Arts and Culture University of Exeter Creative Fellowships 2026-7

Exploratory placements over 4-5 weeks, working in interdisciplinary contexts

Introduction

Arts and Culture Creative Fellowships offer creative practitioners the opportunity to engage with innovative academics and professional services staff across the University of Exeter's faculties and campuses. They are open to practitioners of any artform, including visual, digital, sound and performing arts, craft, design, film, literature, music and beyond. Rather than being a residency, these opportunities are described as placements. The creative practitioner is a peer, opening up new approaches and conversations with the University hosts while developing and enriching their own creative practice. This scheme encourages mutually beneficial exchange, where both the host and the creative practitioner gain new insights and potential ways of working from each other.

The role of an Arts and Culture Creative Fellow

The Creative Fellowships are designed to benefit both the Creative Fellow and the host, providing inspiration for new approaches to creative practice and generating fledgling ideas that could be the springboard for future initiatives. The emphasis is on process, so documentation and evaluation will be intrinsic to project delivery, and we will be making a short film summarising each Creative Fellowship.

The Creative Fellow will be introduced to key contacts working on a specific area of research or enquiry. They will be supported to work alongside research or professional services communities, producing creative outputs that investigate and interrogate the processes and practices of research or enquiry undertaken at Exeter, using creative skills and supporting the aims of the University.

On a practical level, this may involve attending informal department meetings, working with students and audiences, building 1-1 relationships with particular researchers and staff groups and exploring novel perspectives on the activities that support the University's work. It is important that a Creative Fellowship builds towards a tangible outcome that communicates the process and value of the project.

Our preference is for Creative Fellows to come into this process without a fixed output in mind, but to develop, working closely with their University host, new work rooted in their established practice and responding to the university context. We are not anticipating fully resolved work to be made, but we would expect draft work to be in development. We anticipate that the Creative Fellow will liaise closely with Arts and Culture during the Creative Fellowship, to share their process with a broad audience, across the University and the region.

To give a sense of how varied and bespoke each project can be, please click on the links below to find out about three of the Creative Fellows we have worked with in the past; Daksha Patel, Chris Hoban and Tom Stockley:

https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/the-politics-of-sexual-naturehttps://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/exploring-environmental-justice

https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/will-as-windows-to-past-lives

https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/a-thousand-bursts-of-light

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The University and its Campuses

The University of Exeter's campuses in Devon and Cornwall host over 30,000 students. There are two campuses in Exeter (Streatham and St Luke's), one in Penryn, and one in Truro. Streatham campus also holds the Exeter Northcott Theatre and the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum. Find out more about the campuses at: http://www.exeter.ac.uk/undergraduate/life/ourcampuses

Creative Fellowship Aims

- Connect individuals and disciplinary perspectives within the University through creative engagement and outputs.
- Advocate for artistic processes and creative methodologies within the context of a research-intensive university.
- Work with interdisciplinary groups that span a broad range of methodologies and perspectives.
- Document processes and ways of working using creative practice.
- Develop tangible outcomes that communicate the process of the Creative Fellowship.

Outputs and Timetable

The timing and detail of outputs disseminating the process, or testing out ideas jointly developed as part of the Creative Fellowship, are to be developed in discussion with hosts. No two Creative Fellowships are the same and we are committed to an open and process-driven approach.

The Creative Fellowship runs over a period of 4-5 weeks to be agreed with the University of Exeter, split between in-situ research and production time. This time can be spent in a short block or spaced over several months.

Information about timescales and locations of each Creative Fellowship can be found in the appendices below.

The Arts and Culture team aims to work with the Creative Fellows to offer dissemination events and activities to showcase the process and resulting works.

The project must be completed within the 2026-27 academic year. The fee covers the period from January to July 2027.

Budget

The total budget per Creative Fellowship is £6,000 (inclusive of VAT). This must include the practitioner's fee, equipment, travel and accommodation, and production costs. The Arts and Culture team will support additional expenses including film-making and photography, event planning and delivery, promotion, and dissemination.

