

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Queen Mary
University of London



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Representing and Belonging: Social and Cultural Change in the British Diplomatic Service since 1945

PhD Studentship on 'Diversity, Difference and Generational Change'

Applications are invited for an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) studentship commencing in autumn 2014 entitled 'Diversity, Difference and Generational Change in the British Diplomatic Service,' to be supervised by Dr Helen McCarthy (School of History, QMUL), Dr James Ellison (School of History, QMUL), and Professor Patrick Salmon (Chief Historian, Foreign and Commonwealth Office). This award is the second of two CDA studentships on the theme of Social and Cultural Change in the British Diplomatic Service since 1945 to be offered in partnership between the School of History at QMUL and the FCO Historians.

Project Aims:

The project aims to explore the impact of social and cultural change in the decades since 1945 on the personnel and institutional practices of the British Diplomatic Service at home and abroad. It takes for its focus the shifting make-up of the diplomatic workforce in terms of social class, ethnicity and sexual orientation, together with the development of institutional policies towards equality and diversity. The research will assess how far diplomatic elites became more representative of British society during this period, and ask how effectively the Foreign and Commonwealth Office recruited and integrated into its culture members of previously under-represented social groups.

Research Context:

Studies covering the nineteenth and early twentieth century have explored the social origins of both diplomats and Foreign Office clerks in some detail, demonstrating how a primarily aristocratic profession became increasingly middle-class in character but remained nonetheless dominated by white men educated at elite public schools and universities. The social make-up of the post-war Service has not been studied in the same depth, meaning that little is known about the impact of (i) internal recruitment policies aimed at attracting a wider pool of candidates to the top policy-making grades; (ii) developments in the national education system, including the expansion of grammar school and university places and the rise of comprehensive schooling; and (iii) wider changes in the class structure and social mobility and in social attitudes towards hierarchy and deference. In addition, whilst recent work has examined the position of women in the Diplomatic Service, no serious historical enquiry has been made into the status of ethnic minorities or the experiences of gay officers, who were obliged, formally at least, to conceal their sexuality until 1991 due to perceived security risks.

This study will therefore embark on the tasks of mapping change and continuity in the social origins of recruits to the post-war Service and documenting the presence and reconstructing the experiences and identities of ethnic minority and gay officers. The project will then seek to integrate these findings into wider explanatory narratives of institutional change, asking how far and in what ways the changing identities of diplomatic personnel have affected the character of British diplomacy.

Research Framework:

The details of how the project will be undertaken are to be worked out between the successful applicant and the supervisors as part of supervision process. However, the source base for the project would be likely to include: records from the FCO's Personnel Department, including recruitment literature; evidence and minutes of official reviews into the Service; biographical data from the *Diplomatic List* cross-referenced where necessary with other sources (for example, *Who's Who*, the *Times*, school registers, university reporters and so on); records and publications of the Diplomatic Service Families Association and its predecessor bodies; published and unpublished memoirs. In addition, the student will carry out a set of interviews with members or former members of the Service. As well as forming the basis of an oral history archive, it is expected that these interviews will produce further source material in the form of photographs, diaries, scrapbooks and other paraphernalia. It is proposed that the student should focus his or her work on the administrative and executive grades, where the core political and representational work of the Service was performed, although data on the clerical, secretarial and other branches will be collected and analysed where appropriate.

The student will use these sources in order to investigate a range of themes, which might include:

- *Mapping trends:* To what extent have the social and educational backgrounds of recruits to the Diplomatic Service changed since 1945? How has recruitment from ethnic minority groups changed over the same period? Is it possible to establish any trends concerning the representation of gay officers before 1991? How do these trends compare to the Home Civil Service and/or other professions?
- *Identifying drivers:* What were the key drivers of these changes? How important were internal factors, such as recruitment policies and pressures from staff lobby groups, compared to external drivers, such as the expansion of higher education, immigration, and generational shifts in social attitudes, including the rise of 'permissiveness' from the 1960s?
- *Reconstructing experiences:* What difference (if any) has an officer's class or educational background, ethnicity or sexuality made to day-to-day workplace relations or to the projection of national interests through representational activity? How effectively have members of 'minority' groups assimilated to the existing institutional cultures, and how far have they sought to resist or subvert them? Have such officers suffered discrimination, either at the hands of colleagues or foreign officials?
- *Integrating difference into institutional narratives:* How far and in what ways have changes in the social composition of the post-war Service affected institutional culture and diplomatic practice? Has increasing diversity altered the substance or quality of policy advice? Has the growing presence of ethnic

minority and gay officers made any difference, for instance, to how the FCO deals with policy relating to equality and human rights?

