



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

The University of Edinburgh

Collaborative PhD Doctoral Landscape Award Competition Guidance for applicants 2027 entry



Contents

1. Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award	4
2. Why choose the University of Edinburgh?	8
3. The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub.....	9
4. Application and Selection Process	12
5. Guidance on completing the application form	14
6. Equalities Statement	16
7. Data sharing and storage	16
8. School contacts and frequently asked questions	17
9. Assessment criteria for 2027	18

1. Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award

This document provides guidance to support an application for an AHRC Collaborative PhD Doctoral Landscape Award for 2027 entry. Please read carefully in advance of completing the application.

The University of Edinburgh is offering one AHRC Collaborative PhD Doctoral Landscape Award in 2027/28. The award is only open to applicants to the **PhD in Archaeology** and the project is titled “**The Long Afterlife: Channelling practices and cadaveric agency in Medieval Scotland**”

Our funded PhD project will be a hallmark of excellence and originality, enabled by environments where excellent research is supported and conducted.

Our prestigious studentship offers a maximum of 4 years of funding with options of how to tailor the funding to suit the needs of your project and professional goals:

- Fully funded 4-year PhD studentship with a UKRI stipend of £21,805 per annum plus an additional £600 p.a to help support travel to the partner organisation
- Tuition fees
- A world-class research environment and supervisory team
- Access, via to the Doctoral Landscape Award Hub, to:
 - Cohort-responsive training;
 - Interdisciplinary, methodological and creative development through three skills development spokes: *Concepts and Critiques*, *Empirical Enquiry*, and *Creative Practice*;
 - Internships and collaborative partnerships, including engagement with the existing Knowledge Exchange Hubs *Heritage*, *Creative Economies*, *Citizenship & Policy*.

Successful applicants will be required to submit their thesis for examination within a maximum of 4 years (or part-time equivalent). Time to submit can be extended during the funded period in line with UKRI medical leave and family leave conditions and in line with UKVI visa immigration conditions.

What is a Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA)?

CDAs are intended to encourage and develop collaboration between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and non-HEI organisations and businesses.

Collaborative research studentships provide opportunities for doctoral students to gain first-hand professional experience beyond the university environment. Support provided by both HEI and non-HEI supervisors enhances the employability skills and training that a research student gains during the course of their award. It is important that the collaboration adds value to the doctoral researcher's experience and that

they are afforded real opportunities to develop career-enhancing skills in addition to an academic qualification.

Benefits of a CDA

One of the main aims of the Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme is to offer doctoral researchers enhanced benefits to their research, experience, training and skills development. Different skills will be offered, with varying contributions to be made by the University and non-HEI organisations and supervisors. The student will have the experience and challenge of working with two sets of supervisors, colleagues and working environments. A good collaborative partnership and project will be one that sets up the framework so a doctoral student can undertake the research with all the necessary support and resources readily available and with procedures in place to monitor and manage the project. Careful planning, clear lines of communication and an understanding of requirements and responsibilities by all parties should help to minimise any issues that may arise.

The studentships also encourage the establishment of longer-term links between the partners that can bring benefits to both, providing access to resources and materials, knowledge and expertise that may not otherwise have been available and also providing social, cultural and economic benefits to wider society

Partner Organisations

The Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme funds studentship projects that are developed in collaboration with external organisations across creative, heritage, third and business sectors. The CDA scheme sits within the wider AHRC Doctoral Landscape Awards with funding provided by the AHRC.

Students are fully funded to undertake their PhD, including time spent within the partner organisation. This is integral to completion of the project and is not an optional extra or internship.

There is no financial requirement of the partner. As part of their commitment to the awards partners are required to:

- Be fully engaged in the project as an active participant for the entire duration of the PhD.
- Host and support the PhD candidate within their organisation for a period of 6 -18 months, depending on project requirements. The duration and pattern of attendance within the host organisation will be dependent on the individual project and should be agreed by all parties at the outset.
- The host has the option to contribute funding towards the student's research training support costs. This would be appropriate where the placement incurs additional costs over and above the £600 per year for travel which is already included in the annual stipend.
- Nominate a member of staff to work with the student over the course of the

PhD project and provide the student with appropriate desk/workspace and resources in line with standard staff arrangements and as required by the project.

