



Oxford-Wessex Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Partnership

Call for PhD studentship project proposals (Autumn 2027 start)

Initial deadline (Oxford-Wessex internal sift): Monday 2 November 2026, 17:00

Full submission deadline: Monday 14 December 2026, 17:00

Background

The **Oxford–Wessex Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Partnership (Oxford–Wessex CDLP)** brings together the University of Oxford (UoO)'s **Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM)** and **Wessex Museums Partnership** to create inclusive and regionally distributed collaborative doctoral training in the arts and humanities. The partnership aims to diversify access to doctoral opportunities, strengthen research capacity across the cultural sector, and deliver innovative, cross-disciplinary research with real-world impact.

The Oxford-Wessex CDLP provides **AHRC-funded PhD studentships** that are jointly supervised through a partnership between a member of staff from an Oxford GLAM department or from Wessex Museums, and an academic from a UK Higher Education Institution (HEI).

We are now inviting project proposals for Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award (CDLA) studentships commencing in Autumn 2027.

For details on the studentships, partnership, and how to apply, please refer to the FAQ below.

This call is administered by the Oxford GLAM Research and Impact team (contact: researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk).

Frequently Asked Questions (Updated 2 September 2026)

1. What are CDLA Studentships?

CDLA studentships, or [Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award studentships](#), are funded doctoral programmes designed to support students in arts and humanities research. These studentships allow students to work on projects in collaboration with organisations outside higher education, enhancing their employment-related skills and providing hands-on experience in the cultural sector.

Key features include:

- Collaboration: students work with a university partner and an arts, cultural, or heritage organisation, where they will spend a significant amount of time conducting their research.
- Funding: the award includes a maintenance grant, covers university tuition fees*, and additional funding for research and training.
- Application: Open to both UK and international students, with specific [eligibility criteria](#).

**For information about tuition fees for international students, please see Question 10.*

2. What is the Oxford-Wessex Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Partnership?

University of Oxford's Gardens, Libraries, and Museums (GLAM) and Wessex Museums have formed a partnership to create new opportunities for collaborative cultural sector research across Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, and Dorset and our neighbouring regions, with the aim of supporting training and career development for doctoral students from HEIs, research fields, and personal backgrounds under-represented in the [AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership](#) (CDP) portfolio and the UK cultural sector. The partnership builds on existing links between Oxford GLAM and Wessex Museums as Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations (ACE NPOs), bringing our organisations together to co-create new research and impact opportunities for students, staff, and HEIs, excellence in cross-disciplinary doctoral training, community engagement and equity, diversity and inclusion.

[University of Oxford's Gardens, Libraries, and Museums](#) comprises six institutions:

- Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology
- History of Science Museum
- Museum of Natural History
- Pitt Rivers Museum
- The Bodleian Libraries
- Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum

Together, they form one of the greatest concentrations of university collections in the world, comprising over 21 million objects, specimens and printed items.

[Wessex Museums](#) is a partnership of seven museums based in Dorset and Wiltshire:

- Dorset Museum and Art Gallery
- Lydiard House Museum
- Museum & Art Swindon
- Poole Museum
- The Salisbury Museum
- STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway
- Wiltshire Museum

They hold world-class collections spanning archaeology, fine and decorative art, ethnography, literature, social history, costume and textiles.

3. What are Oxford-Wessex CDLA studentships?

These are fully funded studentships that allow Oxford GLAM departments and Wessex Museums to collaborate with an HEI on a project that falls within the [AHRC's subject domain](#) and can provide demonstrable benefits to both partners. Each project is carried out by a research student who is recruited and jointly supervised by supervisors from the HEI and Oxford GLAM/Wessex Museums. The research student will work towards a doctoral qualification by the end of the studentship, and this will be issued by the collaborating HEI.

4. What is the role of the HEI?

The HEI is responsible for administering the studentship in line with the AHRC's terms and conditions, including receiving funds from the AHRC to cover the student's maintenance stipend and university fees. Once the AHRC has checked and approved them, nominated PhD studentship projects will be set up as Doctoral Training Grants to the HEI involved in each project, done via the same process for activating grants and funding students as other PhD awards (i.e., the funding award will be made directly to the collaborating HEI rather than to Oxford GLAM). The HEI partner for a CDLA studentship can be anywhere in the UK.

The HEI supervisor is formally the lead supervisor for the studentship. They and their department must demonstrate they have the right expertise and support for the topic. All CDLA applications should have both a lead HEI supervisor and a second HEI supervisor (at the same HEI) to ensure continuity of supervision in the event of staff changes during the PhD period.