Impact and Public Engagement

The studentship will contribute to the FCO's current diversity and inclusion objectives by offering a rich historical context for understanding how the FCO workforce has changed in composition since 1945 and the evolution of administrative policies to promote equality and diversity. We anticipate that the student would engage throughout the project with relevant officials from the Human Resources Directorate, Staff Networks and the Diplomatic Service Families Association in order to share knowledge on these themes. More generally, the student will use his or her research to contribute to the work of the FCO Historians, including the development of online materials (for example, webcasts and exhibitions) for public engagement and the organisation of seminars and conferences.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Historians

Based in Whitehall, the FCO historians are an integral part of the overall research capacity of the FCO and contribute a crucial historical perspective to the development of evidence-based policy. They carry out a range of activities, including: preparing and publishing the major series, *Documents on British Policy Overseas*; undertaking in-house research projects on a variety of topics; drafting historical briefings for ministers and officials; organising policy-focussed seminars setting current policy issues in a historical context; and bringing the history of the FCO to the wider public through webpages, online exhibitions and podcasts. Led by Professor Patrick Salmon, the FCO Historians are actively engaged in scholarly research and have a strong track record of collaborating with HEIs. When at the FCO, the student will benefit from this strong research culture and be encouraged to attend and present findings at the Historians' regular lunchtime seminar series. S/he will also enjoy access to IT facilities, photocopying, printing and other resources.

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The student will be based in the School of History and play a full part in the life of its rich and diverse postgraduate community. S/he will be encouraged to attend the numerous seminars, workshops and conferences organised by the School's various research centres, including the Centre for the History of the Emotions and the Mile End Group, as well as research hubs in other parts of the College, such as the Centre for Research in Equality and Diversity in the School of Business and Management. For more information on research degrees at the School of History, see: <http://www.history.qmul.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees>

The Studentship

The award will cover university tuition fees and provide the standard AHRC maintenance award for three years. In addition, the student will receive research support from the FCO of up to £1000 for approved research-related expenses.

Supervision and Training

Supervisions will be held fortnightly for the first semester, and monthly thereafter. Students will participate in QMUL's graduate school training programme as well as receive discipline-specific training in the School of History. S/he will also undergo a programme of specialist training in oral history methods at the Institute of Historical Research and/or the British Library. The FCO will provide training where required in the use of IT resources for producing webcasts or other online materials.

Person Specification

Essential skills, qualities and knowledge

- A first class or upper second class honours degree in a relevant discipline. Candidates would normally be expected to hold a Masters degree in a relevant area by 1st October 2014.
- Knowledge of at least one of the following research areas: twentieth-century British diplomatic history; twentieth-century British social and cultural history.
- Experience of undertaking archival research in twentieth-century British history
- Ability to be self-motivated, well-organized, and to respond to constructive criticism.
- Willingness to take a full part in the QMUL postgraduate community and the research activities at QMUL and at the FCO.

Desirable skills, qualities and knowledge

- Familiarity with current scholarship on the history of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, and on the history of social class, race, and sexuality in post-war Britain.
- Experience of using oral history methods
- Experience of developing online learning resources for use in public engagement activities.

Please note:

The AHRC has strict residential eligibility criteria governing the students that can be nominated for this award. If you are not a British citizen and/or not usually resident in the UK (and have not been for the past three years), please check your eligibility and discuss this with the project supervisors so that your eligibility can be determined.

Application Process

Candidates should complete an [application form](#) and submit it either online or by post. You will need to include a CV, two references, academic transcript and a **1000 word statement of purpose** which should explain why you would be interested in undertaking the programme of research and what experience and skills you would bring to the post. The statement should also include details about previous research experience and training and anything else that you feel is relevant. Any queries should be directed to Dr Helen McCarthy (h.mccarthy@qmul.ac.uk)

To be considered for this studentship your application must be received by Queen Mary's Admissions and Recruitment Office no later than **4pm on Friday 28th March 2014**.

All short-listed applicants will be interviewed (either face-to-face or, in the case of overseas candidates, by telephone) and applicants must be available for interview in late April (date tbc). Any particular requirements for the interview will be communicated to shortlisted candidates in good time.

Applications may be submitted in hard copy to The Admissions and Recruitment Office, Queen Mary, University of London, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS, United Kingdom.