

## Charity's support to postgraduate research in humanities hits £13 million

Postgraduate researchers at nine UK universities will benefit from over £2.2 million in scholarships as the Wolfson Foundation announces its renewal of the Wolfson Postgraduate Scholarships in the Humanities from 2018.

The Foundation has committed more than £13 million to over 200 doctoral researchers in the fields of history, languages and literature since the programme launched in 2012. The partner universities, which stretch from Southampton to St Andrews, are carefully selected based on the quality of their research.

The Foundation, which has a long history of support to higher education, launched the Wolfson Postgraduate Scholarships in the Humanities in 2012 in response to concerns about funding for the humanities and the impact of increased undergraduate student debt on postgraduate studies.

“Our aim is not only to support some of the most exciting students, but also to make a statement about the value of the humanities,” explains **Paul Ramsbottom, Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation**.

“We believe that high quality academic research in this field is of critical importance to British society. The scholarships have been deliberately designed as the most generous available. They also include a substantial travel allowance to recognise that research is invariably framed in a global context, and a series of events to forge a network of Wolfson Scholars.

We are thrilled to be able to announce the renewal of this programme, and we hope that it will continue to attract further funding to the sector.”

**Eleanor Houghton, a current Wolfson Scholar at the University of Southampton, says the scholarship has been “invaluable” to her cross-disciplinary study of Charlotte Brontë’s clothing and life’s work:**

“The depth and extent of my current research would have been inconceivable without such substantial funding. My work is generating much interest both within and outside the academic world, and this is in no small part due to the gravitas that the Wolfson connection has given me. It has presented opportunities to organise an international conference, to collaborate with scientific researchers on analysis of the Brontë dresses, and even to act as an historical costume advisor to the Morgan Library in New York and on various BBC productions. Material culture has been much maligned in the past, but endorsement at this level will only serve to strengthen this new, relevant and exciting area of research.”

**Dr John Morgan, now Lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Manchester, completed his Wolfson-funded PhD at the University of Warwick:**

“The rising costs of higher education would have made three years of full time research prohibitively expensive had the Foundation not provided such a comprehensive funding package,” he explains.

“The opportunity the Wolfson scholarship provided to travel abroad was also hugely enriching, as my field (environmental history) has a much higher profile in the United States and continental Europe than in the UK. I was able to speak at conferences in China, the US, Portugal, France, the Netherlands, Germany and across the UK. This international experience, and the publications that followed, helped me to secure a junior research fellowship at the Institute for Historical Research and subsequently a permanent position at the University of Manchester.

“The Wolfson Foundation’s decision to support arts and humanities research came at a crucial moment when the humanities were under threat from funding cuts, and their ‘value’ being called in to question. As a young scholar, the Foundation’s commitment was enormously encouraging, signifying the high regard in which the humanities are still held by those with a deeper and more rounded sense of the public good.”

## **Notes to editors:**

### **The Wolfson Foundation**

The Wolfson Foundation is an independent grant-making charity that aims to promote the civic health of society by supporting excellence in the fields of education, the arts & humanities, health and science. Established in 1955, over £800 million (£1.7 billion in real terms) has been awarded to more than 10,000 projects across the UK, all on the basis of expert peer review.

For more information visit [www.wolfson.org.uk](http://www.wolfson.org.uk) and follow us on Twitter [@wolfsonfdn](https://twitter.com/wolfsonfdn) and at [Facebook.com/WolfsonFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/WolfsonFoundation)

### **Wolfson Postgraduate Scholarships in the Humanities**

Partner universities involved in the programme from 2018 are: the University of St Andrews, University of Birmingham, University of Cambridge, Durham University, University of Oxford, University of Southampton, University of Warwick, University of York and University College London.

Scholarship recipients are nominated by their host university.

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Interviews with the Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation and photography are available on request