CHASE Collaborative Doctoral Award competition 2024-25
Call for projects guidance

1. Introduction

Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDAs) are doctoral studentship projects which are developed by a university based academic working in collaboration with an organisation outside of higher education. They are intended as a way of facilitating collaboration with a diverse range of non-HEI partners including smaller, regional partners and spreading capacity for non-HEIs to work with HEIs in focused, mutually beneficial ways. CDAs provide important opportunities for doctoral researchers to gain first-hand experience of work outside the university environment and enhance the employment-related skills and training which a researcher may gain during the course of their award.

CDA projects also encourage and establish links that can have long-term benefits for both collaborating partners, providing access to resources and materials, knowledge and expertise that may not otherwise have been available and also provide social, cultural and economic benefits to wider society. For more details of Collaborative Doctoral Awards, please see the AHRC report ['AHRC-funded collaborative studentships: Their nature and impact on partners, subject areas and students'](#)

CHASE CDAs are one of the modes of collaboration that the DTP supports, alongside placement projects and collaborative training for doctoral researchers. For full details of these, please see the [CHASE Knowledge Exchange Hub](#)

The number of awards will depend on the number and quality of proposals received, but the Management Board expects to offer 4-5 Collaborative Doctoral Award studentships to start in October 2025. These studentships will be advertised alongside the main CHASE studentship competition, to a separate timetable.

CHASE would particularly welcome applications which support its strategic objectives in the following areas:
- Projects likely to attract applicants from Black, Asian or minoritized ethnicities, or other under-represented backgrounds;
- Modern languages.

2. Eligibility
Applicants & supervisor teams
All research proposals must be submitted by a supervisory team consisting of a lead contact supervisor, who takes overall administrative responsibility for the project; a second supervisor; and a supervisor from the partner organisation.

The lead contact supervisor must be employed by one of the participating CHASE 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.

CHASE policy requires that each academic supervisor has:
- a PhD (or, exceptionally, if conducting practice-based research, equivalent recent experience);
- evidence of recent research activity relevant to the doctoral research project in the past 5 years;
- awareness of CHASE supervisory practice via briefing notes and introductory sessions;
- sufficient time in their workload to carry out supervision duties.

Additionally, a member of the supervisory team should have at least 3 years of experience in successful supervision of doctoral researchers, with at least 1 member of the team being a permanent member of staff and having supervised to completion.

Please also refer to your own institution's regulations regarding doctoral supervision.

You may submit an application that was unsuccessful in a previous funding round.

Partner eligibility
A collaboration with a company or organisation based outside of the UK can be considered. AHRC recognises that, given the distinctive nature of its subject domain, there may be potential for reciprocal research collaborations outside the UK. Proposals will need to be clear what additional benefits are to be gained from the collaboration, that demonstrable value from the project will be accrued to the UK, and that the collaboration will deliver long-term, lasting benefits. The overseas partner must specify a minimum contribution and would normally be expected to cover additional costs of travel to and from the UK. The logistics of running such a partnership should be carefully considered in order to demonstrate that the project is both viable and feasible.

International candidates are eligible for CHASE studentships.

3. Submitting a proposal

The main contact supervisor is responsible for submitting a proposal. The application form has five sections:

1) supervisory team details
2) collaboration details, including a letter of support from partner organisation
3) proposal details
4) studentship advertisement
5) costing for the research project

Summary of application process

- Applicant identifies a research project and a collaborative partner with whom they wish to work. Applicant discusses this project with the collaborative partner and, if they are interested in participating, drafts and agrees a research project proposal, including what each party will contribute to the project, such as financial support, access to data, provision of office space for the doctoral researcher, etc.
- Applicant works with the collaborative partner to produce a letter of support, to be signed by that partner, and which must be uploaded as part of your application. This letter should briefly state what your partner has agreed to contribute to the research project (see Annex B for suggested template).
- Applicant identifies the supervisory team, in which the applicant is lead contact supervisor. The team must include another supervisor who will be actively involved in the research project or who has a particular expertise in this research area, as well as a supervisor from the collaborative partner.
- Applicant drafts an advertisement for the studentship to be attached to the research project (see Annex C).
- Complete the application form and send via email to enquiries@chase.ac.uk

  The closing date for this competition is 23:59 on Friday 6 September 2024.
- Proposals will be assessed by the CHASE Management Board, and applicants notified of the outcome by 4 October 2024.
- If a proposal is successful, it will be advertised both internally and externally to attract candidates for the studentship attached to the research project. The closing date for candidates to apply for the studentship will be in January/February 2025.
- Once the applications for the studentship for the project have been received, supervisors will be involved in selecting the best candidate for this studentship. The CHASE Management Board will be responsible for ensuring that all studentship awards are made to the highest.

