

Part 1 : Project Proposal Application

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



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

SECTION 1: PROJECT PROPOSAL AND CASE FOR SUPPORT

Proposed Project Title:	Experimental Fiction and the Literary Museum: The Legacy of Laurence Sterne		
Project Summary: <i>(Maximum 100 words)</i>	Laurence Sterne's bestselling novels <i>The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy</i> , <i>Gentleman</i> (1759) and <i>A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy</i> (1768) are well known to have generated an eighteenth-century media event, with writers and artists seeking to exploit the selling-power of Sterne's experimental literary and visual style. But little attention has been paid to the way in which Sterne's experiments continued to influence literary and artistic culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Utilising the significant archival holdings of the Laurence Sterne Trust, this project will uncover the significance of Sterne in nineteenth- and twentieth-century art and literature while also contributing to the Trust's core aims of making relevant his experimental legacy to public audiences.		
Name of Non-HE Partner Organisation:	The Laurence Sterne Trust at Shandy Hall		
Name of Contact at non-HE Partner Organisation:	Patrick Wildgust	Email Address:	info@laurencesternetrust.org.uk
Primary AHRC Subject Area:	English Language and Literature		▼
Secondary AHRC Subject Area (if Interdisciplinary):	Choose an item:		
Does the project Include a creative practice component?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If you have listed two subject areas above, do you consider the project to be interdisciplinary?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please provide full details of the proposal and make your case for support below:

(Maximum 750 words)

Shandy Hall in Coxwold, North Yorkshire, is a literary house museum dedicated to its most famous occupant, eighteenth-century novelist Laurence Sterne. It is managed by the Laurence Sterne Trust, the charitable organisation dedicated to promoting Sterne's literary reputation through exhibitions, events and public access to the property. The museum is home to a world-leading collection of books, paintings, manuscripts, prints and ephemera, from first editions of Sterne's works and works that informed his creative practice, to twenty-first century artworks celebrating Sterne's experimental legacy. While many of the Trust's historic materials are known to scholars, it is also the custodian of a diverse collection of nineteenth- to twenty-first-century experimental fiction and fine art works that remain uncatalogued and understudied. This project will both catalogue this material while producing new knowledge on Sterne's legacy in art and literature.

The experimental fiction collection at Shandy Hall offers a major opportunity for considering the impact of Sterne's fictional experiments across a range of media circa 1860 to the present. Aside from David Pierce and Peter de Voogd's edited collection, *Laurence Sterne in Modernism and Postmodernism* (1995), there exists very little scholarship on Sterne's more recent literary reception. Even that has become a much-cited straw man in opposition to arguments that it is unfashionable or unreasonable to claim Sterne as a postmodernist 'avant la lettre'. Scholarship on Sterne's extensive literary and artistic influence continues to flourish, such as W.B. Gerard's *Laurence Sterne and the Visual Imagination* (2006), René Bosch's *Labyrinth of Digressions: Tristram Shandy as Perceived and Influenced by Sterne's Early Imitators* (2007), Mary-Céline Newbould's *Adaptations of Laurence Sterne's Fiction: Sterneana, 1760-1840* (2013), and Warren Oakley's *Culture of Mimicry: Laurence Sterne, His Readers, and the Art of Bodysnatching* (2010), but each of these studies stops short of considering the reception of Sterne's works beyond the earliest decades of the nineteenth century.

