



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

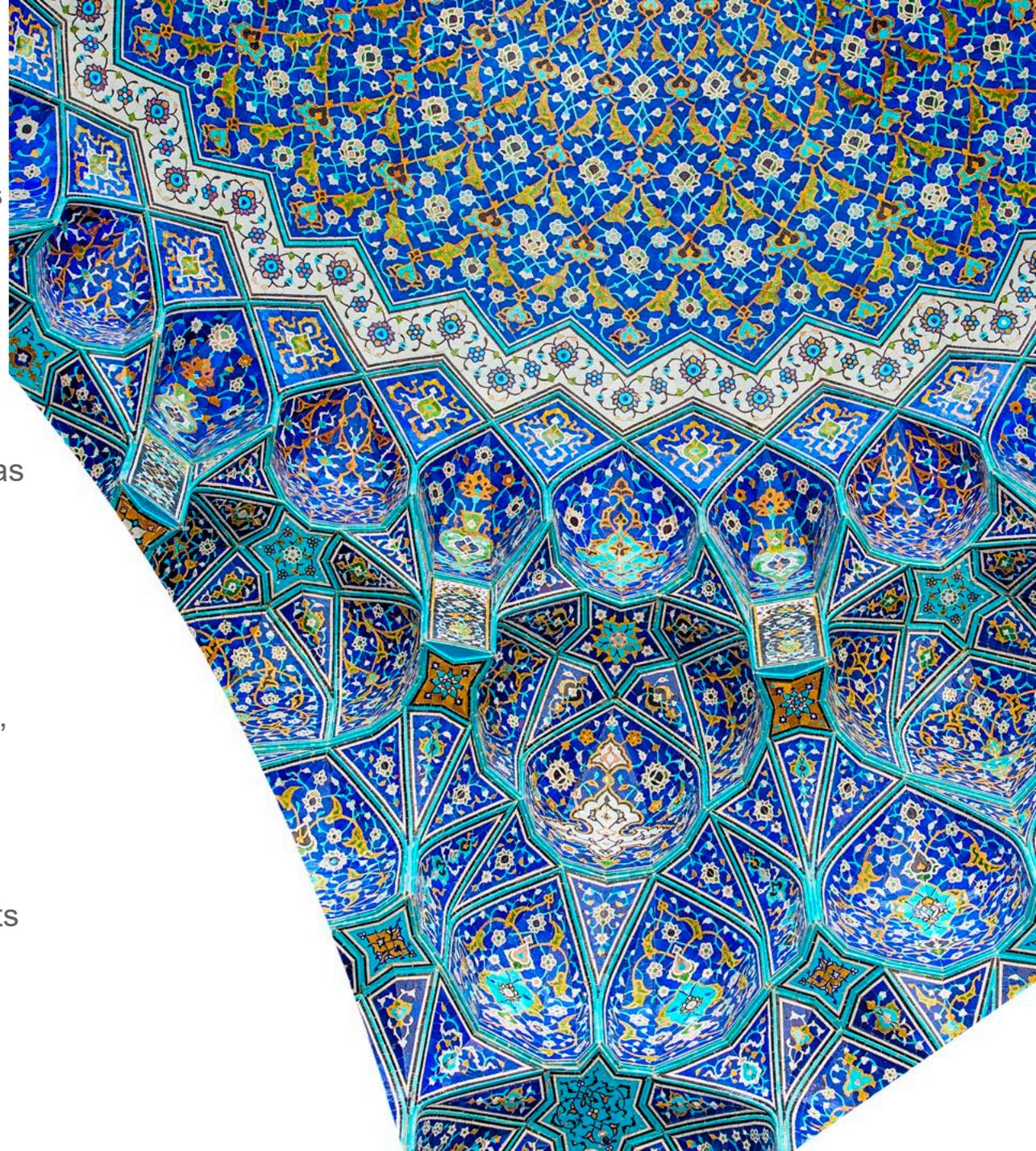
International Placement Scheme (IPS) for PhD and Early Career Researchers

US – Webinar 21st January 2026 3pm GMT

Asia – Webinar 28st January 2026 9am GMT

Aims

1. Provide PhDs*, early career researchers, research assistants with dedicated & unrestricted access to world-leading:
 - **Collections**
 - **Facilities**
 - **Programmes**
 - **Expertise**
2. Enhance the **depth, range, diversity and quality of UK research activities** conducted by scholars, especially in areas exploring under-represented and under-researched cultures, histories and methodologies.
3. Foster **international collaboration and academic mobility**, building strong global networks and long-term research relationships that transcend borders.
4. Accelerate **career progression and personal development**, positioning IPS scholars as future leaders in their subject areas.
5. Cultivate a **vibrant community of scholars**, connecting researchers across disciplines and geographies to share knowledge, inspire innovation, and shape the future of the arts and humanities.



