



UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

About your activity

Title of your activity

AHRC focal awards: multilingual futures for UK growth and connectivity – Full Stage

Council or business area

AHRC Skills

Aims and objectives

This assessment relates to those applying to receive funding to support doctoral training through the 'multilingual futures for UK growth and connectivity' scheme. The full stage is currently open, and this EIA has been updated to reflect this. Applications for the full stage have been invited following on from the completion of the outline stage.

This Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) opportunity seeks to unlock linguistic and cultural expertise to build the high-level skills, innovation capacity, and global connections that underpin the UK's growth and prosperity. It aligns with national priorities for post-16 education and skills development, as outlined in the [UK Government's Post-16 Education and Skills white paper](#), which emphasises how studentships support sector partnerships, creative innovation and workforce pipelines. It has been designed to meet the following objectives:

- deliver world-class doctoral training and development including cohort experience
- provide opportunities for students, preparing them to follow a diversity of career paths within and beyond academia
- support research capacity in specific strategic areas, addressing national and global challenges and delivering UKRI's mission to drive UK growth and improve lives, through arts and humanities doctoral research and by encouraging interdisciplinary approaches
- advance current understanding, generate new knowledge, and develop the breadth of expertise for the future of the research and innovation workforce
- address underrepresentation in the AHRC-funded doctoral community



- enable opportunities for students across specific languages and language-grounded research areas, thereby supporting the pipeline of skilled language researchers within and beyond academia
- enhance collaboration and knowledge exchange within academia and between academia and other sectors for the benefit of the students, members of the focal award consortia, and wider society.

This opportunity responds to evidence of declining capacity in language-grounded disciplines and the wider skills gap in advanced communication, translation, and cultural intelligence. It seeks to enable UK growth and renew the UK's leadership in multilingual, globally connected research and to ensure a sustainable talent pipeline in areas critical to economic growth, social cohesion, and international engagement, recognising linguistic diversity as a cultural, political and social asset.

We intend to support 4 cohorts of students with the first cohort starting in October 2028.

Applications will be assessed against a set of criteria published with the funding opportunity on the UKRI Funding Finder. The final assessment will be moderated by a specially convened panel and involve portfolio balancing.

Who is affected?

- Those applying for the training grant awards
- Candidates for future studentships within the awards and the students that will be subsequently funded
- Supervisors employed by the participating HEIs
- Non-HEI partners supporting the awards, for example through hosting placements or collaborative doctoral awards
- Peer Review College and assessment panel members reviewing the applications received
- AHRC and UKRI staff working on the scheme.

What data and consultation have you used?

AHRC's approach to doctoral support has been informed by a community engagement exercise regarding AHRC future doctoral provision delivered for the AHRC by [CRAC/Vitae in 2021-22](#). The Focal opportunity is part of the implementation of AHRC's Future Doctoral Provision (FDP) Programme which aims to deliver against a set of principles, which are in line with the findings of the Future of Doctoral provision report and Collective Talent Funding.

These principles are to:

- widen opportunities and welcome innovative and diverse routes to doctoral training
- enable collaborative learning and peer support
- enable professional development and expand skills capacity
- reduce bureaucracy
- support and advocate for Arts & Humanities doctoral students within UKRI Collective Talent Fund to deliver training in accordance with the AHRC Vision.

In developing the FDP approach, additional targeted stakeholder engagement through focus groups took place in May 2023 following the results of the study.

Focus groups comprised:

- Higher education institutions within our current training grant community and beyond
- Organisations which may be potential employers of our graduates, such as independent research organisations (IROs), other cultural organisations and the Creative Industries Clusters community
- AHRC doctoral alumni and current students.

Internal consultation took place with AHRC colleagues across the organisation including the Executive Chair and Directors Group (ECDG), Senior Management Team (SMT) and the AHRC Council and Advisory Board.

The theme was developed through a number of submissions to a Where Next survey, conducted in early 2024, and open to the public.

Impact on specific groups

Are there general impacts on multiple groups?

A number of impacts have been identified and considered as part of the funding opportunity design and internal management processes for delivery. The potential negative impacts and mitigating measures are outlined below.

