

**AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship:
“Nature of replication: Natural History Museums & the circulation of casts and models”**

The UCL Institute of Archaeology, and the Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUMNH) are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded three-year doctoral grant 2018–21, to enable the exploration and reassessment of the history, significance and curatorial future of natural history cast collections.

This studentship is funded through the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) scheme. See <http://www.ahrc-cdp.org/about/>

Collaboration between a Higher Education Institution and a museum, library, archive, or heritage organisation is the essential feature of these studentships. The studentship is a fully funded AHRC research studentship covering three years of tuition fees at the university and maintenance (living costs), with additional funds available to support some research costs. There is also the option to apply for additional ‘student development funding’ which covers up to six months extension of the studentship, or use of the equivalent funding for training, work placements and other development opportunities. See <http://www.ahrc-cdp.org/resources/>

These studentships are covered by standard AHRC eligibility rules.

This project will be jointly supervised by Dr Alice Stevenson (UCL) and Mark Carnall (OUMNH) and the student will be expected to spend time at both UCL and Oxford University Museum of Natural History, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

The successful candidate will commence their PhD on 24th September 2018. They will hold their studentship at the Institute of Archaeology at UCL, one of the world’s leading centres for research and scholarship in heritage and museum studies, and will work in partnership with the cast, model and replica collections of Oxford University Museum of Natural History, one of the oldest natural history museums in the world with comprehensive natural history collections dating from the 17th century through to contemporary scientific and teaching collections.

The Project

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, plaster casts, models and replicas were key to sharing unique and rare specimens between museums for scientific scrutiny, museum display and as ‘backups’ to the originals. In many types of museum the status of such materials in the hierarchy of objects was low and, as studies in classical archaeology have shown, contested. The status of such reproductions in the context of natural history museums has never evaluated, but is likely to have operated differently from examples in the art historical world. This project will address this lacunae in scholarship.

Today these casts may give us an insight into the ideas and objects that were being shared, as well as telling us about the techniques and networks used to produce and disseminate casts, models and replicas. Many are now deserving a status as museum objects in their own right or invaluable in instances where the original objects have been lost or destroyed. In some cases these objects are the only remnants of ideas and interpretations where archives do not exist.

This area is very poorly researched and, due to the comparatively low value perception of these objects, not much is known about the network of technicians, artists, modellers and salespeople who spread these objects to almost every museum. This project would look at the cultures of casting and modelling to explore the different techniques used in manufacture, key individuals who sold them, existing catalogues, invoices and correspondence in museum archives and the networks of museum curators who commissioned, swapped and shared this material. The value of casts, models and replicas in the past and in modern museums will also be examined, looking at questions like should they be accessioned objects? Do they have a role in museum displays? What is the value of such objects? Can this history be informative for developing new curatorial approaches to 3D replicas?

This project links to current research being undertaken by OUMNH in collaboration with Warwick Manufacturing Group (University of Warwick) to explore the use of the next generation of 3D visualisation and prototyping in museum spaces, together with the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of user experience.

Starting with examples from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, which holds the 'Oxford dodo', one of the most replicated museum objects in the world, alongside other examples of specimens which were and still are displayed and produced as casts and replicas, this project will piece together the history of cast production as way of sharing ideas as well as examining how museums can best record, promote and display these sometimes second class objects today.

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/>

UCL and the Oxford University Museum of Natural History will supply appropriate facilities to support the research project and limited additional funds for archive visits and conferences. In addition, 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.

Eligibility

We are looking for an excellent, highly promising and appropriately qualified student who will embrace the opportunity to bring together academic research in museum studies with experience and training in a leading British museum.

NB. 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 with an overall grade of 70% or better, with at least 70% for the dissertation.
2. Be a resident of the UK or European Economic Area (EEA).
3. 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

Applicants may come from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds (e.g. archaeology, anthropology, history, heritage studies, natural history, history and philosophy of science, museum studies, archive and information studies, geography, cultural studies), but it is expected that the successful applicant will be able

to clearly explain the relationship between their existing training and the topic of the studentship, and indicate how their present research interests relate to the proposed topic area. Students who are able to show evidence of experience working on museum collections or archive related topics or fields (e.g. through previous work placements or work experience, etc) would be particularly welcomed to apply.

Closing date for applications: 18th April 2018

Interview date: 2nd May 2018

How to apply

Applications are based on the existing UCL application form for Postgraduate (Research) degrees that can be downloaded from:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/apply/application-form.pdf>

The application should also include:

1. The applicant's Curriculum Vitae
2. A covering letter including a statement concerning eligibility for this fellowship
3. A research proposal of 1,000–1,500 words. This should identify how your current academic interests relate to the doctoral project, and explain your reasons for wishing to undertake this research. The research proposal should also indicate critical contexts for the project. It can also outline how you might wish to refine the project so as to meet specific research aims of your own.
4. Transcripts of relevant studies and – where appropriate – a letter from their course coordinator predicting the expected degree result (for those who still have to complete their current Master's programme); and
5. Two reference letters in sealed and signed envelopes.

Submission of application

All application documents should be sent in to Lisa Daniel, Graduate Admissions Administrator, ideally in **hard copy**, at UCL Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY, UK. Your referees can email their references to l.daniel@ucl.ac.uk directly if necessary.

Only complete applications received, with both references, by the deadline, can be considered.

Please do **NOT** submit the application via the UCL admissions portal, since this will unnecessarily delay the receipt of your application.

Further Information

For informal enquiries relating to studentship, please contact Dr Alice Stevenson, email alice.stevenson@ucl.ac.uk. Questions regarding the application process should be addressed to the Lisa Daniel, UCL Graduate Admissions Administrator, email l.daniel@ucl.ac.uk.

Further information about UCL Institute of Archaeology is available at:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology>

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

Further information about Oxford University Museums is available at:

<https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/home>