Staff supervising graduate research students are asked to familiarize themselves with the Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees. This document outlines the expectations and responsibilities of supervisors, students, and Degree Committees. In addition, the University also offers short lunchtime workshops aimed at supporting new research degree supervisors; please visit the Training and Guidance pages to learn more.

Supervisors are expected to attend training and events for Supervisors as prescribed by their Faculty/Department and Degree Committee. All Faculties/Departments are expected to specify their expectations for the frequency and form of supervisions in their Course Handbook, and Supervisors should be aware of what is expected. You may also find helpful the Code of Practice for research students starting their course in 2018-19.

SUBMISSION DATE

The AHRC is accountable for the public funds it manages and distributes. The Submission Rate Survey is one method the Council uses to monitor the progress and outcome of studentships. The Submission Rate Survey is an annual survey that calculates the rate of submission of doctoral students who have held AHRC postgraduate studentships. The census date of the survey is 30 September each year.

SANCTIONS POLICY

The AHRC's monitoring of submission rates is intended to encourage the on-time completion of a thesis, and incorporates a sanctions policy. Research Organisations (RO) identified in the survey as achieving fewer than 70% of submissions on time - in any given year and aggregated over 4 years - are ineligible to hold doctoral studentships for two years. Irrespective of whether the studentship is offered for longer or if it is extended, the submission date must be no more than 4 years from the start of the award for a full-time student. The AHRC will continue to monitor and sanction at RO level, even if the RO is part of a consortium, as it is the RO at which the student is registered which is responsible for that student.

SUPERVISOR TRAINING

Specific training available by the Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning

SUPERVISING GRADUATE STUDENTS: WORKSHOPS FOR SUPERVISORS (ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES)

The workshops are designed to consider reciprocal expectations and duties, as well as approaches to supervising, and to raise awareness of possible issues and where to go for support.
to consider your role as a supervisor: expectations and duties
• to provide an introduction to the administrative requirements of the role
• to reflect on best practice to guide students successfully and on how to avoid pitfalls
• to have an awareness of the range of sources of support available in the collegiate University
• to consider a range of approaches to supervising

POSTDOCS: ASSISTING WITH PHD SUPERVISION:

This workshop explores the principles of good supervision, the art of delivering critical feedback for best results, and the teacher/learner roles of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. It is aimed at postdocs looking to develop their skills in effective and inspired pedagogy.

SUPPORTING POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

A participative, discussion-based two-hour workshop which provides an opportunity to reflect on how students with mental health difficulties can be supported in postgraduate study. The workshop covers best practice in supporting students and an update on services available to all involved.

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH INTEGRITY AT CAMBRIDGE

This course is delivered by the University’s Research Governance and Integrity Officer and will introduce researchers to research integrity and ethics at Cambridge. The course will:

• explore the issue of research misconduct in academia and facilitate discussion of why and how it occurs
• explain the recent research integrity agenda and examine how this effects researchers
• discuss some of the challenges to the integrity of research and ask what individuals, groups and institutions can do to tackle them
• introduce the University’s research ethics system
• use case studies and discussion exercises to examine key issues
Cambridge offers mentoring to new members of staff in the early stages of their teaching careers. Normally they will be offered a mentor during their induction period. Designating a mentor is the responsibility of the Head of Department or other institution, or the Chairman of the Faculty Board, as appropriate, and is part of the general process of induction of a new member of staff into the institution.
OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS FOR AHRC DTP STUDENTS

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

The AHRC expects all of its PhD students to undertake an individual training needs analysis at an early stage in their project. In Cambridge, this analysis takes the form of a 30-minute interview to discuss the ways in which study visits, conference trips, placements, workshops, language tuition, and other forms of training or developmental activity might contribute to a student’s PhD or broader professional development. The interview also focuses on possible uses of additional AHRC funding to support students’ primary research or career development plans.

RESEARCH METHODS

Our first-year programme in this core training strand aims to enhance students’ awareness and understanding of the primary research methods and approaches used by their peers across the many different academic fields involved in the DTP. It begins with a session on techniques for conducting detailed analysis, offering students a taste of methodologies which are prevalent in other fields, allowing them to discuss approaches in their own domain, and giving them with an opportunity to practise explaining those approaches to academic non-specialists in anticipation of undergraduate teaching. Subsequently, we organise a ‘Question Time’-style debate between senior colleagues on the uses and abuses of theory, and a ‘theories fair’ at which early career researchers and advanced PhD students present current theoretical developments for the first year students. A third session covers practice-led research in different disciplines, highlighting a range of approaches which are less well-represented, but growing in importance in Cambridge and elsewhere.