- Nominate this member of staff to attend University of Edinburgh PhD supervision training.
- Engage in at least three formal meetings with the PhD student and academic supervisors each year.

Project description and background

In the study of medieval cemeteries, the “complete” skeleton has traditionally taken centre stage. Yet, across Europe, the final chapter of the funerary rite often involved the deliberate disturbance, disarticulation, and communal re-deposition of human remains: a practice known as charnelling. Whilst these processes have reshaped our understanding of death and memory in England and Continental Europe, the charnelled dead of Scotland remain largely silent. Frequently overlooked in excavation reports or deemed too complex for standard analysis, these fragmentary assemblages represent a significant blind spot in our knowledge of medieval Scottish society, belief systems and cemetery management.

As a Collaborative Doctoral Award “The Long Afterlife” offers a unique opportunity to presence the “forgotten dead”. Working at the intersection of osteoarchaeology, biomolecular archaeology and spatial analysis, the successful candidate will investigate the (after)life cycle of charnel and disarticulated deposits in medieval Scotland. The project moves beyond osteobiographies of individuals to explore the collective fate of the dead, asking how and why communities curated their ancestors in this way, and what these practices reveal about the changing relationship between the living and the dead during a key time in Scotland’s history.

Delivered in close collaboration with National Museums Scotland (NMS), this studentship places the researcher at the heart of a world-class collection. The project will focus on three nationally significant cemetery assemblages curated by NMS: Auldham, the Isle of May and Whithorn Priory. The student will benefit from direct access to NMS’s newly renovated human remains facility and expert curatorial support, whilst also embedded within the University of Edinburgh’s School of History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA).

The doctoral researcher will be tasked with developing an innovative framework to analyse these complex, commingled assemblages. This will involve:

- Re-assessing existing cemetery data to identify patterns of post-depositional treatment and cemetery organisation.

- Applying cutting-edge scientific methods to establish chronologies and reconstruct the lifeways of disarticulated individuals.
- Developing new protocols for the recording and interpretation of fragmentary human remains that can inform future commercial and heritage practice.

Beyond the academic contribution, this project seeks to engage with the ethical and public dimensions of studying human remains. The student will work with key stakeholders to explore how we remember, interpret and care for the dead in the past and present. This is a project for a candidate who is not only technically proficient but also eager to shape the future of bioarchaeological practice and public engagement in Scotland.

Applicant prior experience and key attributes

We are seeking a highly motivated applicant with a strong foundation in human osteoarchaeology and a demonstrable interest in medieval mortuary practices.

Essential Requirements:

- Applicants must hold, or be nearing completion of, an MSc (or equivalent) in Human Osteoarchaeology or a closely cognate field.
- A strong academic track record in archaeological science or bioarchaeology at the Masters level is expected.
- Candidates must demonstrate the ability to work independently with human skeletal remains, including the analysis of both articulated and disarticulated assemblages.

Desirable Skills and Attributes:

- Familiarity with, or a strong aptitude for learning, advanced analytical techniques is highly desirable. This includes Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for spatial analysis, statistical modelling (e.g. using R/Python), and an understanding of biomolecular methods such as stable isotope analysis, radiocarbon dating etc.
- An interest in medieval archaeology, funerary theory, and the ethical curation of human remains are key. Candidates who can articulate the theoretical implications of studying fragmented or commingled populations, rather than individual osteobiographies will be well-suited to this project.
- Since this is a Collaborative Doctoral Award with the National Museums of Scotland, the successful candidate must be eager to work across institutional boundaries. We are looking for an individual who values engagement with stakeholders, and who is keen to develop skills in knowledge exchange and public engagement alongside their academic research.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills are required to convey complex scientific findings to both academic and non-specialist audiences.

