



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ASHMOLEAN
MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Museum of
Natural
History

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship

“Museum Collections, Academic Teaching, and the Making of Geology in the Nineteenth-Century University”

The School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science, University of Leeds, in collaboration with Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded 3-year PhD studentship to explore the origins of object-led teaching in the nineteenth-century university and connect this to the current resurgence of interest in the use of museum collections as a teaching resource.

This studentship is funded through the AHRC’s Collaborative Doctoral Partnership scheme (see <http://www.ahrc-cdp.org/>). Collaboration between a Higher Education Institution and a museum, library, archive, or heritage organisation is the essential feature of these studentships.

It is a fully funded research studentship covering 3 years of tuition fees and maintenance (living costs), with additional funds available to support some research costs. There is also the option to apply for up to 6 months additional funding for related professional development (see <http://www.ahrc-cdp.org/resources/>). The studentship is covered by standard AHRC eligibility rules.

The student will be jointly supervised by Dr Jonathan Topham (University of Leeds), Ms Eliza Howlett and Ms Kathleen Diston (Oxford University Museum of Natural History) and Dr Jim Harris (Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology). The student will be enrolled at, and will receive their PhD from, the University of Leeds, but will be expected to spend time in both Leeds and Oxford, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of AHRC CDP students across the UK.

The successful candidate will begin their PhD in October 2018. They will be primarily based at the University of Leeds Centre for the History and Philosophy of Science, one of the leading groups in the UK for the history of science and technology. They will also work in partnership with Oxford University Museum of Natural History, one of the oldest natural history museums in the world, and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, which is world-famous for its University Engagement Programme and the place where Buckland did his own object-based teaching.

The Project

In recent years there has been a ‘material turn’ in the humanities and social sciences that encourages researchers to look at the roles that objects play in human action as well as signification. Many university museums have sought to exploit this shift in order to reassert the importance of their collections – and objects more broadly – as a teaching resource. This study situates such modern initiatives in a larger historical frame, exploring the origins of object-led teaching in the early nineteenth-century, when Oxford’s first Reader in geology, William Buckland, routinely employed objects and illustrations in his lectures. Focusing on Buckland and his successor, John Phillips, the project draws on a wide range of evidence to analyse the ways in which they used these materials to teach and develop the science of geology.

The project is rooted in the extensive source materials in the OUMNH relating to the history of geological teaching, including collections of specimens, models and large-scale lecture diagrams as well as lecture notes, correspondence, and institutional records. This detailed work on Oxford will be contextualized through extensive comparative research on coeval developments in the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cambridge, and London, the Geological Survey's Museum of Practical Geology, and provincial museums such as that of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society. The project will investigate the role both of university teaching and of material and visual culture in the development of the disciplinary sciences, with a particular focus on geology. It will thus encourage a reappraisal of the approaches used in the teaching of this discipline today, including comparisons between nineteenth-century illustrative materials and modern-day digital visualisations such as virtual reality.

In addition to producing a thesis in the history of geological science, the student will work with museum staff to put the research findings to practical use. In the Museum of Natural History, the student will contribute to an online catalogue showcasing key images and objects from the historic teaching collections and exploring their biography from the nineteenth-century to the present day. Objects and images researched during the project will also be used to develop sessions for Oxford, Leeds and other Higher Education students through a partnership between the Museum of Natural History and the Ashmolean University, in which the student will be involved. The student will also be encouraged to participate in public engagement activities based on the objects and their findings.

Financial Support

Subject to standard AHRC eligibility criteria, the studentship will cover tuition fees at home/EU rate and provide a maintenance award at RCUK rates for a maximum of 3 years of full-time doctoral study from 1st October 2018 with the option of up to 6 months additional funding for related professional development (see <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/180118/>).

In addition, the Oxford University Museum of Natural History will provide research expenses of up to £2,000 to the student each year, to a maximum of £6,000 over the duration of the studentship, to cover costs associated with undertaking research in Oxford.

The University of Leeds, the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology will supply appropriate facilities to support the research project and limited additional funds for archive visits and conferences.

Eligibility

We are looking for a highly promising and suitably qualified student who will value the opportunity of combining academic research with close involvement in the work of a leading British museum. Applicants should have a strong academic record including a high Merit or Distinction (or equivalent) at Masters level in a relevant discipline such as history (especially history of science or education), museum/heritage studies, or visual culture studies, along with a willingness to work across these disciplines while being based primarily in a history of science context. Previous experience of work in museums or archives would be an advantage but is not essential.

Please note that all applicants must meet the AHRC's academic criteria and residency requirements (see <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/guides/research-funding-guide/>).

Candidates should:

1. Hold a Masters degree.
2. Be a resident of the UK or European Economic Area (EEA).

In general, full studentships are available to students who are settled in the UK and have been ordinarily resident for a period of at least three years before the start of postgraduate studies. Fees-only awards are generally available to EU nationals resident in the EEA. International applicants are normally not eligible to apply for this studentship

The successful applicant will be expected to reside in Leeds when not undertaking work at the Oxford museums or research elsewhere.

How to Apply

Candidates should apply by the **deadline of 5pm on Monday 4 June 2018** via the University of Leeds research postgraduate web application service (<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/130206/applying/91/>).

Your application must include:

- Copies of all transcripts and degree certificates.
- A writing sample of your work. This should be a relevant academic essay on a question of your choice which must be no less than 3–4,000 words.
- A letter of application (maximum 1000 words) explaining how your current academic interests relate to the doctoral project, your reasons for applying for the studentship, and how your prior education and other experiences have equipped you to undertake the project. **Please note: this should be entered in the application process in place of the Research Proposal.**
- Three academic references in support of your application. The names and contact details of your referees should be entered in the Referees section of the application form. Your referees should be qualified to comment on your academic ability and should not be from people related to you by blood or marriage. **You are responsible for contacting your referees and ensuring that all necessary references are received.** References can be submitted on headed paper or using the referee's report form. Your referees should return their references by email to prhspgr@leeds.ac.uk or in sealed envelopes to *Postgraduate Administrator, School of PRHS, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT.*

Interviews will be held in Oxford for shortlisted applicants.

Further Information

Informal enquiries relating to the project can be directed to Dr Jon Topham j.r.topham@leeds.ac.uk.

Further information about the School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science at the University of Leeds is available at <https://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/20042/>.

Further information about graduate admissions at Leeds is available at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125022/postgraduate>.

Further information about Oxford University Museums is available at: <https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/home> .

For any other information please contact Dr Harriet Warburton, Oxford University Museums Research Facilitator harriet.warburton@ashmus.ox.ac.uk.