

## AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) PhD Studentship

### *Fanfiction and Online Fan Communities: Collecting Practice and Inclusion in a National Collection*

**Start date:** 1 October 2025

**Application Deadline:** 5pm, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025

Interviews will take place online on **23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025**

The University of Glasgow and the British Library are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded Collaborative Doctoral Studentship from 1 October 2025 under the [AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Scheme](#).

This PhD project aims to explore the publication, collection and preservation activities of online fan communities and fan archives. It will investigate the methodologies and practices utilised by fan communities in creating and archiving works, compare them to current practices in national libraries, and help develop an ethical framework for collecting online fan-generated content.

This project will be jointly supervised by Prof Paul Gooding (Professor of Library Studies and Digital Scholarship) and Dr Rebecca Noone (Lecturer in Information Studies) at the University of Glasgow and by Giulia Carla Rossi (Curator, Digital Publications) and Ian Cooke (Head of Contemporary British and Irish Publications) at the British Library. The student will spend time with both HEI partner and the British Library and will become part of the wider cohort of AHRC CDP funded PhD students across the UK.

The University of Glasgow and the British Library are keen to encourage applications from a diverse range of people, from different backgrounds and career stages, and particularly welcome those currently underrepresented in doctoral student cohorts.

#### **The Research Project**

Online fan-generated content is at high risk of loss due to technical, legal and geographical constraints. As a result, fan fiction and other fan publications are poorly represented in national library collections. Fan content is not just made by and for fans, but it is often also archived by fans themselves, through personal archives, volunteer-run initiatives, as well as rescue-mission-style archiving of disappearing domains or software.

Tensions exist between the statutory responsibility of legal deposit libraries to capture web-based formats, and the ethics of engaging with source communities that produce and share content online.

Existing ethical frameworks therefore need careful examination to ensure that the national record is informed by a deep understanding of the complexity of fan cultures.

This studentship will conduct research into the archival practices and ethics of fan communities and compare them to those currently deployed by legal deposit libraries of the United Kingdom via qualitative interviews and observations. The student will work with the British Library's Contemporary British and Irish Publications team to understand the technical, curatorial, and ethical aspects of preserving complex web-based objects, and create a UK Web Archive collection of fanwork objects published online. These findings will inform a proposed ethics of care framework for fanwork inclusion and preservation in national collections.

Research questions include:

- What are the information practices, needs and perspectives of fan communities engaged in preserving fanworks?
- What existing practices and ethical approaches do the UK legal deposit libraries apply to collecting complex web-based objects?
- What can national libraries learn from the archival practices of online fan communities? What methodologies could be adopted/adapted to work within a collecting institution?
- How might these practices inform an ethical framework specific to the collecting of online fan-generated content? What legal and ethical framework is necessary to ensure collection practices will serve not only the British Library's needs but also the needs of the communities we want to engage with?

### **Benefits and Opportunities**

The successful candidate will be registered with the Department of Information Studies at the University of Glasgow, which is part of the College of Arts and Humanities (CoAH). Information Studies has a vibrant research culture with a growing number of postgraduate taught and research students, exploring a range of topics in the fields of information studies, critical archival studies, museology, digital culture and digital humanities. The successful candidate will have access to a wide range of training, development and networking opportunities via the College of Arts & Humanities Graduate School, and the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities.

At the British Library, the candidate will be primarily based in the Contemporary British and Irish Publications team and will receive expert advice and support from across the team, as well as access to the wider Contemporary British Collections department, Digital Scholarship and Digital Preservation.

The student will benefit from the expertise that the Library's staff can provide around questions of legal and ethical framework and policies for collection management, as well as gaining direct access to the emerging formats collection, which is currently unavailable to Library users. The supervisors and other members of the team will support the student in gaining an in-depth understanding of the policy context in which this research will be located. This relates to implementation of UK legal deposit, and particularly the extension of capability to new forms of digital publication. The student will benefit

from being under the supervision of a team with considerable relevant experience and will receive web archiving training, with an overview of different web crawling and curation tools.

The student will also become part of a vibrant cohort of collaborative doctoral researchers and benefit from staff-level access to the Library's collections, resources and in-house training and development opportunities. CDP students also benefit from a dedicated programme of CDP Consortium events delivered in tandem with the other museums, galleries and heritage organisations affiliated with the AHRC CDP scheme, designed to provide CDP researchers with the knowledge, networks and skills to thrive in their future careers.

This research project will also provide students with an opportunity to participate in a network of cultural heritage institutions concerned with the preservation of digital publications, as well as create contacts with authors and publishers in the digital writing community. The student will be invited to share their research with a variety of audiences, presenting their research and progress at relevant conferences and networks.

This collaborative PhD studentship offers the opportunity to combine academic training with practice-based experience and research behind the scenes of a major cultural institution. This is a unique opportunity to gain a wide range of transferable research skills, which may include researching in archives and libraries, web archiving, a valuable insight into the workings of UK legal deposit libraries and digital preservation, editing, publishing, communicating with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, and public speaking.