While Sterne's bestselling novels spawned a range of texts, images and artworks in the years immediately following the publication of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759) and *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768), authors and artists from the nineteenth century to the present interested in experimenting with metafiction, non-linear narrative, and visual storytelling have continued to look back to Sterne for inspiration. Writers such as B.S. Johnson, Milan Kundera, Cathy Acker and Jennifer Egan have all been compared—for better or worse—with Laurence Sterne. Artists including Nancy Fouts, Katrin Moye, Peter Coates, and Patrick Caulfield have produced artworks directly responding to Sterne's fiction, and many more have been devised with a view to celebrating his experimental legacy. Moreover, crossover works such as those by Tom Phillips and John Baldessari reveal how far Sternean art blurs the boundaries between media forms. However, there is yet to be a study of Sterne's experimental legacy which deals with his revenant-like presence in post-eighteenth-century art and literature. The collections of the Laurence Sterne Trust provide access to rare books and artworks in Sterne's experimental vein as well as the curators' correspondence over the years with artists and authors who recognise(d) in Sterne a literary or artistic forebear.

This research project has two strands. The first is archival and considers the Trust's well-known Monkman collection of eighteenth-century rare books in conjunction with the more recent experimental collection, which has not yet been brought to public attention. It will thereby shed new light on Sterne's experimental legacy on the one hand and, on the other, eighteenth-century experimental writing. It will engage with the many literary works, paintings, drawings, sculptures and decorative arts held by the Trust, reading them alongside the correspondence trails of their acquisition as held in the Trust's records. Such a reading of these collections will enable research to be undertaken exploring some of the following themes: the reception of Sterne in art and literature since the eighteenth century; Sterne's eighteenth-century literary experimentation; how adaptation might raise questions about the 'modernity' of modernism and postmodernism; and literary heritage programming and the creative arts. The second strand of the project involves cataloguing the collection of modern experimental fiction with a view to its eventual purchase by the Trust. This will ensure that the Trust can continue to meet its core aims of making relevant Sterne's literary legacy to modern audiences, reach out to schools supporting all periods of the Literature curriculum, and build their collection of Sterne inspired literary and fine artworks. This project presents the collaborative student with the potential to generate exciting new research while also developing experience in creative programming and acquisitions at a small independent museum.

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)

The archives of the Laurence Sterne Trust at Shandy Hall are the main resources required for the project. They are readily accessible and the Trust has committed to making its collection accessible for the purpose of this project. The student will also be able to access the Burney collection of eighteenth-century newspapers, Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, Nineteenth-Century Collections Online, Stationer's Company Online, Eighteenth-Century Journals, Eighteenth-Century Drama, as provided by Northumbria University. They will also have access to training for PhD students at Northumbria University.

Perhaps the most useful training for both academic and collaborative purposes will be public engagement training. Northumbria University's Humanities department offers discipline-specific public engagement and impact training to postgraduate researchers. This will be supplemented by the university-wide impact training courses and by bespoke public engagement training provided by the Laurence Sterne Trust through their volunteer training programme. The student will have full access to all of the training provided for Laurence Sterne Trust staff, including Shandy Hall staff induction and training, as an in-kind contribution to the project.

Some costs associated with travelling to Shandy Hall as well as to other archives, such as Cambridge University Library and the British Library, where additional resources are held, may be required. Training on the Trust's chosen cataloguing software Modes would also be useful. The student will be supported to apply to external organisations such as the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies for travel costs. However, most costs should fall within the £550 per annum budget for travel and other costs proposed by Northern Bridge provision.

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)

Humanities at Northumbria University has a long-standing relationship with the Trust. This will not be the first AHRC-funded CDA between the organisations. The principal supervisor has carried out various projects with them over the past few years including completing her own CDA, a major NHLF-funded project, and a current AHRC standard grant. Communication channels are consequently well established. The principal supervisor is regularly in communication with the partner organisation, as editor of the AHRC-funded collaborative project, Sterne Digital Library, to which the Laurence Sterne Trust contributes. As their collaboration history suggests, both the partner organisation and academic host organisation have a strong track-record of working together. They will continue to be in regular contact for the duration of the project in order to monitor academic process. Progress will be monitored through regular meetings between the university supervisors, the partner advisor and the student. Full team meetings will be held at least once per semester at the property. Between meetings, any draft material will be circulated to supervisors and advisors from both institutions, and open email communication will be encouraged.

