University of Kent

AHRC Doctoral Landscape Awards 2027

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kent.ac.uk



Arts and Humanities @ Kent

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- **Premier place for Arts and Humanities research**
  - REF 2021 – the official research ranking!
  - see the results in *Times Higher Education* : https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ref-2021-research-excellence-framework-results-announced

- **Strong PhD community**
  - numerically, intellectually and socially

Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

- The AHRC funds world-class, independent research in subjects from philosophy and the creative industries, to art conservation and product design.
- Research addresses some of society's biggest challenges, such as tackling modern slavery, exploring the ethical implications of artificial intelligence, and understanding what it is to be human.
- Successful candidates at Kent will join a vibrant and inclusive research community, benefiting from exceptional academic supervision, tailored professional development and cross-institutional collaboration through a training hub network comprising eleven outstanding universities in the South East and South West of England.

Funding

- Doctoral Stipend (equivalent to the Research Councils UK National Doctoral Stipend, 2026/27 rate is £21,805.)
- Tuition fees
- Opportunity to apply for Research Training Support Grant

Studentships will be funded for an initial period of 3.5 years. Award holders may apply to extend their funding to a maximum of 4 years if their project:

- Involves an intensive skills development component (e.g., language training) identified either at the application stage or during the first year of study;

- Requires the addition of new or complex methodologies identified within the first year of funding; or

- Includes a placement with a partner organisation, applied for at any point during the funded period.

Eligibility and residential criteria

- Open to Home and International students:
  - The majority of awards will be allocated to Home candidates, with up to one-third available for overseas applicants per year.
- To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:

  ✓ Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements), or
  ✓ Have settled status, or
  ✓ Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
  ✓ Have indefinite leave to remain or enter.
- If a candidate does not meet the criteria above, they are classed as an International student. Further guidance on residential eligibility can be found in the UKRI Guidance.
- Applicants who have already commenced doctoral study are not eligible for a AHRC Doctoral Landscape Award studentship.
- Both Home and International students must be resident in the UK for the majority of their studies and any time spent overseas should be for the purposes of fieldwork.
- Students in full-time employment are not eligible for an award of any kind from UKRI.

Eligible subjects

- School of Arts and Architecture

(Architecture, Design, Film, Media and Drama)

- School of Humanities

(Classics, English, History and Medieval and Earl Modern Studies)

- Kent Law School

- School of Politics and International Relations

- Language Centre

We recommend you look through academic staff profiles on the 'People' pages of School websites to find an appropriate supervisor or try using our Find A Supervisor website. Check their research interests, current projects and published articles. Contact potential supervisors directly to discuss your research proposal and the AHRC Doctoral Landscape application.

Application process

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 to start in October 2027 - 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 application to the Graduate and Researcher College by emailing your form to dtpenquiries@kent.ac.uk by the deadline. You MUST complete this step to be considered for an award. Please enclose the following information in your email submission:

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

DEADLINE: Monday 15 February 2027

Application form

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Research proposal title: (maximum of 150 characters, including punctuation and spaces between words)
Character count: Click or tap here to enter text./150
Research proposal abstract: Please provide a brief abstract (maximum 250 words). 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.
Word count: Click or tap here to enter text./250
Description of proposal: Please provide a description of your research proposal under the following headings (maximum 1,500 words, not including headings): • Introduction • Research background and question • Research methods • Schedule of work (your project should be designed and structured to ensure completion within 3.5 years)
Word count: Click or tap here to enter text./1500
Research environment: Use this section to detail how your proposal will be supported by the research environment at Kent. This might include: the proposed supervision, the school's resources, 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 (maximum 200 words).

How are proposals assessed?

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Assessment criteria

Criterion	Assessed using
Research proposal (60%)	Research proposal, supervisor statement
Preparedness for research (30%)	Academic record, professional achievements, widening participation
Suitability of research environment (10%)	Research proposal, supervisor statement

Research proposal

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.

Research proposal

Grade	Quality	Descriptor
10	Exceptional	The proposal is **outstandingly clearly written** and demonstrates engagement with an academic field at **the highest level of sophistication for a PhD proposal**. The project demonstrates **original thinking in its field**. The methodology proposed clearly demonstrates the viability of the planned research, and the **literature review is of the highest quality**. The planned research is described in a way that inspires confidence that it will be completed within the funded period. The application demonstrates excellent motivation for the research project. This is the **highest priority** for funding.
9	Outstanding	The proposal is **outstandingly clearly written** and demonstrates engagement with an academic field at **a high level of sophistication**. It demonstrates **original thinking in its field**. The methodology proposed clearly demonstrates the viability of the planned research, and the **literature review is of high quality**. The planned research is described in a way that inspires confidence that it will be completed within the funded period. The application demonstrates excellent motivation for the research project. While not exceptional, this is a **very high priority** for funding.
8	Excellent	The proposal is **clearly written** and demonstrates engagement with an academic field at **a high level of sophistication**. The project demonstrates **a degree of original thinking** in its field. The methodology proposed clearly demonstrates the viability of the planned research, and the **literature review is of high quality**. The planned research is described in a way that inspires confidence that it will be completed within the funded period. The application demonstrates excellent motivation for the research project. This is a **very high priority** for funding.
7	Very good	The proposal is **clearly written** and demonstrates engagement with an academic field at **a moderate level of sophistication**. The proposal is **very strong, but falls short of 'Excellent'** on one (or slightly short on more than one) of the following: originality, methodology, viability, literature review, or motivation for research. This is nevertheless a **high priority** for funding.
6	Good	The proposal is clearly written and demonstrates engagement with an academic field at a moderate level of sophistication. The proposal is very strong, but **falls short of 'Excellent' on more than one** of the following: originality, methodology, viability, literature review, or motivation for research. This is nevertheless a **high priority** for funding.
5	Fair	The proposal has **originality and rigour** but **could be better designed or elaborated**. Despite good potential, there are **one or more areas for obvious improvement**. This is a **medium priority** for funding.
4	Adequate	The proposal has merit but there are **concerns in relation to one or more areas**. This is **not a priority** for funding.
3	Weak	The proposal does not display **originality** and there are **flaws in the methodology or literature review**. This is **not a priority** for funding.
2	Poor	The proposal is **flawed and poorly written**, with serious concerns in relation to both methodology and literature review. This **should not be funded**.
1	Very poor	The proposal has **significant and serious flaws** such that it **should not be funded**.

