

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentship
with National Museums NI

*John Templeton's (1766-1825) Hibernian Flora
and the Emergence of Irish Botany*



Queen Mary University of London (School of the Arts), in partnership with National Museums NI, invites applications from suitably qualified applicants for a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentship, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, to conduct research leading to a PhD on the theme: *John Templeton's (1766-1825) Hibernian Flora and the Emergence of Irish Botany*.

Start date: 1st October 2025

Application Deadline: 5pm on Friday 13 June 2025

Applications received after this date cannot be considered. Candidates will be notified of the outcome of their application by the end of Friday 20 June 2025.

Interviews will take place on **Thursday 26 June 2025**. All interviews will be **online**.

Queen Mary University of London (School of the Arts), and National Museums NI are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded (fees and living allowance) Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Studentship from 1st October 2025 under the [AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships \(CDP\)](#) scheme.

This project will be jointly supervised by lead supervisors Dr **Richard Coulton** (Queen Mary University of London) and **Rhonda Ridley** (Curator of Botany, National Museums NI), and second supervisors **William Blair** (Director of Collections, National

Museums NI) and Prof **Markman Ellis** (Queen Mary University of London). The student will be expected to spend time at both Queen Mary University of London and National Museums NI (Northern Ireland) and will be part of a wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

The studentship can be studied either full time (4 years) or part time (7 years). We welcome a diverse range of applicants for this CDP studentship and we are committed to supporting students from all backgrounds.

Students should have a Masters Degree in a relevant subject or be able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting.

The studentship is open to both home and international applicants.

Project overview

This project examines the scientific archive and legacy of one of Ireland's most pioneering yet under-researched botanists, John Templeton. The Ulster Museum holds a nationally important collection of manuscripts, journals, drawings, correspondence, and specimens belonging to Templeton, including his unpublished five-volume manuscript the *Hibernian Flora*. The *Hibernian Flora* represents one of the earliest systematic attempts to document plant life in Ireland. It was written when Irish botanical exploration was in its formative stages. No in-depth analysis of this manuscript has ever been undertaken, and this activity will be the focal point of the research. This work will contribute to our understanding of Irish natural history and the development of botany in Ireland.

This PhD integrates multidisciplinary digital and historiographical methods to explore Templeton's *Hibernian Flora*. The manuscript will be digitised as both a research resource and the core data for an online edition. The manuscript's text and illustrations will be critically examined and annotated to mark-up important botanical and historical data, linked via a custom metadata schema to related archival material. This approach will enable the reconstruction of Templeton's discoveries, collecting activities and networks, generating new data for chronological, spatial, and contextual analysis. Beyond investigating Templeton's botanical contributions, the project will position his work within the broader political and cultural contexts of Protestant ascendancy, Irish rebellion, and the Acts of Union.

Templeton's pioneering study of the Irish flora was achieved during a time in which 'national' Floras emerged as an established botanical genre. The *Hibernian Flora* offers a unique lens through which to investigate inter-related questions around the formation of Irish national identity and advances in 'scientific' botany. The project will deepen our understanding of the Templeton collection held by the Ulster Museum, enabling enhanced curation, interpretation, and communication of this important collection for diverse audiences.

Project Objectives and Research Themes

- Evaluate John Templeton's contributions to botany within their scientific, social and cultural contexts.
- Digitise and analyse Templeton's pioneering *Hibernian Flora*, generating new data and knowledge valuable to researchers across disciplines.
- Advance public understanding of the history of natural history in Northern Ireland, particularly in relation to broader intellectual, political, and cultural currents.

The successful candidate will have ample flexibility to develop the project in-line with their own research interests. This PhD opportunity enables exploration across a range of interdisciplinary themes and the candidate will be encouraged to develop their focus based on their academic interests. Potential research themes include, but are not limited to:

- **Templeton and botany:** John Templeton's approach and contribution to botanical science.
- **Collecting and networks:** Templeton's botanical practices and relationships.
- **Significance and legacy:** Templeton's contributions to Irish botanical knowledge and later understanding of the Irish flora.
- **Society and politics:** Templeton's *Hibernian Flora* in broader social context.
- **Digital humanities:** Methodological and public engagement opportunities and challenges when conducting digital research in the history of scientific collections.

