

AHRC Landscape Award application guidance for October 2026 entry at the University of Kent

Award length

Awards are offered for 3.5 years (42 months) full-time equivalent, with the possibility of an extension to up to 4 years (48 months) to accommodate essential skills training or placement projects. Applications for part-time study are also encouraged.

Application process

To be considered for an AHRC Landscape Award, you must apply for a place on a postgraduate research programme at the University of Kent by the competition deadline. It is strongly recommended that you apply as early as possible to allow sufficient time to prepare a high-quality application. You must also consult with your proposed supervisor prior to applying for funding and develop your research proposal with their guidance.

1. Develop Your Proposal

Work closely with your proposed supervisor(s) to prepare your application. Supervisors are required to provide a supporting statement and can offer advice on shaping and refining your research proposal.

2. Submit Your Applications

Step 1: [Apply for a PhD](#) at Kent through one of the eligible schools. Consult with a primary supervisor when applying. If you have already applied to Kent and hold a deferred offer move to step 2.

Step 2: Download the Kent AHRC Landscape Award application and complete the form with the support of your potential primary supervisor. You will need to ask your supervisor to complete the supervisor support and statement section of the form before submitting.

Step 3: Submit your Kent AHRC Landscape Award application to the Graduate and Researcher College by emailing your form to kentgrc@kent.ac.uk by the deadline. You **MUST** complete this step to be considered for a studentship. Please enclose the following information in your email submission:

- Kent AHRC Landscape Award application form
- Full Name
- KentVision applicant ID number
 - Please note: Your KentVision applicant ID number will be generated once you have completed and submitted your PhD application.

3. School-Level Selection

Your application will first be assessed by academic staff within your school. If shortlisted, you will be invited to an admissions interview. Following this, the school will make a further shortlist of candidates to be considered by the institutional selection panel.

4. Kent Selection Panel

Applications shortlisted by schools will be forwarded to the Kent Selection Panel, which comprises representatives from each participating school. The panel will evaluate and score all applications to create a single ranked list. The three highest-ranked candidates will receive the AHRC Landscape Awards.

Selection criteria for applications

Selection panels will grade applications according to the following criteria:

1. Research proposal (60%) (Evidence: research proposal, supervisor statement)	• The proposal is clearly written and demonstrates engagement with an academic field at a high level of sophistication. • The project demonstrates original thinking in its field (or fields) • The project is clearly situated in its field (or fields) • The methodology proposed clearly demonstrates the viability of the planned research. • The planned research is described in a way that inspires confidence that it will definitely be completed within the funded period. • The application demonstrates excellent motivation for the research project. • The proposed research may be timely or urgent in nature, but not all excellent projects will be time-critical or topical.
2. Preparedness for research (30%) (Evidence: academic record, professional achievements, Widening Participation information, references)	• The applicant demonstrates understanding of appropriate research skills required for successful completion of the project. • The applicant has an excellent track record of achievement at undergraduate and Master's levels and appropriate training at Master's level or equivalent (including experience gained outside of higher education) to undertake the project. • The applicant's references fully support the applicant's preparedness for doctoral study. • The applicant demonstrates outstanding competency in organisational skills and initiative through their previous activities, and a capacity to overcome obstacles. • Where a widening participation statement is provided, it gives context on aspects of the candidate's preparedness and on their motivation to undertake doctoral study. Kent is committed to addressing inequalities in participation and encourages applications from all under-represented groups, including people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, lower income families and mature students. Assessors should consider information provided in the widening participation statement alongside other answers in this section.

3. Suitability of research environment (10%) (Evidence: research proposal, supervisor statement)	• The applicant has given clear thought to the fit between their project and their proposed research environment. • The supervisor statement fully supports the project's fit with the proposed research environment.
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Useful notes to support your application

You are advised to discuss your research proposal with your main supervisor. You should treat the proposal as an opportunity to show that you have begun to explore an important area of study, and that your research has the potential to challenge and develop that area. It is also important to demonstrate that you can express your ideas in clear and precise English, accessible to a non- specialist.

The panelists who read your proposal know that it is a provisional statement and that your ideas, questions and approaches will change during the course of your research.