Scheme characteristics

- A timeline of key milestones will be provided when the opportunity is launched to aid applicants in planning.
- AHRC requires that all training grants funded through the scheme are open to candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds and offer holistic doctoral training and development, preparing students for careers within and beyond academia.
- The opportunities will include mandatory events which each award holder will establish depending on their focus and their students' needs. These may be in person, online or hybrid.
- Student recruitment will be devolved to the training grants who should refer to the [UKRI Good Practice Principles in Recruitment & Training at Doctoral Level](#).
- AHRC have hosted two information webinars which were recorded and published online for the benefit of potential applicants unable to watch the webinars live, including applicants who might be on leave due to a religious celebration, sick leave, caring responsibilities, school holidays, pregnancy or parental leave. An additional webinar for those invited to the full stage has been arranged and advertised on the Funding Finder, this will also be recorded and made available to attendees.
- The assessment panel will be held online to reduce the need for travel and for time away from home.



Eligibility

- The funding opportunity is open to all UK-based Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that are eligible to receive research council funding for research and have the infrastructure in place to deliver postgraduate training.
- AHRC contact details will be provided on UKRI Funding Finder to support queries related to the scheme, including EDI.

Panel

- Whilst panel members are appointed primarily based on experience, we will aim to appoint a diverse assessment panel
- We will attempt to balance the panel by gender, ethnicity and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of institution
- We will aim to ensure that the Chair and deputy Chair of the panel are not the same gender if possible
- All panel members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias
- Panels are instructed to assess the application in front of them and not to 'read between the lines' or give the benefit of the doubt based on the reputation of the individual or team, as this would be a form of confirmation bias
- Panel members will be briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it
- For each proposal we appoint three academic panel introducers who formally assess and score the proposals, with all panel members expected to contribute where possible
- Each proposal will be assessed by an assessment panel, members are asked to participate in discussions to ensure that an open and transparent assessment process is undertaken, and a diverse range of views is represented.

AHRC Portfolio balancing approach

Portfolio balancing will be undertaken by AHRC following the assessment process. At the full stage, AHRC will consider:

- diversity of higher education institution types and non-HEI partner organisations, to ensure all funded consortia are diverse and collaborate with a diverse group of partner organisations
- research focus, to ensure we fund consortia across a range of languages research
- geographic coverage, to ensure the new training grant awards are located in a range of regions across the UK

Impact on protected characteristics



Protected characteristic	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Age	Potential positive and negative	This scheme requires an experienced team to lead the applications. Therefore, the career stage and age (indirectly) of applicants may lead to difficulties for those early in their career to demonstrate the level of experience needed. There should be no age-related barriers to candidates for studentships and for students to participate in the grant. All ages of student are eligible to apply.	Panel members will be briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them. They will assess an individual's capability to deliver the proposed activities. Age isn't a criterion in assessment. They will also consider the doctoral training and development offer in the applications, and how these respond to career needs of their research community across age groups
Disability	Potential positive and negative	Applicants, panellists, student candidates and students may have a range of disabilities, health conditions and additional needs which might impact their ability to apply for this funding opportunity, assess/attend a panel meeting, apply for a studentship, study within designated time frame or access training and development provision. Applicants and panel members with specific accessibility constraints may be unable to participate/engage unless reasonable adjustments are made. The same applies to students, from recruitment to delivering their research projects and attending training and development. For disabled applicants, candidates for students, and students, the provision of support from their HEI research support office may vary.	All documentation will adhere to UKRI accessibility guidelines and AHRC will take the necessary steps to ensure that electronic information is accessible to all participating within the application and assessment process. AHRC will take all reasonable steps to make adjustments to enable participation. We will offer closed captioning at virtual panels and events promoting the call using Zoom or Teams. We will upload webinar recordings to the Funding Finder for those attending and those unable to attend. The panel meeting will be online to mitigate any barriers members might have accessing a meeting in person. AHRC will make all reasonable adjustments to

		On the other hand, when these adjustments are made, this may increase participation.	support members with specific needs. The awards are expected to increase flexibility in the content and delivery of the training offered and we are providing funding to support this. A range of development opportunities can be used to ensure they meet the needs of the individual students (for example, placements are encouraged but not mandatory). The Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) sets out the support available for disabled students. The 2025 update to terms and conditions has sought to further address student needs.
Gender reassignment	Potential negative	A period of leave might be needed for reassignment/recovery. This might impact applicants' or students' ability to apply within specified timeframe and might require periods of leave during the studentship. Mis-gendering or deadnaming may happen in the application and assessment process. This could have a negative impact on applicants and could deter them from continuing their application and any future applications with UKRI.	Gender neutral language is important to support inclusivity, equality and representation. Language which isn't gender neutral may have an adverse impact on applicants, reviewers, and panel. AHRC will use and encourage the use of gender-neutral language including pronouns. UKRI Training Grant terms and conditions are flexible in nature and recognise absence because of medical treatment including treatment related to gender reassignment. This opportunity has a long application process, which may be beneficial to allow those who need to take a period of leave sufficient time to apply.