Required Skills and Experience

- Experience of arts placements or residencies with non-arts professionals.
- Ability to plan and deliver projects to deadlines.
- Strong interest in use of creative processes and application of artistic insights and behaviours in diverse contexts.
- Collaborative and enquiring outlook.
- Willingness and ability to spend time on the University of Exeter campuses.

Application Process

Two Creative Fellowships are being offered in the 2026-27 academic year. Details of the two Creative Fellowships have been included in the Appendices below, so that artists can make informed choices about which strand to apply for.

Following a call out across the University's Exeter Campuses, two initiatives were selected to each host a Creative Fellow, based in Exeter. Practitioners from any creative discipline are invited to apply and will be selected following interview. The interview panel for each Creative Fellowship will consist of the Lead Contact for the host group, a representative from Arts and Culture and one other member of University staff. All interviews will be online (Teams).

Apply by emailing a one-page written response (with up to six supporting images, or link to one video file if appropriate), plus a CV to artsandculture@exeter.ac.uk . (Please note that the maximum size for emails is 10MB.) Please specify which of the Creative Fellowships you are applying for, and what you would contribute to a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and practice. You may only apply for one of these two Creative Fellowships.

The two Creative Fellowships in this callout are:

- **History/Art History and Visual Culture/Biosciences** *'The Coast of Good Health' research project group* (See Appendix 1)
- **Special Collections**
  Engaging with the archive of images from the Imperial Institute (See Appendix 2)

Deadline for applications is midnight on Sunday 15 November 2026.

Interview dates:

Title	Date	
'The Coast of Good Health' research project group	2 December 2026	Teams link to be sent to candidates; remote interview.
A Different Lens: Engaging with images from the Imperial Institute Archive	30 November 2026	Teams link to be sent to candidates; remote interview.

Please note - £100 will be provided to cover the creative practitioner's time to prepare and attend interview.

If you have any queries, please email artsandculture@exeter.ac.uk

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APPENDIX 1 – History/Art History and Visual Culture/Biosciences

Lead:
Dr Rebecca Williams, Senior Lecturer in Medical History in the Department of Archaeology and History

Team:
Dr Rebecca Williams, Senior Lecturer in Medical History in the Department of Archaeology and History
Dr Sariqua Wagley, Senior Research Fellow, Biosciences
Dr Camille Mathieu, Associate Professor in History and Art History and Visual Culture

Fellowship Title: *'The Coast of Good Health' research project group*

Key dates when the Fellow must be present/available

There are no specific dates. However, it is hoped that the Creative Fellow will be able to attend a community meeting being planned for Spring 2027 (exact date tbc) at which we would welcome creative involvement. This event will involve academic and non-academic partners, and will be held in Teignmouth. The aim is to use this as a space to co-create research questions, methodologies, outputs and funding application plans, as the project is developed from a small seed-funded project in May-July 2026 to a full-scale, collaborative research inquiry.

Location

Department of Archaeology and History Streatham Campus.

The Fellow will also be welcome to join the research project team on archival and/or microbiology sampling visits and also to attend—and help shape—an event we are planning for Spring 2027 with community and activist groups working in and around Teignmouth.

Introduction to Area of Practice

In 1932, the illustrated daily newspaper *The Graphic* described Teignmouth and its surroundings—with its 'intensely red' cliffs and 'deep terra-cotta' waters—as 'The Coast of Good Health' to which holidaymakers could escape. In 2026, the community action group *Surfers Against Sewage* staged a Paddle Out from Teignmouth pier to protest against sewage pollution in those very same terracotta waters. Our new research project, begun in May 2026, asks how the present threats of environmental pollution and climate change can benefit from being examined through the lenses of microbiology, history, and community action. Using Teignmouth as a hyperlocal example, we investigate what current and past data tells us about the healing powers and health threats of sea water—and the ways in which modern life and climate change affects them. The project particularly lends itself to creative reimagining, as we seek ways to flip the dynamic between climate science and the public. Instead of scientists disseminating information about the effects and dangers of climate change and environmental pollution, our ambition is to work with the public, historical data and a Creative Fellow, to explore health, environment, and the sea through the stories of people's everyday lives. The research project team includes microbiologist, a historian, and an art historian.