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

(Maximum 300 words)

This CDA enables the student to participate in the in-house training offered by Shandy Hall: the induction for volunteers as well as the training it participates in as a member of Lithouses as well as of the Association of Independent Museums. Bespoke training will also be made available from Shandy Hall so that the student clearly understands the challenges and opportunities facing the organisation. Whilst the curator will be the advisor, the student will additionally benefit from the insight of the collections manager during the project, providing training on working with collections of different kinds and on the nuances of cataloguing such material. The student will be able to make use of shared working space at Shandy Hall when necessary and while on site will be embedded in the daily working of the house, to see how the museum's collections inform their practice on a day to day as well as a strategic level, gaining in-depth insight into the heritage sector that will open up an alternative career path for them should they wish to pursue it and will help them see their academic research as feeding into cultural and economic developments outside academia, too.

This project is of especial interest to the Laurence Sterne Trust as they consider how to develop their collections with a modern angle. At this time, their potential to best benefit from new research is vast, and they are keen to explore the angle that this project offers. The project therefore allows the student to add to the museum's case for acquisition, to help develop their interpretation offer, whilst also helping develop their staff in acquiring knowledge and experience of literary history, intermediality, and adaptation. The student's research will also be of interest to Shandy Hall's volunteers, offering opportunities for knowledge exchange regarding the material the room guides present to visitors. They will also be encouraged to liaise with The Arts Society, or National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts (NADFAS) who assist the museum with conservation and with whom the Laurence Sterne Trust have a longstanding relationship, in order to facilitate knowledge exchange about the collections and the techniques used for their conservation. The volunteers and NADFAS community will also be able to develop their research skills from an academic and archival perspective.

While the experimental collection is housed at Shandy Hall, it is not currently owned by the Trust. This CDA would be mutually beneficial in providing opportunities in heritage practice for the student while their findings would be emerging at a time when the Laurence Sterne Trust can make use of that material in the Trust's bid to acquire the experimental literature collection. The CDA could thereby be capacity building in a manner tailored to the needs of the Trust.

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)

The Laurence Sterne Trust will provide:

1. The time of the curator in the role of advisor
2. Archives orientation by the collection manager
3. Custom training in cataloguing
4. Full access to the archives on site at Shandy Hall
5. Access to shared working space
6. Introduction to volunteers and NADFAS
7. Basic training in conservation and rare books handling
8. Opportunities to feed into interpretation, room guiding, gallery hanging, and events programming and delivery

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

(Maximum 300 words)

The student will join the team of Northumbria University staff who are currently collaborating with the Laurence Sterne Trust through the AHRC-funded Sterne Digital Library project. The team currently consists of the proposed principal supervisor as well as two PDRAs. The PhD will be independent from the AHRC project but it offers further opportunities for collaboration through the student learning more about the long history of Sterneana, how to present research findings about Sterneana in digital fora, and learning key collaborative skills from the research team involved in the project.

The student will have the opportunity to spend between two and six weeks per year embedded within the partner organisation, acquiring key skills in the everyday life of a small independent museum while also being surrounded by primary materials. This will enable more close analysis of the collections and collaboration with the team as the Trust plans their bid for acquisition and its accompanying interpretation activities.

One of the primary objectives of the CDA will be to catalogue the experiential fiction collection under the guidance of the collections manager and curator. This will enable them to develop skills in bibliography while also developing a general knowledge of the collection. This knowledge will facilitate their thesis work while also enabling them to assist the museum with its creative programming and its acquisition plans. The student will spend two months with the partner organisation in year three in order to finalise the cataloguing project.

The major benefit of working with a small independent museum like the Laurence Sterne Trust at Shandy Hall is that the museum experience can be tailored to the interests of the CDA student. Rather than being embedded in a single department, the student will be encouraged to engage with a wide range of activities undertaken by a small independent museum, from events programming and marketing to educational outreach and fundraising. The wealth of experience of the staff makes this project a particularly rich one for a student looking to develop experience and be mentored in the heritage sector while also creating an opportunity for a heritage organisation with limited resources to build its capacity and to achieve more of its goals.

