

Cohort Development and Innovation Scheme (Student-led) Guidance



Applicants must read the Guidance as they complete the Cohort Development and Innovation Scheme Application. The NBCDTP Academic Directors may reject any application failing to follow this guidance.



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Policy

The Cohort Development and Innovation Scheme (Student-led) funds innovative training programmes, events and activities. The AHRC Northern Bridge Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership (NBCDTP) Academic Directors will receive, evaluate, and prioritise innovative proposals for generic and specialised research training that emerge from the cohort of NBCDTP students.

Definitions

The lead applicant's "host institution" is the University at which the lead applicant is registered. The "local NBCDTP Administrator" is the administrator or equivalent based at the lead applicant's host institution, whose contact details are listed below. Their local NBCDTP Administrator is the first point of contact for award-holders.

The NBCDTP Academic Directors are members of academic staff appointed at each of the seven partner institutions of the Northern Bridge Consortium: Durham University, Newcastle University, Northumbria University, Queen's University Belfast, University of Sunderland, Teesside University and Ulster University.

Eligibility for Funding

The Scheme can only be used to support activities proposed by AHRC NBCDTP-funded doctoral students actively registered at their host institution.

Proposals must not duplicate either existing provision or activities organised in response to needs identified in the Training Needs Analysis.

Proposals should be for activities that support training for groups of three or more students.

Proposals must be aimed at students from all seven NBCDTP institutions, though representation from all seven institutions at the event itself is not required.

The proposed expenditure must comply with AHRC regulations and the use of the Cohort Development Fund: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/guides/training-grant-funding-guide-2015-16/>

The Scheme can be used to cover the following costs:

- Travel, subsistence, accommodation and fees for external facilitators;
- Travel, accommodation and limited subsistence (in addition to venue catering) for NBCDTP award-holders;
- Purchase of essential consumables, such as materials for conference packs;
- Venue hire, and essential additional services such as the provision of Wi-Fi;
- Venue catering.

The Scheme **cannot** be used to cover:

- Internal staff (meaning all staff employed by an NBCDTP partner institution) costs or expenses;
- The cost of alcohol during, for example but not limited to, dinners and receptions.

Applying for Funding

Applications to the Scheme must have a named lead applicant, and will normally also have a supporting team of co-applicants representing at least three of the NBCDTP partner institutions. There is no limit to the number of co-applicants.

The lead applicant will be accountable to the NBCDTP for delivery of the activity and expenditure.

All sections of the application form must be completed, and the form must be typed. Incomplete and handwritten forms will be returned to the lead applicant without consideration. Electronic signatures are permitted.

Applicants are encouraged to seek supplementary sources of funding, such as travel bursaries, and must make clear what other sources and amounts of funding have been identified, if any.

Applicants must ensure that all costs incurred are reasonable and in line with the lead applicant's host institution's own Travel and Expenses Policy. (See Annex 1 below.)

All costs must be **fully itemised**, converted to sterling where applicable, and as accurate an estimate as possible based on current prices. You must evidence your estimates with, for example, a copy of screenshots or quotations from venues, identified accommodation, etc.

Applicants are encouraged to ensure that all costs incurred are reasonable. For example, travel should be by the most economical means available and should be by standard-class public transport except in exceptional circumstances.

Applications must be submitted to the NBCDTP Administrator at the lead applicant's host institution by the deadlines of 31 October, 31 January, 30 April or 30 June for consideration by all NBCDTP Academic Directors. Late applications will not be considered.

The application form and accompanying documents should be merged into one complete PDF document in the order stated on the application form and named using the following convention:

Award Holder Surname + Initial_ Host Institution_ CDIS_ Date DDMMYYYY
e.g. SmithJ_QUB_CDIS_30062017

Failure to format the document correctly may result in a delay to its being considered or being returned to the lead applicant without consideration.

The application should be submitted from an institutional email account to the NBCDTP Administrator in the lead applicant's host institution.

Applicants may submit multiple applications to the Scheme. But in accordance with the AHRC's recommendation, priority will be given to students who have not previously received funding via the Scheme.

There is no maximum amount of funding that can be requested in a single application to the Scheme, but applicants should note that the Scheme fund is limited.

Applicants must seek approval for additional costs that arise during an activity, (for example, opportunities not foreseen at the application stage, or resulting from an emergency) by making a request by email to their local NBCDTP Administrator at the earliest opportunity. Approval of such requests is not guaranteed. Claims for such additional costs that have not received prior approval by the NBCDTP will be rejected.

