Student brief and application guidelines

The Mercers’ Company, as the premier livery company of the City of London, with a Company history of over 700 years, wishes to award one doctoral studentship in the history of London, starting in October 2017, with a second to be awarded the following year.

The value of each award is a total of £45,000 (ie. £15,000 per year for full-time study over three years, or pro rata for part-time students over a maximum of five years).

The scheme is a partnership with three leading academic institutions offering established programmes for doctoral training and expert supervision in London history. The studentship may be held at Birkbeck, University of London; the Centre for Metropolitan History at the Institute of Historical Research; or University College London. Joint supervision within and between the institutions is possible.

Area of research

The area of research should be relevant to the history of the London in any period from the medieval to the modern (both ‘history’ and ‘London’ defined in the widest sense).

Excellence in proposals, including originality and the expected level of contribution to the field of London history, is the first criterion, but preference will be given to research proposals which will use the archives of the Mercers’ Company and/or other City of London livery companies and the archives of the City of London Corporation and which have some connection with the general areas of their history, activities and context.

Some research areas which might be explored include: civic life, trade, economy, philanthropy, almshouses and other charitable institutions, religion, social networks, schools, education, material culture, the built environment, and many others. Further information on the Mercers’ Company archives is provided below.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the studentship starting in the 2016-17 academic year, candidates must have received an offer of a place to carry out doctoral research at one of the following institutions:
Candidates must be a UK or EU citizen and meet the entry requirements of the institution they are applying to study at. (The successful applicant will be required to provide appropriate confirmation of citizenship).

Students in full-time employment are not eligible for the studentship.

**Application process**

- Candidates should first have been offered a place for doctoral research at one of the three participating institutions. The deadline for application for a place at Birkbeck is *3 January 2017*; for UCL and the Centre for Metropolitan History it is *6 January 2017*.

- Prospective candidates should contact one of the following to discuss their research ideas and supervisory arrangements before applying for a place:
  
  **Professor Vanessa Harding** (Birkbeck) – [v.harding@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:v.harding@bbk.ac.uk)
  
  **Dr Mark Merry** (Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research) – [mark.merry@sas.ac.uk](mailto:mark.merry@sas.ac.uk)
  
  **Professor Jason Peacey** (UCL) – [j.peacey@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.peacey@ucl.ac.uk)

  See attached list of potential supervisors and their research interests.

- After that, if candidates intend to make use of the Mercers’ Company Archive, they are invited to contact the Archivist of the Mercers’ Company to find out more about the archival resources it holds. Contact details: Jane Ruddell [janer@mercers.co.uk](mailto:janer@mercers.co.uk)

- Candidates should email Tom Bell ([tomb@mercers.co.uk](mailto:tomb@mercers.co.uk)) to request a copy of the application form

- Applicants must submit i) the completed application form, ii) a research proposal (up to 1000 words), iii) a CV and iv) a statement of support from the prospective academic supervisor (up to 500 words).

- The research proposal may be that submitted already for a candidate’s PhD place, or an amended version of this.

- The supervisor’s statement should address the quality of the research proposal, specifically the value of the likely contribution to the field of London history, originality,
and feasibility; and the perceived suitability / institutional fit of the candidate. It should also summarise the references provided for the candidate’s PhD application.

- Applications must be emailed to tomb@mercers.co.uk by candidates’ prospective PhD supervisors by 12 noon on 3rd February 2017. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Applications will be assessed by a selection panel by the end of March 2017 and candidates informed of the results by 8th May 2017.

The recipient of the studentship will be required to submit a written annual progress report to the Mercers’ Company and to make two presentations on their progress and findings during the course of their research.

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**The Mercers’ Company Archive**

The Mercers’ Company is the premier livery company of the City of London. It was originally a trade guild representing the interests of members trading in mercery goods (silks, fine linens and other luxury fabrics and piece goods) and received its royal charter from Richard II in 1393/4.

The Company also has a long history of philanthropy and management of charitable bequests including real estate and endowments. Today charity is the primary focus of its activities in the key strategic areas of social welfare, care for the elderly, education, the Christian religion, and heritage and arts.

The Mercers Company Archive holds the business records of the Company dating from the 14th century.

**Key record series include:**

- The Acts of Court (the governing body) from 1453 which also include records of the governing body of the Merchant Adventurers

- Accounts dating from 1390-present (incomplete)

- A large number of records relating to properties belonging to the Company and its charities. These include deeds, leases, plans etc. and date from the 13th century. Properties are located primarily in the City of London but also include some in Greater London and outside London.
The records of the management of the Gresham Estate from 1596 which includes the Royal Exchange and Gresham College and was bequeathed by Sir Thomas Gresham to the Mercers Company and City of London Corporation

Records relating to the management of the Company’s charitable and educational trusts including the Charity of Sir Richard Whittington (established in 1424) and the Earl of Northampton’s Charity (established in 1614)

A number of other livery companies hold their own archives in their Halls. The archives of many others may be found at Guildhall Library. Archives of other London institutions and the Corporation of London are held at London Metropolitan Archives.

Potential research supervisors

Dr Matthew Champion (Birkbeck) - medieval urban history: m.champion@bbk.ac.uk;

Dr Michael Collins (UCL) – modern British and imperial history; twentieth century London: michael.collins@ucl.ac.uk

Professor Stephen Conway (UCL) – Eighteenth century Britain and Ireland and the wider world: s.conway@ucl.ac.uk

Professor Matt Cook (Birkbeck) - 19th- and 20th-century cultural and urban history and the history of gender and sexuality: m.cook@bbk.ac.uk

Professor Matthew Davies (Executive Dean of the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy, Birkbeck) - medieval and early modern urban history: m.davies@bbk.ac.uk;

Professor Margot Finn (UCL) – Britain and the British colonial world, c.1750-1914: m.finn@ucl.ac.uk

Professor Vanessa Harding (Birkbeck) – medieval and early modern London; health and the family; death: v.harding@bbk.ac.uk

Professor Julian Hoppit (UCL) – British history 1660-1850; economic history and the state: j.hoppit@ucl.ac.uk

Dr Peter Jones (Centre for Metropolitan History, IHR) – 19th- and 20th- century London, literary and popular culture: peter.jones@sas.ac.uk

Dr Julia Laite (Birkbeck) - 19th- and 20th-century history, including urban history, migration, crime, and the history of women: j.laite@bbk.ac.uk
Dr Mark Merry (Centre for Metropolitan History, IHR) – medieval and early modern London; topography; material culture: mark.merry@sas.ac.uk

Professor Jason Peacey (UCL) – early modern London; political culture: j.peacey@ucl.ac.uk

Dr Andrea Tanner (Centre for Metropolitan History, IHR) – nineteenth and twentieth century London; hospitals, medical history, retailing: bonmot@btinternet.com

Dr Brodie Waddell (Birkbeck) - British history, c.1500-1800, especially the social, economic and cultural history of early modern England: b.waddell@bbk.ac.uk

Professor Jerry White (Birkbeck) - history of London, 18th-20th centuries: jerry.white@bbk.ac.uk

NB. Joint supervision within and between the three participating institutions is possible.