5. What is the role of Oxford GLAM and Wessex Museums?

Oxford GLAM and Wessex Museums are the cultural partners and will provide co-supervision for all CDLA studentships, and proposals should be developed and written collaboratively by the proposed HEI supervisor(s) and Oxford GLAM or Wessex Museums co-supervisor(s).

Each application should identify two Oxford GLAM/Wessex Museums co-supervisors: a primary co-supervisor and a second co-supervisor. This helps to provide a breadth of relevant expertise and ensures continuity of supervision should staffing circumstances change during the course of the PhD.

CDLA students will spend an extended period of time based with Oxford GLAM and/or Wessex Museums over the course of their studentship. This will enable them to work closely with relevant staff and provide access, as appropriate, to the collections, libraries, archives, research facilities and other resources needed to undertake their research.

The Oxford GLAM Research and Impact team is responsible for administering the Oxford–Wessex Partnership CDLA scheme, working in collaboration with Wessex Museums. This includes managing the annual competition and coordinating the project selection process and coordinating student on-boarding and training within the Oxford-Wessex CDLP institutions.

6. How many studentships does the Oxford-Wessex Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Partnership have?

The AHRC has awarded the Oxford-Wessex CDLP an allocation of three fully funded studentships in each year from Autumn 2027 to Autumn 2030 (12 studentships in total).

7. What kind of project is the Oxford-Wessex Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Partnership looking for?

The Oxford-Wessex CDLP welcomes proposals for PhD studentships that draw on the distinctive collections, expertise, communities and research environments of Oxford GLAM and Wessex Museums. We are particularly interested in projects that align with one or more of the four cross-cutting research themes, reflecting areas of shared strengths as well as wider priorities for collections and heritage research.

Projects do not need to address every aspect of a theme, and proposals may sit across two or more themes. We particularly welcome ideas that make imaginative connections between collections, disciplines, professional practice and communities, and that take advantage of the complementary expertise and resources available across the Oxford–Wessex Partnership.

Heritage Futures: Conservation, heritage science & digital humanities

This theme explores how new methods, technologies and approaches can help us understand, care for and make use of collections and heritage now and in the future. Potential projects might:

- advance research in conservation, heritage science or digital humanities, including research that makes use of emerging national research infrastructures such as RiChES and Capability for Collections;
- address new questions about conservation, materiality, object histories, collections care and heritage management;
- explore the application of digital methods to collections research, interpretation, preservation or access; or
- investigate how digital collections and infrastructures can generate new research and wider societal benefit.

Decolonising Collections: Material anthropology, ethical practice, and connections to community, culture, creativity, and spirituality

This theme supports critical and collaborative research into the histories, meanings and contemporary responsibilities associated with collections. Potential projects might:

- investigate colonial histories, material anthropology, provenance, restitution, repatriation and other areas of ethical collections practice;
- develop community-centred or collaborative approaches to researching and interpreting collections;
- explore relationships between collections and communities, cultures, creativity, identity or spirituality;
- connect related collections across Oxford GLAM and Wessex Museums; or
- develop new relationships between collections and local, national or international communities.

The Partnership builds on significant existing research and community-engaged work in this area across its organisations, while offering opportunities to develop new questions, approaches and collaborations.

Activating Libraries and Archives

This theme seeks to develop innovative research with library and archival collections and to explore their potential as active sites of research, creativity and engagement. Potential projects might:

- work with books and manuscripts, literary collections, archives, photography, audio-visual materials or born-digital collections;
- explore book arts, histories of the book and reading, or the materiality of textual collections;
- develop digital humanities approaches to library and archival collections;

- investigate new approaches to access, interpretation, preservation or engagement; or
- make innovative use of the Partnership's specialist expertise and research infrastructure.

Relevant strengths and resources across the Partnership include the Bodleian Libraries' Centre for the Study of the Book, literary collections held by Wessex Museums, and Oxford GLAM's Book Storage Facility in Swindon.

Collections for Change

This theme asks how collections and collections-based research can contribute to contemporary society and help address social, cultural and economic questions. Drawing on collections spanning art, culture, archaeology, literature and science, potential projects might:

- develop new approaches to interpretation and public engagement;
- explore how collections can contribute to creative health and wellbeing;
- investigate relationships between collections, creativity, performance and the creative economy;
- examine how collections-based research can inform policy or professional practice;
- explore histories and experiences that have previously been marginalised, overlooked or under-represented; or
- develop new ways of engaging underserved audiences and widening participation in collections and heritage.