Benefits for IPS

Participants

- **Unrestricted access** to the host institute's collections, resources, facilities, expertise from scholars/curators.
- Inclusion in the host's own fellowship programmes.
- Dedicated **office or workspace** provided.
- **Privileges** and experience equivalent to scholars at host institutions.
- Exposure to non-UK research environment.
- **Host Expertise:**
 - **Support from experienced hosts** with a proven track record in international fellowship programmes.
- **Networking & collaboration:**
 - Opportunities to build international networks and collaborate with professionals across disciplines.
 - Membership in a **cohort of international scholars**, fostering IPS friendships and long-term connections.
- **Academic & Professional development:**
 - Participation in **conferences, seminars, and classes**.
 - **Development of transferable skills**, including project management, presentation, comms and influencing.



Host partners

The Huntington Library, California

Harry Ransom Center,
The University of Texas

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C

Smithsonian Institution, Washington
D.C

The Yale Center for British Art

Shanghai Theatre Academy
Shanghai

National Institutes
for the Humanities

Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas



5m photographs



100,000 art + design works



42m manuscripts



1m books and print



The Huntington Library, California



9.2m manuscripts



1.8m books and prints



512,000 digital files



805,000 photographs



50,000 art objects



The Munger Research Center



11 million items spanning 11th and 21st centuries

The Library of Congress



15.7m photographs



8.2m sheet music pieces



41m+ books and print



4.3m audio materials
1.8m moving images



5.8m maps



78.5m manuscripts



178.2 million items in collections.

Smithsonian Institution



155.5m artefacts, works of art, 2m library volumes specimens



14.9m digital records



156,830 cubic feet of archival material



Worlds largest research and museum complex

The Yale Center for British Art



Reference Library and
Archive 40,000 volumes



35,000 Rare Books
and Manuscripts



2,000 Paintings and
250 sculptures



60,000 Prints
and Drawings



**Home to the largest collection of British Art
outside the UK**

Shanghai Theatre Academy, Shanghai



Practice-led rather than
collections-based



Performing arts, fine arts and
visual culture



National Institutes for the Humanities, Japan



- Research Institute for Humanity and Nature
- International Research Centre for Japanese Studies
- National Museum of Ethnology
- National Museum of Japanese History
- National Institute of Japanese Literature
- National Institute of Japanese Language and Linguistics



Previous Placements – US

Harry Ransom Centre

Investigating James Hanley's later novels and radio drama

Queer Community in the Works and Correspondence of George Cecil Ives and the British Sexological Society

Huntington

The impact of early colonialism on perceptions of body size and beauty

Personification drama from manuscript to print, 1538-1607

Library of Congress

Investigating the economic and educational reconstruction of Yugoslavia, 1945-1948

Hip-Hop Museology at LOC

Smithsonian

Contemporary History of Northern Virginia Data Centres—Security, Memory, Conflict

Exploring the material culture of the Soviet and Russian space programmes

Yale Centre for British Art

This Is Not a Novel: The 1960s Experimental British Novel and the Visual Arts

Queering Space and Place: The Collaborations of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant

Previous Placements – Asia

Shanghai Theatre Academy

Investigating Historically-Responsive Theatre Practice in Shanghai: Tradition, Innovation, and Intercultural Exchange

NIHU

Investigating images of strange phenomena and Yōkai depicted in paintings.

