

**Collaborative Doctoral Awards
Studentship Competition (Project-led)**



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Part 1 : Project Proposal Application

To be completed by the lead proposed supervisor(s) and non-HE partner organisation.

**Before completing each section, please consult the Guidance Notes.
Failure to provide the required information may result in disqualification.**

| SECTION 1: PROJECT PROPOSAL AND CASE FOR SUPPORT | | | |
|---|---|----------------|------------------------------|
| Proposed Project Title: | Systemic Inclusion: Representation and Diversity in UK Literary Festivals | | |
| Project Summary: <i>(Maximum 100 words)</i> | Studies suggest that British poetry is 'failing to meet even the most basic measurements of inclusivity' (Flood, 2018). Research is needed to identify strategies for audience development and engagement. This project takes a two-fold approach to issues of representation and diversity. Working in partnership with Sabotage Reviews, it will involve: (i) a piece of creative practice-based research, engaging communities in the development of original poetic work, culminating in performance; and (ii) an exploration of the challenges involved in the development of inclusivity in literary festivals using The Saboteur Awards as case study, in order to make recommendations for future practice. | | |
| Name of non-HE Partner Organisation: | Sabotage Reviews | | |
| Name of Contact at non-HE Partner Organisation: | Dr Charlotte Barnes | Email Address: | director@sabotagereviews.com |
| Primary AHRC Subject Area: | Creative Writing | | |
| Secondary AHRC Subject Area (if Interdisciplinary): | Choose an item. | | |
| Does the project Include a creative practice component? | YES | | |
| If you have listed two subject areas above, do you consider the project to be interdisciplinary? | N/A | | |
| If Yes, please briefly state why: <i>(Maximum 100 words):</i> | | | |
| Please provide full details of the proposal and make your case for support below: <i>(Maximum 750 words)</i> | | | |
| The project will address the following key research questions: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the ways in which literary artists can develop work in active engagement and partnership with communities around issues of representation, identity, voice and representation? • What are some of the challenges for literary artists/ poets/ performers in this context? • What are the current practices, challenges and obstacles for UK literary festivals in addressing issues of representation and diversity? • What recommendations for future strategy and policy best practice can be made to effectively address issues of inclusivity and diversity in literary festival programming? | | | |

The project sits at the intersection of a number of important discussions, reports, surveys and critical and theoretical perspectives that begin to consider current issues of diversity in British poetry, including: *The State of Poetry and Poetry Criticism in the UK and Ireland, Jan 2012 – Mar 2018* (2019); *The State of Poetry Criticism* (Coates, 2019); The Complete Works scheme for black and Asian poets, and the Ledbury Emerging Poetry Critics scheme; the exclusion of working class writers (de Waal, 2018), and virtual literary festivals (Jones, 2017). Although these reports and discussions focus on the publishing industry in the UK, there has not yet been a thorough investigation into issues of diversity and inclusivity as they relate to UK literary festivals, and how these are being addressed. This is a timely project within the field of Creative Writing and the context of literary festivals, both of which are increasingly relied upon to address social and political concerns, create inclusive communities and partnerships, build knowledge and understanding of diverse groups and build impact narratives.

The student will undertake practice-based research in creative writing, developed in partnership with communities and literary festival organisers, together with critical, archival and qualitative research that seeks to contextualise, understand, and evaluate the impact and potential of this practice.

Practice-based research in Creative Writing

The student will produce a portfolio of poetry with a focus on an issue or intersection of gender, race, disability, class, and sexuality and its representation. To support and inform their practice-based research, the student will investigate writers' approaches to representation, studying texts that address issues of gender, race, class, disability, and sexuality, such as Wayne Holloway-Smith's *Alarum* (2017), Raymond Antrobus's *The Perseverance* (2019), Warsan Shire's *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* (2011), *Stairs and Whispers: D/deaf and Disabled Poets Write Back* (Alland, Barokka and Sluman, 2017) and Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* (2016). The student will work in partnership with Sabotage Reviews to investigate ways to develop their creative work in active consultation with communities and audiences. This will culminate in performance and/ or other ways of disseminating work, therefore exploring and testing new strategies to actively engage future audiences in artists' creative practice. Sabotage Reviews will support the student to develop workshopping and other activities with their existing audiences, and to identify and engage new audiences.