8. How does the Oxford-Wessex CDLP decide what studentships to support?

Each year, the Oxford-Wessex CDLP will hold an open competition designed to identify and select which funded studentship projects will be supported, in accordance with AHRC guidelines. Studentship proposals must be submitted by either the lead HEI supervisor or the lead Oxford GLAM/Wessex co-supervisor. The proposal should be developed in close collaboration between the HEI and the proposed Oxford/Wessex co-supervisor(s).

Projects will be judged against five equally-weighted criteria:

- **Academic Excellence.** This will be judged by our panel, which includes research-active and academic members from Oxford GLAM, UoO's Humanities Division; and an external HEI. For cross or interdisciplinary proposals outside of the fields of our panel members we will co-opt expertise from within the UoO, or from one of the other UK-wide Consortium organisations.
- The **Feasibility** of the proposed research, including the balance of the partnership, and the extent to which the project demonstrates input from all of the HEI and cultural partner supervisors, with the expectation that there will be primary and secondary supervisors at the HEI and at the cultural partner organisation, particularly for interdisciplinary projects in which supervisory expertise needs to cover the disciplines of the project; the suitability, track record, and existing commitments of the HEI and

cultural partner supervisors; and the supervisory support plans outlined in the application.

- The **Innovation** represented by the proposal: the degree to which the proposal represents a new or unexpected collaboration across institutions and/or AHRC's subject areas, which either takes an existing partnership in a new direction, or builds a new collaboration.
- The **Potential Impact** of the research within academia, the cultural sector, or wider national or international interests.
- **Student Development**, the degree to which the project offers training and development opportunities that align with UKRI statement of expectations for doctoral training, and offers a range of individually tailorable career development opportunities.

Following project selection and approval by AHRC, the established procedure for signing collaboration agreements for these commitments will be followed. The process will be led by the Oxford GLAM Research and Impact team, supported by UoO's Research Contracts team.

9. How long is a CDLA studentship and what does the award cover?

The studentship award covers four years of full-time funding (or up to eight years at 50% FTE). Each studentship includes the HEI tuition fees and a student maintenance grant (the exact amount of which is in line with UKRI guidelines and includes CDLA-specific uplift, if applicable).

The four-year duration is to enable students to undertake development activities as part of their doctoral study. Doctoral projects must be designed and supervised in such a way that students are able to submit their thesis within the funded period, as defined at the outset of the project.

10. Who can be a CDLA student?

Studentships are open to UK and international students. UKRI funding will cover tuition fees at the UK (Home) fee rate. Where an HEI charges a higher international tuition fee, the difference cannot be met from UKRI funding. The HEI may choose to waive the additional fee or meet it from another source; alternatively, the student may be required to meet the difference. For more information on eligibility criteria, please see the [UKRI website](#).

In line with AHRC guidance, named students are not permitted in the project application process. Student recruitment for each chosen project, commencing in October 2027, will begin from March 2027 via a recruitment process led by the HEI supervisor in close partnership with the Oxford GLAM and/or Wessex Museums co-supervisor(s). This is to increase accessibility of the Partnership's CDLA award by ensuring equal access to the funding and opportunities these studentships afford.

Oxford-Wessex CDLP has an [EDI Action Plan](#) so prospective supervisors are encouraged to read the EDI Action Plan and consider how to align their project with it.

11. Where will the student be based?

It is anticipated that the student will spend a significant amount of time researching at one (or more) of the institutions within Oxford GLAM and/or Wessex Museums. Depending on the student and their project, they may also be encouraged to spend some time undertaking professional development opportunities during the course of their funding, which could be conducted within or beyond the Oxford-Wessex CDLP institutions.

The Oxford-Wessex CDLP host institution will provide additional financial support to CDLA students for travel and related research costs, up to £2,000 per student per year for the four years of their studentship (or part-time equivalent), which can be used to support expenses due to travelling between their HEI and cultural partner.

12. I am from an HEI and would like to propose a project – how should I do this?

HEI colleagues interested in developing a project are encouraged to either:

- contact the Oxford GLAM Research and Impact team with a brief summary of your research area or initial project idea so that we can help you to identify relevant expertise and develop the proposal collaboratively. The team can also add you to the relevant contact list, including invitations to the pre-application information sessions, and connect you with researchers from the relevant department/museum; or,
- approach supervisors from Oxford-Wessex institutions directly (please copy the GLAM R&I team into any correspondence) to initiate co-development of a project.

There are two key Oxford-Wessex CDLP deadlines that you will need to meet – please see Question 14 for details.

NB The relevant Oxford-Wessex and HEI Head of Department for each proposed supervisor must give consent for their involvement and time commitment for the studentship.

