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# New Generation Thinkers

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Open
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)</a>
<b>Co-funders:</b>	The BBC
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Publication date:</b>	20 August 2020
<b>Opening date:</b>	20 August 2020
<b>Closing date:</b>	1 October 2020 16:00 UK time

*Last updated: 23 September 2020*

[Start application](#)

Or if you have already started an application, [sign in](#)

This prestigious scheme offers early career researchers the opportunity to develop programmes for the BBC. If selected, you'll workshop ideas with BBC producers, get media and public engagement training, and a platform for informing and influencing public opinion, policy and practice.

You'll be an up-and-coming early career researcher who wants to share ideas with the largest possible audience. 60 applicants will be invited to BBC workshops, from which 10 will be selected as New Generation Thinkers. Thinkers will then experience a year of focused activity and development from the BBC and AHRC.

To get a good idea of what we're looking for, we recommend you [listen to work by previous New Generation Thinkers](#) on the BBC website before you apply. You can also find more examples and other information about the scheme on AHRC's [New Generation Thinkers](#) webpage.

[Close all](#)

## Who can apply

To apply for the New Generation Thinkers scheme, you must be:

- a UK resident, **and**
- over the age of 18, **and**
- currently working or studying at a UK research organisation that is eligible to receive funding from UK Research and Innovation (see 'Your organisation's eligibility', below), **and**
- studying a relevant area of research (see 'Your research', below).

You must also be either:

1. A current PhD student who has made considerable progress on your research, for example within one year of submission, **or**
2. Within eight years of the award of your PhD, excluding any period of career break such as parental leave, caring responsibilities or health reasons, **or**
3. Within six years of your first academic appointment, excluding any period of career break such as parental leave, caring responsibilities or health reasons. This must be a paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, which lists research and/or teaching as the primary function, including research assistantships.

You **do not** need to have a permanent contract of employment to be eligible, as long as you meet the conditions above.

You **can** apply if you have applied to the scheme before, as long as you weren't selected as a final New Generation Thinker.

You **can't** apply if you work for the BBC, the AHRC or UK Research and Innovation.

## Your organisation's eligibility

You must be working or studying at an eligible organisation to apply. Your organisation is eligible if it is either:

- A UK higher education institution that receives grant funding from a UK funding body, such as Research England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Scottish Funding Council or the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland, **or**
- A [research institute](#) which UKRI has established a long-term involvement with as a major funder, **or**
- An independent research organisation (IRO) which has been [awarded IRO status by UKRI](#).

You can find out more about your organisation's eligibility in section 2 of the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#).

## Your research eligibility

Your research must have a primary focus in the arts and humanities. Your research could be bringing together arts and humanities research with other non-AHRC funded disciplines, provided you can demonstrate suitable links to the world of arts and humanities and that arts and humanities remains a primary focus.

Your application will be disqualified if the arts and humanities is not a primary focus of your research.

Our main topic areas are:

- Archaeology
- Classics
- Cultural and museum studies
- Development studies
- History
- Information and communication technologies
- Law and legal studies
- Library and information studies
- Philosophy
- Political science and international studies
- Theology, divinity and religion
- Dance
- Design
- Drama and theatre studies
- Media
- Music
- Languages and literature
- Linguistics
- Visual arts.

You can find a more detailed list on the [AHRC disciplines](#) page of our website.

**We don't prefer applications from any particular research area. We assess all applications on their own merits against the application criteria.**

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## What we're looking for

The applicants who will go forward to the next round will demonstrate:

- how one area of their research could make a strong, clearly expressed and engaging programme for Radio 3 of up to 45 minutes
  - how this new research could have the potential to either change public opinion, influence policy or make a difference to people's lives
  - creativity, originality and the potential to talk and write about other areas within the arts and humanities, in an accessible and interesting manner, particularly to a wider listening audience
  - that you are comfortable talking and writing about ideas from beyond your own research area, in an accessible and interesting way
  - a wide range of interests through their review and description of their current research
  - high standards of scholarship – clearly explained in interesting, well-written, jargon-free language, that's editorially and stylistically suitable for a BBC audience.
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## How to apply

**You cannot apply for New Generation Thinkers on our 'Je-S system'. It is one of the pilot Opportunities being run on the [new UKRI Funding Service](#).**

From 20 August select the 'Start an application' button toward the top of this page.