The supervisory team consists of Dr Sam Leggett (HCA Edinburgh), Dr Sophie Newman (HCA Edinburgh) and Dr Jess Thompson (NMS).

Fee Status

The Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award is open to home and international applicants. The University is only able to make one international award to the Doctoral Landscape Award scheme each year, to include candidates nominated in the Open Competition and the Collaborative Competition. If an international candidate is nominated for a Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award, the candidate will be considered for funding alongside any other international candidates for the Doctoral Landscape Open Competition. Where the award cannot be made to the Collaborative Award candidate, the supervisory team can nominate a home candidate from their reserve list.

PhD study

Current PhD students are not eligible for this funding.

2. Why choose the University of Edinburgh?

We are a vibrant and diverse community of researchers, committed to producing outstanding research that enriches our culture and society, and enhances justice, well-being and sustainability across the globe. As a global powerhouse for the Arts and Humanities, the University of Edinburgh is a destination of choice for research students and staff who are curious and want to better understand our complex and changing world. We offer rich opportunities for collaboration across a broad spectrum of disciplines to advance knowledge that addresses major societal and global challenges.

Our PhD graduates will be future leaders, committed to generating and mobilising new insights across scholarly, professional and public communities. They will be capable, caring, ethical & reflective professionals, and their work will demonstrate the value of arts and humanities to society, industry and other disciplines.

The School of History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA) at the University of Edinburgh hosts one of the leading centres for human osteoarchaeology in the UK, offering a dynamic and supportive research environment. The School benefits from established, long-term collaborations with the National Museums Scotland, providing students with unparalleled access to world-class collections and facilities, including the newly renovated Scotland's Archaeological Human Remains Collection (SAHRC) at the National Museums Collection Centre. Our School is home to experts in biomolecular archaeology, funerary taphonomy, and medieval studies, fostering a cross-disciplinary approach that integrates scientific methods with historical enquiry. PhD researchers in HCA are embedded within vibrant research communities such as the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (CMEMS, formerly CMRS), and the One Health Archaeology group. Our PhD students have access to state-of-the-art laboratories for isotopic and osteological analysis and dedicated computing facilities for spatial and statistical modelling.

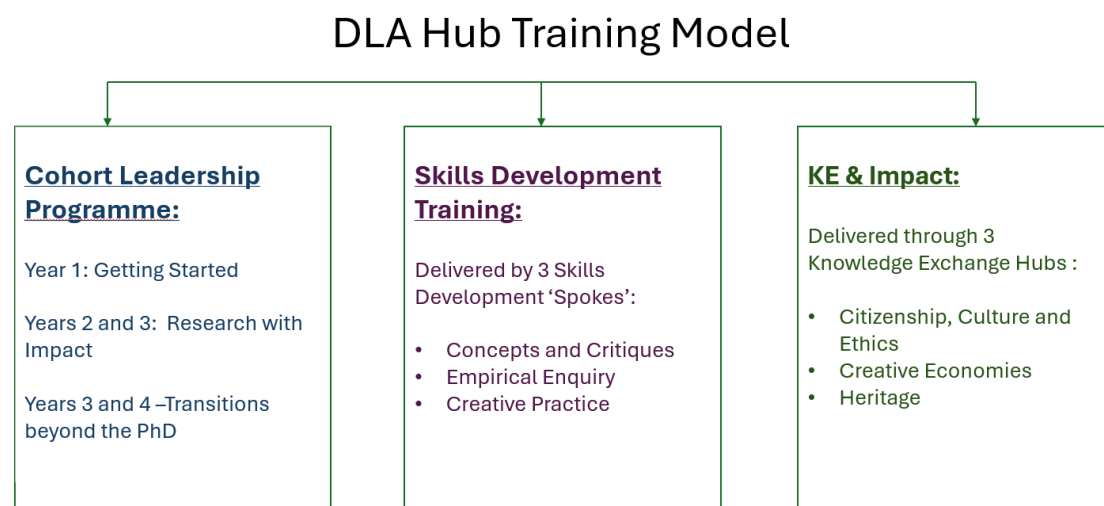
3. The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub

The Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities (SGSAH) is the home of the AHRC Doctoral Landscape Award Hub. This Hub offers collective doctoral training and development activities to the funded cohort of Doctoral Landscape Award (DLA) PhD studentship holders, sometimes in partnership with broader communities of Arts & Humanities doctoral researchers across [all 17 of SGSAH's member Higher Education Institutions \(HEIs\)](#). More details of the projected training are provided below, in order to assist applicants in developing their training and development plans.

Please note that some details of the Hub activity may change. Any changes will be clearly flagged via the SGSAH website.

The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Training and Development Overview

The DLA Hub training offer is projected to comprise of three key and mandatory components, each complementing and enhancing the offer in individual HEIs, leveraging collaboration within the DLA Hub and through the wider SGSAH consortium. The components are:



The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Cohort Leadership Programme

The Cohort Leadership Programme will together DLA award-holders as a Scotland-wide cohort, spanning universities and disciplines. This will foster collaboration, allowing students to benefit from sector-leading Arts & Humanities training from academics across all Hub universities, and to build networks. A stepped training and development programme will be delivered via a range of in-person, hybrid and online

events, including short sessions, day-long and residential events. The Cohort Leadership Programme will build thematically through successive years, with combinations of year specific and multi-year activity, the latter cascading experience across cohorts. These will be delivered through a three-step framework:

- **Year 1 GETTING STARTED: inducts students to the Hub and enables them to embark on their PhD**

The centrepiece will include a residential event held early in the academic year, introducing Year 1 students to the Hub and its full range of training activities, providing cohort-building opportunities, and discussing training needs and priorities. Student representatives from Years 2 and 3 will be invited to speak about their experience of the Hub (or, in Year 1, from existing DTP2 students) and of using Hub funding to develop student-led cohort activities. This induction will complement a broader SGSAH Welcome event, which will highlight the wider opportunities available to all doctoral researchers in Scotland through SGSAH, supported by the Scottish Funding Council and extending to SGSAH's full HEI membership.

- **Year 2-3 RESEARCH WITH IMPACT: focuses on honing the skills to deliver the core PhD research and realise wider societal benefits**

All cohorts will come together for a residential event timed as part of the broader SGSAH Summer School, enabling wider networking opportunities across DLA cohorts and beyond. Topics covered will include three-minute thesis presentations, research internships, knowledge exchange (KE) and other opportunities. Year 2 and 3 students will share their research and KE activities via posters, stands, and short presentations.

- **Year 3-4 TRANSITIONS BEYOND THE PHD: in the final two years, the Cohort Leadership Programme pivots to focus on future careers and outputs within and beyond academia**

Events in Years 3 and 4 will cement networking; support planning for postdoctoral career pathways, both academic and non-academic; prepare for submission, examination and any post-examination corrections; focus on outputs (including publishing) from the thesis and creative practice; introduce postdoctoral networks and opportunities; and facilitate alumni connections.

The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Skills Development Training

In addition to core training for the entire cohort, the Hub will also offer specific grounding in Arts & Humanities research skills. This offer will complement the disciplinary expertise and individual training plans developed and delivered within the University of Edinburgh. It will be structured via three 'Spokes', allowing the Hub to

respond to cohort needs while maintaining consistency and promoting awareness of the full scale and scope of Arts & Humanities research. The 'Spokes' are:

- **Concepts and Critiques:** training focused on the ideas, methods, concepts, and frameworks that underpin research. This element of the programme will hone researchers' ability to work confidently, fluidly, and in a cross-disciplinary manner.
- **Empirical Enquiry:** training to develop the cutting-edge skills necessary for data gathering for Arts & Humanities research, whether through archival enquiry, working with images and objects, through surveys or interviews, or quantification, within ethical frameworks.
- **Creative Practice:** training exploring all forms of creative practice as research and creative methodologies, including writing, composing and performing arts within creative industry contexts.