Application procedure

Candidates should submit an online application to study for a PhD at Queen Mary University of London via <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/postgraduate/research/applying-for-a-phd/>. You will need to choose the option for a PhD in 'English' as this is the Department to which the QMUL supervisors belong.

You will be required to include in your application:

- your 'research group': select "early modern" or "eighteenth-century"
- a research proposal: write around 750 words outlining from an academic perspective the independent research that you anticipate undertaking in relation to this project – avoid repeating the formal project description but rather identify and extrapolate those aspects that you find particularly interesting
- a statement of purpose: write up to 750 words explaining how your academic and/or professional experience has prepared you to fulfil the terms of this project (250 words) and your personal and/or academic motivation for pursuing this Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (500 words)

• a

current academic CV

- two references, which should normally be by academics (or other professionals) who are familiar with your recent work in relevant fields
- your degree certificate and university transcripts
- IELTS scores (International English Language Testing System) if applicable

Research with National Museums NI

This research studentship is allocated to Queen Mary University of London by the AHRC to support the work of National Museums NI. Given the site-specific nature of the PhD, the successful student will be expected to spend a significant proportion of their time carrying out research and gaining relevant experience at National Museums NI.

Details of Award

CDP doctoral training grants fund full-time studentships for 4 years or part-time equivalent up to a maximum of 7 years.

The award pays tuition fees up to the value of the full-time home UKRI rate for PhD degrees.

Research Councils UK Indicative Fee Level for 2025/2026 is £5,006.

The award pays an annual stipend, both home and international students, which is tax free. The UKRI Minimum **Doctoral Stipend for 2025/2026 is £20,780** plus London Weighting Allowance. There is also an additional CDP maintenance payment of £600 per year.

The student is eligible to receive an additional travel and related expenses grant during the course of the project courtesy of National Museums NI worth up to £2,000 per year for 4 years (pro-rated for part-time students).

The successful candidate will be eligible to participate in events organised for all Collaborative Doctoral Partnership students who are registered with different universities and studying with cultural and heritage organisations across the UK.

Eligibility

- This studentship is open to both home and international applicants.
- To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:
 - Be a UK or Irish National (meeting residency requirements), or
 - Have settled status, or
 - Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
 - Have indefinite leave to remain or enter
- Further guidance on revisions to Training Grant Terms and Conditions for projects starting in October 2025 can be found here - [Policy statement: review of the training grant conditions – UKRI](#)
- International students are eligible to receive the full award for maintenance as are home students. A successful international student will be required to pay the difference between what the AHRC provide to the university for tuition and the charge made by the university for tuition fees for international students studying for a doctoral degree.
- We encourage the widest range of potential students to study for this CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming students from different backgrounds to apply. We encourage applicants from all backgrounds to apply, even if you are not certain that you meet every criterion. We are keen to hear from individuals with varied expertise who can bring unique perspectives to the studentships. Experiences beyond academia, including other experience in a professional setting are also highly valued, this includes diverse lived experiences and those with an understanding of diverse research practices, outputs, impacts and engagement practice.
- Applicants may come from diverse disciplines, including natural sciences, humanities (including digital humanities), or heritage studies. It is expected that the successful applicant will be able to clearly explain the relationship between their existing training/experience and the topic of this CDP, and to indicate how their present research interests relate to the proposed project.
- Applicants will normally hold (or expect to receive before October 2025) a Masters-level qualification in a relevant subject. Applicants who have not completed a Masters degree are nevertheless eligible to apply providing they can demonstrate equivalent experience that has prepared them for doctoral research. For this studentship, equivalent experience might include, but is not restricted to, a strong track-record of employment in a museum, botanic garden, or heritage institution, that includes responsibility for relevant archival research, collections curation, and/or public engagement activity.

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the GLAM sector and potential and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in related areas.
- As a collaborative award, students will be expected to spend time at both Queen Mary University of London and the National Museums NI.

NB. All applicants must meet UKRI terms and conditions for funding. See:

<https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

Further information

If you have questions about the project funding and practicalities, please contact cdp@nationalmuseumsni.org

If you would like to ask any questions in relation to your research proposal or statement of purpose please email the main supervisory team jointly:

- Richard Coulton (QMUL) <r.x.coulton@qmul.ac.uk>
- Rhonda Ridley (NMNI) <rhonda.ridley@nationalmuseumsni.org>