

Early Career Research Fellowships in Cultural and Heritage Institutions: Townhall, 18.09.25



Welcome and introductions

Arts and Humanities Research Council – Andrea Bond, Senior Investment Manager, Skills

Cohort Training and Development Team – Joanna Norman, Director of the V&A Research Institute, National Art Library and Archives, and Eloise Rowley, Project Coordinator

Current Fellow – Siôn Parkinson, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Independent Research Organisation representatives:

Historic England: Thomas Gould, Research Manager

Historic Environment Scotland: Ben Thomas, Research Manager

Imperial War Museums: Maria Castrillo, Head of Collections Access &
Research

Natural History Museum: Isabel Davis, Research Theme Leader,
Collections and Culture

Royal Museums Greenwich: Helen Mears, Head of Curatorship and
Research

Programme for the session

Structure of the session:

The townhall will last 1.5 hours, 3.30 – 5.00 pm

There will be a short break at around 4.25 pm

3.30 – 3.55 pm

Welcome & intros (5 mins)

Presentation from AHRC about the opportunity (10 mins)

Presentation from Cohort Coordination and Development Team about cohort development and application process (10 mins)

Programme for the session

3.55 – 4.25 pm

Short presentations from 3 IROs on their specific priorities (5 mins each):

- Historic England: Thomas Gould, Research Manager
- Historic Environment Scotland: Ben Thomas, Research Manager
- Imperial War Museums: Maria Castrillo, Head of Collections Access & Research

Q&A

5 minute comfort break

Programme for the session

4.30 – 5.00 pm

Presentation from current ECR fellow Siôn Parkinson (5 mins)

Short presentations from 2 IROs on their priorities:

- Natural History Museum: Isabel Davis, Research Theme Leader, Collections and Culture
- Royal Museums Greenwich: Helen Mears, Head of Curatorship & Research

Q&A (15 mins)

Housekeeping

- The Townhall is being recorded
- Please remain on mute, unless asking a question
- Please ask any questions during the allotted Q&A sections, or in the chat
- The presentations and the recording of the Townhall will be available on the funding call
- After the event you will receive a voluntary equality, diversity and inclusion monitoring form. This information is anonymised and will be held by the V&A for any evaluations

Joanna Norman, V&A
Cohort Coordination and Development
Team lead

Cohort Coordination and Development

Currently led by a team based at the V&A:

- Joanna Norman, Director of the V&A Research Institute,
National Art Library & Archives
- Oliver Cox, Head of Academic Partnerships
- Eloise Rowley, Project Coordinator

Cohort Coordination and Development

3 workstreams:

- Supporting development of fellowship proposals through the Expression of Interest phase
- Design and delivery of cohort training and development programme
- Evaluation and reporting

Cohort Training and Development programme

- Designed for the cohort of fellows, with a specific focus on research within the cultural and heritage sector
- Time commitment involved: approx. half a day per week
- Most sessions take place online, key milestone events in person, with at least one residential
- Mentoring
- Peer-to-peer learning

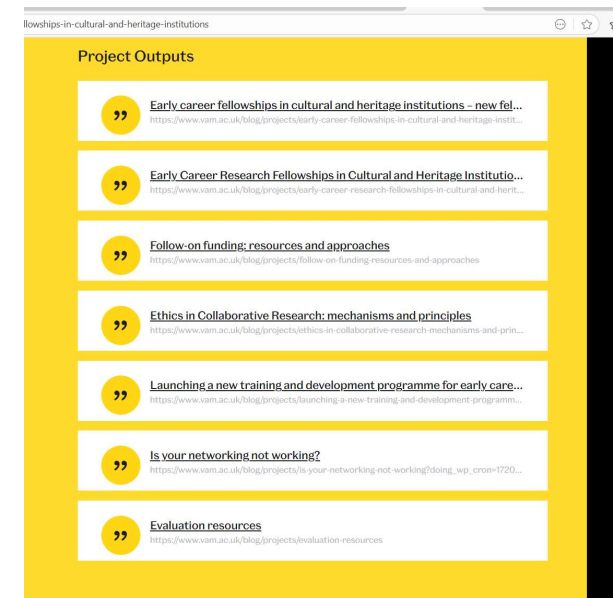
Examples of training and development

The pilot programme has included:

- **Seminars** focused on the cultural and heritage sector issues – themes, challenges and opportunities
- **Workshops** on navigating complex institutions and working with communities
- **Practical sessions** on budget and project management, career pathways, funding opportunities, writing CVs and grant applications

Cohort Training and Development (cont.)

- Mentoring
- Responsive grants scheme
- Peer-to-peer learning through the cohort
- Find out more at [Early Career Research Fellowships in Cultural and Heritage Institutions](https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/projects/early-career-research-fellowships-in-cultural-and-heritage-institutions)



Fellowship applications: developing a proposal

- UKRI Funding Finder has all the information about the opportunity: [Early career fellowships in cultural and heritage institutions: 2025 – UKRI](#)
- Find out which Independent Research Organisations are participating (there are 23)
- Read about the priority areas of interest that each organisation has identified
- Get in touch with a potential host organisation

Cross-IRO areas of interest

- Researching **underexplored collections and places**, unlocking opportunities for more inclusive engagement with heritage
- Contextualising collections and heritage in relation to **contemporary themes of national and global relevance**
- **Creative technology** applied to practice and performance
- Applications of **heritage science** to better understand and conserve collections, sites, materials and environments

