KESS II Scholarship

Aberystwyth University are seeking to recruit a 3-year PhD student to work on a project entitled: Cultural Value of the Llangollen International Eisteddfod: Understanding the Digital Audience

The studentship project would build on the existing work funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), undertaken by the proposed supervisors in 2013-14. This work sought to understand the ‘cultural values’ derived by different groups of people attending the International Eisteddfod and the National Eisteddfod, including audience members and competitors. In short, the project sought to understand the cultural benefits the two eisteddfodau generated, who received them, and how they are transmitted, first to those attending the event and then to wider society. We wanted to gain a better of understanding of how today’s eisteddfod fits into our society and, effectively, “what it does for us?”

This proposed studentship project would extent and further develop this work, tailoring it to the specific needs of the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod. These needs include attaining a better understanding of how the different audiences of the Eisteddfod – including the competitors, accompanying persons, day and evening audiences members and the volunteer workforce – but also new digital audiences – co-create the values that the Eisteddfod aims to develop with its various stakeholders. These co-created values include a better appreciation of one’s own culture and nationhood, and that of others, mutual appreciation of what is valued by people of different nations, ethnicities and cultural groups. Increasingly such audiences co-create their experience of the event through digital means, rather than attending in person and communication with others through face-to-face communication.

The International Eisteddfod has two compelling issues which the research would aim to address by examining the growing role of the digital economy in co-creating and communicating the eisteddfod experience. First, membership is in decline and so attendances have been falling. This has been attributed to the gradual ageing of the audience demographic, with few younger recruits in recent years. Meanwhile a number of barriers have been proposed with regard to older people fully accessing the digital economy. Second, the International Eisteddfod faces competition from other entertainment formats, which have made increasing use of digital technology to grow their audiences and spread their values.

The research would aim to investigate the role of digital technology in audience value and participation. The event is currently broadcast on television, however, the use of internet streaming is yet to be fully embraced. The research would thus take a quasi-experiemint approach and focus on the differences between ‘old’ (non-digital) and ‘new’ (digital) audiences, being: (1) live audience members, (2) the networked audience who view the streaming on their own, (3) those who use the internet to watch and participate on online communities and (4) networked audience who watch with other people physically present. For all four audience groups the aim is to understand co-creation and transmission of the eisteddfod’s various values and to understand how this differs from group to group. Arguably, the use of digital technology would help to re-engage the aging audience as well attract a younger audience through the ability to meet the audience in new a new space. It would also help the organisation to find new audiences, who are perhaps more willing to follow the event from their homes rather than to attend in person.
The prospective applicant should have a minimum of a 1st or good 2:1 in a relevant degree, and be available to take up the studentship by 1st October 2016. The project is part-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the European Union’s Convergence programme administered by the Welsh Government. KESS II PhD scholarships are collaborative awards with external partners.

To apply, please submit the following to the Postgraduate Admissions Office (address below) by 31st October 2016.


2. A completed KESS II Participant proposal form (put the reference number AU20012 in the top right hand box of the application form) and an up-to-date CV. KESS II application forms are available to download at the link below.

   http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/rbi/staff-students/knowledge-economy-skills-scholarships/currentscholarshipvacanciesandapplicationforms/

3. A PhD proposal of up to 1,000 words where you expand on your experience and interests and describe why you are a good candidate for this research studentship. Please refer to the Project Description.

**Value of Award:** A stipend of £14,002 (rising in accordance with inflation for the remaining two years). Each scholarship has an additional budget for travel, equipment/consumables and training to support your research. KESS II PhD Scholarship holders do not pay fees.

**Length:** Full-time for 3 years. (Theses must be submitted 6 months after the funded three year study period.)

**Training:** The achievement of a Postgraduate Skills Development Award (PSDA) is compulsory for each KESS II scholar (The PSDA is based on a 60 credit award, which is an additional award to the PhD).

**Eligibility:** To be eligible to apply for a KESS II award, you must be resident, upon starting the scholarship, in the Convergence Area of Wales and you must be able to take paid employment in the Convergence area on completion of the scholarship.

The Convergence Area means the following counties of Wales:

- Isle of Anglesey
- Gwynedd
- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Ceredigion
- Carmarthenshire
- Pembrokeshire
- Swansea
For further student eligibility criteria related to the individual projects, please view the details of the individual project above.

Informal enquiries should be made to Professor Brian Garrod at bgg@aber.ac.uk or 01970 621638; or Dr. David Dowell at djd5@aber.ac.uk or 01970 622848.

Address for applications:

Postgraduate Admissions Office
Recruitment & Admissions
Student Welcome Centre
Aberystwyth University
Aberystwyth
SY23 3FB

Quote Reference AU20012

Closing date for applications 31st October 2016