

CEELBAS CDT Doctoral Studentships: Application Guidelines

About the CEELBAS Centre for Doctoral Training in Russian and Slavonic Languages and Culture

The CEELBAS Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) comprises four CEELBAS universities with extensive expertise in and resources for the study of the languages, literatures, cultures and histories of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia:

- **UCL** (School of Slavonic and East European Studies)
- **University of Cambridge** (Department of Slavonic Studies)
- **University of Manchester** (Department of Russian and East European Studies)
- **University of Oxford** (Sub-Faculty of Russian & Slavonic Languages)

in collaboration with four external partners:

- British Library
- Foreign & Commonwealth Office
- Open Democracy
- Pushkin House
- Calvert 22 Foundation

For further details about the CDT, please visit: <http://www.ceelbas.ac.uk/students/cdt>

The CEELBAS CDT is currently able to offer AHRC Doctoral Studentships to candidates who have been offered a place on a relevant doctoral programme at one of its four partner universities.

Value and Timeframe of the Studentship

The Studentship will cover the value of Home/EU tuition fees, plus a stipend at standard UK Research Council rates: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/skills/training/>

The Studentship will normally be offered for a period of three years (full-time) or part time equivalent, although exceptionally an extension of up to another year (or part-time equivalent) may be offered to support specialist research or language training needs (see below under 'Additional Support for Doctoral Research and Training').

Eligibility

CEELBAS invites applications from all students intending to undertake doctoral research in its subject area of Russian, Slavonic and East European languages and culture. UK citizens, citizens of other EU member states, and citizens of states from outside the EU are all able to apply.

However, the eligibility of applicants for AHRC funding will be determined by the residency eligibility rules for UK Research Council funding. Full details of these rules can be found in the documents available at <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Postgraduate-funding/Pages/Current-award-holders.aspx>

Note: These eligibility criteria are based on the Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations 1997 and subsequent amendments. These regulations cover England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Applications from students who are not eligible for AHRC funding, or who are eligible for 'fees only' awards, will still be considered by CEELBAS. If such applications are very highly ranked, CEELBAS will explore the possibility of securing matched funding from its consortium universities so that an offer of a studentship can be made. In such cases, the studentship holder would become a CDT 'affiliate student' and would have the opportunity to participate in CDT training events and activities. Please note that CEELBAS is unable to guarantee that institutional funding will be available to support potential CDT affiliate students in this way, and that capacity to award institutional studentships will be likely to vary across institutions and from one year to the next.

Application Process and Timetable

To be eligible to apply for a CEELBAS Studentship, it is expected that that you have received an offer of a place at one of the four consortium universities (UCL, Cambridge, Manchester, Oxford). Applications to CEELBAS for a Studentship will generally still be considered in cases where an offer of university admission is still pending. However, you will need to **take note of the closing date advertised by the relevant university for receipt of applications** from candidates who wish to be considered for studentship funding.

Applications to CEELBAS for a Studentship will be read alongside the applications for university admission. Applicants may submit multiple applications for university admission (for the same research proposal), but can only name up to two universities in their application for a CEELBAS Studentship. In such cases, applicants are invited to indicate their preference if they wish.

Please indicate your intention to apply for a CEELBAS CDT Studentship in the appropriate section of the admission application form and follow any additional instructions provided by the university for this purpose. In addition, you will need to ensure that your studentship application reaches the CEELBAS Administrator by the submission deadline: ssees-ceelbas@ucl.ac.uk

The timetable for the next round of CEELBAS Studentship applications is as follows:

Application window for CEELBAS Studentships opens	2 November 2015
Deadline for submission of applications to CEELBAS	1 March 2016
Funding decisions reported to applicants; Studentship offers made	By April 2016

Applications from current students

Students who have already commenced doctoral study within the subject remit of the consortium at UCL, Cambridge, Manchester or Oxford are eligible to apply for a studentship provided:

- They have not already applied for a CEELBAS CDT Studentship and been unsuccessful.
- The duration of study to be supported is in line with AHRC regulations (which state that at the start of the AHRC award, the student must have at least 50% of their period of study remaining).

Current students should follow the same guidelines and deadlines as new students when applying to CEELBAS, but should provide the following additional documentation:

- A 500-word progress report outlining the research and training activities already completed and indicating any changes to the research proposal submitted with the original application for university admission;
- A statement of support from their supervisor – this should be e-mailed directly to the CEELBAS Administrator by the supervisor before the application deadline.

Funding Criteria

Studentship applications will be assessed by the CEELBAS CDT Steering Group, comprised of representatives from the four partner universities and an external academic advisor. The allocation of CEELBAS Studentships will be made strictly on the basis of merit and in pursuance of the consortium's strategy and vision. The assessment criteria are:

- Applicant track record (as detailed in the application to the home university (and including supervisor's support statement in the case of current students)
- Quality and relevance of the research proposal
- Fit with the consortium's strategy and vision (see below)
- Appropriateness of proposed supervisor(s) and home university

Candidates should note that, as with all forms of research funding, competition for these Studentships is likely to be extremely fierce.