This will take you to a screen to create an account with the new UKRI Funding Service. This is a two-minute process that requires you to verify your email address and create a password.

You can then start answering the questions detailed below. By starting an application, you are not committed to submitting it. Equally, you can save changes as you go along and come back to it later. Your answers must be entered directly into the text fields provided – documents cannot be uploaded.

Make sure you gain any required approval from your organisation and ensure you submit before the deadline at 4pm on 1st October. Your application will not be sent to your Research Office – it will go directly to the AHRC.

We strongly suggest you listen to work by previous New Generation Thinkers before you apply. You can find examples of these on the [BBC website](#). You can also find more examples and other information about the scheme on the [AHRC website](#).

## **Your application**

You will need to provide the following information when applying:

### **1. Details and summary**

#### **Application name**

This should be the title of the programme you would like to make for BBC Radio 3.

Limited to 20 words

#### **Summary**

Provide a brief pitch for an engaging Radio 3 programme of up to 45 minutes.

#### **Guidance for writing a summary**

Focusing on one aspect of your research, give a clear outline of your idea including the format your programme would take.

Keep in mind this will be for a non-academic audience. The assessors are looking for ideas that:

- are based on a strong and innovative programme concept
- will engage and excite the public
- explain the relevance of your research and what the findings mean in an accessible way
- demonstrate creative and original thinking with personality and flair

Limited to 250 words

### **2. Personal eligibility**

**You need to be a UK resident, aged 18 or over and must select one of the eligibility criteria listed below.**

### **Eligibility categories**

Select which of the three categories below describes you best, then enter 'A', 'B' or 'C' in the space provided. Briefly add a description of your current situation and how this meets your selected criteria.

1. A current PhD student who has made considerable progress on your research, for example within one year of submission, or
2. Within eight years of the award of your PhD, excluding any period of career break such as parental leave, caring responsibilities or health reasons, or
3. Within six years of your first academic appointment, excluding any period of career break such as parental leave, caring responsibilities or health reasons. This must be a paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, which lists research and/or teaching as the primary function, including research assistantships.

Limited to 100 words

### **3. Topic eligibility**

Select the primary focus of your current research activity from the [list of AHRC Level 2 subject disciplines](#).

#### **Guidance to answering this question**

Your research could involve bringing together arts and humanities research with other non-AHRC funded disciplines. We welcome interdisciplinary research, but your current work must have the Arts & Humanities at its heart. Choose the subject discipline that best describes your research.

In the space provided, state your subject discipline.

### **4. Your current research activity**

**Briefly describe what you are researching and its broader relevance to a non-academic audience.**

#### **What you should include in your answer**

Provide a brief explanation of the current arts and humanities research you are undertaking.

The assessors are looking for research that is:

- new, unique, interesting or challenges current thinking
- evidenced, scholarly and well written.

Limited to 250 words

### **5. Your research history**

**List the academic institutions where you have been based, the years you were there and the research you undertook.**

## What you should include in your answer

Include all the academic institutions for whom you have carried out research. Start with the most recent; describe what you did and how you did it, providing any interesting outcomes.

The assessors are particularly looking for:

- a breadth of research interest
- high standards of scholarship.

Limited to 250 words

## 6. Write a review

**Review a book, film, play, poetry, current exhibition or cultural event.**

### What you should include in your answer

Review a new film, play, novel, book of poetry, exhibition or any other cultural event of which you have personal and recent experience. This should be of interest to and written for a non-academic audience, and must be on a topic and discipline separate from your research. Write the review as if you were going to read it on air as a short essay for BBC Radio 3 – you can listen to examples online. Remember that *Free Thinking* makes a link between arts and ideas, so your review will need to explore ideas within or prompted by the work and not simply discuss its apparent quality.

The assessors are particularly looking for:

- links between arts and ideas, where you explore ideas within or prompted by the work
- comfort with communicating ideas outside of your research area in an interesting, well written and engaging manner.
- editorial and stylistic suitability for a Radio 3 audience

Limited to 250 words

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## How we will assess your application

### Stage one – Assessment

Before we assess an application, the AHRC will check it for:

- Eligibility
- Research subject

Applications which don't adhere to these rules will be disqualified and will not progress any further. Incomplete, obscene or fraudulent entries will also be disqualified at this stage.