Applicants are required to address the following:
(Examples provided are taken from previously successful applications.)

- **Aims and Objectives**

“This workshop aims to provide basic digital illustration skills in Adobe Illustrator to postgraduate researchers from different disciplines through intensive training by an experienced Adobe trainer. The workshop will be specifically tailored to participants’ needs. Participants will also learn about the use and value of digital illustrations within and beyond academia from an expert in Digital Humanities. Finally, participants will be able to put their newly learned skills into practice in a follow-up ‘Strategic Partner Project’ (SPP). Here, participants will work in small teams designing a product commissioned by real life ‘clients’ (Northern Bridge’s strategic partner institutions) who could use the end product in their exhibitions/displays. Thus, the course combines aspects of basic software training with public outreach and digital humanities skills.”

“CPCS is a residential symposium designed to address the training needs of Creative Practice PhD students who write theses led by the production of creative work. It provides intensive, specialised sessions and opportunities to present research in an appropriate environment to an audience of peers.”

- **Intended Beneficiaries (Including the skills to be gained by the lead applicant and co-applicants)**

“Participants will learn basic digital illustration skills in Adobe Illustrator. This will allow them to create informative images which convey complex ideas and concepts. These skills can be applied in their academic research (i.e. to illustrate their thesis and publications), but also beyond, for instance in communicating their research to a wider audience. Moreover, the SPP allows participants to gain valuable transferable organisational, planning, negotiation and communication skills. All of these can be applied directly in participants’ research, and will be equally beneficial in their future careers, whether academic or not.”

“The NBDTP consortium includes 24 Creative Practice students. Priority applications will be accepted from students in their 2nd, 3rd and final writing up years. 5 funded spaces will be allocated for non-NBDTP students with additional spaces calculated after initial NBDTP take-up confirmed. A maximum of 22 residential spaces are available consisting of 19 students and 3 facilitators. The symposium is informed by digital surveys and focus groups in the Creative Practice PGR group led by xxx, Research Fellow for Newcastle Institute for Creative Arts Practice (NICAP). CPCS draws from and contributes to xxx’s research, strengthening the NBDTP and NICAP partnership. The Lead Applicant is a contributing member of the Creative Practice PGR group. Hosting and organising the symposium will feed back directly into this group, demonstrates her skills as an engaged practice-led ECR and boosts career prospects in academia post-completion.”

- **Mode of Delivery**

“The workshop will consist of the following parts:

- *2x two days of computer based training (one day beginners, one day intermediate) for 10 participants in each workshop in Adobe Illustrator delivered by Christine Storey (external facilitator) of Can Consultants.*
- *One evening lecture on how to convey difficult academic concepts in simple illustrations (Digital humanities specialist).*
- *The SPP: practical sessions in which teams of 4-5 participants design illustrated information panels (or a similar product) commissioned by NB strategic partners (Wordsworth Trust, Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM), BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art).”*

“CPCS includes sessions led by three experienced student-nominated facilitators. In a digital survey, 91% and above respondents opted for:

- *talks and specialised thesis workshops led by recent Doctors in each field,*
- *sessions to facilitate discussion on practice-led research*
- *appropriate time and space for practitioners to present creative and critical components, and*
- *opportunities to give and receive in-depth peer feedback.*

Hosted at Hopsitalfield, the innovative three-day symposium follows established models of professionally tutored

residential training.”

- **Innovation and Risk**

“The proposed course is unique as it offers specifically tailored digital illustration training at various levels to individual postgraduate researchers. For newly trained participants to deliver a high quality product within a short time span to the client in the SPP is a risky and challenging, but equally highly instructive/informative undertaking.”

“The necessity to innovate this practice-led training event became apparent during the Thesis Bootcamp, led by and marketed toward students writing traditional 80k word theses. Creative Practice theses consist of a creative body of work and a 30k word critical component. CPCS is a low-risk project built upon advanced 'buy-in' from students through digital surveys and focus groups. 100% of Creative Practice PhD respondents agreed it was difficult to find professional training within their institution and their training needs require such a symposium to complete their theses.”

- **Profile-raising**

“This course raises Northern Bridge’s profile as it is the only tailored digital training course providing both intense training specifically tailored for academic postgraduate researchers and an opportunity to immediately put new skills in practice in a real world case study. The products of the SPP, if displayed in partner institutions, will be credited to the Northern Bridge, thus raising its profile further.”