Marriage or civil partnership			
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative	Pregnant persons and persons on maternity, paternity, and/or parental leave, may miss the application deadline to be Project Leads. The same applies to candidates for students in the recruitment process. Panel members, candidates and students who are pregnant may need reasonable adjustments to enable their participation	This opportunity has a long application process, which may be beneficial to allow those who need to take a period of leave sufficient time to apply. Assessment panels will be organised as a video conference to mitigate any barriers members might have accessing a meeting in person. AHRC will make all reasonable adjustments to support members with specific needs, including needs related to pregnancy and maternity, paternity, and/or parental leave. Provision for parental leave for students (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI training grant terms conditions. AHRC expects training grants to make necessary adjustments to enable students to engage in training and development.
Race	Potential negative	We are aware of underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in the arts and humanities research community, which extends across career stages, and includes the pool of potential applicants, students, as well as AHRC's Peer Review College.	AHRC awards are open to candidates of all ethnic backgrounds. The opportunity will be available on Funding Funder using inclusive language. AHRC will encourage successful training grant

		In case of applicants, panellists and candidates with names which aren't broadly popular in the UK, there's a risk of misgendering people from different nationalities, racial and ethnic groups, which may happen in the application and assessment process. This could have a negative impact on applicants and could deter them from continuing their application and any future applications with UKRI.	award holders to ensure diversity of their studentship advertisement channels and recruitment panels. AHRC expects training grants to make necessary adjustments to enable students to engage in training and development.
Religion or belief	Potential negative	Potential applicants may be on leave due to observing a religious festival or celebration and may miss the application deadline. There is also potential for student participation in events to be impacted if organisers don't consider participant needs such as dietary requirements, need for quiet spaces etc.	AHRC will ensure that religious observations are considered when planning how long the opportunity is open for, when it closes, and when panel meetings take place, to avoid clashes with major observations. This opportunity has a long application process, which may be beneficial to allow those who need to take a period of leave sufficient time to apply. Important dates will be included in the Funding Finder so that applicants can be prepared – particularly for the applicant response process.
Sex	Potential negative	Being mis-gendered may happen in the application and assessment process. This could have a negative impact on applicants and could deter them from continuing their application and any future applications with UKRI. The gender split of the research community may vary across arts and humanities disciplines and some disciplines may require	AHRC will use gender-neutral language including pronouns in the funding opportunity specification, panel guidance, etc. AHRC will ensure that the assessment panel has as balanced a gender representation as possible. We will encourage panel members to add their preferred pronouns to their names at the videoconference

		greater work to increase gender balance or non-binary participation. There may be an impact on student candidates and current students if award holders are not sensitive to gender	panel meeting to avoid mis-gendering.
Sexual orientation			

Impact on additional characteristics

Complete the table for all characteristics. You only need to add details if there is a positive or negative impact.

Additional characteristics	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Geographical location and place	Potential positive and negative	There is a risk that most or all applications AHRC receives are from lead applicants who are concentrated in certain parts of the UK. Demand management will limit applications and could reduce spread. There is also a risk that applications from one or very few regions are the only ones proposed for funding based on merit. Therefore, gaps may occur on the map of AHRC doctoral training awards. Subsequently, this may discourage future candidates from applying for doctoral	Applications are not limited to a specific geographic location and AHRC will undertake portfolio balancing which at full stage will consider: "geographic coverage, to ensure the new training grant awards are located in a range of regions across the UK" HEIs may submit one full application as lead, and be included as partners on other applications We will aim to ensure that the focal training grant awards which we fund are not clustered and will be accessible to students from a range of geographic locations AHRC expects training grants to make necessary adjustments to enable students to engage in training and development.

		studentships due to the cost of relocation or travel.	
Socio-economic status	Potential negative	Eligibility requirements stipulate that lead applicants are employed at HEIs, therefore excluding candidates outside academia from leading applications for these training grant awards. Although UKRI stipend and rates have recently been increased, the level of funding available for studentships may still be a concern for candidates from some socioeconomic backgrounds. Another factor to consider is demand management and location. For example, students may need to be located close to their HEI. This could further discourage candidates from some socio-economic backgrounds if the cost of relocation, commuting or a change in cost of living is a barrier.	To be more inclusive, AHRC allows candidates from outside academia (such as IROs) to be co-applicants for the training grant awards and requires project partners who can be from any organisation with the capacity to offer direct or in-kind contributions. Training grant awards holders must enable equitable access to studentships in the recruitment process, and support students from all socio-economic backgrounds. AHRC expects training grants to make necessary adjustments to enable students to engage in training and development.
Education background	Potential positive and negative	Students from a range of education backgrounds will be encouraged to apply. Having a Master's degree may be a prerequisite to apply for a PhD at some institutions, which is likely to limit representation of	The opportunity requires applicants for the training grant awards to enable diverse routes into doctoral education. This is open to including candidates with professional experience equivalent to a Master's degree. Once the training awards are made, we will encourage the award holders to

