

## M4C DTP Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Marketing Template

<b>Project Title</b>			
A Qualitative Study of the Reception of the Literary Arts and its Implications for Public Funding for Writing in the Midlands and Beyond			
<b>LEAD INSTITUTION</b>			
Name of HEI institution	Birmingham City University		
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PARTNER ORGANISATION</b>			
Name of organisation	Writing West Midlands		
Website URL	<a href="https://www.writingwestmidlands.org">https://www.writingwestmidlands.org</a>		
<b>THE RESEARCH PROJECT</b>			
<i>(Max 750 words)</i>			
<p>This project is concerned with the qualitative, critical reception of new literary writing – poetry, fiction and nonfiction – in the UK and will be carried out in collaboration with Writing West Midlands (WWM), the Regional Literature Development Agency for the West Midlands. The partnership with WWM enables a community-based and publicly-funded perspective on what can otherwise be an exercise in criticism governed by the typical assumptions of the English Literature / Creative Writing academic department.</p> <p>WWM has worked for over twenty years developing the work of creative writers. It has built up a considerable body of expertise and has supported many emerging and established writers. Alongside its annual festival, it now runs the UK’s largest programme of out-of-school creative writing workshops for young people, an extensive professional writer development programme (including running the annual National Writers’ Conference), and an international programme that is currently working with festivals and literature organisations in India, Germany and Latvia.</p> <p>What kinds of new (or old) critical thought might be shaken loose in breaking down the barrier between the two types of organization – the academic department and the development agency? How far do public funding bodies (such as Arts Council England) play a role in the reception and qualitative evaluation of new work? Is the qualitative simply subsumed by the quantitative within such discourse? What role does social engineering play here? How far do the demands of public bodies pose a threat to artistic freedom in terms of the style, moral standpoint, and subject matter of new writing? By moving between Birmingham City University and WWM, the project will develop a unique perspective from which to ask these, and similar, questions.</p>			
<b>Aims:</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To provide a researched account of the shaping rhetoric within which the contemporary writer is formed. Evidence is likely to include existing scholarship, funding-council documentation and interviews with writers pursuing graduate courses in Creative Writing, as well as those working under the auspices of WWM, one of a number of similar organizations nationally. One important outcome here is a comparative account of the self-identified literary writer within and without the University. Some consideration of non-traditional qualitative claims (e.g. writing is important because it improves mental health) may also be relevant here.</li> </ol>			

2. To understand this idea of the writer as his/her work historically, and to place it in relation to major conceptions of the importance of literary writing. This will require some knowledge of, for instance, classical models and Romantic and post-Romantic conceptions of the poet. This historical dimension is crucial to the project in providing a basis for understanding current preconceptions and assumptions.
3. To engage and influence government funding policy relating to new literary writing. To shape discourse about what the benefits of investing in new writing might be. Organizations such as WWM are consulted by government (e.g. the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Poetry) and funding organizations including the Arts Council, Jerwood Crompton and The Poetry Summit. This project would provide a unique point of reference within such discussions.

We anticipate the following as a provisional timetable for the research:

Year 1 (2020-21): Establish literary, historical and conceptual methodology for qualitative analysis; establish the practical scope of the enquiry according to the brief; establish contact with all stakeholder organisations pertinent to the research.

Year 2 (2021-22): Continue and consolidate primary research and extend its scope to include the national and, where possible, comparative international contexts of the study.

Years 3-4 (2022-24): Complete primary research and writing up of the thesis; dissemination of research among stakeholder organisations.

#### **HOW TO FIND OUT MORE**

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