4. Guidance for applicants

4.1 Supervisory team details

The Main Contact Supervisor is responsible for completing the application form. Please provide details of the proposed academic supervisors, and confirm that they meet the eligibility criteria (see 2).

4.2 Collaboration details

Please provide details of the partner organisation, including a named contact, and a proposed collaborative supervisor (if different from the named contact). Please describe the proposed

collaboration, noting the benefits to both parties, along with any track record in successful collaborative activity. You must include a letter of commitment from the partner organisation (see Annex B for suggested template).

Excellent proposals will demonstrate a shared understanding of the area for research, often achieved through extended dialogue between parties, and describe an effective way of working together.

4.3 Proposal details

In describing your research proposal, please address the following:
- The nature and significance of the proposed research, including expected outcomes and impact, and the work that would be undertaken by the funded researcher;
- Outline the proposed timetable for the research;
- Any other research activity which is planned (workshops, conferences etc.).

Excellent proposals will demonstrate a clear area of research, and allow for the successful candidate to have input into the project design. It will be clear that the candidate will have appropriate autonomy to develop the project, rather than the project being framed around the research of the supervisor.

Please use the check-box on the application form to identify to reviewers if your proposal lies outside core arts and humanities subject areas, i.e. in an area of shared interest with social or physical sciences. Applications on the margins of the AHRC subject remit will be subject to additional scrutiny.

4.4 Studentship details

Please provide a short (1,000 characters maximum including spaces) advertisement text for your studentship. If your application is successful, this text will be used by CHASE to advertise for applicants. Please see Annex C for a suggested template. Please also provide details if your studentship is not suitable for a part-time award, and if there are any particular factors that should be considered in selecting the best candidate.

4.5 Costing the studentship

Please provide details of any additional costs associated with your project. You do not need to include costs for stipend, fee, or expenses relating to training and development. Additional costs may include:
i) travel costs - for the candidate to the partner organisation, or for the supervisory team relating to project meetings;
ii) accommodation costs where necessary, subject to the financial regulations of the home institution;
iii) costs for knowledge exchange or public engagement events relating to the project;
iv) equipment costs where this is not available at the home institution. Any equipment purchased for the project remains the property of the home institution and it is expected that it will be returned after the project is concluded.
Please provide a rationale for any costs.
Please provide details of any contribution to be provided by the partner organisation.
Where the partner organisation is based in the UK, the maximum available for additional costs is £8,000. Where the partner organization is based overseas, the maximum available is £12,000.

5. Assessment of proposals

Proposals will be assessed by the CHASE Management Board against the following criteria:

1. The quality of the research proposal (**40%**)
2. The quality of the collaboration (**30%**)
3. Suitability and feasibility of the project for a studentship (**30%**)

Assessment criteria for CDA proposals

1a	Excellence of the Research Proposal	The research proposal should be of an outstanding quality, with clearly articulated aims, objectives and focus.	**40%**
1b		The research methodology should be appropriate and very well-defined, and should demonstrate that ethical considerations have been taken into account.	
1c		The proposal should clearly show what impact the research will have, such as building research capacity, helping to transform business practices, helping to explore and develop the skills necessary in today's economy etc.	
1d		The project must be feasible within the given time and resource limitations.	
2a	Quality of the Collaboration	The proposal should set out clearly how the collaborative partner will be involved in the management and supervision of the research project, and the research itself, that is, there should be strong evidence that this relationship is a genuine research partnership.	**30%**
2b		The proposal should clearly set out what the collaborative partner will contribute to the research proposal and to the studentship.	
2c		There should be measurable benefits for the collaborative partner (for examples of these, see 1c above). However, the research outcomes should have wider relevance than simply addressing a need specific to the collaborative partner.	
2d		The collaboration should provide real measurable benefits for the doctoral researcher, such as the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of a work environment outside academia.	
3a	Quality of the research and training environment	The proposal should demonstrate an excellent research environment for the PhD researcher, in terms of relevant supervisory expertise, availability of cognate research groups, and access to appropriate resources and materials.	**30%**
3b		Proposals should demonstrate that the doctoral researcher will be engaged in a rewarding and relevant research project that will provide them with a first-class research experience. The project should be appropriate in scope to be completed by a doctoral researcher, and should allow the researcher appropriate input into the topic and/or project design.	
3c		The proposal should demonstrate excellent training and development provision, including both development of advanced research skills and generic/transferable employability skills.	