Research proposal

Title	Please provide a title for your proposal. Be as concise and explicit as you can. The title of your project may change during the research process.
Abstract	Please provide a brief abstract (c.200 words, and not more than 1,000 characters). This should be a complete but concise description of the project that will allow a non-specialist reader to quickly ascertain the purpose of your project. Most panellists will not be expert in your precise disciplinary area.
Proposal	Please provide a description of your research proposal of no more than 10,000 characters, under the following headings: Introduction Use this section to introduce the questions and issues central to your research. Identify the field of study in broad terms and indicate how you expect your research to intervene in the field. Research background and question Use this section to expand your Introduction. What are the key sources, texts and approaches in the field? How does your proposal differ from existing lines of argument? What does your project contribute to existing work in the field? How does it extend our understanding of particular questions or topics? You need to set out your research questions as clearly as possible. Identify the problems that you want to explore and explain why it is important to do so.

	Please use this section to indicate how your previous studies, professional and/or other experience contribute to your understanding of the field and your preparedness for research, and also your motivation for undertaking this project. Think about how to situate your project in the context of the university and its disciplines. Research methods Give a brief statement detailing how you will achieve the aims set out in the previous sections. Your focus here will depend very much on your discipline(s) and research topic. You can consider the following questions (no one project will require you to answer them all): • Does your project involve archival sources, particular databases or specialist libraries? • Is your study interdisciplinary? • How does your creative practice contribute to your research? • What theoretical resources do you intend to use and why? • Is your research based on the work of a single author, artist or theorist, or a group of individuals or texts? • What forms of textual, historical, visual or material analysis are relevant to your topic? • Is there a 'gap' in established approaches to your field of study that you want to explore? • Are there ethical issues that you need to address in undertaking your research? Schedule of work Use this section to show that you have a realistic plan for completion of the project within the period of the award. You may want to think about dividing the proposal into sections (not necessarily chapters at this stage) with a timetable for researching and writing up each section.
Research environment	Use this section to detail how your proposal will be supported by the research environment within your school. This might include: the proposed supervision, the institutional support (including available archives, sources, research centres), and any external organisations involved. You should demonstrate that you have given clear thought to the fit between your project and the proposed research environment.
Bibliography	You must provide a bibliography of up to 20 items, in a standard format such as Chicago or MHRA, listing any books and articles to which you refer in the proposal. This is indicative, not exhaustive.

Personal Statement

Your personal statement is a key part of your application and should clearly demonstrate your motivation, preparedness, and potential for doctoral study. You should aim to address the following points within your 500-word limit:

- 1. Motivation for Doctoral Study**

Explain why you wish to pursue a PhD and why you want to join the postgraduate research community at Kent. Reflect on what draws you to your chosen research area and how it aligns with your academic and personal interests.

- 2. Preparedness and Passion**

Discuss your readiness for the demands of postgraduate research. Highlight your passion for your topic, drawing on relevant academic, professional, or life experiences that have equipped you for advanced study. This may include independent research, previous degrees, or work experience relevant to your field.

- 3. Career Goals and the AHRC Studentship**

Outline your career aspirations, both short- and long-term. Explain how completing a PhD, and specifically receiving an AHRC studentship, will help you achieve these goals.

- 4. Evidence of Achievement**

Include details of any academic achievements, awards, placements, or conferences that demonstrate your suitability for postgraduate study. Explain how these experiences have prepared you for your proposed research project and strengthen your case for an AHRC studentship.

Widening Participation

Kent recognises the value of diversity in research communities and is committed to addressing patterns of under-representation. We recognise that a range of factors, both structural and individual, influence and impede pathways into postgraduate research in different ways. The term 'preparedness for research' is designed to help our assessors take 'a whole person' approach to your application and to take further contextual information into account where appropriate. You are invited to write a short, optional statement offering any further contextual information affecting your pathway to postgraduate research not included elsewhere that you think is relevant to this application.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring

You are asked to provide information on your protected characteristics (gender, ethnicity, disability and age) to assist with AHRC monitoring. This information will be stored securely and will not be shared with anyone involved in the assessment process.