

Collaborative Doctoral Awards Student Specification

NORTHERN BRIDGE
CONSORTIUM DOCTORAL
TRAINING
PARTNERSHIP



**Arts and
Humanities
Research Council**

Project Title:	Systemic Inclusion: Representation and Diversity in UK Literary Festivals	
Project Summary:	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.	
Institution:	Teesside University	
Partner Organisation:	Sabotage Reviews	
Primary AHRC Subject Area:	Creative Writing	
Creative Practice Component:	Creative Writing	

For further information and to submit an expression of interest, please contact:			
Lead Supervisor:	Dr Jenna Clake	Email:	j.clake@tees.ac.uk
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN:			6 th January 2020

Interviews for shortlisted candidates will take place in the week commencing: To be confirmed.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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.

RESEARCHER PERSON SPECIFICATION

**Applicants must also meet the criteria for acceptance on a doctoral programme as set out by the host institution’s Postgraduate Admissions Service.*

Education and Professional Qualifications	Essential Criteria	<p>Undergraduate degree (first-class or good upper-second) in a relevant subject e.g. Creative Writing, English Studies, Language and Literature. However, as Creative Writing at postgraduate level draws students from a range of backgrounds, we recognise that your first degree may be in another area.</p> <p>Masters Degree in a relevant subject: Creative Writing, English Studies, English Language, English Literature.</p> <p>In exceptional cases, candidates with lower qualifications will be considered if they can demonstrate that relevant professional practice or work experience has equipped them with equivalent academic and research skills, and preparedness for doctoral study, as per AHRC guidelines.</p>
Research and impact experience and training	Essential Criteria	Evidence of engagement in independent research.
	Desirable Criteria	Experience in sharing and making public arts and humanities activity e.g. publications, presentations, performance, exhibition, online dissemination, applied design outcomes, industry reports, public talk etc.
Professional practice and job-related experience	Essential Criteria	Evidence of ability to communicate and build conversations and partnerships with a range of participants and audiences.
	Desirable Criteria	<p>Work experience which points to preparedness for doctoral research.</p> <p>Evidence of ability to work with stakeholders to plan, deliver and evaluate projects, programmes and writing workshops.</p>
Interpersonal Skills	Essential Criteria	Effective communication and organisational skills and ability to persuade and enthuse.

		Ability to articulate a vision of the contribution that the CDA project will make to the field.
	Desirable Criteria	Ability to use and develop new and existing networks to inform research. Understanding of and ability to articulate issues around diversity and inclusion in a sensitive and professional manner.
Other Factors	Essential Criteria	Willingness to travel to meet the needs of the research project.
	Desirable Criteria	Confident use and application of digital technologies.

RESEARCH PROJECT

The project will address the following key research questions:

- 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.

SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

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

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

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.

APPLICATION