Centre FOR Health Humanities POstdoctoral Residency

Bid Development Residency Application Form 2021-22

The Centre for Health Humanities at the University of Reading is offering a stipend of £1500 to support an annual residency for post-doctoral bid development. The Resident will have the opportunity to develop a funding application for post-doctoral research on a broad health theme. The funding is available to doctoral candidates who are in the final stages of thesis submission or to those who have graduated from a doctorate within the last five years. It is expected that the residency will take place before 30 June 2022.

The residencies provide financial support for who are working to attract funding which builds on health research at the CHH. Details of the Centre may be found at: https://research.reading.ac.uk/health-humanities/. Of particular note are the following thematic strengths:

**Bodies, Minds, Sickness**

At the heart of this theme is an interest in what it is like to be unwell. Colleagues approach this question from diverse disciplinary perspectives – History, Art History, English Literature, Philosophy, Modern Languages, Pharmacy, Psychology, and Applied Linguistics – but what they have in common is the belief that experiences of the body and mind are not universal and unchanging, but contingent on time, place, culture, and individual personality. Key issues addressed by these academics include: perceptions of pain; bodily sensations and the senses; definitions of health and illness; the relationship between disease, disability, and disfigurement; body-mind relationship; emotional and physical suffering; witnessing others’ pain; patient agency over treatment; experiences of pharmaceutical or surgical intervention; locations of medical care; and compassion and listening.

**Colonial and Global Medicine**

We are interested in examining how medicine has been entangled with world historical problems, such as slavery, colonialism and globalisation. Intercultural encounters in the postcolonial world enriched Anglo-American and West European notions of health, disease and cure. Inhabitants of the (erstwhile) European and American colonies rejected, reconceptualised, and appropriated these notions. Indigenous therapies in these regions in turn were transformed beyond recognition. Researching these global and colonial histories enables us to nuance Eurocentric conceptions of medicine, and to contribute to debates about the decolonisation of health. Lessons learnt from the past are invaluable in making current global health strategies humane, respectful and effective.

**Life Transitions**

This theme investigates the variety of human experiences and transitional identities that we occupy throughout life. Common themes include the changing identities of women over the life cycle, such as those brought about by marriage, pregnancy, physical impairment, or dependant/dependency; concepts of ‘adolescence’, and the impact of physical changes at puberty, migration and work, and social inclusion or exclusion; individual and collective reactions to bereavement and death, and forms of religious, magical, and medical healing; and senescence, exploring attitudes to, and experiences of, older or infirm people and how past perceptions have coloured contemporary ones. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, our work is historical, anthropological, and archaeological. It also draws on broader issues, such as medical treatment, magic, meteorology, and biological criminality.

**Monsters and the Monstrous**

Monsters matter in medicine: Francis Bacon recommended the study of the strange as a route to understanding the laws of nature, and modern geneticists study mutations in order to understand DNA. Monsters have served a similar function in culture, providing the ‘other’ against which groups and societies define themselves. The original understanding of the word, derived from the Latin *monere*, ‘to warn or advise,’ framed monsters as portents, signs sent by God. Today, monsters form a long-established literary trope, stretching from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* to Stan Lee’s X-Men, that uses the ‘other’ to comment on contemporary society and warn us about the future. The theme explores the vital question, who makes monsters, and why? Key contexts include pregnancy and childbirth, interventions (magical and medical), inheritance, otherness, and the boundaries between human and non-human monsters. In the process, our research spans a range of areas, from twelfth century leprosy through to the growth of AI.

Applicants are expected to:

* Clearly articulate how their project links to the interests or strategic priorities of the Centre.
* Clearly articulate how their proposal has a strong focus on health; this may include global health questions as well as local, parochial, or rural health; broader topics relating to wellbeing and/or the history of health and/or medicine are also welcome.
* Have a strong research proposal. It is strongly recommended that you mention your proposal to a member the University. Staff profiles of colleagues connected to the CHH may be found here: <https://research.reading.ac.uk/health-humanities/meet-the-team/>.
* Have identified a funding stream or grant to which they will apply after the residency is complete.
* Have demonstrated how they are planning to use the time (the equivalent of 1 month; working from home is permitted).

Applicants do not have to be based at the University of Reading or hold a post at any other institution.

Enquiries: Professor Andrew Mangham [a.s.mangham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:a.s.mangham@reading.ac.uk)

**Please return this form to Professor Andrew Mangham** [a.s.mangham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:a.s.mangham@reading.ac.uk) **by**

**11 February 2022**

**Name of applicant**

**University qualifications, with dates**

**Name funder and competition to which you will be applying**

**Outline of your planned funding bid (500 words)**

**Timetable for residency (300 words****):**