15/16:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>No. of Applications</th>
<th>Value of Applications (£)</th>
<th>No. of Awards</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
<th>Value of Awards (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Grants (Standard)</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>101,788,309</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28,207,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowships</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10,721,312</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>5,878,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowships - Early Career</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>9,384,361</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>2,705,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-on Funding - I&amp;E</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>5,458,037</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>2,548,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Grants (Early Career)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5,217,324</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>2,902,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Networking</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>4,755,102</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1,731,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>612</strong></td>
<td><strong>137,324,445</strong></td>
<td><strong>202</strong></td>
<td><strong>33%</strong></td>
<td><strong>43,973,090</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **Key Schemes**

**AHRC Research Grants – Standard**
The scheme supports well-defined research projects and encourages collaboration of all kinds.

- Projects must have both a PI and at least one Co-I (it does not support individual scholarship), spending a minimum (average) of 4 hours per week on the project.
- As of 1st Jan 2017, you may include international investigators as Co-Is.

**Eligibility:**
- PI must have PhD or equivalent experience
- PI & Co-I must have an existing contract (or an institutional commitment) that extends beyond the duration of the grant.

**Budget:** £50,000 to £1,000,000 (fEC) with a duration of up to 60 months / 5 years

- Note that PI and Co-Is must average at least 4 hours a week on the project

**Internal Process:** There will be a School peer review process. Contact your Research Office.

**Deadline:** Open - no fixed deadlines (note assessment takes c.30 weeks)

**Link:** [AHRC Research Grants – Standard Route](#)

**AHRC Research Grants – Early Career Routes**

This research grants route from the AHRC is intended to enable academics in the early stages of their career to build and lead their first research team around a well-defined project. Projects must have both a PI and a Co-I (Co-I does not need to be an ECR).

**Eligibility:** Within 8 years of PhD award or equivalent or 6 years of first academic appointment, be a salaried member of staff.

**Budget:** £50,000 to £250,000 (fEC) with a duration of up to 60 months / 5 years.

**Internal Process:** There will be a School peer review process. Contact your Research Office.

**Deadline:** Open - no fixed deadlines (note assessment takes c.30 weeks)

**Link:** [AHRC Research Grants – Early Career](#)
AHRC Leadership Fellows – Standard
The AHRC wants this scheme to not only lead to a significant individual work but to enhance research leadership and capacity across the arts and humanities by mid-career and senior academics. Therefore in addition to focused individual work, there must also include time for collaborative activities that will have impact on the relevant discipline and beyond.

**Eligibility:** A salaried member of staff with at least 1 year’s length of service at the University of Edinburgh prior to submission of the proposal, and which extends beyond the end of the Fellowship. Evidence of institutional support is required.

**Budget:** £50,000 to £250,000 with a duration of between 6 and 18 months. Please note, however, that you can only work full-time on the Fellowship for up to 12 months; after that, you need to be part-time.

**Internal Process:** Internal peer review will be required. Check with your Research Office for process.

**Deadline:** Open – no fixed deadlines

**Link:** [AHRC Leadership Fellowships - Standard](#)

AHRC Leadership Fellows – Early Career
The Fellowship scheme emphasises the importance of research leadership potential for successful applicants. The scheme is intended to support research of the highest quality in arts and humanities and the development of academics able to take a leadership role in their field, therefore collaborative activities are very important.

**Eligibility:** 2-8 years post-doc, a salaried member of staff with at least 1 year’s length of service at the University of Edinburgh prior to submission of the proposal, and which extends beyond the end of the Fellowship. Mentoring support will also be required.

**Budget:** maximum £250,000 with a duration of between 6 and 24 months.

**Internal Process:** Check with your Research Office for peer review processes.

**Deadline:** Open - no fixed deadlines

**Link:** [AHRC Leadership Fellowships – Early Career](#)

AHRC Research Networking
This scheme is intended to facilitate discussion, idea and debate between researchers and stakeholders on a specific problem. The interactions could take the form of workshops, seminars, networks or other events. Proposals need to explain the approach taken and clearly justify the value of bringing the participants together.