Shanghai Theatre Academy

Structuring Unstructured Data: Enhancing AI Predictions for Movies and TV Shows

NIHU

Exploring the Intersection of Horror, Technology, and Cultural Identity

Eligibility & Award

Who can apply

- Current early career researchers, doctoral level research assistants and doctoral students, student (in funded period)
- From any arts and humanities subject areas (or social science subject area if applying to the LoC)
- PhD students must be AHRC-funded
- ESRC eligibility: only ESRC-funded doctoral students can submit applications and must apply for the LoC

Duration

- Scholars undertake their visit between 2 – 6 months
- Remain in-country throughout the placement

Stipend

One-off payment for visas
and flights:

£1,000* +

Monthly stipend:

£2,500

In addition to any existing
AHRC/ESRC PhD funding



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*£1,200 for
NIHU and
STA



Tips to Strengthen Your Application – Pre-proposal prep

Before writing your proposal, you will need to prepare your application by scoping your proposal, contacting host institutions, demonstrating a compelling and specific need for a placement at the host institution and ensuring feasibility before writing your proposal.

1. Research the host institution thoroughly

- Review online catalogues, finding aids, digital archives, object records, and guides to collections by visiting the institutions' individual websites.
- Identify specific collections, objects, manuscripts, archives, datasets, or materials central to your project and research questions.

2. Discuss your work plan with your supervisor (if you are a PhD student) or head of department (if you are an ECR or research assistant).

- Ensure your proposed research appropriately contributes to your current research or any AHRC parent project, if applicable, and the proposed research activities and outputs from your placement propose a distinct package of research that complements, strengthens, or builds on your current area of research.
- Discuss how a short placement can be completed within a realistic timescale.

3. Satisfy all requirements in the assessment criteria for the scheme



4. Engage with host contacts early

Note: For NIHU, you must contact the institutions to let them know what collections you want to access **at least 6 weeks before applying**. For the other hosts, it is optional but highly recommended.

- Reach out to faculty members, curators, archivists, collection managers or librarians well in advance to confirm the feasibility of your intended research.
- Be precise about:
 - Collections to be consulted
 - Institutes or departments to be engaged with
 - Methodologies to be used
- Clarify access arrangements, handling requirements, potential research support, or special restrictions.
- Demonstrate awareness of ongoing projects, active research groups, the institute's thematic priorities (e.g., cultural resources, linguistics, ethnology).
- Clarify access arrangements, handling requirements, potential research support, or special restrictions.
- Use these conversations to refine your scope and timeframes, this directly supports demonstrating feasibility when you write your proposal.
- Ensure your proposal is relevant to your prospective IPS host institution you are applying to, explain how this project relates to their collections and expertise.

5. Align your project with host strengths

- Note any host research programmes, exhibitions, collecting areas or methodological expertise that your project complements.
- Determine how the residency length (2–6 months permitted) aligns with the required onsite activities.
- Position your research in relation to host's strengths (e.g. STA's Chinese opera studies, theatre and performance innovation, dramatic literature, acting, directing, design or choreography research) and explain how your work aligns with or contributes to the host's mission of advancing research, and its potential to lead to future collaborations.

Tips to Strengthen Your Application – Proposal

When preparing your proposal for submission via the UKRI Funding Service (the required route for applications), ensure you clearly address the following points:

1. Demonstrate essential need for the host institution placement

- Identify and name the specific collections, materials, archives, scholars, or facilities you will consult. For NIHU, identify the **specific research institutes** within NIHU you will work with.
- Explain **why the identified resources are essential to your project**, clarifying what these resources uniquely enable and how the placement **enables research that would otherwise be impossible**.
- Demonstrate that **in-person engagement** is indispensable, and why the work cannot be completed elsewhere, online, or in the UK, e.g. restricted-access materials, items not digitised, necessary collaboration with scholars, specialist onsite tools, technologies.
- Provide a clear **rationale for the length of residency** requested, based on specific tasks e.g. item-level examination, data capture, object analysis, specialist training, materials and methods.

*Note: Applications that do **not** reference specific collections are unlikely to succeed.*

2. Show scholarly quality, significance, originality, and contribution

- Articulate the **original contribution of your project**, explaining what new knowledge, questions, interpretations, or methodologies your research will generate in the arts, humanities or social sciences (depending on your disciplinary eligibility). E.g. Asian studies, Performance studies, Cultural heritage research, Linguistics, literature, or visual culture, or any other related fields.
- Show precisely how the placement will **enhance the depth, range, and quality of your research in ways not otherwise possible**.
- Position the work within current debates or emerging research areas, making clear how the proposed placement allows you to contribute to or reshape these discussions, articulate the project's **academic value** and its contribution to broader global or comparative scholarship:
 - For STA, the intended research is to be practice-led, thus the applicant's own practice must be an integral part of the research proposal and the creative/performative aspects of the research must be made explicit.
 - For NIHU, emphasise **innovative methods**, interdisciplinary approaches, or use of unique NIHU resources.
- Explain how your work **aligns with or contributes to the host institution's strengths**, including: existing research programmes, ongoing scholarly conversations, resident fellows or research groups, thematic or methodological priorities.