All disciplinary areas hosting DLA students will be involved in developing events, and the Hub will provide funding to enable students to co-develop training events with staff. Students will be required to attend at least one 'spoke' training event each year and encouraged to participate in more.

Events will be delivered through a combination of online and face-to-face activities, ensuring that training is accessible and inclusive to students with different needs and in different geographical locations.

The continuing training activities delivered [by SGSAH's 11 Discipline+ Catalysts](#) will also appear in the programme of training linked to the Spokes.

The SGSAH Summer School is a well-established flagship for Arts & Humanities training in Scotland, available to any Arts & Humanities PhD researcher in member HEIs and delivered through a blend of online and face-to-face training. [Spring into Methods](#), SGSAH's collaboration with SGSSS, will also continue to offer innovative methodological training beyond disciplinary boundaries and beyond the Arts & Humanities.

The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Knowledge Exchange and Impact

Knowledge Exchange (KE) and Impact will form a key strand of the Hub training offer. SGSAH's three [KE Hubs \(Citizenship, Culture and Ethics; Creative Economies; Heritage\)](#), offer routes into collaboration with external partners from public, private and third sector organisations, including via internships and the artist residencies programme. This training will act as a springboard for collaboration with key national institutions and stakeholders, including SGSAH's ten core partners (BBC Scotland, British Council, Built Environment Forum Scotland, Creative Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland, Interface, National Museums Scotland, National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Parliament, V&A), and with research centres and institutes in

HEIs across Scotland. You may wish to consult the [list](#) of other organisations that SGSAH has worked with.

DLA PhD researchers will attend at least one KE and Impact event per year, benefitting from insights and expertise drawn from Arts & Humanities stakeholders across Scotland to co-create and translate their research into impact, societal engagement and employability.

The Doctoral Landscape Award Hub: Responsive Model

From the point of studentship awards, the University of Edinburgh will offer the Hub an initial assessment of their students' training needs aligned to the three Skills Development Training Spokes, KE and Impact activity and Cohort Leadership Programme. The Year 1 induction and Year 2/3 events will then allow a more detailed dialogue between the Hub leadership and the cohorts, enabling students to co-develop the training offer in relation to their needs.

Subject areas hosting DLA students will contribute to Skills Development Training, ensuring a close alignment to DLA student needs, while also extending responses to those needs across the cohort and the wider Scottish HE landscape.

SGSAH will maintain [Cohort Development Fund](#) opportunities for students to design and deliver cohort-level training opportunities. These opportunities will align with and be promoted through the Skills Development Training Spokes and KE Hubs.

4. Application and Selection Process

Please read this guidance and the assessment criteria thoroughly before applying and ensure you are reading the most recent version.

The completed Doctoral Landscape Award funding application must be emailed to pgawards@ed.ac.uk by 5pm 18th January 2027. Late applications will not be accepted.

You must also submit a PhD Archaeology admission application for 2027/28 by 5pm 5th January 2027. The admission application will require certified copies of your degree certificates and transcripts and references. For the research proposal section, please include the title of the project 'The Long Afterlife: Charnelling practices and cadaveric agency in Medieval Scotland'.

Current PhD students are not eligible for this funding.

Selection Process and Timeline

PhD admission deadline	5 th January 2027
CDA funding application deadline	18 th January 2027
Supervisors interview and nominate a successful candidate.	W/C 15 th February 2027
Nominated candidate submits a Nomination Form to College	17 th March 2027
College Review Panel consider candidate alongside candidates for the Doctoral Landscape Open Competition.	By early April 2027
Funding outcomes sent to nominated candidates	By late April 2027
PhD start date	September 2027

Candidates will be interviewed by the full supervisory team, including the partner supervisor. The recruited candidate must meet University of Edinburgh PhD entry requirements for 2027/28. Unless required by the School, a PhD application is not mandatory during the recruitment process. If awarded the funding, the candidate will be asked to apply for admission to the University for 2027/28.