The CEELBAS CDT Strategy and Vision

The overarching vision of the CEELBAS CDT is to create a national centre of excellence for the postgraduate study of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, thereby helping to realise the UK's strategic commitment to the study of the region. More specifically, CEELBAS aims, through its studentships and training programme to:

- Promote outstanding postgraduate research and top quality training in Russian, Slavonic and East European languages and culture
- Lead in the exploration of new directions for research and serve as a hub for postgraduate training in this field
- Promote inter-regional collaboration covering global modern languages and cultures
- Provide a flow of expertise that augments national capacity to understand and respond to European and global developments

CEELBAS contends that contemporary political configurations, developments in the global economy and transnational flows all attest to the continuing necessity of advanced, nuanced scholarship of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, including in historical, comparative and global contexts. Central and Eastern Europe and Russia should be understood as part of a fluid and dynamic transnational neighbourhood, in which shared historical and cultural legacies continue to be fought over. CEELBAS sees this region as part of an increasingly global space in which new borders and new social relations are increasingly evident. Without the cultural and linguistic dimension, understanding will be incomplete. Advanced research in the humanities offers a uniquely nuanced perspective for understanding these processes and makes a major contribution to the UK's capacity to appreciate and respond to developments in the region.

The CEELBAS CDT encourages postgraduate researchers to see their doctorate as a professional training; to recognise that the end product of the doctorate is not only the research itself, but also the researcher. Researchers are trained to recognise and maximise the potential applicability of their expertise, and their advanced research skills, to a wide range of possible futures, not limited to the Higher Education sector.

Supervision and Expertise

The CEELBAS CDT is able to draw upon a total of no fewer than 35 supervisors for research in Russian, Slavonic and East European languages and culture. Additionally, Studentship holders benefit from the opportunity to engage with a large cohort of scholars in i) the history of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, ii) the politics, society and economics of the region, and iii) other modern languages, who form part of the larger multidisciplinary and collaborative environment of the consortium.

Further information about the expertise and research interests of these scholars can be accessed via the CEELBAS Database of Expertise. Current and former doctoral students at all CEELBAS universities are also encouraged to register on this Database, which serves as a resource for anyone looking to locate a specialist on Central and Eastern Europe or Russia: www.ceelbas.ac.uk/databaseofexpert

The CEELBAS CDT encourages its studentship holders to benefit from a pool of complementary ideas and approaches to research training. Joint supervision, including with supervisors from two different universities, can also be arranged should this be appropriate to the proposed research project. Financial support will be available to cover essential travel costs for purposes of supervisory meetings outside the home university.. The supervisory teams for successful applicants will be agreed by the CEELBAS CDT Steering Group, in discussion with the applicant, once offers of Studentships have been made

Additional Support for Doctoral Research and Training

Where necessary and as far as budgetary constraints allow, the CEELBAS CDT will provide additional financial support to enable Studentship holders to address their individual training and research needs. This support is intended to allow researchers to access the best resources and expertise in their field in the UK, to facilitate their interaction and knowledge exchange with non-academic partners, and to expand opportunities to benefit from specialist training, research resources, scholars and institutions abroad. In this respect, the CDT benefits from previous CEELBAS funding schemes, including:

- The CEELBAS Internships Scheme: <http://www.ceelbas.ac.uk/internships>
- CEELBAS Overseas Research Training Grants: <http://www.ceelbas.ac.uk/training-grants>

In exceptional cases, the duration of CEELBAS Studentships may be extended by up to one year (or part-time equivalent) in order to support the acquisition of specialist longer-term research training that is deemed essential to the successful completion of the research project.

Initial training needs should be identified at application stage in discussion with the proposed supervisor(s). For guidance on completing the Application Form, see below. Once on the programme, Studentship holders will be further briefed on the wide range of opportunities provided under CEELBAS through an induction event organised annually. Training needs will continue to be reviewed throughout the period of study, allowing Studentship holders to apply for support where appropriate and to develop an individually-tailored training programme.

The CEELBAS Doctoral Training Programme

The CEELBAS CDT training programme adopts a four-tiered approach to student development, following *Vitae's* RCUK-approved Research Development Framework (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework/developing-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>). Researchers receive training that combines the benefits of institutional-level support and additional targeted training provided by the consortium. The four strands of the training programme cover: (i) Generic Research Skills; (ii) Professional Development and Employability Skills; (iii) Subject-specific Research Skills, Language Training & Interdisciplinarity; (iv) Knowledge Exchange, Public Engagement and Impact.

External Partners

The CEELBAS doctoral training programme is enhanced by the following partnerships:

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Collaborative training activities with the FCO's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate (EECAD) provide an invaluable opportunity for CEELBAS Studentship holders to gain experience of knowledge exchange and of the practical application of humanities research skills to issues of strategic importance to UK diplomacy and foreign policy.