For second years, a Lent Term session on the relationship between the humanities and digital methods, including big data, continues the exploration of primary approaches to research. Otherwise, though, this year sees a shift in focus towards methodological issues which can affect the way all researchers operate, irrespective of discipline. In the Michaelmas Term, a workshop considers how different approaches to framing research questions can unlock continued academic funding at different career stages and encourages students to practise presenting their own research questions to peers in other fields. The Easter Term workshop, meanwhile, introduces students to the impact agenda, and considers how evidencing impact can affect the way in which research is carried out.

The third-year sessions continue the emphasis on methodological concerns which can enhance the professionalism of all academics, with an eye to issues which are more relevant to students in the latter stages of their doctorate, as they write up, rewrite or edit their thesis, and involve themselves increasingly in prestigious conferences or publications. Thus a session investigating different approaches to marshalling data and evidence through argumentation in a drive towards proof is followed by a workshop on ways of managing academic disagreement respectfully.
RESEARCH LEADERSHIP

This second core training strand introduces students to key features of the contemporary academic environment which they will typically need to navigate effectively if they are to become leading academics in the arts and humanities.

First-year sessions in this vein include an exploration of the concepts of academic field and collaboration across disciplines, and a look at research in different international university contexts.

In the second year, a workshop on raising money and the evaluation of funding bids introduces students to different types of postdoctoral funding. This session develops insights introduced in our Methods session on research questions, and involves participants in a simulated peer-review exercise featuring genuine, anonymized fellowship applications. It is followed by a session on university working cultures and finances, which includes a discussion of REF, reflection on how institutions view research, teaching and administrative duties, and a first-hand account of working life from a University Teaching Officer.

As in our Research Methods strand, our third-year Research Leadership sessions focus on issues which are a priority for many students who are nearing the end of their PhD. In the Michaelmas Term, we run a workshop on traditional academic publishing, which addresses the question of REF research output requirements alongside broader publishing norms affecting academic careers, before demystifying the commissioning and peer review processes of learned journals and monograph collections. In the Lent Term, a complementary workshop introduces students to open access publication and open research more generally.

An additional aim of the Research Leadership strand is to explore broader aspects of what it might mean to be a leading researcher. Consequently, while most of the sessions have an academic focus, one of their guiding principles is that to be successful, academics increasingly need to develop skills which are required in other sectors too, such that lessons learned in core workshops are applicable to research work in universities and elsewhere; this principle also guides our approach to the Research Methods strand. The concern with a broader research skills agenda means that the Leadership strand also includes a first-year session on communication, and a second-year session exploring non-academic careers for PhD graduates in the arts and humanities.

Where capacity allows, the sessions in both the Research Methods and Research Leadership training strands are opened out to students beyond the AHRC DTP. Most of them centre on contributions by academic or, more rarely, administrative colleagues or guest speakers with particular expertise in the topics discussed.

Besides the involvement of close to 40 expert colleagues each year, the core training strands also recognize that a large and diverse cohort of PhD students is itself a major source of expertise. Peer-group discussion is therefore a regular feature of sessions, and we close the third-year core training programme with a combined Research Methods and Leadership session in which students devise their own ideal doctoral training programme. Where possible, we try to integrate students’ ideas in our own training provision.

WORLD FACTORY

Developed by Zoë Svendsen from her acclaimed, innovative Young Vic production, this scenario-based, interactive game in a powerful theatrical environment invites participants to explore resource management and the relationship between mass production, labour ethics and environmental impacts, while offering practical, hands-on insight into a real outcome of practice-led research, and thereby bringing to life concepts discussed in our final first-year Research Methods workshop.
MEDIA TRAINING

A half-day introductory course with multiple award-winning radio journalist Vince Hunt covers the basic skills needed to negotiate interaction with the media successfully. Participants prepare a radio or webcast interview and by making and reviewing practice recordings, they learn to deliver their ideas effectively to a non-specialist audience. Once students have completed this course, they can book individual consultancy slots with a view to building their media profile, or preparing real-life broadcasting engagements.

FILM TRAINING

This intensive two-day course investigates the various strands of the production necessary for building a good film before principal photography takes place. Could a section of a thesis form the basis of a documentary? Might a PhD uncover details that make television dramas more realistic? In this course, multiple award-winning producer and director Frederick Baker helps the DTP students explore the ways in which they can project their research onto the screen.

DOING RESEARCH IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Cambridge Digital Humanities is working the DTP to provide training to support the needs of researchers in the digital age - this includes accessible introductions to key digital methods, techniques in networked scholarly practice, advice and training on using digital tools. We also organise an extensive programme of advanced workshops featuring problems and challenges in digital methods and opportunities for interdisciplinary networking.