Cross-IRO areas of interest

- How cultural heritage can address and engage with **climate change and biodiversity loss, sustainability and resilience** of collections and heritage
- Enhancing and exploring **future practices** in cultural, heritage and creative organisations (eg application of digital technologies & responsible AI, creative methods, provenance research, co-design)

Individual institutions' priorities

	A	B	C	D
	IRO name	Contact person	Broad research themes/codes/key words	Strategic areas of your organisation's interest
1	Amgueddfa Cymru / National Museum Wales	Dr Gemma Brown	Community action research; Improving the inclusivity and accessibility of our services and collections; Interdisciplinary approaches that use our collections and/or involve our communities; How cultural heritage organisations can support wellbeing and social prescribing.	We are a multi-site organisation with seven national museums and a collections centre. Our sites are vital community spaces and our collections o research on the natural history, archaeological, social and industrial history of Wales as well as the history of art and approaches to library and arch management. Our 2022-2027 Research Strategy and our organisational Strategy 2030 outline our commitment to use our research to engage with (understand Wales' cultural heritage and environment to support happier, healthier lives and 2) ensure that everyone in Wales has an opportunity to heritage. We invite fellows to develop projects that incorporate any one of the following four strategic areas relating to the approach or subject of their propo: 1. Community action research, especially with communities in Wales that are under-represented in our collections, to share new stories or reinter; 2. Improving the inclusivity and accessibility of our services and collections, particularly where the research is co-designed by communities of rele; 3. Interdisciplinary approaches that use our collections and/or involve our communities. We particularly welcome projects that either work across, archaeology, art, natural science and social history collections. For example, using our natural science collections to explore how cultural heritage change and biodiversity loss. 4. How cultural heritage organisations can support wellbeing and social prescribing; we especially welcome proposals that identify potential collat approach.
2	British Film Institute (BFI)	Dr Barry Dixon	Screen crafts; Open and Equitable Practices; Engaging New Audiences; Collecting.	Screen crafts: Devised archival practices for screen crafts. One of the legacies of film studies is to place a premium on the screened output. We are reconsider the whole lifecycle of filmmaking in its archived state, revaluing where the creative process and creative acts might sit, who contributes understanding of filmmaking and its contributors. Open and Equitable Practices: We are particularly engaged with questions around curatorial and archival practice (civic, critical, feminist, eco-criti organisation are committed to questions of anti-racism. We are interested in questions around equitable practice and how this can be embedded a cataloguing; our built and digital spaces; and our engagement with industry and creative partners

Please us this as the basis of your discussions with IROs. Only projects that directly relate to these priority areas will be taken forward by host organisations.

Contacting a potential host

https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/AHRC-110925-Contact-Details-for-IROs-Final.pdf

Arts and Humanities Research Council

AHRC early career fellowships in cultural and heritage institutions - IRO host institutions contact details

Organisation name	Contact details
Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales	Dr Gemma Brown, Research Manager Email: gemma.brown@museumwales.ac.uk
British Film Institute (BFI)	Dr Barry Dixon, Head of Academic Partnerships Email: Barry.Dixon@bfi.org.uk
English Heritage Trust	Dr Megan Leyland, Senior Curator of History (Partnerships). Email: megan.leyland@english-heritage.org.uk Tel: 020 7973 3054 Dr Andrew Hann, Senior Curator of History (Research Coordination). Email: andrew.hann@english-heritage.org.uk Tel: 020 7973 3560 or 07776183310
Historic England	Thomas Gould, Research Partnerships Manager Email: thomas.gould@historicengland.org.uk
Historic Environment Scotland	Ben Thomas, Research Manager, External Relations and Partnerships Email: ben.thomas@hes.scot
Historic Royal Palaces (HRP)	Dr Catherine Speight, Research Lead Email: Catherine.Speight@hrp.org.uk
Imperial War Museums	Dr Maria Castillo Llamas, Head of Collections Access and Research. Email: mcastillo@iwm.org.uk or Research@iwm.org.uk Tel: 020 7416 5349
MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology)	Emma Dwyer, Head of Grant-Funded Research. Email: edwyer@mola.org.uk
National Gallery	Dr Jack Hartnell, Head of Research, Email: headofresearch@nationalgallery.org.uk
National Museums Scotland	Andrea Conn, Research & Academic Liaison Manager

Please don't leave it too late to get in touch! Hosts will be having concurrent conversations with potential applicants and will need time to respond.

Further townhalls

Tuesday 23 September, 3.30 – 5.00 pm: Museum of London Archaeology, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, Tate, V&A

Tuesday 30 September, 11.30 am – 1.00 pm: Amgueddfa Cymru, British Film Institute, Historic Royal Palaces, Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, Science Museum Group, National Trust

Monday 6 October, 10.30 am – 1.00 pm: English Heritage, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, The British Library, The British Museum, The National Archives

Timeline Reminder

Candidates approach potential host Independent Research Organisation to discuss Fellowship Proposal via IRO Contact Details form (published as part of Call Text)

NOW!

Host IRO and potential candidates discuss project fit and/or identify project supervisor

From now through to 10 December

Candidate submits Expression of Interest form via the Cohort Coordination and Development Team by emailing e.rowley@vam.ac.uk

By 16:00 on 10 December 2025

Thank you

V&A