

NEW WRITING NORTH



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

Northern Bridge Consortium Collaborative Doctoral Award

Fully-funded PhD opportunities

Partner Organisation: **New Writing North**

Lead supervisor: **Professor Katy Shaw** (Northumbria University)

We are looking for outstanding candidates interested in undertaking either of two fully-funded doctoral projects in collaboration with Northumbria University and New Writing North.

New Writing North is the biggest writing development agency in the UK. It supports writing and reading, commissions new work, creates development opportunities, and nurtures writing talent in the North of England.

PhD Project (1): *Common People: Enhancing the Visibility of Working Class Writing and Working Class Writers in the Twenty-First Century UK Literary and Publishing Industries*

We would be interested in working with a researcher to explore the profile of working class writers in UK publishing and literature and to investigate the barriers to accessing the industry that writers from working class backgrounds experience. Are working class writers and books well represented in UK publishing? If not, what are the barriers, commercial considerations and access issues that make this so?

New Writing North is involved in a number of initiatives in this area that present opportunities for original research to be generated. The publication of the anthology *Common People* edited by Kit de Waal in May 2019 will raise a debate around class diversity in publishing. The anthology includes commissioned work by 17 well-known writers and 17 new writers who have been identified by the seven regional writing agencies in England. The new writers participating in the book will all take part in a yearlong professional development programme produced by the UK writing agencies.

The researcher will work alongside the team delivering the project to undertake evaluation and to generate original knowledge based on the experience of the writers as they enter the professional writing industry. Alongside this project New Writing North is also supporting the development of a Working Class Writers' Collective and is engaged in national debate around this issue.

It is anticipated that the PhD project should pose questions and engage with debates that relate to the broader field (both national/international) of working class writing. Applicants may have a background in writing development/literary studies, but we also welcome applicants with a background in related subject areas where this is relevant to the concerns of the project.

PROJECT PROPOSALS

Project proposals should describe how the applicant plans to draw on their access to leading writers and to publishers via the project to generate new research that will impact on and support both public and charitable funders of the arts and commercial publishers so as to support work in this area in a deeper and more nuanced way. They should also indicate a willingness to engage with New Writing North and project-associated writers and publishers, be it through research undertaken on site, proposed collaborative activities or by working with particular teams. Project proposals should have the potential to enhance critical understanding of the impact of strategic interventions to promote the inclusion of working class writers in contemporary literary and publishing industries.

PhD Project (2): The 'Value' of the Writing: The Impact of the Northern Writers' Awards on the Northern Creative Economy

In 2000, New Writing North established the Northern Writers' Awards. This major programme has supported over 220 writers since it began and generates a wide variety of impacts for the writers involved, including access to publication and professional networks and personal support to develop creative and business opportunities. Since 2010, Northumbria University has been the headline sponsor of the Northern Writers' Awards.

We would like to work with a researcher to undertake a longitudinal study of a number of our winners to establish a broad understanding of how the awards support writers and to understand the longer-term impacts of winning an award (creative, financial, sustainability).

In 2018 we will publish a short research report that has looked at some of these issues. This report has concluded that further in-depth research is needed and that there is an opportunity to better understand how and why the awards engender such strong results and what the long-term impact on the UK's creative industries is of the work that we are supporting.

The researcher will have access to the awards archive, will help to develop the archive's collection strategy, and have access to key staff working on the project. They will undertake original research alongside contextualising the awards in the wider environment of UK awards and prizes and the public and private funding of books and writers.

We are seeking candidates who will engage with the Northern Writers' Awards and the database of information on past winners held by New Writing North to produce a PhD thesis that extends current knowledge on the impact of the awards on the professional writing practice and professional writing career destinations of winning authors, and on the economic impact of the awards on the creative economy of Northern England. It is anticipated that the PhD project should pose questions and engage with debates that relate to the broader field (both national/international) of literary awards and regional writing. Applicants may have a background in writing development/literary studies, but we also welcome applicants with a background in related subject areas where this is relevant to the concerns of the project.

PROJECT PROPOSALS

Project proposals should describe how the applicant plans to draw on the history of the Northern Writers' Awards to date, and generate new data regarding impact. They should also indicate a willingness to engage with New Writing North, the Northern Writers' Awards and its winners, be it through research undertaken on site, proposed collaborative activities or by working with particular teams. Projects should have the potential to inform the future strategic agenda of New Writing North, and enhance critical understanding of the impact of regional literary awards.

Professor Katy Shaw will act as lead supervisor for both projects, with a member of New Writing North's executive leadership team acting as second-supervisor. For initial queries, please contact Professor Katy Shaw who will act as a liaison between candidates and New Writing North for all enquiries relating to the project.

Professor Katy Shaw (<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/our-staff/s/katy-shaw/>) is academic lead for the Northumbria University/New Writing North partnership. As Professor of Contemporary Writings, she has published widely on social class in contemporary literature, from 1945 to the present day. Among her many publications is *Crunch Lit* (Bloomsbury, 2015). She is also editor-in-chief of *C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-century Writings*.

More information about New Writing North can be found here: <http://newwritingnorth.com/>

HOW TO APPLY

To take advantage of this opportunity you will:

- Be a resident of the UK or EU
- Be seeking to begin a PhD in October 2019
- Have an outstanding academic record, including an undergraduate degree in a relevant subject and (in most cases) EITHER a master's degree either in hand or shortly to be completed OR relevant and equivalent work experience
- Wish to pursue a doctoral project in collaboration with New Writing North and have a professional interest in the UK writing industries

Potential applicants should contact Professor Katy Shaw (katy3.shaw@northumbria.ac.uk) by **Friday 14th December 2018** for an initial discussion of their approach to the project. Candidates whose projects are approved to progress, should then apply via the Northumbria University online application form by **17:00 on Wednesday 9th January 2019**. Applicants should outline their proposed research, representing it as a CDA project, and quote NBC19 in the 'Project/Student Reference Number' field.

For further information, please see the link below:

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/study-at-northumbria/postgraduate-study/how-to-apply/>