SECTION 2: SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

First Supervisor:	Dr Helen Williams	School/Department:	English Literature
		Email Address:	helen.williams@northumbria.ac.uk
Second Supervisor:	Prof. Katherine Baxter	School/Department:	English Literature
		Email Address:	katherine.baxter@northumbria.ac.uk
Additional Advisor:	Patrick Wildgust	Organisation/Institution:	The Laurence Sterne Trust
		Email Address:	info@laurencesternetrust.org.uk
Additional Advisor:		Organisation/Institution:	
		Email Address:	

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)

Dr Williams has strong experience in each of the strands that make up this CDA: Sterne Studies, adaptation studies, collaboration; and heritage research and practice. She is the author of *Laurence Sterne and the Eighteenth-Century Book* (CUP, 2021), co-editor of the dataset *Laurence Sterne and Sterneana* (Cambridge Digital Library, 2020), and co-editor of a forthcoming special issue of the journal *1650-1860 on Sterneana* (2022). She has also published widely on eighteenth-century literary culture (JECS, 2013; RES, 2013; ECF, 2016; Shandean, 2016; ECL, 2019).

Having completed her own AHRC-funded collaborative PhD with the Laurence Sterne Trust in 2013, Dr Williams has the rare experience of managing collaborative projects from both sides. She has supervised one PhD—in collaboration with the Lit & Phil Newcastle—to on-time completion as second supervisor. She currently supervises a Northern Bridge CDA with the National Trust at Seaton Delaval Hall and is second supervisor to a Northern Bridge candidate from the standard pathway. She currently line manages two postdoctoral research assistants and has in the past managed two more. Dr Williams also has extensive experience of collaborative research projects, including with the Laurence Sterne Trust (NHLF, 2013). She is the recipient of a British Academy Rising Star Public Engagement Award in recognition of her aptitude for partnership working (2019). She leads two strands of the NHLF project *Curtain Rises at Seaton Delaval Hall* (2018) and is co-investigator of an RCUK-funded project on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the literary heritage sector (2021). As a member of the editorial board of *The Shandean* journal, Dr Williams can offer the student opportunities to contribute to the journal's conferences as well as subject-specific mentoring in academic publishing.

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/our-staff/w/helen-williams/>

Prof. Baxter has supervised 2 PhDs to completions and her current supervisees include two standard route NBC-funded students (one in Fine Art and one in Literature). Baxter and Williams have supervised a PhD in collaboration with the Lit & Phil to on-time completion. Baxter's extensive experience as a research manager (including UoA lead, Department Research Director, Faculty REF Lead and Deputy Faculty PVC for Research and Knowledge Exchange) will enable her to guide the delivery of this project and to support interdisciplinary networking with cognate research in other areas of the institution. Her heritage sector experience, as a cataloguer and curator at the British Library and a trustee of the Lit&Phil, will be invaluable to this CDA's focus. In particular, because Prof. Baxter's research expertise lies in twentieth-century literature and culture, including visual arts, her cross-disciplinary interests will support the project's engagement with multiple media and its twentieth-century remit. She will draw on her experience as General Editor of *English: The Journal of the English Association* (2016-20) to support the publication ambitions of the student.

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/our-staff/b/katherine-baxter/>

Patrick Wildgust is curator of Shandy Hall. He has supervised one AHRC-funded CDA to completion (2013). He is perfectly placed to advise the student given his expertise in the area of Sterne and Sterneana, his heritage and arts networks and experience, and his status as a past advisor to an AHRC-funded CDA student. His leadership of an independent small museum means that he is willing and able to facilitate student access to a range of experiences and training including cataloguing, conservation, curatorial work and heritage programming and education more broadly.

www.laurencesternetrust.org.uk

SECTION 3: RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

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

(Maximum 500 words)

The English Literature department is well placed to support a CDA on eighteenth-century literature and its subsequent intermedial adaptation.

