



The Wolfson Foundation

Press release

WOLFSON FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR STUDY IN THE HUMANITIES

15 September 2011

The Wolfson Foundation today announces a pilot funding programme of postgraduate scholarships in the humanities. The timing reflects the Foundation's concerns about funding for the humanities and the potential impact of increased undergraduate student debt on postgraduate studies.

In accordance with the Wolfson Foundation's history of support for higher education and commitment to the humanities, Wolfson Postgraduate Scholarships in the Humanities will be available in three disciplines that align closely with the Foundation's interests: history, literature and languages. In the first year, over £2 million is being allocated for twenty seven scholarships at nine universities across the UK.

Wolfson Scholarships will be awarded to outstanding students who demonstrate the potential to make an impact on one of these fields and to be future academic leaders. They will be awarded solely on merit to students aspiring to an academic career. The Foundation has a particular interest in supporting UK students in light of increasing levels of domestic undergraduate debt.

Each university will be offered three Wolfson Scholarships, one for each of the selected disciplines. The first awards are for students beginning their doctoral study at the start of the academic year 2012-13.

Paul Ramsbottom, Chief Executive, Wolfson Foundation, said “High quality research in the humanities is of critical importance to British society. The announcement of this pilot scheme reflects our concern about the effect of undergraduate debt on numbers of students continuing to postgraduate research. We are also acutely aware of pressures on funding in the humanities. The hope is that many of the students funded through this programme will be future academic leaders.”

Professor Andrew Hamilton, Vice Chancellor, University of Oxford, said "It is wonderful news that the Wolfson Foundation has committed such generous support to helping some of our best students pursue their academic research free from the worries of further debt. It is immensely satisfying that this support will benefit postgraduates in the Humanities, where British universities are having to face critical funding challenges in order to sustain our research excellence. The Wolfson Foundation's long-standing philanthropic partnership with higher education is truly inspirational. I am delighted that this initiative will allow so many outstanding postgraduates to have the opportunity to demonstrate their potential, and make an impact in their chosen academic field."

Professor Brian Cantor, Vice Chancellor, University of York, said "I am delighted that the Wolfson Foundation has recognised the importance of supporting the humanities. The University of York has invested very heavily in the humanities over the last ten years and the Wolfson postgraduate scholarships will reflect our mutual and profound commitment to the humanities in these challenging times for higher education."

Notes to editors

1. The selected host universities are: University College London, University of Cambridge, University of Edinburgh, University of Oxford, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, University of Warwick, University of York and the School of Oriental and African Studies. The institutions have been carefully selected based on a formula drawing on 2008 Research Assessment Exercise scores and average number of Arts and Humanities Research Council postgraduate awards.
2. The awards are available for doctoral research only, and will be paid over three years (or up to six years part time). The value of each award is £75,000 (£25,000 per annum on a full time basis). The award will cover full fees, maintenance and an element for research and training costs. The selection of students to be awarded a scholarship will be made by each university, with recommendations agreed by the Wolfson Foundation.
3. The Wolfson Foundation is a charitable foundation set up in 1955. Grants are made for the advancement of science and medicine, health, education, the arts and humanities. As a general policy, funding is provided to support and promote excellence, to act as a catalyst and to provide for promising future projects which may currently be underfunded. The Foundation allocates over £30 million each year.

For more information about the Wolfson Foundation visit www.wolfson.org.uk

For enquiries call 020 7323 3124