The British Library: The British Library's collections in the field of Slavonic, East European and Soviet Studies are the largest in the UK and represent a vital research resource. This partnership enables CEELBAS Studentship holders to benefit from advanced specialist training in the use and application of this resource.

openDemocracy Russia and **Pushkin House:** Collaboration with these two partners is aimed specifically at promoting public engagement and wider dissemination of doctoral research. openDemocracy is a global affairs network whose website is visited by over 2 million unique readers each year; its Russia pages offer contributors a chance to reach a large and influential non-academic audience. Pushkin House is an independent charitable foundation dedicated to showcasing Russian culture and promoting Anglo-Russian cultural exchange; its cultural programme covers Russian literature, art, film, music, theatre and dance, as well as history, philosophy and politics.

In addition, the consortium has links with a wide range of organisations from the public, private and third sectors, both in the UK and overseas, reflecting the successful experience and track record of CEELBAS in

creating partnerships for knowledge exchange and internships, and in working actively to enhance user engagement and achieve impact.

The input and involvement of these organisations brings an invaluable extra dimension to the consortium's training programme. CEELBAS Studentship holders benefit not only from the enhanced impacts of research informed by the perspectives of non-academic communities, but also from increased awareness of opportunities for dissemination of research and of the various skills and techniques required to make this effective and mutually beneficial.

How to Complete the Application Form

Programme(s) of Study for which funding is requested

You should discuss your research plans with several possible supervisors initially and propose the supervisor(s) and home university/universities that will most effectively support your project. In your Studentship application you can name up to two universities from the consortium where you would like to take up a place and, if you wish, may indicate your preference.

Research Summary (300 words max.)

This should summarise the proposed research and the main questions or themes to be addressed. It will be read in conjunction with the more detailed Research Proposal submitted as part of the application to CEELBAS, as well as the Research Proposal that was submitted with the admissions application to the university programme(s) for which funding is sought.

Training Needs Analysis (no word limit)

A key part of the discussions with your proposed supervisor(s) should be the identification of any initial training needs. This is particularly relevant for researchers who want to convert their training into a CEELBAS area specialism, but lack the region-specific knowledge or language competency needed to do this. The CEELBAS CDT is committed to expanding opportunities for such training to be acquired, including, exceptionally (and only where necessary) through extending the duration of its Studentships to up to four years (or part-time equivalent). All applicants for CEELBAS Studentships, in liaison with their proposed supervisor(s), are expected to identify and outline an initial training needs analysis.

Fit to the vision and strategy of the CEELBAS CDT (around 300 words in total)

Taking account of the information provided above, applicants should use this section to outline how their proposed research and training will take forward the aims and objectives of the CEELBAS Centre for Doctoral Training and support its remit to enhance knowledge exchange, research interaction, international collaboration and the dissemination of research to multiple audiences.

CEELBAS encourages Postgraduate researchers to see their PhD as a professional training; the end product of which is not only the research itself, but also the researcher. This section should therefore focus not only on the actual research topic but also on the training, professional development and other skills acquisition that it is anticipated the Studentship will support.

Impact Summary (around 300 words)

This section offers an opportunity to underline the value and impact of the proposed research project and to make the case for its importance and potential contribution, both to the academic field of Russian, Slavonic and East European languages and culture and also to UK understanding of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia more broadly. CEELBAS encourages a broad and flexible interpretation of impact that recognises the value of all forms of humanities-based research and not only that which is directly concerned with contemporary, policy-focused subjects.

Any Other Information

Please use this section to provide details of any other relevant information in support of your application, particularly any achievements, prizes, honours or awards that are not mentioned elsewhere (either in the application to CEELBAS or in the application to the your home university for a place).

Research Proposal

All applications should be accompanied by a Research Proposal of up to 1,500 words. The quality of the Research Proposal is a key part of the assessment criteria. Its content should be discussed in advance with the proposed supervisor(s). It is also crucial, however, that the detail of this section is your own work. The Research Proposal submitted to CEELBAS will be read in conjunction with the Research Proposal that was submitted with the admissions application to the university programme(s) for which funding is sought. For new students, it is expected that there should be no substantial difference between the research proposed in these documents. Current students should also provide a 500-word progress report outlining the research and training activities already completed and indicating any changes to the research proposed in the original application for university admission.

Degree Transcript(s)

All applications should be accompanied by transcripts of results for completed undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

How to submit your application

Completed Application Forms and accompanying Research Proposals should be submitted by e-mail to the CEELBAS Administrator: ssees-ceelbas@ucl.ac.uk

Queries relating to the Application Form and applications process for CEELBAS Studentships should be addressed to the CEELBAS Administrator: ssees-ceelbas@ucl.ac.uk / 020 7679 8802.