END-OF-YEAR COHORT DAY

At the end of each year, we gather first-year students together to talk to one another about their research, to hear pitches for DTP funding from prospective student-organized research and reading groups, and to suggest themes for the next student-organized international conference. Previous Cohort Days have also offered tasters of second- and third-year training options such as ThinkLab, and introduced students to non-academic partner institutions.
ANNUAL LECTURE

Each year we invite an internationally renowned speaker to address a theme of broad import across the arts and humanities. We have previously heard from Professor Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (Stanford, Literature), and Professor Adriana Cavarero (Verona, Political Philosophy). Lectures have addressed ‘The Humanities and the University Today’, ‘Why Prosody and Rhythm Matter – in Poetry and in the Humanities at Large’, ‘What is Left of Marx?’, and ‘Political Phonospheres: Plurality and Crowds’.

CAMBRIDGE AHRC INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCE

As a flagship opportunity in the Cambridge AHRC DTP’s training provision, we offer our second-year students the chance to organize a major international postgraduate conference each September, involving delegates from the a.r.t.e.s Graduate School of Cologne University, the Australian National University, the European University at Saint Petersburg, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Stockholm University.

THINKLAB

ThinkLab is a Cambridge AHRC DTP initiative, developed to support our doctoral students to connect with social, private and public organisations. Designed with input from senior leaders of the BBC, Arts Council England, and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the ThinkLab model is unique to the University. To date, we have run several projects, applying the model in a range of contexts, with organisations including The Reading Agency, the Royal Society of Arts and the Fitzwilliam Museum. Students join a ThinkLab project for a term, working as a team on a live challenge, alongside employees from a host organisation.

INTERNSHIPS

The AHRC DTP Internship Programme is designed for second and third-year students. Pre-arranged placement opportunities include those with the Centre for Science and Policy, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and the Fitzwilliam Museum but we also support students to design tailored projects. The length of each internship is flexible but the minimum duration is one month, up to a maximum of 12 months.
MASTERCLASS SESSIONS

Our Masterclass series gives students the opportunity to meet with senior leaders to understand first-hand how research is applied and understood within a range of organisations. Doctoral students enjoy an interactive three-hour session within a small group. Previous Masterclass speakers include the Cultural Editor of a national newspaper; Lord Smith of Finsbury, former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport; and the Chairperson of a UN Committee.

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW!

We are keen for students of the Cambridge AHRC DTP to derive similar benefits from their membership of such a sizeable and talented cohort. To this end, we have decided to launch a self-organizing writing group for students who feel that they would profit from regular communal thesis-writing sessions.

STUDENT-LED RESEARCH GROUPS

The AHRC DTP offers its students the chance to bid for funding to run their own innovative, cross-disciplinary research or reading groups. Our competition has grown to support up to at least 8 groups annually. The DTP has sponsored a number of successful groups, including the Anthropocene in the Humanities Group, the Cambridge Body and Food Histories Group, the Cambridge Endangered Languages and Cultures Group, the Cambridge Latin Circle, the Cambridge Medieval Literature and Culture Seminar, the Early Modern Interdisciplinary Seminar, the Gender and Politics Action Group, Materials in Practice, The Value of the Humanities, and Writing Women in History.

AHRC INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENT SCHEME

The AHRC’s International Placement Scheme (IPS) funds short-term fellowships at prestigious international research institutions for UK postgraduate students and early career researchers. The scheme is run annually, with approximately 50 places available across seven current host institutions:

Please check the IPS page on the AHRC’s website for details.
RESEARCH SUPPORT TRAINING GRANTS

AHRC students can apply for funds from the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) to enable them to undertake overseas and UK study visits, attend conferences, and to cover other primary research costs (e.g. consumables or artist materials). All AHRC funded doctoral students are eligible to apply for these funds, apart from those who are writing up. However, students who have already received one allocation from RTSG funds will not normally be funded again.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Cambridge AHRC DTP students can apply for funds from the Student Development Fund (SDF). This funding is primarily available to extend the duration of PhD study flexibly and responsively – i.e. to support an appropriate range of training for individual AHRC-funded students according to their individual needs. This may include: Study Visits; Placements; International Placements; Skills Development; High Cost training; attendance at conferences.

AHRC COLLOQUIA FUND

The Cambridge AHRC DTP has established an AHRC colloquia Fund for supporting student-led symposia. The scheme allows AHRC DTP doctoral students to set up and run conferences and symposia, gaining valuable transferable skills in the process.