Critical exploration

The student will reflect on their experience of developing the creative work, produced through the practice-based research outlined above, within a rigorous critical framework drawn from interviews, archival material, and networking.

Sabotage Reviews will provide the student with opportunities to network with and interview practicing writers and publishers, focusing on issues of diversity and representation in order to inform the creative writing process. Working closely with the director, Charlotte Barnes, the student will gain direct experience of aspects of planning, programming and evaluating The Saboteur Awards event, an annual literary festival and awards ceremony, and will use this experience as a case study to further inform their practice. In addition, the student will have access to Sabotage's online archive and previous programmes, in order to investigate attitudes and approaches to representation, diversity, and accessibility.

The collaboration will also provide a platform from which to contact and work with other organisations, writers, and audiences: for example, Verve Poetry Festival (2017-), Diva (2017-), and New Suns (2018-) to further extend the case study methodology, investigating past and current approaches to representation and diversity. This will enable the student to seek views from writers, performers, event organisers, and audiences across the UK, in regard to their experiences of diversity and representation at literary festivals and events, and to make some recommendations to inform future practice and policy.

Please provide details of any resources and facilities, including details of any high cost equipment, fieldwork, training, etc., that may be required to complete the project successfully, and where you will seek these resources (e.g. NBCDTP; partner resources; departmental/school funds). Please include estimated costs:

(Maximum 200 words)

Training

The student will benefit from attending the Northern Bridge annual Cohort Development events and tailored training sessions, particularly concerning developing key professional skills to support them during their Collaborative Doctoral Award placement. Archival training will prove invaluable to the student, to allow them to make use of Sabotage Reviews's digital collections.

Placement

The student will undertake a placement or series of shorter placements with Sabotage Reviews. This will form the basis of the research. Depending on the geographical base of the student, they may apply for associated expenses such as travel costs for these activities. The student may also undertake research trips to meet with organisers of literary events and festivals, or to attend other festivals, such as Verve Poetry Festival, New Suns, Bodmin Moor Poetry Festival, Birmingham Literature Festival, Diva Literary Festival, Edinburgh International Book Festival, and Durham Book Festival. PhD students may also apply for additional funding from the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts to support such activities, and funding from the Student Experience Fund (up to £2000).

Please outline the arrangements for communication between the partner organisation and academic host organisation in regard of the project management and the monitoring of academic progress:

(Maximum 150 words)

The student will receive monthly supervisions from their supervisory team, in which the student's academic progress and work as part of the partnership will be supported and discussed. The partner supervisor will be invited to regularly attend supervisions in person or via Skype. The partner organisation and the academic supervisors will additionally keep in regular contact via email and Skype, to ensure the student's progression. The student will undertake an annual progression panel at Teesside University to monitor development and ensure clear direction throughout the period of registration. The supervisory team will also use an online system (e-vision) to record meetings, goals and outcomes and support communication and planning.

What benefits will accrue to the student and the partner organisation as a result of your collaboration?

(Maximum 300 words)

Student

Noting that only 37% of doctoral graduates in the Arts and Humanities go into teaching or lecturing in Higher Education, and that only 9% move into Higher Education research (Vitae, 2016), it is essential to provide students with transferrable skills and experiences that will improve their employability outside academia. The partnership with Sabotage Reviews will enable the student to develop a range of transferrable skills in events planning and organisation, audience development and management, curation and marketing, thus creating a range of career opportunities after their doctoral studies. In addition, the studentship will provide them with an essential platform and role, through which they can conduct their research, develop networks, and raise their profile as a creative practitioner.

Partner

Sabotage Reviews is a small organisation that is run by volunteers and does not make an income; the partner will therefore benefit greatly from the collaboration. The selected student will prove an invaluable member of the team, and will be able to contribute to a defined area of organisation of the Saboteur Awards, including planning and developing their own event for the festival. Clear roles, tasks and expectations will be established at the beginning of the partnership to ensure a positive working relationship, and that the student has ownership of their project, and is working towards their research questions. The student's research into diversity and representation in literary festivals will inform Sabotage Reviews's future programming strategy and demonstrate its commitment to inclusivity. In addition, the student's ongoing research during the studentship will influence the bid-writing process and support the targeting and development of future income for Sabotage Reviews.

Please briefly state what financial (if any) or in-kind contribution the partner will be making over the duration of the award:

(Maximum 100 words)

As an independent arts organisation, Sabotage Reviews will be unable to make a financial contribution during the award.