Where the top candidate is an international fee candidate, supervisors are asked to shortlist a reserve home fee candidate. Where the top candidate is a home fee candidate, supervisors can identify reserve candidates but they cannot include an international fee candidates, only home fee candidates.

The deadline to nominate the top candidate and reserve candidates is 17th March 2027. The nominated candidate should complete the **CDA Candidate Nomination form** and submit it to pgawards@ed.ac.uk by the nomination deadline. The nomination form must have the approval of the School PGR Director.

In April 2027, the College Review Panel will consider the nominated candidate alongside the nominations for the two Doctoral Landscape Open Competition Awards for 2027 entry.

From across both the Open and Collaborative competitions, only one international candidate can be awarded the funding. If the top candidate nominated for the Collaborative PhD studentship is an international candidate and is not selected for funding by the College Review Panel, then the top home reserve candidate will be considered for the Collaborative PhD award. College will ask the top home reserve candidate to complete a **CDA Candidate Nomination form** so that the candidate can be considered by the panel.

From late April 2027, the College Postgraduate Research Student team will issue the outcomes to all candidates and will issue the award letters to successful candidates. If the award holder has not yet made a PhD application for 2027/28, they will be asked to do so.

Successful applicants are not allowed to defer the funding to a later year of entry or take the Doctoral Landscape funding to another institution.

5. Guidance on completing the application form

Personal details

This section asks you to provide contact information. We will normally contact you by email so please ensure you use an address you check regularly, and which will be available to you until at least September 2027.

Reasonable distance

Distance PhD students are not eligible for this funding.

AHRC studentships are awarded on the condition that the doctoral researcher lives within a 'reasonable distance' from their lead university. University of Edinburgh students must attend and participate as required in all aspects of their programme of study. This includes being available for teaching sessions, assessment, examination and meeting Programme Directors or supervisors face-to-face and/or electronically. Students are expected to attend and participate in person, including during the period spent working on a dissertation or research project (with the exception of periods offered for any post-viva resubmission of PhD projects, where in-person attendance may not be required).

Fee Status

All funded PhD students, whether UK or International, will be eligible for a full award – both a stipend to support living costs and tuition fees at the home (i.e. UK) rate.

These AHRC-funded awards are governed by the terms and conditions set by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which oversees the work of Research Councils such as the AHRC. As per guidance published by UKRI in 2020, a minimum of 70% of all studentships awarded within a UKRI grant will be made to home students, while a maximum of 30% of all studentships awarded can be made to international students.

Please note that it is not a requirement for 30% of studentships to be awarded to international students, as the quality of applications will always remain the primary assessment criterion during the competition. In addition, some highly ranked international students may not be able to receive an award due to the 30% cap.

The cap on international studentships means that the University of Edinburgh can award a maximum of 1 award per year to International students (including those from EU states). The University of Edinburgh will waive the difference between the home fee and international fee for the award holder.

To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have settled status, or
- Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
- Have indefinite leave to remain or enter the UK

If an applicant does not meet the criteria above, they would be classed as an international student.

Qualifications

The AHRC expects applicants to have completed or to be studying towards a relevant Masters qualification. This section requires you to complete the year, and if appropriate, grade, of your qualifications.

We recognise that some applicants will have completed degrees which are non-standard or unclassified (i.e. Pass/Fail only). Where this is the case, applicants should still complete the Qualifications section with further information to be provided in the personal statement section of the application form.

Relevant Professional Experience (300 words maximum)

This section is intended to provide a level playing field for applicants with unrelated, dated or no Masters qualifications but who have demonstrably relevant professional experience. The Relevant Professional Experience section should therefore **only** be completed by applicants who:

- do not have and are not studying towards a Masters degree or equivalent
- or are returning to Masters study after a considerable break in higher education
- or gained a Masters degree more than five years previously
- or their Masters degree is not in a relevant subject
- AND they have significant professional experience, which is relevant to their research proposal.