DISABLED STUDENTS ALLOWANCE

Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) are intended to help with additional expenditure for the costs of study-related requirements that may be incurred as a result of disability, mental health problems or specific learning difficulties that means additional support is needed to undertake a UK Research and Innovation funded studentship. The allowances can cover the cost of non-medical personal assistance, items of specialist equipment, extra travel costs and general expenses.
CHRISTINA FARADAY (COHORT 2)

Christina Faraday researches British visual culture in domestic settings during the century after the Break with Rome (c.1530-c.1630). Investigating objects as diverse as portraits, plasterwork, print culture and crockery, her PhD explores how such objects communicate, and interrogates prevailing conceptions of the period as ‘iconophobic’. Her thesis considers the interaction between text and image in Tudor and Stuart culture, harnessing Early Modern literature on rhetoric to reassess how artists made their chosen subjects vivid and memorable.

Christina’s interest in rhetoric and the interplay between visual and verbal media has a further practical, more contemporary aspect which she has purposefully cultivated during her postgraduate career. Seizing on presentation skills development opportunities, she has become an outstanding, reliable communicator of complex academic ideas to non-specialists, without oversimplifying or disfiguring content. She has become especially proficient at interweaving her own words with visual material for different audiences. Unsurprisingly, we asked her to present her research to the Chief Executive and Strategy and Development Manager of the AHRC when they visited Cambridge recently.

Christina was already working on her articulate, engaging presentation style during her Master’s year, when she was runner-up in the 2015 Cambridge Three-Minute Thesis Competition with her talk on clocks, dials and watches in Tudor and Stuart visual culture. She has subsequently won research poster competitions organized by our DTP and our ESRC counterpart during her doctorate. During her PhD, she has built on these successes by engaging with the full range of media training offered by the Cambridge AHRC DTP. In particular, she has worked at length with Sony Award-winning radio producer and journalist Vince Hunt to clarify her ideas in written and oral form for non-academic audiences. With both Vince Hunt and award-winning filmmaker Fred Baker, she has also developed her pitching technique.

Christina’s enhanced pitching and explanatory skills combined with her strong networking acumen to unlock a unique part-time curatorial internship at the National Portrait Gallery. Having come to the attention of the NPG’s Senior Curator of 17th-Century Collections, Catharine MacLeod, Christina was able to persuade the Gallery to engage her as one member of a team of three, developing and delivering its major exhibition on the portrait miniatures of Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver, which opens in February 2019. Since the internship is unpaid, Christina produced a very strong pitch to convince our SDF allocations committee to support this initiative through a 7-month studentship extension.

Working closely with Ms MacLeod two days a week from February 2017 to August 2018, Christina reviews and shortlists objects for exhibition, negotiates loans from other collections, helps develop the exhibition themes and layout, contributes to the writing of wall panels and catalogue entries, and represents the NPG on research trips, for example to the Bodleian Library and Ham House, London, to examine loan objects. The exhibition will benefit from Christina’s expertise on a wide range of early modern artistry, accrued during her PhD, as well has from her skill in conveying specialist knowledge in approachable ways. Meanwhile, the internship will impact positively on Christina’s research, especially for a planned chapter on wit and brevity in portrait miniatures, and enable her to hone her communication skills before a large-scale international audience.
RALPH WEIR (COHORT 2)

Ralph Weir’s thesis specifically explores the logical viability of leading theories of mind in light of new insights from analytical metaphysics, but he has wide-ranging philosophical interests including aesthetics, ethics, the philosophy of religion and the history of philosophy. Ralph’s intellectual breadth and his particular concern with the embodiment of thought both influence his way of doing philosophy, in the sense of analytical activity, but also of giving a practical expression to ideas.

To this end, Ralph has involved himself since his time as a BPhil and MSt student in high-profile initiatives to reconnect philosophical research with concrete social goals benefiting the broadest conceivable public. In this vein, he is co-founder of the Humane Philosophy Project, an international initiative at the Universities of Oxford and Warsaw which promotes humanistic approaches to philosophy. The Project organizes international philosophical events, promotes academic collaboration between Western and Eastern Europe, and maintains substantial related audio-visual archives. In Cambridge, Ralph brought the Project’s humanistic values to bear on discussions in CDF-funded DTP training sessions, prompting creation of the student-led research group Value of the Humanities.