Please describe the nature of the collaborative arrangement and the activities the student will be taking with the organisation:

(Maximum 300 words)

During their studentship, the student will undertake a range of activities that will recursively inform their creative practice-based research and critical exploration, as detailed in the proposal outline. These activities will be undertaken and supported using the following timetable.

Outline timetable:

Year 1

- Begin to develop own creative work in active partnership with Sabotage Reviews and its existing and/or future audiences. This may include planning and running workshops, and public engagement activities.
- Organise an event to take place at the Saboteur Awards festival.
- Network with other writers, performers, and organisations.
- Analyse own practice and experience of event organisation and audience development through Sabotage Reviews to identify challenges around diversity and inclusion.

Year 2

- Develop, produce, perform, and evaluate creative work at the Saboteur Awards festival.
- Continue to produce and refine creative work and reflect on own creative process/ practice.
- Archival research.
- Produce critical work analysing both own creative practice and experience of event planning and audience development through critical frameworks.

Year 3

- Refine documentation and dissemination of creative work, which may include: page publication, digital media, and performance.
- Evaluate findings and make tentative recommendations to inform future strategy, both at Sabotage Reviews and beyond.

SECTION 2: SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| First Supervisor: | Dr Jenna Clake | School/Department: | Social Sciences, Humanities and Law |
| Second Supervisor: | Dr Sophie Nicholls | School/Department: | Social Sciences, Humanities and Law |
| Additional Advisor: | Dr Charlotte Barnes | Organisation/Institution: | Sabotage Reviews |
| Additional Advisor: | | Organisation/Institution: | |

Explain how the expertise of the supervisory team and external advisors will allow them to support the proposed project and the selected student:

(Maximum 500 words)

The first supervisor, Dr Jenna Clake (Lecturer in Creative Writing), is the author of a collection of poems *Fortune Cookie* (Eyewear, 2017) and a pamphlet, *CLAKE/ Interview for* (Verve Poetry Press, 2018). Her second collection is forthcoming from Bloodaxe in 2021. She has received the Melita Hume Prize (2016), an Eric Gregory Award from the Society of Authors (2018), and been shortlisted for a Somerset Maugham Award (2018). She publishes regularly in leading journals in the UK and Ireland, including *The Poetry Review*, *The White Review*, and *The Stinging Fly*. She contributes as a reviewer to *Poetry London*, *The Poetry Review*, *Poetry School*, and *The Compass*. Her critical research focuses on modern poetry aesthetics. Clake has worked with Verve Poetry Festival as its Volunteer Co-ordinator, and as an Events Management Intern for Ledbury Poetry Festival. Her academic and applied experience will prove a very good match for the project. She currently acts as second supervisor for two PhDs.

The second supervisor, Dr Sophie Nicholls (University Teaching Fellow), is an award-winning poet and novelist. Her collection *Refugee* was published by Salt (2012) and her bestselling novels, *The Dress* (Twenty7 Books, 2016) and *Miss Mary's Book of Dreams* (Bonnie Zaffre, 2017) have been translated into six languages. Her monograph *The Feeling of Writing: What Happens When We Write and Why it Matters*, is forthcoming with Palgrave. Sophie created the MA Creative Writing Online at Teesside in 2015, using an innovative approach to video and a bespoke online workshop environment to engage a vibrant community of creative writers all over the world. She has over fifteen years of experience of developing creative writing workshops with a range of partner organisations, including NHS Trusts and voluntary organisations. She is a Senior Fellow of the HEA, and is currently Director of Studies for six PhDs, and a member of a further three PhD supervisory teams. She is committed to developing non-traditional PhD students from a range of backgrounds and has led the growth of an international PhD community in Creative Writing at Teesside. Her supervisory experience and her experience in workshop design and facilitation will be essential in supporting the student on this project.

The partner supervisor, Dr Charlotte Barnes, is the Managing Director of Sabotage Reviews. Alongside the everyday management of the Sabotage website, she orchestrates the annual Saboteur Awards Festival. The Saboteur Awards highlight minority organisations and individuals working outside of so-called "mainstream" literary constructs. Barnes is experienced in: compiling a varied and interesting programme that complements current trends and interests in independent literature; liaising with authors, publishers and other literature-based workers throughout the country; developing successful bids for Arts Council England funding. Barnes previously worked as a Director of the Worcestershire LitFest and Fringe Festival where her role involved promoting diverse representation in the literature world, and providing a platform for writers to share their work. Barnes's industry experience and commitment to inclusivity will be key in guiding, mentoring and developing the student towards successful completion of this research project.

