



# UK-US new directions for digital scholarship in cultural institutions: level one

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Open
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)</a>
<b>Co-funders:</b>	National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), US
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Maximum award:</b>	£60,000
<b>Publication date:</b>	30 March 2021
<b>Opening date:</b>	15 April 2021
<b>Closing date:</b>	8 July 2021 16:00 UK time

*Last updated: 15 April 2021*

Apply for funding to advance digital scholarship in cultural institutions such as museums, libraries, galleries and archives.

You must focus on:

- organising, creating and interrogating all collection types
- evolving institutions to face the 21st century
- fostering digitally enabled equitable participation.

Projects could include:

- preliminary work for future large-scale projects
- small-scale collaborative projects
- sharing project outputs.

If you are interested in a larger project, you can [apply for up to £250,000 in level two](#).

Your project team must be a US-UK collaboration and last up to 24 months.

You can apply for up to £60,000. AHRC will fund 80% of the full economic cost of the UK side. The US project team members can apply to NEH for up to \$50,000 to cover US costs.

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## Who can apply

Applications must be submitted by teams composed of at least one research organisation from the US and one from the UK, in which each country is represented by at least one cultural institution.

For the purpose of this funding opportunity, the term 'cultural institution' is conceived broadly and defined as any organisation that collects, organises, preserves, and makes accessible cultural heritage materials to both the academic research community as well as the public (including museums, libraries, galleries, archives, and historical societies).

## UK applicants

Standard eligibility criteria will apply to this opportunity for UK investigators and research organisations.

Please see the [AHRC research funding guide](#).

## US applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- US non-profit organisations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status
- public and 501(c)(3) accredited institutions of higher education
- state and local governmental agencies
- federally recognised Native American tribal governments.

US investigators should refer to the NEH notice of funding opportunity.

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## What we're looking for

The opportunity aims to support a diverse range of projects that advance digital scholarship in line with the following themes:

### **i) Organising, creating, and interrogating all collection types**

In what ways can digital collections become richer and more user-friendly through existing methods such as optical character recognition, text extraction and parsing, linked open data, and network analysis?

How can artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning be leveraged to help organize, search, and understand digital collections?

What sorts of new and emerging methods will enable breakthroughs in working with digital collections?

How can digital technologies unlock new data, uncover hidden or under-researched histories, and facilitate discovery research?

## **ii) Evolving institutions to face the twenty-first century**

What innovative training programs can be developed to address leadership and digital skills gaps in cultural institutions and how can these programs build capacity for smaller institutions?

What challenges do AI and machine learning methods present in terms of privacy, ethics, research integrity, copyright, reproducibility, and bias?

How can digital innovation be harnessed to inform and advance the process of decolonization across the sector, such as in collections, acquisitions, storytelling, programming, staffing, visitor participation, and physical spaces?

How can digital tools help to improve visitor-facing experiences, enhance accessibility and inclusion, and better interpret visitor needs and interests?

## **iii) Fostering digitally-enabled equitable participation**

In what ways can digital scholarship and tools enhance access and create more equitable and inclusive approaches to community engagement, including for people of colour and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality?

How can existing methods such as crowd-sourcing and co-creation be used to broaden participation or increase engagement across cultures or borders?

How can digital technology help to interrogate and address issues relating to representation across cultural institution staff and volunteers, for example in terms of diversity and precarity in the sector?

This opportunity can support activities, such as:

- planning and preliminary work for future, larger-scale projects, including conferences, workshops, and working group meetings to bring together individuals with complementary skill sets to outline future research, plan publications, or develop best practices
- small-scale collaborative projects, such as case studies, experiments, and exploratory or developmental research
- outreach to disseminate project findings, methods, software, and tools.

If you are interested in a larger project, you can [apply for up to £250,000 in level two](#).

You should choose the funding level appropriate to the scope and maturity of your proposed project.

Projects must begin by 1 February 2022.

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## How to apply

The US and UK partners should prepare their application materials together, but will submit two separate applications.

UK applicants should submit proposals through the Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S), while the US partner should apply via the instructions in the NEH Notice of Funding Opportunity.

The opportunity will be open through the Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S) from 15 April 2021 and will close on 8 July 2021.

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## How we will assess your application

A panel of experts will assess your application based on:

- the significance and importance of the proposed thematic area
- the responsiveness of the project and its research questions to the programme and its aims
- clarity and appropriateness of the proposed methods
- the expertise, commitment, and complementarity of team members
- the suitability of the work plan
- budget and value for money.

Please consult the call guide for further details of the review criteria.

Proposals will be considered by a cross-disciplinary expert assessment panel drawing on members of AHRC's Peer Review College, NEH's reviewer database, and other experts as appropriate. The panel will assess both the level one and level two proposals.

There will not be a separate stage of individual peer review for each application prior to consideration by the panel, therefore applicant teams will not receive feedback on their applications in the form of individual peer reviewers' comments.

The assessment panel will agree on grades for each proposal, agree a ranked priority list of applications and make funding recommendations to the NEH and AHRC.

Applicant teams will be notified of funding decisions by email in December 2021.

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## Contact details

The opportunity is managed by AHRC's international partnerships and engagement team.

For initial enquiries, please contact [fic@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:fic@ahrc.ukri.org).

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## Additional info

This is the second New Directions for Digital Scholarship in Cultural Institutions funding opportunity jointly supported by the NEH and AHRC.

It builds on the success of the first funding opportunity, as well as two previous opportunities for proposals to facilitate partnership development activities between cultural institutions and universities in the UK and US run by AHRC.

Read our news story: [Grants announced with National Endowment for the Humanities](#).

It also builds upon a workshop held in Washington, D.C. in September 2019, co-convened by the AHRC and NEH, along with:

- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
- US National Science Foundation
- Smithsonian Institution
- Library of Congress.

All personal data provided to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in connection with this joint funding call will be processed in accordance with current UK data protection legislation.

As this is a joint funding call between UKRI's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), both AHRC and NEH will need to process the information provided.

Further information on how we use your personal data, and how you can exercise your rights as a data subject, can be found in:

- the [UKRI privacy notice](#)
- the [NEH privacy notice](#).

By choosing to submit an application you are affirming that your application can be shared with NEH. Please contact [fic@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:fic@ahrc.ukri.org) if you have any concerns or require any further information.

## Links to guidance

- [Call guidance](#)
- [AHRC funding guide](#)

- [Je-S handbook](#)
  - [NEH notice of funding opportunity](#)
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## Timeline