The AHRC will then share the entirety of the content of the applications, including applicant contact details, with the BBC via a secure online portal. The AHRC may also share anonymised equality, diversity and inclusion details with the BBC.

The AHRC and the BBC will then assess all remaining applications against the assessment criteria below and assign an initial grade (1 to 6), where 1 is unsatisfactory

and 6 is exceptional.

After considering all proposals, both the AHRC and the BBC will each shortlist up to 60 applications.

Unfortunately, due to the volume of applications, we are not able to provide individual feedback if you are unsuccessful at the application stage.

The shortlisted applications from both BBC and AHRC will be considered at a joint panel meeting where both organisations will agree on the final 60 candidates to attend the workshops.

The chair will ensure that stated processes are adhered to and that all applications are treated in a consistent manner. The chair is also responsible for facilitating the panel discussions. The panel meets as a whole to discuss all the applications selected by the BBC and AHRC and agree final candidates to attend the workshops.

## **Stage two – Workshops**

From the written submissions, up to 60 applicants will be chosen to attend a workshop event. At your workshop event, you will:

- Learn from BBC staff how they commission, produce and present radio and television programmes
- Workshop programme ideas with the help of other candidates and producers
- Take part in interactive practice sessions to showcase programme ideas and demonstrate their ability to communicate with the listening audience
- Have the chance to speak to AHRC staff about the scheme, AHRC's involvement and UK Research and Innovation more widely
- Meet fellow researchers.

You won't be competing with other candidates like you would at other interviews. We assess each applicant on their performance as a whole, as well their application.

We're not able to pay travel expenses or compensation for time off in lieu of work for attending a workshop. You should approach your organisation, however, to see if they can provide any assistance.

We will provide individual feedback on your performance if you are unsuccessful at the workshop stage. We will provide guidance on how to obtain feedback at the workshops.

If you don't attend the workshops or our later media training, you'll be disqualified from the scheme and we won't pay any expenses.

## **Stage three – Final panel**

The Radio 3 team will monitor progress of the workshop attendees and later form a panel to decide who will be selected to be the 10 New Generation Thinkers for 2021.

The workshops and the selection process will be observed by representatives of the AHRC and the final decisions will be made in consultation with the AHRC.

The panel will use the same criteria as above to decide who is shortlisted, assessing their verbal communications skills as well as written.



We expect that this will happen within ten working days of the workshops.

## Final applicants

10 successful applicants chosen from the workshops will become an Arts and Humanities Research Council, Radio 3 New Generation Thinker for 2021. They will:

- Work with BBC producers to develop their own programme ideas for Radio 3 and receive input from BBC Arts
- Be invited to showcase their research and trail their programme idea at the BBC and AHRC events
- Appear regularly on air in Radio 3's *Free Thinking* programme, available as a BBC Arts & Ideas podcast
- Write and present an edition of The Essay for Radio 3
- Have the chance to appear at AHRC events, including the Being Human Festival
- Work with the AHRC on appearances in the wider media
- Write articles for the AHRC blog and the AHRC website
- Attend a two-day session run by the AHRC on 16-17 February 2021 at a central UK location. This will include a media training course, a photograph and filming session and an evening dinner on the first day. **You must attend to be part of the scheme.**

We will refund travel expenses for the final 10 New Generation Thinkers.

## The judging process

The judges' decision is final. We won't enter into any correspondence regarding the judges' decision.

The BBC and the AHRC reserve the right to change one or more of the judges if necessary.

The BBC and AHRC reserve the right to disqualify applicants at any stage. We might do this, for example, if we find that:

- You are ineligible
- You misrepresented yourself in your application
- Any part of your research background is fraudulent (e.g. due to plagiarism)
- You bring the scheme, the AHRC or the BBC into disrepute.

This list is not exhaustive.

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## Contact details

The UKRI Funding Service Helpdesk is here to help with any questions about the service and the AHRC New Generation Thinkers Call. Queries should be directed through the following routes:

**Email:**

[Funding service support](#)

**Helpline:** 01793 442900

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