6. Timeline

Monday 20 May 2024	CDA project call opens to supervisors at CHASE institutions
Friday 6 September 2024	Deadline for CDA project proposals from supervisors
September (exact date tbc)	Management Board meets and selects Collaborative Doctoral Award projects for advertisement
Friday 29 September 2023	CHASE team notifies Collaborative Doctoral Award project applicants of outcomes - opportunity to revise and resubmit if necessary
Monday 9 October 2023	Collaborative Doctoral Award studentships advertised on CHASE website and elsewhere
November (exact date TBC)	Applicant workshops
January 2024 (exact date TBC)	Deadline for applications to CDA studentship projects
March 2024 (exact date TBC)	CDA supervisors assess applications and make recommendations to Management Board
April (exact date TBC)	Management Board ratifies CDA recommendations
April (exact date TBC)	CDA applicants notified of outcome
June/July	Successful candidates invited to CHASE summer Encounters
October 2024	Studentships start

Version control

Version	Date	Changes
1	30/6/23	
2	10/5/24	Updated dates for 2024 call for projects Updated link to AHRC-funded collaborative studentships report Updated with gender neutral language Added guidance on checking institutional regulations regarding eligibility for doctoral supervision

Annex A: Template for Collaborative Partner's Letter of Support

[Collaborative partner's address]

[Date]

RE: letter of support for CHASE staff-led Collaborative Doctoral Award project proposal

This letter should include the following information:

- The title of the research project, and the name of the primary supervisor (with whom the collaborative partner has been working on developing this proposal).

Rationale

- why the collaborative partner wishes to be a partner in this project.

Input

What the collaborative partner will contribute to this project, including:

- any cash and in-kind contributions (which can include staff time, access to equipment in their organisation, provision of data, software or materials - expressed as cash equivalent);
- in particular, please include and highlight details of contributions which are essential to the successful conduct of the research (e.g. confirming access to datasets, or confirming access to or use of facilities provided by the collaborative partner); and,
- the representative from the collaborative partner who will act as a co-supervisor for the studentship.

Output

- Details regarding the collaborative partner's involvement in, and commitment to, research and/or doctoral research, or why the collaborative partner wishes to develop its role in research and/or doctoral research (e.g. to build capacity, or product or service development etc.).
- Please note that collaborative partners are not required to have past involvement in doctoral or academic research, but may wish to be a partner in order to develop future collaborations.
- The collaborative partner's assessment of the likely or potential impacts of the research project.

- Any other comments the collaborative partner wishes to make in support of this project.

[Signature: representative of collaborative partner]

_____

Name of representative:

Representative's job title:

Name of collaborative partner:

Annex B: Guidance for Writing a Studentship Advert

1. Write for your audience

When writing your advertisement, we recommend that you avoid using jargon or overly expert or technical language.

2. Give concrete details

Consider including details such as:

- Who is the collaborative partner, and what do they bring to the table for this project?
- What is the problem to be solved, and what are the objectives of the project/studentship?
- Why is this research important, and why now?
- What will the student actually do?
- What training opportunities might the student have?
- What are the (complementary) strengths of the members of the supervisory team?

3. Take a look at existing examples of adverts on advertising websites

- Website such as FindaPhD, and jobs.ac.uk are particularly helpful for this.

4. Keep it concise and specific

- People tend to scan web content in a rough 'F' shape, where the left-hand side of the page is used, so sub-headings, short paragraphs, and bullet points are great for this.
- Put all of the key information in a sentence at the beginning of each section so you don't lose your reader's attention.

5. Be encouraging to increase applicant interest

- You can encourage applications from candidates from other disciplines by reassuring them about any training or upskilling that will be provided for them.
- Try to allow for candidates from a wide range of degree subjects.
- And, most importantly, do not use jargon without explanations, always write for a knowledgeable but non-specialist applicant.
- As your project involves collaboration, be sure to point on how valuable this is, and consider using links to the collaborative partner's website or research.

End of document.