

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentship – Interrogating British South Asian Culture in Non-Fiction Films and Television, 1960s-1980s with the British Film Institute and the University of Warwick

Start date: 1st October 2026

Application Deadline: Tuesday 5 May 2026, noon/12.00pm (GMT)

Interviews will take place on Tuesday 19 or Thursday 21 May [online]

The University of Warwick and the British Film Institute are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded collaborative doctoral studentship, starting in October 2026, under the AHRC's [Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships \(CDP\) scheme](#)

This studentship will interrogate the representation of British South Asian culture in non-fiction films and television from the 1960s to the 1980s, when critical debates about South Asian immigration became a focal point in British culture. Jointly supervised by Lisa Kerrigan and Patrick Russell, BFI, and Dr. Julie Lobalzo Wright and Dr. Ritika Kaushik, University of Warwick, the student will be expected to spend time at both University of Warwick and British Film Institute, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

- The studentship can be studied either full or part-time.
- We encourage applications from a diverse range of people, from different backgrounds and career stages.
- Students should have a Masters Degree in a relevant subject or can demonstrate relevant equivalent experience.
- The studentship is open to both home and international applicants.

Project Overview

This project studies the representation of British South Asian culture in non-fiction films and television programming from the 1960s to the 1980s. As South Asian immigrants moved to the UK in big numbers during these decades, emerging as a key focus in British cultural history, they also began to reshape British culture by renewing debates around race, gender, class, and ethnicity. Focusing on understudied documentaries and current affairs programming in the collections available at the BFI National Archive for this period, this project will throw light on how these factual programs focused on, reflected, and depicted the British South Asian experience through real-life events and individuals.

This project has been conceived as a collaboration between the BFI and University of Warwick, connecting historical and theoretical studies with practical research undertaken at the BFI National Archive. The aim of the project is to study collections focused on British South Asian peoples and/or made for a British South Asian audience, including the Central Office of Information (COI), LWT (London Weekend Television) and Channel 4 collections for short films and news programmes. These collections hold documentaries and factual and magazine programmes, such as *Eastern Eye* (LWT, 1982-1985), or a variety of programs focused on single historical events like the Grunwick strike (1976-1978) that changed the conversations around

workers' rights and collective struggles while also impacting the popular perception of British South Asian life in these critical decades.

The project fills a significant gap in British film and television studies by turning attention to documentaries and current affairs programmes that remain historically understudied. These programmes offer unique and unparalleled insight into the marginalised community of British South Asians who were immigrating to Britain, building communities, and adjusting to a new way of life in this period. The project underscores the importance of these overlooked archival sources as rich sites to illuminate the ways South Asian culture was received in Britain as well as how British South Asian individuals navigated new challenges like learning about British institutions, along with collective challenges like facing racial discrimination and fighting for worker's rights.

Based on these historical and archival contexts, the dual objectives of the study are to better understand what these media can tell us about British South Asian heritage in terms of race, class, gender, and ethnicity, and how these programmes are categorized and catalogued in the archive itself. The project will not only show how such archival materials can deepen our understanding of British South Asian culture but also contribute to knowledge about the histories of British film and television studies.

Research questions include:

1. How has British South Asian culture been documented from the 1960s to the 1980s through non-fiction film and television media?
2. What do such media held at the BFI National Archive tell us about critical aspects and historical events of British South Asian life in terms of race, class, gender, and ethnicity?
3. What is the role of national heritage archives in reflecting ideologies of marginalized identities and social hierarchies within the domain of British South Asian culture?

The student will be able to develop more detailed research questions early in the project. The project's thematic focus is deliberately presented as broad to leave substantial scope for the student to determine if there are benefits to mainly focusing on specific programmes within the main collections and/or certain historical events. The expectation is that the original research undertaken by the student into the collections will determine the selection of key case studies for the thesis.

Research with British Film Institute

This research studentship is one allocated to British Film Institute by the AHRC. The successful student will be expected to spend time carrying out research and gaining relevant experience at the BFI National Archive in Berkhamsted and the BFI's London sites, as appropriate, as part of the studentship. They will be supported in accessing the BFI collections and receive any necessary training, including on using relevant catalogues and equipment if applicable.

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 fee. Research Councils UK Indicative Fee Level is £5,238.* Students with an 'International' fee status are welcome to apply with the difference between 'home' and 'International' fees waived by the university. Please note that the student will be required to reside in the UK until completion of the PhD. International students will have to bear visa related costs on their own.

The award pays an annual stipend for all students, both home and international students. This stipend is tax free, and is the equivalent of an annual salary, enabling the student to pay living costs. The UKRI Minimum Doctoral Stipend is £21,805*. There is also a CDP maintenance payment of £600 per year, plus an allowance of £1000/year.

Further details can be found on the [UKRI website](#).