**Eligibility:** Must involve collaboration with at least one other organization.

**Budget:** maximum £30,000 with a duration of up to 2 years, with an additional £15,000 available for international participants.

**Internal Process:** Check with your Research Office for peer review processes.

**Deadline:** Open - no fixed deadlines

**Link:** [AHRC Research Networking](#)

AHRC Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement
This is to support innovative and creative engagement with new audiences and stakeholders to stimulate pathways to impact and should show engagement with potential beneficiaries in developing the project. It has two streams one that support activities under £30k and one that supports those over £30k (max £100k), with the former for shorter or high-risk activities.

**Eligibility:** This scheme can support follow on work from research projects funded by any of the Research Councils so long as the proposed work fits the remit of the AHRC. It does not support supplementary research.

**Budget:** maximum £100,000 with a duration of up to 12 months.
Internal Process: Check with your Research Office for peer review processes.
Deadline: Open - no fixed deadlines
Link: AHRC Follow on Funding for Impact and Engagement

The AHRC has five themes under which some directive and themed research calls have been and are being delivered under the current strategic plan:

- Care for the Future: Thinking Forward through the Past
- Digital Transformations
- Science in Culture
- Translating Cultures
- Connected Communities (the cross-council initiative which AHRC leads on)

6. Highlight Notices
Highlight notices are applied to existing AHRC Schemes in order to encourage proposals in specified areas of strategic interest to AHRC and to engage the arts and humanities research community in the development of these initiatives. Highlight notices are applied for a set period of time, for example 12 months and the descriptions are usually intended to guide inquiry rather than prescribe individual research topics. At time of writing this guide there are highlight notices on the Research Networks scheme and Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement Scheme both expire in April 2017.

7. AHRC and Impact
The Research councils define impact as the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. In the context of the AHRC then it can be regarded as the influence research has on an individual, a community, policy development, products or services. It does not necessarily refer to direct financial impact, but can be through a wide variety of types of impacts from intellectual capital to informing development in performance to social inclusion. The AHRC has a range of information available on the website (under development) relating to impact reports to case studies which highlight impact. In addition, Research Councils UK undertook a Pathways to Impact review. These resources can provide both useful guidance and inspiration.

8. Decision making
Like all the Research Councils, the AHRC relies on a rigorous peer review system that is then complemented by a dedicated panel process.

Assessment Criteria: Generally the assessment criteria for AHRC are:
- Quality and importance, including people involved
- Management of the project
- Value for money
- Outputs, dissemination and impact

Decision Making Process: The process, assuming the proposal can progress at each step, following submission is:
1. AHRC office checks (eligibility, appropriate documentation etc.)
2. Peer Review (including Technical Review if necessary)
3. PI Response to Peer Review
4. Moderating or Assessment Panel
5. Panel recommendations considered by the Director of Research

The AHRC Research Funding Guide provides an overview of both the assessment criteria and the decision making process but more information is supplied on a scheme by scheme basis where specific additional criteria apply.

Peer Review: The AHRC provides a great deal of information about the peer review process and the role of the reviewer, which may be of benefit to those submitting proposal in understanding how their proposal will be assessed and graded. The Peer Review College has over 1,500 members, including 880 academics, with each proposal receiving at least two reviews in addition to a technical review. The role of reviewers is to assess and grade the proposals, from 1 (poor) to 6 (outstanding). If the proposal scores 4 or more then feedback will be sent to the PI to facilitate the PI response. Then the proposal, reviews and the PI response will be sent to the Panels for assessment.

Panels: The Panels meet on ad hoc basis depending on demand. Moderating Panels normally make funding recommendations for schemes that operate without a deadline. They assign final grades and provide a rank order for funding. Assessment panels have a similar purpose but operate for specific schemes. It is possible to see who has served on recent panels by looking at the recent Panel meetings.

Resubmissions: – these are allowed only if they are termed an ‘office reject’ – i.e they have been rejected prior to review stage because of a failure to comply with the scheme rules (“proposal does not fall within the remit or the rules of the scheme”).

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