“This symposium will raise NBDTP's reputation for delivering globally relevant practice-led research by expediting the timely completion of participating students. It fosters future collaboration by bringing together a strategic network of creative-critical practitioners. CPSC dovetails with Lead Applicant's Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts (NCLA) student-led project 'Write Around the Toon' being relaunched in the 2017 academic year as 'Off-Site'. With NICAP support this takes the form of a module within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) training. Within the delivery of this training, the Lead Applicant will present and promote CPCS as an innovative NBDTP model in response to training need, promoting CPCS as an example of practical thesis training, collaborative discourse and creative showcasing to demonstrate the critical relevance of off-site research. Strengthening strategic partnerships and developing new ones, this presentation will also be delivered to current and prospective NBDTP partners, cultural venues across Newcastle-Gateshead with whom 'Off-Site' aims to host Practitioners in Residence. Continued use of Pop-Up banners here represent value for money in marketing a professional identity for Creative Practice within NBDTP.”

- **Publicity and Evaluation**

“The organisers have already gauged interest amongst the Northern Bridge cohort and recognised a significant interest in this course across different subjects. Before and after the event, the organisers will collect feedback via short questionnaires, which should allow this course and possible future ones to be tailored to participant’s needs even better.”

“An evaluative survey will capture key demographics and responses, including free text space for suggestions towards a future event. This will be distributed by email to all participants. Participants are encouraged to use social media to promote CPCS. We will collate these responses to boost Northern Bridge's profile, sharing on the social media account (co-run by the Lead Applicant) and elsewhere, as part of the delivery of 'Off-Site' in core HASS training and beyond.”

- **Proposed Venue and Rationale for Choice:** For reasons of health, safety and security, it is strongly recommended that activities take place at an NBCDTP institution, or in the local region of an NBCDTP institution. A strong rationale will be required for activities intended to take place off-campus, including an account of what actions will be taken to safeguard the health and safety of participants.
- **Evidence of Demand:** Applicants must provide a case or evidence for demand for the activity. For example, an applicant may, via their local NBCDTP Administrator, contact the NBCDTP cohort to seek expressions of interest in the proposed event **prior** to making an application.

Practical Considerations:

It is strongly recommended that due to the availability of space on university campuses, applicants consider the planning of events taking place during term-time at least six months in advance.

The lead applicant must consult the NBCDTP Administrator at their host institution for clarification on the administrative support they can expect to receive and the availability of common requirements (venue hire, catering, etc.). Depending on the nature of the event, it is generally anticipated that the applicants will take responsibility for liaising with facilitators and speakers, for publicising, for the production of course materials, scheduling, etc., where administrators will handle payments to venues, accommodation, catering, etc.; i.e. actions where an exchange of funds is required.

In most cases, only active University vendors can be used for the provision of goods and services.

Due to stringent employment legislation, **under no circumstances** should applicants approach and engage third party service providers to help assist with activities without first requesting the advice of their local NBCDTP Administrator, and **prior** to the submission of an application to the Scheme. Applicants are not regarded as the employer of the service provider. Depending on individual institutional policy, such service providers may be regarded as temporary University employees; it may be necessary for them to undergo a Right to Work check **in person** at the host institution – and they should be prepared to do so before undertaking work; they may be required to have their employment status assessed by the host institution via an IR35 procedure; and institutions may refuse to engage any provider other than a listed University vendor. Failure to seek the appropriate advice well in advance of the proposed activity may mean that payment cannot be made to the provider, or they will be subject to deductions which are irrecoverable via the host institution.

As a student-led initiative, a senior member of academic or professional services staff will **not** normally be present as a lead to monitor or support the running of the activity. Applicant organisers are reminded of the high degree of responsibility they assume in leading such activities; that they are ambassadors for both their institution and the NBCDTP, and therefore expected to conduct themselves professionally during the event. Applicants can remind participants that they too should conduct themselves professionally and appropriately. Applicants should contact the Academic Director and local NBCDTP Administrator at the host institution either during, or as soon as possible after the event to report incidences of unsuitable behaviour, which may be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action by the relevant institution.

Conferences should be given particular consideration: proposed conferences with **no training component** will not be considered by the NBCDTP Academic Directors.

Allocation of Funds and the Source of Funding

The NBCDTP allocates the Scheme funds that are at its disposal via an open, transparent and equitable process, which is focused on meeting the needs and priorities of its award-holders. The Scheme is funded from the Cohort Development Fund (CDF), an additional sum provided to the NBCDTP by the AHRC to be used to support innovative training and development activities for the wider cohort of DTP-funded students.

There is no limit to the amount of funding that applicants can apply for each year, but the NBCDTP is obliged to select the most eligible applications for support, based upon the assessment criteria listed below, and its clear articulation in the Scheme application.