The successful candidate is eligible to receive an additional travel and related expenses grant during the course of the project courtesy of the BFI, worth up to £500 per year for 4 years. They will also have access to a yearly research fund of up to £250 through the Warwick Film and Television Department.

The successful candidate will be encouraged to participate in professional development events and activities organised for all Collaborative Doctoral Partnership students who are registered with different universities and studying with cultural and heritage organisations across the UK. These activities are organised by a coordination team based at the V&A and are designed to provide CDP researchers with the knowledge, networks and skills to thrive in their future careers.

The successful candidate will also benefit from the structured training offered at Warwick, which includes the Doctoral College Researcher Development Programme, the Centre for Arts Doctoral Research Excellence (CADRE)'s workshops and events, and Film and Television Department's Research and Methodologies programme. The Warwick PGR Professional Development Framework offers PGR students with an equitable and encouraging environment to support their Professional Development.

For more information about Film and Television Studies at Warwick see [Film and Television Studies](#).

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
- The latest revision of the AHRC Training Grant Funding Guide is available [here](#).
- International students are eligible to receive the full award for maintenance as are home students. 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 in Film and Television Studies will be waived.
- We want to encourage the widest range of potential students to study for a CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming students from different backgrounds to apply. We welcome applicants from both within UK and abroad, especially from historically marginalised communities and socio-economic backgrounds that are underrepresented in the field.
- We welcome students with disabilities to apply. Assessment needs would be arranged from the point that a scholarship is offered (before enrolment) to ensure any recommended equipment, software or training is provided in good time start doctoral research. Students with disabilities may also be eligible for UKRI DSA (disabled student allowance). Reasonable Adjustments will also be available for the interview process and can be requested when the candidate is invited to interview.
- [English language requirements](#) are Band B; IELTS overall score of 7.0, minimum component scores of two at 6.0/6.5 and the rest at 7.0 or above. See [Warwick English Language Entry Requirements](#) for more information.
- Applicants should ideally have (or expect to have completed before beginning the studentship) a relevant Masters-level qualification in a relevant subject in Film/Television Studies, South Asian Studies, History, or Cultural Studies, OR be able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting such as the Film/Television Industry, Heritage/Cultural organisations, Archives, or Museums.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate a sustained interest in the study of Film and Television, which may include documentary/non-fiction films and television news or current affairs programming and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in related research areas, such as cultural histories of South Asian peoples in Britain.

- Applicants should be able to demonstrate experience, knowledge or interest in archival research.
- As a collaborative award, students will be expected to spend time at both the University and the British Film Institute.

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/>

Project details and how to apply

Please note you will apply to this award through the standard Warwick Film and/or Television Studies portal (MPhil/PhD). However, the requested supporting documentation for this CDP will differ from a standard MPhil/PhD application as set out below.

To apply, make an application for the Film and/or Television Studies (MPhil/PhD) course online through the [Warwick application portal](#). You don't need to complete your application all at once, you can start now and save for later.

Please upload the following information required for this CDP:

Supporting Documentation

- Personal statement (1-2 pages) - The personal statement should clearly articulate how the applicant's prior experiences and research and professional interests qualify them for undertaking a PhD. Furthermore, how they envision this studentship to help prepare for future career goals and endeavours. See our [guide to writing your personal statement](#).
- Research statement (1 page)- The research statement should demonstrate how the applicant's research and professional interests align with the CDP and specific project and collections mentioned above in addition to the project's focus on British South Asian life in these decades.
- Sample piece/s of writing (5-7 pages)- The sample/s should demonstrate the applicant's ability for critical thinking and skills for writing specifically about film and television. This can be a published or unpublished academic piece of work, OR a public-facing piece like curatorial note, blog post, critical review or reflection.
- Degree certificate/transcripts from your university-level study (current or completed) including translations if not in English, grading scale and average score certificate (if available).
- Two academic or Professional referee contact details - please refer to our [guide for providing academic or professional references](#).
- CV/resume.

To avoid delays in receiving a decision, you'll need to upload scanned copies of all relevant supporting documents (like transcripts) before you submit your application.

Certificates and transcripts should be uploaded in colour wherever possible.

Please address any enquiries about the project or the studentship to:

Julie Lobalzo Wright (j.wright.4@warwick.ac.uk), Ritika Kaushik (Ritika.Kaushik@warwick.ac.uk), or Lisa Kerrigan (lisa.kerrigan@bfi.org.uk).

We ask all applicants to complete a voluntary EDI monitoring form [here](#). All responses are anonymous.

All CDP projects are part of a nationwide programme called the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership consortium. **The CDP consortium will host an online webinar for prospective applicants on 13 April 2026 at 11:00.** These webinars will provide an overview of the CDP funding scheme.

To sign up for a webinar, please email cdp@vam.ac.uk with the subject line "Prospective Applicant Webinar" from the email address you would like to join the online meeting from.

Sign up will close on 10 April 2026 at 17:00.

Please note, the webinars will not focus on individual projects.