Whilst we recognise that some applicants may not previously have had the opportunity to study at postgraduate level, you should be aware that a doctoral degree involves rigorous training at the highest academic level. If you are completing this section of the application, you should provide evidence that the training and development you have received are equivalent to those obtained through a Masters course and therefore prepare you to continue to doctoral study.

Personal statement (1,000 words maximum)

In this section we are looking your personal statement, tailored to the advertised project, describing:

- Your particular interest in and understanding of the research subject
- How your experience to date makes you suitable for this studentship, and what you would learn through this opportunity;
- The impact you hope to make through working with us on this project.
- Applicants without a Masters' qualification should within their personal statement outline the specifically relevant skills, experiences and knowledge they have gained beyond undergraduate degree level, that could be considered equivalent to Masters study.

Supporting Documents

Please include with your funding application:

- a) A CV (max. 2 pages), certified copies of degree certificates and transcripts, the details of two referees.
- b) A short example of writing (e.g. chapter, paper, blog or article). This can be a shorter excerpt from a larger piece of work.

6. Equalities Statement

The University of Edinburgh seeks to ensure equity of experience and opportunity for applicants to access funded studentships. The assessment process of this scheme includes the following measures designed to promote equity of experience and opportunity:

- A section of the applicant form for 'Relevant Professional Experience' is available to provide a level playing field for applicants with unrelated, dated or no Masters qualifications but who have demonstrably relevant professional experience

7. Data sharing and storage

Anonymised, limited special characteristic data from applicants (such as disability, ethnicity, and other health data) will be collected and retained by the University of Edinburgh in order to fulfil our contractual obligations to our funder, the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Funding applications from applicants not in receipt of funding will be destroyed by 1st October 2027. Applications from nominees in receipt of funding will be retained for the duration of the studentship.

Applicants are asked to consent to the sharing of aggregated anonymised Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) information with the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH)/DLA Hub to enable them to identify inequality gaps, inform strategic planning and to create an inclusive research environment. This data will not be used to identify individuals.

Applicants are asked to consent to the sharing of individual details, including title, email address, and research summary, with the SGSAH/DLA Hub. This information will be used to help deliver essential services and comply with funding requirements including delivery of training, network building, and showcasing doctoral research.

8. School contacts and frequently asked questions

If you have any further queries, please refer to our FAQs or contact below:

pgawards@ed.ac.uk for any funding application queries

Sam.Leggett@ed.ac.uk for any project queries

hca-pgr@ed.ac.uk for any PhD admission queries

Frequently asked questions

1.Can I apply for a Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award at more than one University?

Yes, you can apply to more than one University offering a Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award. However, you can accept only one Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award. You will not be able to transfer a Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award to another institution or defer the award to a later year.

2.If I am unsuccessful this year, can I apply again in future years?

Yes, we expect to advertise another Collaborative Doctoral Award for 2028, linked to a different project. You will be able to apply for this award if you think that you have the appropriate experience, training and skills needed to undertake the project that is advertised.

3.How will my proposal be assessed?

Your application will be assessed by a variety of relevant colleagues within the University. Our marking scheme and indicative criteria are contained in this guidance on p.19.

4.When will I find out if I have been successful?

We aim to make initial offers by late April 2027.

5.Can I delay the start of my study?

Although you can request to have your PhD admission deferred, you cannot defer the Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award funding or take it to another institution.

9. Assessment criteria for 2027

The majority of applications are of fundable quality and the competition is intense. We have developed a set of criteria to help us to make difficult decisions in a transparent way.

In essence, the questions we ask are:

- Why this applicant?

Marks are organised into broad bands A-D. Reviewers are asked to allocate precise marks within each band. The total marks available are 30.