Applications are permitted from University of Oxford academics who wish to collaborate with either GLAM or Wessex Museums co-supervisors, but please note that awards to University of Oxford are capped at 25% of the available studentships (i.e. a maximum 3 studentships over the 4 years of this AHRC award).

13. What support is available to me as a prospective supervisor interested in applying?

The Oxford GLAM Research and Impact team will be your first point of contact throughout the application process. The team will hold at least one pre-application information session and offer application coaching for new HEIs and new supervisors (i.e., those with no prior Collaborative Doctoral Partnership experience or those unfamiliar with cultural sector research). To ensure that you receive invitations and relevant communications, please contact the team at an early stage so that you can be added to our contact list.

The team will also support pre-application discussions with new HEIs to help them align with the Oxford-Wessex CDLP's EDI and management procedures; these include:

- Appropriate supervisory arrangements (supervisory team must include 2 HEI supervisors and 2 cultural partner co-supervisors from Oxford GLAM and/or Wessex Museums).
- Positive Action measures in student recruitment to attract and support students from protected characteristic groups

Please refer to the Oxford-Wessex CDLP [EDI action plan](#).

14. Where can I find the application form and how do I submit?

The full application form and guidance are available on the [Oxford GLAM CDP](#) website.

There is a two-stage application process:

- **2 November 2026, 17:00:** complete the 'Project Summary' and 'Core Team' sections of the project proposal form and submit by email to researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk for internal approval. Your proposal will be checked for feasibility by your proposed Oxford-Wessex CDLP institution. The project proposal should be sufficiently developed so that the project concept can be approved.
- **14 December 2026, 17:00:** final deadline for full project proposal submissions; send this by email to researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk.

Project Proposals **must be jointly developed** by an Oxford GLAM / Wessex Museums staff member and an academic based at a UK HEI.

15. What happens after you submit a full project proposal?

A selection panel, consisting of staff from across Oxford GLAM, Wessex Museums, UoO, UK HEIs, and the UK-wide Landscape Award Consortium, meets in January to consider all the eligible proposals. Panel members will not take part in the review of any proposals where there

could be a conflict of interest. Some proposals may be recommended for funding subject to improvements or conditions by the panel. The panel will provide feedback on all proposals.

If your proposal is successful, the Oxford-Wessex CDLP will formally nominate the project to AHRC. The HEI supervisor will then need to submit a CDLA 'application' form via The Funding Service to allow the AHRC to undertake basic eligibility checks and to set up awards. Once this is completed, the studentship can be advertised, and the HEI will then administer it in line with standard AHRC CDP/CDLA studentships.

16. What else do I, as a prospective CDLA HEI supervisor, need to know?

Cultural-sector research usually has a different focus and approach from standard PhD research taking place in HEIs. It often (although not always) relates directly to collections and the knowledge, practices and communities associated with them. Across Oxford GLAM and Wessex Museums, this may involve in-depth engagement with objects, specimens, archives, books, historic environments, museum visitors/communities etc. which can provide a central body of evidence for the CDLA student. Research questions may emerge from the collections themselves, including gaps or uncertainties in existing knowledge and interpretation. They may also arise from organisational priorities and practice, including the desire to develop new perspectives on collections, address under-represented histories, and explore more inclusive and creative ways of engaging diverse audiences and communities.

It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the collections, research, and wider work of Oxford GLAM and Wessex Museums through their websites, and explore recent publications, exhibitions, projects and other activities relevant to your area of interest. Where appropriate, the Oxford GLAM Research and Impact team will help you make contact with relevant Oxford-Wessex staff whose expertise, collections, or areas of work relate to your proposed project.

17. What is the timeline?

Date	Due
Early September 2026	Call for project proposals - open
1 October 2026 (provisional – TBC)	Pre-application information session for prospective supervisors
2 November 2026	Oxford GLAM/Wessex Museums internal deadline for feasibility checking (complete 'Project Summary' and 'Core Team' sections of project proposal form only).
14 December 2026	Deadline for submission of final Project Proposal
Mid-January 2027	Selection Panel for Full Application
Mid/late-January 2027	Successful applicants notified
From March 2027	Student Recruitment
October 2027	Projects start

18. Application process overviews

Step-by-step overviews of the application process are provided in the following pages. Please refer to the first one if you are an HEI supervisor; the second if you are an Oxford GLAM supervisor; and the third if you are a Wessex Museums supervisor.

