

## University of Birmingham in arts and humanities research partnership

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Six of the region's universities, including the University of Birmingham, are to benefit from a multi-million-pound partnership to create a centre for excellence for a new generation of arts and humanities researchers.

The Midlands Three Cities consortium, which brings together academic expertise from the Universities of Birmingham and Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University, Birmingham City University, the University of Leicester and De Montfort University, is to receive a grant of £14.6 million that will result in hundreds of new postgraduate studentship opportunities across the region.

The consortium is one of 11 new Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) announced by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) which, along with seven new Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) will deliver postgraduate supervision, training and skills from 2014.

The Midlands Three Cities DTP will have a strong emphasis on collaboration and will work closely with a number of partner organisations including the British Museum in London, to offer exciting placement opportunities for postgraduate students.

Professor Michael Whitby, Head of the College of Arts and Law at the University of Birmingham, commented: 'The success of this joint project which blends traditional research strengths with innovative methods of engaging potential research students and then developing their skills and employment prospects ensures that there will be a strong cohort of Arts and Humanities researchers embedded across the Midlands for the next three years. Postgraduates are the lifeblood of intellectual creativity and sustainable success in research, so that this collaborative success is a tremendous result for the Midlands and its universities. The cities of Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham stand to benefit in terms of intellectual and cultural diversity from this investment by the AHRC, which is matched equally by the participating institutions. The University of Birmingham is proud to be helping to shape a new form of cross-sector collaboration that demonstrates our commitment to the Arts and Humanities and to effective post-graduate training.'

The DTP will see more than 400 postgraduate research studentships available across the six institutions over three years and will include dedicated resources for placement opportunities and skills training. The funding will also encourage the partner institutions to work closely together on development activities to support joint supervision of students, sharing of resources and further activities such as student events, conferences and the fostering of peer support networks.

Central to the new DTP will be a focus on the development of broader skills for postgraduate students such as partnership working, language skills and experience of working outside academia to enhance their employability. It will encourage students to consider the impact of their research and how it contributes to the wider world right from the start of their postgraduate studies.

The Midlands Three Cities DTP will also devote a portion of the funding to Masters training — aiming to more effectively bridge the gap between BA and PhD.

Professor Mark Llewellyn, Director of Research for the AHRC said: "The AHRC's more flexible arrangement for postgraduate funding will support students to explore new opportunities to engage with deeper and broader skills alongside maintaining disciplinary capability. This investment by the AHRC will not only support university researchers but also enrich the contexts in which arts and humanities skills and capabilities engage with and contribute to advancement and growth in sectors across the wider UK economy."

The international, national and regional partners that will be working with the Midlands Three Cities DTP will be the Central Conservatory for Music (Beijing); the British Film Institute (BFI); the British Museum; the Cinema Museum; the National Army Museum; Broadway Media Centre; Creative Hinkley; Creative Leicester; City Museum Services (Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham), Derbyshire County Council; Leicestershire County Council; Leicester Curve; Nottingham Contemporary and Phoenix Square, Leicester.

### Notes to editors

The University of Birmingham, recently named University of the Year by the Times and Sunday Times, is a truly vibrant, global community and an internationally-renowned institution. Its work brings people from across the world to Birmingham, including researchers and teachers and more than four thousand international students from nearly 150 different countries.

The University is home to approximately 30,000 students. With more than 7,500 postgraduate students from across the world, Birmingham is one of the most popular universities for postgraduate study in the UK.

The University contributes almost £1.1 billion to the West Midlands regional economy each year and supports 12,000 jobs.

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