Qualifications OR Relevant Professional Experience

Band	Mark	Qualifications description*	Relevant Professional Experience description
A	6	A first-class degree with evidence of high marks maintained across the programme or exit velocity as demonstrated by increasing marks in undergraduate transcripts <i>and</i> dissertation or equivalent awarded a first-class mark. OR a Masters level distinction with a dissertation mark of 70% first class/A grade or equivalent OR clear evidence of excellence in the dissertation/independent research element of an unclassified postgraduate research degree (e.g. MPhil), e.g. comment from external examiner or dissertation of publishable quality, set out in the candidate's application and corroborated by a reference letter provided with the application for a University place	A compelling case that relevant professional experience is at least equal to the completion of a Masters degree with distinction, including strong evidence of independent research thinking and excellent quality output
B	5	A first-class degree OR a Masters level distinction OR clear evidence of a high standard of achievement in the dissertation/independent research	A strong case is made including evidence of independent research thinking and high-quality output

		element of an unclassified postgraduate research degree (e.g. MPhil), e.g. dissertation of near-publishable quality, set out in the candidate's application and corroborated by a reference letter provided with the application for a University place	
C	4	Masters with merit	A good case is made that relevant professional experience is at least equal to the completion of a Masters degree but is not compelling. For instance: evidence is available of research thinking but the level of independence is unclear; evidence is available for output, but the quality is not excellent.
D	1	Masters at pass (overall mark 50-59% or equivalent) OR Undergraduate degree at 2:1	A case is made that relevant professional experience is at least equal to the completion of a Masters degree but is not strong. This might include a lack of evidence of independent research thinking and poor-quality output, for example.
* Where the qualification is non-standard or unclassified, your application for a University place and/or Supervisory Statement will provide further information for review purposes.			

Quality of Personal Statement

Band	Mark	Description
A	14 13 12	An exceptional statement in all of its components.
B	11 10 9	A strong statement in all of its components.
C	8 7	A solid statement in all of its components.

	6	
D	5 4 3	Serious shortcomings in one or more of its aspects.

Preparedness for research (taking into account writing sample)

Band	Mark	Description
A	10 9	Evidence that the applicant is exceptionally well-prepared for the proposed research and for PhD level of study through either: Previous highly relevant study (e.g.: the relevance of undergraduate and Masters' programme and dissertation topics; specific advanced methodological or skills training; proficiency in required language or technical skills; relevant employment-related or work-based learning experience etc.); or Previous highly relevant professional experience (e.g. significant employment in a highly relevant field with equivalence to Masters' study; specific methodological training and/or experience etc.); and The training requirements identified demonstrate convincingly that the candidate has an excellent sense of what is required to enable them to complete the project successfully and has identified training available, making excellent use of the SGSAH Hub.
B	8 7 6	Evidence that the applicant is well-prepared for the proposed research and for PhD level of study through either: Previous related study (e.g.: the relevance of a UG programme and Masters' dissertation topic; specific methodological or skills training); or Relevant professional experience (e.g. employment in a relevant field with equivalence to Masters' study; specific methodological training and/or experience); and The training requirements identified indicate that the candidate has a reasonable idea of what is required to enable them to complete the project successfully and has identified some training available, making good use of their membership of the SGSAH Hub.
C	5 4 3	Evidence that the applicant is prepared for the proposed research and for PhD level of study through either: Previous related study but somewhat limited in scope (e.g.: the relevance of an undergraduate or Masters dissertation; some competency in appropriate methodological or skills training and/or experience). or

		Some relevant professional experience but limited in scope or duration (e.g. employment in a relevant field with equivalence to Masters' study.) and The training requirements identified indicate that the candidate has partially considered the training required to enable them to complete the project successfully and has given some indication of familiarisation with the resources and opportunities provided by being a member of the SGSAH Hub.
D	2 1	No evidence that the applicant is prepared for their proposed research and for PhD level of study (e.g. there is no relevance of UG/Masters programmes to the proposed project) or No relevant professional experience and Little indication of familiarisation with the resources and opportunities provided by being a member of the SGSAH Hub.