### **Details of Award**

The PhD studentship can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis. AHRC CDP doctoral training grants fund studentships for 48 months full-time or part-time equivalent for between 60-96 months. AHRC CDP doctoral training grants also make provision of funding for student development activities to help the student extend their wider skills portfolio and improve their career prospects.

The award pays tuition fees up to the value of the full-time home UKRI rate for PhD degrees. **The indicative fee level for Research Council studentships for 2025/26 is £5,006.** The University of Glasgow will provide a fee waiver for any difference between the home fee rate and international student fees, meaning that any applicant will be eligible to have their fees covered in full.

The award also pays full maintenance for all students, both home and international students. This stipend is tax free, increases slightly each year, and is the equivalent of an annual salary, enabling the student to pay living costs. The UKRI Minimum Doctoral Stipend for 2025/26 is £20,780.

An additional London allowance of £1000/year will be applied for this studentship.

In addition, the successful candidate will receive a CDP maintenance payment of £600/year.

Further details on UKRI funding for doctoral training can be found on the [UKRI website](#).

In addition, the successful student will be eligible for an additional research allowance courtesy of the British Library, up to £1,000 per financial year or part-time equivalent, for the duration of the project.

## **Eligibility**

This studentship is open to both Home and International applicants. 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 in or enter.

A UK national may have spent an extended period living outside the UK, either for study or employment, and still be eligible for home fee status. Candidates in those circumstances are required to show that they have maintained a relevant connection with their home country and therefore claim that the absence was temporary. 'Temporary' does not depend solely on the length of absence.

If a candidate does not meet the criteria above, they would be classed as an international student, but would not be required to fund the difference between UK and international fees for this studentship.

To be eligible, you will also need to have been accepted on to the PhD programme in Information Studies via University of Glasgow Admissions.

Further guidance can be found here based on revisions to [Training Grant Terms and Conditions for projects starting in October 2025](#).

## **Applicant Information**

Applicants should have or expect to receive a Masters-level qualification in a relevant discipline or equivalent experience in a professional setting, and an Upper Second-Class Honours degree (or equivalent). Applicants whose first language is not English must also meet the English Language requirements detailed on the [Information Studies Postgraduate Research admissions webpage](#).

Relevant disciplines include, but are not limited to, Library and Information Studies, Fandom Studies, Literary and Cultural Studies, Media History and Digital Culture.

Equivalent experience might include, but is not restricted to, a strong track record of employment in a library, museum, or heritage institution, that includes responsibility for relevant archival research, collections curation, and/or public engagement activity. Collaborative doctoral students are expected to spend time at both the University and the British Library.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the museums, galleries, archives and library sector and potential and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in related areas. An interest in online fan spaces, fanfiction or fandom studies would also be beneficial.

Applicants must satisfy the standard UKRI eligibility criteria. This includes the requirement that the student must live within a reasonable travel time of their Research Organisation (the University of Glasgow) or collaborative organisation (the London site of the British Library). For further information please see the [UKRI terms and conditions for training funding](#).

## How to Apply

The University of Glasgow and the British Library are keen to encourage a wide range of applicants from different backgrounds and particularly welcome applications from Global Majority students currently underrepresented in doctoral student cohorts.

To apply for this studentship, you must submit an online application via the [University of Glasgow Online Admissions portal](#) by 5pm on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025. **Applications received after this date cannot be considered.**

When you log into the admissions portal, you will be asked to create a new application. Please select your country of permanent residence and the following details:

- Programme: PhD in Information Studies (Research)
- Proposed Start Date: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025
- Mode of Study; Full or Part Time.

The portal will then lead you through the required steps. When you reach the Finances and Supervisor pages, please indicate the following details:

- Intended funding source: External Scholarship/Sponsor
- Scholarship Name: UKRI Fanfic CDP
- Is this funding confirmed? No
- Academic supervisor: Prof. Paul Gooding (email address: [paul.gooding@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:paul.gooding@glasgow.ac.uk)).

**There is no need to submit a research proposal: when this is requested, please submit the covering letter described below. In addition to the documentation outlined on the [Information Studies PGR Admissions webpage](#), you must provide the following documents:**

- **A covering letter (maximum two pages) outlining your interest in, suitability for, and intended focus and direction of, this studentship.**
- **A CV outlining your prior qualifications, work experience and other relevant information.**
- **A writing sample of up to 3,000 words. If you are unsure about how to choose your writing sample, please email the contact below to discuss.**

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an online interview to take place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.

We ask all applicants to complete a voluntary EDI monitoring form [here](#). All responses are anonymous.

## Informal Enquiries

If you are interested in applying, you are welcome to contact the following for an informal discussion about this opportunity: Prof. Paul Gooding ([paul.gooding@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:paul.gooding@glasgow.ac.uk)).