**MOLA Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships 2022-23**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **What are Collaborative Doctoral Partnership studentships?**

Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentships are part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) scheme to encourage and develop collaboration between UK universities and organisations such as museums, galleries, and heritage sector organisations.

<https://www.ahrc-cdp.org/>

The CDP scheme offers fully funded studentships for study towards a doctoral degree. CDP students are jointly supervised by subject specialists at a UK university, and at one of the museums, libraries, archives or heritage organisations that make up the CDP Consortium.

The scheme provides an exceptional opportunity for doctoral students to acquire new skills within a research-led, professional environment. Students are also encouraged to engage with the wider public and to present their research to non-specialist audiences. The scheme also seeks to facilitate collaboration between universities and a diverse range of partners, including cultural organisations and community groups.

1. **What are CDP studentships at MOLA?**

MOLA CDP studentships are paid studentships that allow MOLA and a university to collaborate on a project that falls within the AHRC’s subject domain, and that can provide demonstrated benefits to both partners. Each project is carried out by a research student who is recruited by the partners and who will gain a doctorate by the end of the studentship, jointly supervised by staff from both MOLA and the proposing university.

1. **Who can propose a CDP studentship project?**

To submit an outline project proposal you must be a current member of academic staff at a Research Organisation directly supported by the UK funding councils. This includes most UK universities and PhD-awarding colleges. Studentship proposals must be submitted by the member of the university’s academic staff who would act as the student’s main supervisor. Outline proposals which are shortlisted for the second stage of the selection process will be co-developed into a full proposal with a MOLA staff member, who would act as the student’s co-supervisor.

1. **What is the role of the university in the scheme?**

The university is responsible for administering the studentship in line with the AHRC’s terms and conditions, receiving funds from the AHRC for fees and to cover the student’s maintenance. Once the AHRC has checked and approved the nominated PhD studentship projects, these will be set up as Doctoral Training Grants to the university involved in each project, and will follow the same process for activating grants and funding students on other PhD awards (i.e. the funding award will be made directly to the collaborating university rather than to MOLA). The university partner for a CDP studentship can be anywhere in the UK.

The university supervisor is the lead supervisor for the studentship. They, and their Department, should demonstrably provide the right expertise and support for the topic. All CDP applications should have both a main university supervisor and a second university supervisor to ensure continuity of supervision in the event of staff changes during the PhD period.

1. **What is MOLA’s role in the scheme?**

Each of the chosen CDP studentships will ultimately be co-supervised by at least one member of MOLA staff, and will have a second MOLA co-supervisor identified to ensure continuity of supervision in the event of staff changes during the PhD period.

MOLA staff members will also collaborate with the proposed university supervisors of outline project proposals which are shortlisted in the first stage of the application process, to develop a full project proposal for consideration by the final selection panel (see below).

1. **How many CDP studentships will MOLA be co-supervising?**

The AHRC has awarded us a total allocation of nine funded studentships.

1. **How will MOLA decide which studentships to support?**

All project proposals will be subject to a rigorous, two-stage selection process, in accordance with AHRC guidelines. The final selection will be made by a panel comprising MOLA staff, trustees, and representatives from universities and other CDP-holding organisations. Panel members will not take part in the review of any proposals where there may be a conflict of interest.

This panel will score each proposal based on the [AHRC’s grading scale](https://ahrc.ukri.org/peerreview/peer-review-handbook/the-review-process/grading-scale/), and will consider:

* The academic quality of the proposal
	+ Are there clear and answerable research questions?
	+ Will the research lead to an original and substantial contribution to the knowledge of the subject matter?
* The suitability of the proposed project to PhD-level research
	+ Is there a PhD in this topic?
	+ How practical will it be for the student to complete the research and answer these questions in the time period and with the specialist support and resources that MOLA and the university have available?
	+ Is there scope for the student to develop their own emphasis within the overall proposal?
	+ What will be the benefits to the student of doing a doctorate in collaboration with MOLA rather than in a university alone?
* The potential benefits to MOLA and the student.
	+ How does this CDP support MOLA’s research themes, aims, priorities and current initiatives (see section below)?
	+ Is the proposal part of a partnership with other organisations?
	+ How does this studentship connect with challenges and opportunities relating to the wider cultural heritage and historic environment sectors?
	+ Is the proposal part of a partnership with other museums, libraries or similar institutions?

The panel will also consider:

* The suitability and track record of the proposed supervisors
* The project’s fit with the workload and other commitments of the proposed MOLA supervisors
1. **What kind of project is MOLA looking for?**

We welcome outline project proposals for CDP studentships provided that the proposed project is of high quality, is appropriate for collaborative study at doctoral level, and is relevant to both AHRC subject areas (<https://ahrc.ukri.org/funding/research/subjectcoverage/ahrc-disciplines/>) and MOLA’s own research themes and priorities.

