**SCHC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Awards to start in October 2018**

**The assessment process**

The internal assessment process for SCHC will broadly follow the same procedures as those used by the AHRC for awards and commissioning panels.

Criteria for assessing applications

1. Academic quality of the proposal.
2. How it supports the Consortium’s themes.
3. The experience of the proposed research supervisors and the effectiveness of the supervision arrangements.
4. Where there is a named student proposed for the studentship, the academic strength of the student.
5. The quality and appropriateness of the student development fund proposal.

Please note that an application that strongly supports SCHC objectives, but is weak academically is unfundable.

For the **Academic Strength** of the proposal we consider:

* *Is there a PhD is this topic?*
* *Will the research lead to an original and substantial contribution to the knowledge of the subject matter?*
* *Are there clear and answerable research questions?*
* *How practical will it be for the student to complete the research and answer the questions in the 3-4 years and with the resources the SCHC and University partners have available?*
* *Is there scope for the student to develop their own emphasis with the overall proposal?*
* *What will be the benefits to the student of doing a doctorate through CDA rather than in a University Department alone?*

For how the proposed CDA will **support the Consortium’s themes** we consider:

* *How does this CDA support the Consortium’s research themes?*
* *Is this CDA part of an existing or planned SCHC partner’s research project, exhibition or publication?*
* *If so, how will it support or extend that project?*
* *Is the proposal part of a partnership with other Museums, Libraries or institutions?*

We specifically ask applications to make a case for how their proposal fits within one or more of the five key research themes of the Consortium.

Scottish Heritage Consortium Research Themes

1. Creation, history and care of Scottish material culture
2. Analysis, interpretation and presentation of material culture
3. Impact and understanding of collections and the historic environment
4. Understanding and valuing the historic environment
5. Intangible heritage and the history of ideas

Scottish Cultural Heritage Consortium Aims

* Deliver world-class research and high-quality studentships that promote collaboration between the academic community and our work and collections
* Encourage inter- and cross-disciplinary doctoral research on material culture that contributes to the strategic objectives of the institutions and has public impact
* Build a supportive training and professional development environment that shares skills across our institutions and promotes integrated access to our collections
* Maximise the impact and value of the research generated by working collaboratively to provide routes for sharing both between institutions and with a wider public
* Add economic value by providing training and opportunities that enhance the employability of the students

**Student development fund**

An additional six months supported by the Student Development Fund will be used flexibly to support training and opportunities that will give our students the skills and experience they need for careers in the cultural heritage or HEI sectors, as well as ensure the greatest impact of the research within the non-HEI institution. In many cases this will be used to allow the student to deliver a programme of public engagement to a bespoke design appropriate to the subject of their research. The SCHC will agree with each university as to when this public engagement programme will take place. It is anticipated it will usually be in the second half of year two or the first half of year three. In other cases students might require additional time to learn a language or undertake research outside of the UK.

For the **student development fund** we consider:

* Is the timing and structure of the proposal appropriate?
* Does the proposal achieve public impact?
* Does the proposal bring benefit to the work of the SCHC partner?
* Does the proposal enhance the CV of the student?

**Named Students:** Where an application names an intended student, please provide their degree grades, marks for any dissertations and other evidence for their ability to carry out independent research and write academic papers. Students would normally need high 2:1 marks (65-69%) or 1st marks (70%+) for their first degree, and Pass (60-69% - preferably high 60’s) or Merit/Distinction (70%+) for a Masters Degree.

**GRADING**

Each application will be marked using the following grading system that is based on the criteria used by AHRC panels to assess applications.

Please note, reviewers are permitted to apply half-marks where they feel it is appropriate.

6 = exceptional 5 =good 4= adequate 3 = unsupportable

**Grade Descriptors**

**Grade 6**

An exceptional proposal in terms of the standard of scholarship and quality that is internationally competitive, original and innovative. It will make a highly significant contribution to the research field and directly benefit the SCHC partner, clearly supporting SCHC objectives. It provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal, and management arrangements are clear and convincing. It should be funded as a matter of priority.

**Grade 5**

A proposal that is good in terms of its originality, quality, and significance. It provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal, management arrangements are clear and convincing and there is a clear benefit to the SCHC. Or, this is an application that is outstanding academically, but has some weaknesses in terms of how it supports SCHC objectives and priorities. It should be funded as a matter of priority, but does not merit the very highest priority rating.

**Grade 4**

An adequate proposal in terms of the overall standard of scholarship and quality and/or which is more limited in terms of originality/innovation, significance and/or its contribution to the research field and/or of limited benefit to SCHC. It provides reasonable evidence and justification for the proposal, and management arrangements are adequate overall. In a competitive context however, the proposal is not considered of sufficient priority to recommend for funding.

**Grade 3 Unsupportable**

A proposal of inconsistent quality which has some strengths, innovative ideas and/or good components or dimensions, but also has significant weaknesses or flaws for example:

* unsatisfactory levels of originality, quality, and/or significance,
* contains insufficient evidence and justification for the proposal,
* displays limited potential to advance the research field,
* displays limited potential to benefit SCHC,
* is unconvincing in terms of its management or capacity to deliver the proposed activities.

As a result of the flaws or weaknesses identified, the proposal is not considered to be of fundable quality, even if there were available studentships.