3. Provide a realistic, structured, well-designed research plan

- Present a detailed, feasible timeline for the 2–6 month residency, with clear milestones and deliverables, showing **capacity to deliver the proposed activities**.
- Outline your research **question, aims, objectives, methods, and anticipated outputs**, ensuring these are **specific and doable within the timeframe**.
- Detail the **specific activities** you will undertake, including professional/academic development opportunities e.g. archival or collection-based research, object or technical analysis, specialist training or skills development, interviews, engagement with curators, conservators, or senior scholars, participation in academic events (workshops, conferences, reading groups, seminars).
- Demonstrate how the placement **connects to the broader trajectory of your overall research project**, including thesis chapters, publications, practice-led components, or future collaborations.
- Keep your proposal sharply **focused and outcomes-driven**. Avoid overly broad, diffuse, or speculative plans.

4. Demonstrate interdisciplinarity and wider relevance (where applicable)

- If your work spans multiple fields, specify **how the host institution may support this interdisciplinarity** (e.g., access to conservation science, digital humanities labs, special collections teaching, or cross-disciplinary research groups).
- Highlight how your project connects to broader discourses or applications, such as museum and gallery practice, heritage interpretation, public engagement, pedagogy, digital or creative practice.

Tips to Strengthen Your Application – Supporting Materials

1. Ensure your CV demonstrates:

- Your skills and aptitude (including language skills) to deliver the work
- Any prior relevant collections-based or practice-based research experience
- Methodological skills required for onsite work
- Publications, creative outputs or professional activities showing readiness for independent research to complete the project
- Evidence of ability to conduct independent research and work in cross-cultural or practice-based and interdisciplinary contexts.

Note: STA and NIHU hosts expect applicants to have **functional working proficiency in the relevant language**. Provide **evidence** of your language skills to demonstrate your ability to work **independently and effectively during your research placement**.

2. Supervisor or Head of Department Statement of Support

You must provide a statement of support from your supervisor if applying as a PhD student or Head of Department, if an ECR or doctoral level research assistant. Your referee must:

- Confirm your readiness to undertake independent research at an international host, speaking to your capability, research excellence, and suitability for an internationally based placement
- Explain why the proposed institution is appropriate for you to conduct your research and validate the feasibility and value of your proposed project
- Any details of the supervisory arrangements that will be in place whilst you are undertaking your research during this placement
- Assure that the time spent on IPS will not result in extra time being required to complete the current research funded by AHRC or ESRC if applying as a PhD.

Your proposal, CV and reference should present a consistent narrative showing:

- ✓ **Eligibility**
- ✓ **Research excellence**
- ✓ **Ability to conduct independent research**
- ✓ **Feasibility**
- ✓ **Clear institutional fit**
- ✓ **Strong motivation and justification for onsite access**

Host specific eligibility requirements

Host Institutions	Eligibility Requirements
Harry Ransom Center	Standard
Huntington Library	Standard
Library of Congress	Standard
Smithsonian Institute	Applicants must contact the institutions before applying to identify an advisor
Yale Center for British Art	Standard
Shanghai Theatre Academy	Knowledge of basic Mandarin is highly recommended
National Institutes for the Humanities	Applicants to NIJL + NMJH must understand Japanese to an advanced level

How to apply

Preparing your application

- You **must** identify and research the institutions' collections, fully familiarising yourself with them and how they are relevant to your own research
- Applications must be submitted via the UKRI Funding Service. All required application sections must be completed clearly, concisely and in accordance with the portal instructions.
- The **project lead (i.e you!)** is responsible for completing the application process on the UKRI Funding Service.
- **Only** the lead research organisation can submit an application (this is submitted through your university's research office)
- If PhD is funded through a **consortium of research organisations**, the application should be submitted by your **home research organisation** rather than the consortia lead research organisation
- Full details on the [International Placement Scheme 2026 – UKRI](#) under 'How to apply' section.

