



V&A Doctoral Placement Scheme 2024-2025

Application Guidance

Introduction to the V&A

The V&A is a family of museums dedicated to the power of creativity. Our mission is to champion design and creativity in all its forms, advance cultural knowledge, and inspire makers, creators and innovators everywhere. We share a 5,000-year-old story of creativity through exhibitions, events, educational programmes, digital experiences, conservation, research, and an ever-evolving national collection of over 2.8m objects spanning every creative discipline. It also offers some of the most important national (and international) resources for the study of the fine, decorative, industrial and performing arts.

The V&A has long been a research leader in the fields of art, design, performance, conservation, conservation science and collections management, and at the forefront of interdisciplinary, object-led, museum-based teaching, research and applied inquiry. It was the first national museum to establish a dedicated Research Department and one of the first to hold Independent Research Organisation status with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), enabling it to apply for its own research grants and projects. It is home to a flagship postgraduate programme in the History of Design, delivered in partnership with the Royal College of Art, which celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2023. The Museum encourages research that is collaborative, inclusive, interdisciplinary and experimental and offers a uniquely dynamic environment in which museum professionals, academics, makers, practitioners and students can work together to develop new approaches to the study and understanding of material and visual culture.

The V&A has hosted PhD students for well over 20 years and currently hosts a large community of doctoral students from a range of different schemes.

Context of the V&A Doctoral Placement Scheme

To provide opportunities for early-career training for PhD students, the V&A has made available a range of doctoral placements based in collections departments, archives, the National Art Library, research, and collections care and access.

Each placement is a discrete project designed by members of V&A staff (who will also act as the placement's supervisor), involving collaborative as well as independent research. They contribute to live research projects and existing priorities, and their outputs and value to the Museum are varied; projects may lead to new insights into our collections and archives, influence Museum policy and procedures, contribute to public engagement and/or support funded projects.

In addition to the on-the-job experience of each placement and mentoring from supervisors, doctoral placement students will have access to the Museum's wider range of workshops,

talks and postgraduate training events/opportunities, alongside a bespoke training package designed for the placement student cohort.

Placements will be hosted across the V&A's family of sites. Where the project allows, there is scope for some remote work; however, all students will be required to come to the Museum at certain points during the placement and must be based in the UK during any remote work. The exact proportion of remote to onsite work will be negotiated between the student and placement supervisors. For remote work, students will be required to have access to their own equipment (i.e. computer and internet access).

Eligibility

V&A Doctoral Placements are *only* open to students currently studying on a **funded PhD**. There are two routes for application.

1) Applicants from UK universities on a funded PhD Programme

- Applicants will be asked to provide evidence that they are in receipt of a stipend for the duration of the placement that is at least equivalent to the [UKRI national minimum doctoral rate](#); the V&A provides no funding to support these placements (and a placement does not constitute an offer of temporary or permanent employment at the V&A).
- International students studying at a UK university are welcome to apply. It is assumed that international students at a UK university will have all relevant visa/residency requirements, but for the sake of clarity, the V&A is unable to provide sponsorship for visas. Like domestic students, international students must provide evidence they are in receipt of necessary funding (as detailed above).
- Applicants must also have the support of their university and, where necessary, training grant provider. Any placement offer will be subject to a letter of support signed by your PhD supervisor on behalf of your university.

2) Applicants from non-UK universities on a funded PhD Programme

- The V&A recognises the importance of providing opportunities for doctoral researchers to conduct a research stay abroad. We understand that international experience is important in building a career as a researcher, and that a significant number of national research councils offer mechanisms to enable this.
- Applicants will be asked to provide evidence that they are in receipt of a stipend for the duration of the placement that is at least equivalent to the [UKRI national minimum doctoral rate](#); the V&A provides no funding to support these placements (and a placement does not constitute an offer of temporary or permanent employment at the V&A).
- Applicants will be responsible for all travel, accommodation and subsistence costs required to take up the placement.
- Successful applicants will be issued with a formal letter of invitation (or equivalent) to provide the necessary confirmation to applicants' research funder that the V&A will act as host for their placement project.
- Any placement offer will be subject to a letter of support signed by your PhD supervisor on behalf of your university.

- The V&A is unable to provide sponsorship for visas. If a visa is required, it is the responsibility of the successful applicant to fund any costs associated. These costs are usually met by the successful applicants' research funder.

Please note: all placement students will be subject the V&A's security clearance process.

Length

Each individual placement description notes the length of time a student would be asked to commit. With most placements, these timeframes are negotiable dependent upon the student's mode of study (i.e. full time vs part-time) and available stipendiary funding for professional development. Please note in your application cover letter your proposed timeframe and mode of study you would be able to engage with the placement through. Where a placement has a specific timeframe, this will be due to the availability of the staff or collections involved.

There will be two start date windows for placements during the academic year 2024-2025.

For applications made in Spring 2024, successful applicants will need to begin their placement between **23rd September and 21st October 2024**. Successful applicants will need to attend a mandatory induction day in the week commencing 23rd September 2024.

For applications made in Autumn 2024, successful applicants will need to begin their placement between **6th January and 3rd February 2024**. Successful applicants will need to attend a mandatory induction day in the week commencing 6th January 2025.

We will only accept applications with start dates outside the above timings in exceptional circumstances. Please contact the V&A Doctoral Placements Scheme management team in advance of application to discuss any potential issues.

Application Process

Each placement advert contains a project description as well as any essential and/or desirable skills and experience. Applicants will need to make their application using the online recruitment portal accessed through the [V&A Vacancies page](#).

Applicants will be required to provide details of their education and their career to date through the online form. Applicants will be required to provide details of their PhD funding. Only those applicants who confirm that they are in receipt of PhD funding for the duration of their placement will be able to complete the application form.

Applicants will also be required to submit a supporting statement (of up to 4000 characters). In this supporting statement, please include the following information:

- *Why you have applied for this placement, how it would factor into your professional development, and how you fulfil any required skills and experience (600 words max).*
- *Your PhD title and a brief abstract (200 words max).*

Interviews for shortlisted applicants will take place in the first two weeks of July. All interviews will be conducted online via Microsoft Teams. Applicants invited to interview will be provided with the interview questions in advance to enable them to perform to the best of their ability. Successful applicants will start their placement between 23rd September 2024 and 21st October 2024.

A student may only apply for two placements maximum; any applications beyond the first two will be discounted.

Queries

Any enquiries about the V&A Doctoral Placement Scheme, eligibility to apply and the application form should be sent to Dr Oliver Cox, Head of Academic Partnerships (o.cox@vam.ac.uk).