Preparedness for research

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.

Preparedness for research

Grade	Quality	Descriptor
10	Exceptional	The applicant demonstrates **exceptional potential and preparedness** in relation to appropriate research skills required for successful completion of the project. They have **appropriate training at Master's level or equivalent** (including experience gained outside of higher education) to undertake the project, with **evidence of very high attainment**. They demonstrate **outstanding competency in organisational skills and initiative** through their previous activities, and a capacity to overcome obstacles. **All skills gaps have been identified**, and there is a **plausible plan** to address them.
9	Outstanding	The applicant demonstrates **very strong potential and preparedness** in relation to appropriate research skills required for successful completion of the project. They have **appropriate training at Master's level or equivalent** (including experience gained outside of higher education) to undertake the project, with **evidence of high achievement**. They demonstrate **outstanding competency in organisational skills and initiative** through their previous activities, and a capacity to overcome obstacles. **All skills gaps have been identified**, and there is a **plausible plan** to address them.
8	Excellent	The applicant demonstrates **strong potential and preparedness** in relation to skills, training, and previous research or fieldwork experience. They demonstrate **excellent competency in organisational skills and initiative** through their previous activities. Any **crucial skills gaps have been identified** and there is a **plausible plan** to address them.
7	Very good	The applicant demonstrates **strong potential and preparedness** in relation to skills, training, and previous research or fieldwork experience. They demonstrate **competency in organisational skills and initiative** through their previous activities. **Most of the small and large skills gaps have been identified** and there is a **plausible plan** to address them.
6	Good	The applicant shows **good potential and preparedness** in relation to skills, training and previous research or fieldwork experience. **Most of the small and large skills gaps have been identified** and there is a **plausible plan** to address them.
5	Fair	The applicant shows **some potential and preparedness** in relation to skills, training and previous research or fieldwork experience. **Most of the small and large skills gaps have been identified** and there is a **plausible plan** to address them.
4	Adequate	The applicant shows **some potential and preparedness** in relation to skills, training and previous research or fieldwork experience. **Some skills gaps have not been identified** or the plans for addressing such gaps **may not be plausible** within the timeframe.
3	Weak	The applicant has **not identified the skills or preparation necessary to the project**, and there are **significant gaps** that mean the project is unlikely to reach a successful conclusion.
2	Poor	The applicant has **not identified the skills or preparation necessary to the project**, and **no meaningful attempt** has been made to address any skills gaps.
1	Very poor	The applicant **does not meet the criteria** (e.g. requirement for M-level study or equivalent has not been met).

Research environment

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.

Research environment

Grade	Quality	Descriptor
10	Exceptional	The application demonstrates that the proposed research environment has been considered carefully. There is an excellent, mutually beneficial fit between the project and the proposed research environment **in all respects**. The project is clearly situated within its field.
9	Outstanding	The application demonstrates that the proposed research environment has been considered carefully. There is an excellent, mutually beneficial fit between the project and the proposed research environment **in all important respects**. The project is clearly situated within its field.
8	Excellent	The application demonstrates that the proposed research environment has been considered carefully. There is an excellent, mutually beneficial fit between the project and the proposed research environment in all important respects. The project **may not be clearly situated** within its field.
7	Very good	The application shows that the proposed research environment has been considered and is a **strong fit** for the project in the **most important respects**.
6	Good	There is a **good fit** between the project and the proposed research environment in **most respects**, such that the project is on balance likely to be successful.
5	Fair	The research environment is good, but **no clear case** is made for why it is suitable for this project.
4	Adequate	The research environment is **unsuitable in some respect** (e.g. potential lack of access to an essential resource)
3	Weak	There are reasons for concern that the research environment is **unsuitable in several respects**.
2	Poor	There are reasons for concern that the research environment is **seriously unsuitable in several respects**.
1	Very poor	The application **does not meet the criteria** for supervision or access to essential resources.

Resources to use when working on your application

- Your prospective supervisor can provide advice
- Application Guidance document
- Designing a Good Research Proposal recording

- Eligible school websites:
  - School of Arts and Architecture
  - School of Humanities
  - Kent Law School
  - School of Politics and International Relations
  - Language Centre

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Thank you.