To apply

PhD students and early career researchers (ECRs) are both eligible to apply as a project lead for this funding opportunity. UKRI expects the research organisation will ensure that students do not apply for any other opportunities as a project lead unless it is specified that they are eligible to do so.

Select 'Start application' near the beginning of this Funding finder page.

1. Confirm you are the project lead.
2. Sign in or create a Funding Service account. To create an account, select your organisation, verify your email address, and set a password. If your organisation is not listed, email support@funding-service.ukri.org
Please allow at least 10 working days for your organisation to be added to the Funding Service. We strongly suggest that if you are asking UKRI to add your organisation to the Funding Service to enable you to apply to this Opportunity, you also create an organisation Administration Account. This will be needed to allow the acceptance and management of any grant that might be offered to you.
3. Answer questions directly in the text boxes. You can save your answers and come back to complete them or work offline and return to copy and paste your answers. If we need you to upload a document, follow the upload instructions in the Funding Service. All questions and assessment criteria are listed in the How to apply section on this Funding finder page.
4. Allow enough time to check your application in 'read-only' view before sending to your research office.
5. Send the completed application to your research office for checking. They will return it to you if it needs editing.
6. Your research office will submit the completed and checked application to UKRI.

How to apply

Funding opportunity

International Placement Scheme 2026

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) , Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Funding type:	Other
Total fund:	£250,000
Award range:	£6,000 - £16,200
Publication date:	7 January 2026
Opening date:	7 January 2026 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	19 March 2026 4:00pm UK time

Last updated: 7 January 2026 - [see all updates](#)

[Start application ▶](#)

Timeline

- 7 January 2026 9:00am**
Opening date
- 21 January 2026 3:00pm**
Webinar (placement opportunities in the US)
- 28 January 2026 9:00am**
Webinar (placement opportunities in Asia)
- 19 March 2026 4:00pm**
Closing date

 [Print this guidance or save as PDF](#)

OPP1151:AHRC International Placement Scheme 2026

Confirm you'll be leading this project if your application is successful

We strongly advise that you only start this application if you'll be the project lead (or the fellow, if you're applying for a fellowship Opportunity).

If you're just curious about the application questions, or any guidance for completing them, you can find this information on the funding Opportunity's page in the [UKRI Funding Finder](#)

Confirmation

- I confirm that I'll be leading my project, and I understand that:
- the only people who can edit the application are myself and staff at my research office, if I have one
 - if I have a research office, only it can submit the application to UKRI

[Confirm and continue](#)

Assessment process

All applications will be checked for eligibility after the funding opportunity closes.

Eligible applications will be shared with the respective placement institutions and will be reviewed by relevant experts at the institutions. Scores and comments from the host reviews will then be moderated by AHRC and ESRC.

Applications which do not meet the eligibility requirements of this funding opportunity will be rejected prior to the reviewing stage. We will notify the submitter for any applications rejected at this stage

Assessment areas

The assessment areas we will use are:

- eligibility
- purpose
- applicant experience
- supervisor's or head of department's support

Key dates

 **Application deadline: 19th March 2026 @ 4pm (GMT)** 

Host	Number of Awards Available	Window for Placements to Take Place (Indicative)	Placement Duration
Harry Ransom Center	7	1st Sept 2026 – 31st May 2027	2 to 3 months
The Huntington Library	6	1st Sept 2026 – 30th Jun 2027	3 to 6 months
The Library of Congress	25	1st Oct 2026 – 30th Sept 2027	3 to 6 months
National Institutes for the Humanities (NIHU)	9	1st Sept 2026 – 30th Jun 2027	3 to 6 months
Shanghai Theatre Academy	4	1st Sept 2026 – 31st Dec 2026; or 1st Mar – 30th Jun 2027	3 to 4 months
Yale Centre for British Art	5	1st Sept 2026 – 30th Jun 2027	3 months
Smithsonian Institution	5	1st Oct 2026 – 30th Sept 2027	3 to 6 months

Q+A

For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal, please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

For questions related to this specific funding opportunity please contact enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org, where Eva, Iris, Tom or Ian will probably be one of the friendly faces to receive and respond to your query!

Any queries regarding the system or the submission of applications through the Funding Service should be directed to the helpdesk. Email: support@funding-service.ukri.org