		candidates who don't have a Master's degree, even if they have appropriate skills acquired outside academia.	consider a range of criteria in the student recruitment process in an inclusive way, so academic excellence evidenced by past grades and HEIs the candidates graduated from aren't the only criterion.
Parent or guardian responsibilities	Potential positive and negative	People with parent/guardian responsibilities may require additional adjustments to enable participation in the application and assessment process. Such applicants may find application deadlines to be lead applicants or co-leads of the training grants challenging whilst on leave due to their parent/guardian responsibilities. They may also miss the recruitment deadline. For students, due to the flexible nature of training and development, and the availability of part time studentships and special leave they may be more inclined to apply.	AHRC will: • accommodate reasonable adjustments of panel members when needs related to parenthood/guardianship are disclosed to us • work with panellists to remove any barriers to their participation in the panel activities and panel meeting, including barriers occurring due to parental responsibilities • enable the award holders to tailor the training and development based on the students' needs, and encourage a personalised approach with a cohort element This opportunity has a long application process, which may be beneficial to allow those who need to take a period of leave sufficient time to apply.
Carer responsibilities	Potential positive and negative	People with carer/parent carer responsibilities may require additional adjustments to enable participation in the application and assessment process and in the training and development opportunities. Such applicants may find meeting application	AHRC will: • accommodate reasonable adjustments of panel members when needs related to caring responsibilities are disclosed to us • work with panellists to remove any barriers to their participation in the panel activities and panel meeting, including barriers occurring due to caring responsibilities

		deadlines to be lead applicants or co-leads of the training grants challenging whilst on leave due to their caring responsibilities. They may also miss the recruitment deadline. For students, due to the flexible nature of training and development, and the availability of part time studentships and special leave they may be more inclined to apply.	enable the award holders to tailor the training and development based on the student's needs, and encourage a personalised approach with a cohort element. This opportunity has a long application process, which may be beneficial to allow those who need to take a period of leave sufficient time to apply.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)			
Other characteristics			

Final decision

Make a decision on whether to proceed with the activity

2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality

Possible risks and bias associated with this activity have been identified and activities have been/will be adapted accordingly. AHRC will provide reasonable adjustments during the application and assessment phases.

The funding opportunity has been designed to accommodate diverse student needs. AHRC expects successful training grant award holders to organise and deliver doctoral training in a way which eliminates barriers and bias. AHRC gives higher education



institutions and their partner organisations in the training grant award consortia the flexibility and ownership to meet diverse needs within UKRI's T&Cs and guidance.

Review and sign off

How will you monitor and review the impact of your activity?

AHRC will continue to consider EDI throughout the activity and will review this EIA at key milestones.

Lessons learned from this funding opportunity design and delivery, in line with our monitoring, evaluation and learning approach, will help us to make future doctoral training funding opportunities more inclusive.

What is the EIA review date?

July 2026 (in line with the full stage of this opportunity).

Contact

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Will the EIA be published?

On the opportunity funding finder.

Who has this been signed off by?

Joanna Dunster, Associate Director of Programmes

8/7/2026

Submitting the form

You need to [submit the form to the central repository](#)

EIAs for the International Science Partnership Funds should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org

Change log

Include changes as you've reviewed the EIA. For example, based on input received from x at the announcement of opportunity stage, x was added

Name	Date	Version	Change
		1	
		2	
		3	

Action plan

Add the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the negative impact you have identified. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is the outcome?
Note that the long application window is a mitigation for many of the characteristics, and review any applicant feedback relating to deadline timing	At lessons-learned stage (post-award)	AHRC Skills team	Collect and review any timing-related feedback from applicants or hosts.	Assess whether existing mitigations are sufficient and identifies whether any timing issues are raised in practice.
Provide panel members with the standard AHRC review and panel meeting briefing, including reminders of UKRI assessment principles and expectations for	Prior to panel meeting	AHRC Operations team	Confirmation from panel chair and observers	Reinforces fairness and consistency in assessment.



bias-aware decision-making				
Follow UKRI best practice to aim for a balanced panel membership	At panel building stage	AHRC Skills team and Operations team	Regular review of panel member invites and acceptances	The assessment panel is diverse