Assessing and Deciding Applications

Received applications are first checked by the local NBCDTP Administrator to ensure they are eligible for funding under the terms and conditions of the AHRC's Cohort Development Fund.

Applications are considered by all NBCDTP Academic Directors following the quarterly deadlines and are

assessed against the following criteria:

Primary Criteria:

- The quality of the proposed training;
- Innovation in terms of content and/or format;
- A willingness to take risks;
- Likely value to the beneficiaries identified in the application;
- The potential to raise the profile of the NBCDTP;
- Value for money.

Secondary Criteria:

- The extent to which the proposal is interdisciplinary;
- The involvement of the NBCDTP Strategic Partners.

Applicants may be asked to refine, revise and resubmit their applications and/or discuss their plans with the NBCDTP Academic Directors at a number of stages throughout the application assessment process. Applicants are **not** required to wait until the next quarterly deadline in order to submit revised applications.

It is anticipated that applications will be assessed **within four weeks of the respective deadline**. Applicants should bear these turnaround times in mind when applying for funding.

Dispersing, Accessing and Reimbursing Approved Funds

Where funds are approved, payment will take place by one of the following means (dependent upon the host institution's own procurement and expenses policies):

- a) The NBCDTP, usually the local NBCDTP administrator, will arrange payment of the item(s) and service(s) on the applicants' behalf, once negotiated by the applicants;
- b) The NBCDTP will transfer funds internally to the lead applicant's home Department/School to purchase on the lead applicant's behalf;
- c) In some cases, an applicant will purchase item(s) of small value and submit receipts to their local NBCDTP Administrator so that reimbursement may be arranged. Applicants must therefore be prepared to make an initial outlay.

It is not normally possible to pay or reimburse more than the approved amount.

Funding is approved on condition that the applicants may not change any detail of an approved application for funding without prior approval by the NBCDTP. If the approved funding is no longer required, the lead applicant must inform their local NBCDTP Administrator. Any changes to an approved activity must be reported to NBCDTP Administrator at the lead applicant's host institution at the earliest opportunity, but will not usually require the resubmission of an application.

Monitoring and Reporting

At the end of the event, the applicants are required to complete and submit an evaluation (maximum 500 words). These reports must be submitted to the NBCDTP Administrator at the lead applicant's host institution within one month of the activity taking place. Reports will be reviewed by the NBCDTP Academic Directors. The information provided by applicants in their reports may be used by the NBCDTP to publicise the Scheme externally and the NBCDTP's wider activities, and those applicants may also be invited to participate or present at future NBCDTP events and seminars.

Further Information

The AHRC's Guidelines for the use of funding, to be followed by Research Organisations is available at: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/skills/phdstudents/post-graduate-funding-training/training-grants-and-training-grant-funding-guides/>

Local NBCDTP Administrator Contact Details:

Durham University	northernbridge.admin@durham.ac.uk
Newcastle University	northernbridge.admin@newcastle.ac.uk
Northumbria University	researchsupport@northumbria.ac.uk
University of Sunderland	faci-research@sunderland.ac.uk
Teesside University	n/a
Queen's University Belfast	northernbridge.admin@qub.ac.uk
Ulster University	n/a

Annex 1: Estimating Your Costs and a Brief Guide to what is Eligible

The guidance below is provided to individual claimants, but applicants to the Cohort Development and Innovation Scheme should bear in mind these principles and restrictions when calculating, for example, estimated costs of travel and accommodation.

*Award-holders should be aware that the reimbursement of expenses is subject to the Travel and Expenses Policy at their host institution **irrespective** of the source of their studentship funding. Expenses are **not** reimbursed by Northern Bridge Consortium administrators but by the appropriate institutional finance, payroll and expenses teams, who will have divergent processes and turnaround times. Failure to follow the local policy guidance may mean it is **not** possible to reimburse costs, even those approved by the NBCDTP.*

When completing an application for funding, please consider the following:

Travel and Accommodation

Travel should be by the most cost and environmentally effective means, having regard for:

- cost and value for money;
- reasonable comfort;
- time and duration of journeys (and connecting travel);
- requirement for flexibility of itinerary;
- our commitment to reduce carbon emissions;
- safety and wellbeing.

You must obtain competitive quotes and demonstrate value for money. The best possible route, taking into consideration the principles above must be evidenced by, for example, a quotation or screenshot of an online booking form.

Rail travel by standard class only is permitted. Two single tickets are often cheaper than a return ticket, as is splitting journeys requiring multiple changes. Costs of railcards cannot be reimbursed.