The student would be primarily located within the **Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Studies Research Group at Northumbria University**, one of the largest and most successful of its kind in the UK and internationally, with 11 staff working on the literature and music of the period 1688-1789, including 3 professors, 1 Emeritus prof, 3 associate professors, 2 senior lecturers, 1 lecturer, and 5 PDRAs (two of whom are line managed by Dr Williams). Four of its members have published on Laurence Sterne. Colleagues have won numerous research awards, with Dr Williams being involved in two of three large research projects (AHRC and Leverhulme) currently running in the group with a value of around £700k, one of which is on Sterne and Sterneana. Prof. Brycchan Carey is currently the president of the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, and Dr Williams is its longstanding annual conference organiser. The university is a proud co-convenor of the North East Forum in Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Studies (<https://northeastforum.wordpress.com>).

Many colleagues from the Literature department have recently published work on adaptation and reception history from the Renaissance to the present, in theatre, music, and periodicals (Drs Adam Hansen, Monika Smaikowska, and Ann-Marie Einhaus). The department also holds significant expertise in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary and visual arts, as exemplified by the cross-faculty Visual and Material Arts Research Group and the major AHRC research grants currently held by Drs Victoria Bazin and Melanie Waters and Dr Ann-Marie Einhaus and May Sumbwanyambe, which also evidence the strength of twentieth-century studies and scholarship on modernism and postmodernism in the department. There is also expertise in heritage studies and much of the work in literary studies in this department involves public facing activities and engagement. The English department is home to journals which will be of interest to the student, such as C21 and English.

The wider Department of Humanities includes History, English Language and Literature, Creative Writing and American Studies. The student would become a member of a vibrant and cohesive community of PhD students, including those funded by AHRC, Leverhulme, ESRC and NBC as well as by the university. We have CDAs or CDPs with the National Trust, the National Union of Students, NNPA, Northumberland Wildlife Trust, the National Railways Museum, the Bowes Museum, and the Laing and Shipley art galleries, so the student would join a community of postgraduate researchers working with external partners and in pioneering formats, helping develop networks and improve skills in academic work and collaborative skills for after graduation.

Humanities postgraduate students have hot-desking facilities in the Faculty's Glenamara Centre and further facilities in the Library's Research Commons. They attend both a Faculty training programme at the Graduate School and one designed and delivered by Humanities staff in the dedicated Humanities Institute, where further space and technical resources are available to students. The current programme includes sessions on applying for external funding, pursuing careers outside academia, publishing, digital humanities, and organising conferences. The Humanities Department also runs regular ad hoc events for PGRs including writing workshops and social gatherings. These events ensure that there is an active and lively Humanities postgraduate community at Northumbria University.

Within this environment, the student will be encouraged to build contacts, develop skills, and present work at the Forum, the student-staff seminar series in the Humanities Institute and nationally at the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies annual conference. The student will be funded and supported by the department to organise a workshop for PGRs on archival research, sharing expertise with peers, developing research organisation skills, and sharing research with a national audience. The student will also make full use of the opportunities to join activities in collaboration with the British and International Societies for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

The Laurence Sterne Trust



Shandy Hall, Coxwold, York YO61 4AD

(Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1181127)

To Whom it May Concern

As curator of the Laurence Sterne Trust at Shandy Hall I fully endorse the project as described above and commit to co-supervise and support it for its full duration. In particular, I am happy for the student to spend between two and six weeks a year working within our organisation with the aim of researching and cataloguing the experimental literature collection and to spending up to two months in year three finalising the catalogue that will help underpin the bid for the collection's acquisition. Moreover, the Museum team are committed to flexibility responding to the student's project in order to support their academic and professional development goals.

Patrick Wildgust (Curator)