Application Process Overview – HEI Supervisors

Oxford-Wessex CDLA Project Proposals - Application Process

If you are a HEI supervisor

For PhD studentships starting in Autumn 2027

Phase 1 IDEA & CONTACT

YOU **START** – you have a research / project idea for a potential CDLA studentship

Phase 2 PARTNERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

**YOU +
PARTNER**

Develop the project collaboratively

Contact Oxford GLAM Research & Impact team OR
Approach an Oxford GLAM / Wessex Museums supervisor directly to begin discussions (copy the GLAM R&I team into correspondence)

TEAM

Build the supervisory team

2 HEI supervisors + 2 Oxford GLAM/Wessex Museums co-supervisors

FORM

Prepare the initial application for internal sift

Complete the Project Summary + Core Team sections of project proposal form

Phase 3 INTERNAL REVIEW

**YOU or Co-
SUPERVISOR**

Monday 2 November 2026, 17:00

Internal deadline: Submit Project Summary & Core Team sections of project proposal form to researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk

Internal approval

- Proposed Oxford-Wessex institution / department checks feasibility and whether the project concept can be approved
- HEI lead supervisor to contact own university's Research Services to seek institutional approvals, where relevant

Phase 4 FULL SUBMISSION

Supervisors jointly develop full proposal → secure required consent → **SUBMIT FULL PROPOSAL by Monday 14 December 2026 (17:00) to researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk**

KEY SUPPORT

Oxford GLAM Research & Impact is the first point of contact and can support pre-application discussions, information sessions and application coaching.

Contact email: researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk

APPLICATION RULE

Either the lead HEI supervisor or lead Oxford GLAM/Wessex co-supervisor may submit the project proposal.

SELECTION

Five equally weighted criteria: Academic Excellence, Feasibility, Innovation, Impact, Student Development.

Pre-application Information Session

This is provisionally scheduled for 1 October 2026 – sign up by emailing researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk

AFTER SUBMISSION | Mid-Jan 2027 Selection Panel → Mid/late-Jan notification → AHRC nomination → HEI submits via The Funding Service → student recruitment from Mar 2027 → projects start Oct 2027

Application Process Overview – Oxford GLAM Supervisors

Oxford-Wessex CDLA Project Proposals – Application Process

If you are an Oxford GLAM supervisor

For PhD studentships starting in Autumn 2027

Phase 1 IDEA & CONTACT

YOU

START – you have a research / project idea drawing on Oxford GLAM collections, expertise, communities, or research environment

Phase 2 PARTNERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

YOU + PARTNER

Develop the project collaboratively

Discuss the project with Oxford GLAM Research & Impact team and identify a suitable HEI partner. Co-develop the project proposal with the HEI supervisor(s).

TEAM

Build the supervisory team

2 HEI supervisors + 2 Oxford GLAM/Wessex Museums co-supervisors

FORM

Prepare the initial application for internal sift

Complete the Project Summary + Core Team sections of the project proposal form

Phase 3 INTERNAL REVIEW

YOU or HEI SUPERVISOR

Monday 2 November 2026, 17:00

Internal deadline: Submit Project Summary & Core Team sections of project proposal form to researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk

Internal approval

Proposed Oxford-Wessex institution / department checks feasibility and whether the project concept can be approved

Phase 4 FULL SUBMISSION

Supervisors jointly develop full proposal → secure required consent → **SUBMIT FULL PROPOSAL by Monday 14 December 2026 (17:00) to researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk**

KEY SUPPORT

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Contact email: researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk

APPLICATION RULE

Either the lead HEI supervisor or lead Oxford GLAM/Wessex co-supervisor may submit the project proposal.

SELECTION

Five equally weighted criteria: Academic Excellence, Feasibility, Innovation, Impact, Student Development.

Pre-application Information Session

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Application Process Overview – Wessex Museums Supervisors

Oxford-Wessex CDLA Project Proposals – Application Process

If you are a Wessex Museums supervisor

For PhD studentships starting in Autumn 2027

Phase 1 IDEA & CONTACT

YOU **START** – you have a research / project idea drawing on Wessex Museums collections, expertise, communities, or research environment

Phase 2 PARTNERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

**YOU +
PARTNER**

Develop the project collaboratively

Discuss the project with Hannah Baker and within Wessex Museums, connect with Oxford GLAM Research & Impact team, and identify a suitable HEI partner.

TEAM

Build the supervisory team

2 HEI supervisors + 2 Oxford GLAM/Wessex Museums co-supervisors

FORM

Prepare the initial application for internal sift

Complete the Project Summary + Core Team sections of project proposal form

Phase 3 INTERNAL REVIEW

**YOU or Co-
SUPERVISOR**

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Internal deadline: Submit Project Summary & Core Team sections of project proposal form to researchsupport@glam.ox.ac.uk

Internal approval

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