SECTION 3: RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Please provide details about the research environment the selected student will be joining and its suitability:

(Maximum 500 words)

The Creative Writing PhD at Teesside University is an area of continuing growth and innovation, with eight PhD students currently undertaking their doctoral studies. Doctoral students have been funded by University awards, and the North of England Consortium for Arts and Humanities. Staff in poetry include Jenna Clake, Sophie Nicholls, and Bob Beagrie, as well as creative writers in prose fiction and life writing, including Megan Hayes and Hilary Jenkins. In addition to high quality individual supervision, the faculty provides group workshops for Creative Writing postgraduate students to discuss their work in progress in a supportive environment, and a regular English and Creative Writing Research Workshop and Seminar series, involving guest lecturers, facilitators, and readers. Postgraduate researchers' skills are developed through an online peer support network, using collaborative software to cultivate development of work in progress, and structured tutor-led online sessions addressing a range of issues related to progression and completion.

English and Creative Writing at Teesside University is well-placed to contribute to the promotion of equality and diversity given its research expertise in relation to the status of women, transgender people, ethnic and religious minorities in national and international contexts, representations of class identities, the welfare state, and the dynamics of social inequality from 1945 to the present. Staff have partnered with significant cultural organisations and venues in the region, including Open Clasp Theatre, Stockton Arc, British Museum, Dorman Museum, Durham Book Festival, The Natural History Society of Northumbria, New Writing North, The Poetry Book Society, and StAnza Poetry Festival. The department hosts the Feminist Book Club, a monthly public reading group, has convened a training workshop for media professionals in partnership with the charity Trans Media Watch (2016), and has hosted public events to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance (2018).

Students are offered opportunities to work with staff to plan the English and Creative Writing Research Seminar series, and to present their own research. The University Postgraduate Conference offers further occasions to present work and exchange ideas with postgraduate students across the institution. The English and Creative Writing Research Workshop provides a monthly forum for researcher peer support through the sharing of research practices and experience, feedback on work in progress, guidance on developing research funding bids, publication plans, and impact generation. Crossing the Tees Book Festival and T Junction Poetry Festival host readings by both established and emerging writers, affording students the opportunity to contribute and network. The Teesside University owned MIMA (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) provides further opportunities for doctoral students to contribute to the wider research culture of the institution, and work within a community of writers and artists.

The School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Law has a dedicated 'village' for PhD students, providing dedicated work spaces and nurturing a strong sense of community. Teaching experience is valued by our doctoral students in preparation for future employment, and we offer mentored opportunities for students to teach on a small number of undergraduate and postgraduate Creative Writing modules during their studentship.

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9 October 2019

To whom it may concern,

Please accept this letter as confirmation of my involvement with the Collaborative Doctoral Award, orchestrated and supervised by Dr Jenna Clake at Teesside University. Considering Sabotage Reviews's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, I am thrilled to be contributing to the supervision of this research project, and to support the student through their placement.

I completed my own doctoral studies in 2017, and therefore will draw on my experience of PhD study and supervision to support the student during their project. I appreciate the importance of a positive working relationship between student and the supervisory team. With this in mind, I will work closely with Dr Jenna Clake to ensure that we establish this positive relationship with the selected student. Additionally, I will set up a weekly meeting with the student - either in person or via Skype - to discuss aims, responsibilities, and progress, supporting the student to follow their research timeline, and work towards their research questions.

Furthermore, I will oversee the placement to ensure that the student is supported in their archival research, provided with resources and a platform to create new research networks, and assist opportunities to interview practicing writers, and reach new and existing audiences. In addition, I will provide guidance to the student when planning events, workshops, and their own performance, to support their creative and critical research.

Overall, Sabotage Reviews and the accompanying Saboteur Awards Festival provides ample opportunity for the student's research project, and development of their transferrable skills. With that in mind, I anticipate this resulting in an interesting and worthwhile thesis, and an invaluable placement.

If there is anything else that you need from me toward this application, please do hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Dr Charlotte Barnes