We are particularly keen to encourage applications that address MOLA’s three key research themes:

* Our discoveries – the new knowledge, techniques and specialisms that are created through our archaeological work
* Citizen Science – diversity and engagement, education and citizen science, public programming, and evaluation of our own citizen science projects
* Archaeology and the contemporary – exploring the value of an archaeological approach to the contemporary world and the impact of archaeology on contemporary society

In addition, this year we particularly seek proposals focused on matters of **Activism** and **Social Justice**. We are keen to examine archaeology as a crucial field of practice for challenging issues of historical bias, exploring ethics and morality, enabling equal opportunities to participate in society, and acting as a philosophical lens through which we can ask difficult questions, and explore complex responses to those questions. MOLA operates as a nexus between the charitable, academic, governmental, and business sectors, actively pursuing partnerships that draw together and extend archaeology for the benefit of wider society and culture. Through such partnerships, we aim to critically test and rigorously evaluate new ways of doing, interpreting, and presenting archaeology. This means we are also interested to support proposals that link activism and social justice to archaeological science and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics).

1. **How long is a CDP studentship?**

The studentships are funded for 3 years and 9 months (45 months) full-time or part-time equivalent. The studentship has the possibility of being extended by up to 3 months to provide time for further professional development opportunities, including training, which will support career development, or up to 3 months of funding be used to pay for the costs the student might incur in taking up professional development opportunities. These opportunities can include delivering impacts from the PhD research, placements at MOLA or other organisations, or training courses, as required for the development of the student’s professional skills.

1. **What does the CDP Award cover?**

Each CDP studentship includes the university tuition fees and a student maintenance grant for 3 years and 9 months, which can be extended to up to 4 years (see above). Please note that the cost of Oxford/Cambridge College fees are not covered. In addition to this full studentship award for fees and maintenance, MOLA will provide up to £1,000 per annum per student to cover the costs of travel between the university and MOLA, and related costs in carrying out research.

1. **Who can be a CDP student?**

Any prospective doctoral student wishing to study at a UK research organisation, including prospective international students, can apply for a UKRI studentship. All UKRI-funded doctoral students will be eligible for the full award – both the stipend to support living costs, and fees at the UK research organisation rate. This is a change in the criteria and comes into force for the start of the 2021 academic year.

Applicants must meet the same eligibility criteria as any AHRC doctoral research student. See <https://ahrc.ukri.org/skills/phdstudents/award-holders-terms-and-conditions/> for more details.

1. **Where will the student be based?**

The student is expected to spend a significant amount of their time researching at MOLA’s London, Northampton or Basingstoke office, and attending training and other MOLA-based activities. MOLA will provide additional financial support to our CDP students for travel and related research costs, of up to £1000 per student per year over the course of the studentship.

1. **Can a university propose more than one CDP working on a topic?**

University partners can propose two studentships working on a larger project (which could involve different university and MOLA departments or sets of supervisors), however please note that competition for our two studentships per year is likely to be strong, and MOLA reserves the right to select only one proposal, or none at all.

1. **Can a proposal be for a particular student?**

MOLA wishes studentship opportunities to be available to the widest possible pool of candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds, and for this reason we have decided not to allow nominated students as part of proposals to this Collaborative Doctoral Partnership – the two chosen studentship opportunities will be advertised publicly.

1. **I am from a university and would like to propose a project. How should I do this?**

In the first instance, university supervisors are invited to submit an outline proposal by downloading the outline project proposal form from the [MOLA website](https://www.mola.org.uk/ahrc-collaborative-doctoral-partnerships-mola) and returning it to cdp@mola.org.uk.

Up to 12 outline proposals will be selected for the university and MOLA supervisors to expand into full project proposals in collaboration. In addition to an expanded case for support and information about the qualifications and experience of the supervisory team, the full proposal will also ask for details of training and career development opportunities that will be available to the student.

For more information about this year’s process and deadlines, and to download the outline project proposal form, visit <https://www.mola.org.uk/ahrc-collaborative-doctoral-partnerships-mola>

1. **What happens after a university submits a full project proposal?**

The assessment panel will meet in January 2022 to consider all the eligible proposals. We will provide feedback on proposals, and may in some cases make recommendations subject to suggested improvements or conditions by the panel. If a proposal is successful, MOLA will formally nominate the project to the AHRC. The university supervisor will then need to submit a CDP application form via [Je-S](https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx) to allow the AHRC to undertake basic eligibility checks and to set up awards. Once this is completed the studentship can be advertised, and the university will then administer it in line with standard AHRC collaborative doctoral studentships.

1. **As a prospective student, where do I find out about applying for a MOLA CDP studentship?**

The MOLA CDP studentships will be advertised at <http://www.ahrc-cdp.org/> in Spring 2022, and on MOLA’s social media channels ([Twitter](https://twitter.com/MOLArchaeology) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/MOLArchaeology/)).