Summary of Fellowship Opportunity

The archives and contemporary cultural life of the sea and health are replete with creativity: from C18th watercolour paintings of an idealised, picturesque coastline; C19th health resort postcards and railway posters; songs of the sea; to modern documentaries of sewage scandals. This centuries old tradition of artistic engagement with the sea and its surrounds means that there are many entry points for a Creative Fellow to explore creative approaches to the historical and contemporary stories that we seek to tell.

We would particularly welcome the input of a Creative Fellow at this early stage, when we are seeking to co-create research questions, methodologies, and plans for outputs, with an interdisciplinary team of academic and non-academic partners. Creative input has the potential to help us to realise our ambition of breaking out of the mould of top-down dissemination of environment and climate science and instead explore genuinely collaborative and publicly-engaged modes of working.

The Creative Fellow will be able to liaise with Dr Williams and the members of the research project team and join them on archival and/or microbiology sampling visits if they wish to learn more about historical or scientific methodologies. The Fellow will also be welcome to attend—and help shape—an event we are planning for Spring 2027 with community and activist groups working in and around Teignmouth. It may be possible to work together towards collaborative outputs and funding bids after the end of the Creative Fellowship, which could open up further avenues for the artist's work.

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APPENDIX 2 – Special Collections

Website: https://www.exeter.ac.uk/departments/library/special-collections/

Lead: Caroline Walter

Head of Heritage Collections

Team: Special Collections

Fellowship Title: *A Different Lens: Engaging with images from the Imperial Institute Archive*

Key dates when the Fellow must be present/available

No specific dates identified – contact dates with the host to be agreed between the Creative Fellow and the host.

Location

The Archive is based at Streatham Campus, Exeter, but digitised images allow remote access, making a hybrid placement possible. On-site work offers opportunities to explore engagement activities and network with staff, academics and local organisations.

The balance between on-site and remote working can be agreed with the host, reflecting the practitioner's focus and approach.

Introduction to Area of Practice

The Special Collections team are currently exploring the research and engagement potential of a recently digitised collection of almost 2000 glass plate negatives from the Imperial Institute. This is a significant visual archive documenting people, places, and industries across the British Empire.

The material that has survived is a remnant of a once-vast collection created to support the educational and commercial ambitions of the British Empire and raises important questions about power, agency, omission and the role of photography in shaping colonial narratives.

The perspective of a creative practitioner would bring fresh approaches to working with this material, activating the collection beyond traditional archival interpretation.

Of particular interest is the impact of working with this material at this interim stage - where there is sufficient intellectual order to enable retrieval and referencing, but where descriptive cataloguing has yet to take place. While catalogue descriptions provide valuable historical context, they can also foreground the language and assumption of the creator. Could engaging

creatively with such a collection in the absence of established descriptions create a unique space for curiosity? What is the risk of missing contextual information?

Summary of Fellowship Opportunity

The Fellowship will support research, teaching and public engagement by providing an opportunity to explore the Imperial Institute glass plate negatives through a creative and critical lens. Outcomes will be guided by the practitioner, but we anticipate there being the opportunity for engagement to include digital or physical exhibitions, guest seminars for modules with relevant focuses, and public/community events. Just as importantly, it will contribute to our ongoing work to make collections more accessible, inclusive and reflective of diverse perspectives. It will provide valuable insight into how creative practice can support the interpretation of complex histories and allow the team to explore a new way of working with audiences, helping ensure that the collection is not only preserved as a historical resource but also used as a catalyst for reflection, dialogue and creative exploration.