Air travel within the UK is **not** permitted except where you can demonstrate that this is less costly overall, taking account of other costs such as accommodation. You should choose the lowest cost appropriate schedule taking

into account the factors listed above. Air travel must be **economy** in all cases.

Hotels should be selected on a best value basis, choosing the most economically priced room available. Costs should not exceed the following nightly limits for **short-term** stays of usually **seven nights or less**, inclusive of tax:

- London or Dublin: £140.00
- Rest of UK and ROI: £100.00
- Rest of World: up to £165.00 and **in line with room rates** stated here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scale-rate-expenses-payments-employee-travelling-outside-the-uk>

A case can be made for the above rates for longer stays where an alternative such as renting is not possible or is considerably more expensive. In general, however, where stays **exceed seven days**, you should source economically priced accommodation through, for example, <http://www.universityrooms.com/>. We generally recognise the value for money provided by services such as Airbnb, but emphasise the need for award-holders to consider their safety, wellbeing and security. The use of such services and the accommodation offered should be fully considered.

You should take advantage of, for example, rates offered by conference hosts for discounted accommodation where available.

Items such as mini bar items, pay per view TV, telephone calls, etc., will **not** be reimbursed. Where these are included in the bill, the costs must be deducted prior to the submission of the receipt for reimbursement.

The cost of taxis will be reimbursed if this is the cheapest or most appropriate means of reaching your destination. For example, this may be when public transport is unavailable, either early in the morning or late in the evening, or where public transport would add significantly to the journey time, or in instances where you feel your safety may be compromised.

We will not meet the costs relating to a spouse/partner or other family members accompanying you, though they are permitted to do so. If you are submitting receipts which includes the costs of anyone travelling with you, you can claim your portion of the costs only.

We will **not** meet any additional costs where you might choose to extend your stay for personal reasons.

Other General Principles

- Childcare costs cannot be met.
- The costs associated with the care (kennelling, etc.) of domestic pets while on extended fieldwork, etc. cannot be met.

Under no circumstances will the costs of **subsistence** be provided for except where these costs have been included in a package (for example, hotel bed and breakfast, and meals included as part of a residential training package are acceptable; an optional conference dinner is not.) Please see below for the subsistence entitlement when participating at NBCDTP-funded cohort development events.

Expenses Claims

Bookings must be made directly with the airline, hotel, etc., and not via a travel agent. You should not be influenced by any promotional incentives such as airline mileage credits, personal loyalty schemes, etc.

Claims can be submitted immediately after bookings have been made, and prior to the event itself. You do not have to have undertaken the approved activity before seeking reimbursement. Follow-up claims for approved costs such as internal travel during an activity can be made afterwards. That is, you can submit more than one

claim against the same approved activity.

You must retain and submit **detailed original receipts** - without exception - as proof of purchase to support all expenditure. Printed copies of online booking receipts are acceptable. Costs that are not supported by a receipt will not be reimbursed.

The cost must be clearly visible on the printed receipt and costs stated on the claim form must match the receipts. If you are submitting receipts which includes the costs of anyone travelling with you, you must clearly indicate your portion of the costs only.

The purchased item must also appear clearly on the receipt. Credit or debit card receipts indicating a total only are not considered sufficient proof of expenditure and will **not** be accepted and cannot be reimbursed. Statements are not accepted as proof of purchase.

Under no circumstances should you pay any costs for a fellow award-holder and claim the total amount paid, even for smaller costs such as lunch. You should request your own individual receipt.

Subsistence can be reimbursed for NBCDTP-funded cohort development events, such as the annual conferences. You are eligible to claim for the following where this has not been provided by the host institution:

- A daily allowance of up to a maximum of £9.30 to cover lunch and additional refreshments +
- One evening meal per day of the event, including soft drinks: £20.00

The cost of **alcohol** will **not** be reimbursed. **Gratuities** will **not** be refunded unless they are included on an itemised bill as a service charge and not as a voluntary addition by the award-holder.

Claims must be made one month following the completion of the activity to which the expenditure relates.

Unforeseen Increases in Costs

We appreciate costs can fluctuate between the submission of your application, approval and booking. Minor increases of a few pounds are acceptable and you are not required to seek additional approval to cover these. However, if the increase is significant, or you have any concerns about an increase in costs post-approval, please check with your local NBCDTP Administrator before you make a payment.

Version Control	
Version	1.1
Last Amendment	12/11/2018
Last Amended By	Sarah Rylance