Ralph is also a member of the steering committee of the Dalai Lama Centre for Compassion in Oxford, an independent educational charity closely connected to Oxford University. He contributes to a group developing an introductory ethics course for schoolchildren on its behalf. The Centre’s approach is secular, but Ralph’s engagement in its work on ethics has encouraged him to interrogate the relationship between thought and religion. In response to this growing enquiry, and looking to develop more systematically his nascent research management skills derived through work with the Humane Philosophy Project and Dalai Lama Centre, Ralph approached the University of Oxford’s Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion as potential hosts for an internship. The result was the offer of an Associateship from April to July 2017, for which Ralph was granted a 3-month SDF-funded studentship extension.

Working closely with Andrew Pinsent, Research Director of the Ian Ramsey Centre, Ralph accrued an impressive range of skills relevant to running a leading specialist research institute. Besides furthering his familiarity with cross-institutional collaboration, and extending his events management experience on high-profile seminars and the Centre’s 2017 summer school and conference, he was able to learn research project management through work on projects such as construction of the Centre’s new website exploring Special Divine Action, which represents the leading online source of material in its field. Ralph was also able to assimilate sector-leading external grant application practice by working alongside colleagues who have won over 50% of the Oxford University Theology Faculty’s outside funding. This aspect of his Associateship was so effective, that he was able to obtain a John Templeton Foundation grant on behalf of both the Ian Ramsey Centre and Humane Philosophy Project, for a project on science, religion and humane philosophy in Central and Eastern Europe. This success has in turn led to his appointment to a post as postdoctoral researcher on the project, which will commence once Ralph has completed his PhD.
THE VALUE OF THE HUMANITIES STUDENT-LED RESEARCH GROUP (COHORT 2)

Inspired by discussions of the value of the humanities and an examination of the Two Cultures debate in our 2015 CDF-funded session on academic field, Sara Caputo (History), Christina Faraday (History of Art), Samuel Hughes and Ralph Weir (both Philosophy) established a cross-disciplinary research group. The Value of the Humanities secured CDF funding through our 2016-2017 student-led research groups competition.

Drawing healthy membership among the DTP cohorts and wider Cambridge humanities postgraduate community, they submitted an ambitious plan which thoroughly impressed our selection committee, for conducting and presenting collaborative research into the value that contemporary society can derive from the humanities, with informative comparisons drawn from diverse historical contexts.

As per the proposal, the group’s principal research developed through regular seminars interrogating classic and contemporary texts, determining key value-related questions, then making them the subject of thorough cross-disciplinary exploration. The group’s exceptional diversity proved a great strength, with members facilitating each other’s access to otherwise unapproachable specialist texts from other disciplines, and exploring each text using multiple methodological approaches.

Their seminars included: a strand exploring premodern texts on the humanities by Plato, Erasmus, Castiglione and Sidney; Sara Caputo’s strand introducing key twentieth-century historiographical works by Herbert Butterfield, E.P. Thompson, E.H. Carr and Keith Jenkins; Christina Faraday’s analysis of various media interventions in the 2016 public debate on the abolition of Art History A-Level; Maxime Lepoutre’s (Philosophy) introduction to the work of Charles W. Mills and ways the humanities can challenge systems of ideological repression; and short accounts of humanities teaching in members’ home countries, including France, Germany, Italy and the UK.

This outstanding foundation was enhanced by workshops involving leading researchers: Warsaw-based scholar, Dr Mikolaj Slawkowski-Rode, introduced Husserl’s discussion of the humanities, outlining its importance for work on Dilthey, Weber and other key philosophers of the humanities; and Professor Peter Mandler spoke about student subject choice at school and university.

Most impressively, the group presented its research outcomes at a major conference, at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford, in September 2017. Alongside short papers by group members, an extraordinary roster of internationally renowned keynotes gave lectures: Alicja Gescinka, broadcaster and public intellectual, on globalization’s challenges to the humanities in European universities; Raymond Tallis, neuroscientist, arguing the potential contribution of neuroscience to the humanities is often misunderstood; Roger Scruton, philosopher, discussing the kinds of knowledge the humanities offer, and how they might differ from equivalents offered by natural sciences; and Alexander Stoddart, Queen’s Sculptor, critiquing the role of art schools in British public life today.

The group’s research outcomes included: categorical distinctions relating to the ascription of value, between aims/justifications, then private/public, broad/narrow-scope, and substantive/procedural justifications; recognition that public discourse often neglects such distinctions; critical investigation of various substantive justifications; possible reasons why articulating humanities-based values might be comparatively problematic; examination of specific obstacles to articulating humanities-based values in the UK; and greater appreciation that maintaining value in the humanities depends on conscious efforts by professionals to foster links between relevant disciplines and the broader community.

These last two outcomes convinced the group to shift focus onto overcoming obstacles to the recognition of value in the humanities. Evolving into Communicating the Value of the Humanities, the group received extended CDF funding for 2017-2018.