



# SEAHA

EPSRC CENTRE FOR DOCTORAL TRAINING  
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING IN  
ARTS HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

## SEAHA Studentship: Drones for Heritage Communication and Audience Development

The EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in [Science and Engineering in Arts, Heritage and Archaeology](#) at University College London, University of Oxford and University of Brighton, in collaboration with Sussex Past (<https://sussexpast.co.uk/>) and Skypower (<https://www.skypower.co.uk/>) are seeking applications for a fully funded studentship on the topic Drones for Heritage Communication and Audience Development.

While a number of heritage institutions and bodies have worked with drones, for example for surveying and documentation, there has been little research on how drones could be used for communication and audience building/engagement by heritage institutions. This project will critically explore emerging current use and the potential future of drones for communication and audience development in the field of heritage.

Both consumer and professional engagement around drones (e.g. photography, video) has increased markedly over the last few years. For example, drone footage is used across a wide range of media and drone aesthetics are becoming a key element of contemporary visual culture while drone festivals and drone races are rapidly growing around the globe. How can the heritage sector contribute to this technological landscape of drone innovation to build new audiences? An ecosystem of start-ups, festivals, grassroots user groups, etc. is emerging around drone culture, and this research critically explores the socio-economic opportunities from this for the heritage sector. At the same time, as heritage sites become ever more popular with drone amateurs (including illegal/unwanted use) and regulation of amateur drone use is increasing, this project will inform heritage sector responses that would enable safe, family-friendly and digital literacy-building engagement through drone cultures. This project will draw on scientific research on audio-visual and race drone technology, digital media research on drone culture and audiences, and heritage audience development frameworks to inform an integrated model of drone-focussed heritage audience communication and development.

The doctoral project will aim to address the following research questions:

1. How can drone technology inform an audience development framework for heritage institutions, especially around diversification of audiences and innovative ways of engaging with heritage culture?
2. What are the potential socio-economic benefits for the heritage sector of drawing on commercial and civic models (e.g. drone film festivals, drone races, science/geek family days out) around drone technologies?
3. What mediator role could the heritage sector (as legitimised actor) play between the legal context, commercial exploitation and end-user engagement (e.g. digital literacy for families) around drone technology?
4. How can we test the effectiveness of the framework by conducting experiments with drone technology, working with the industry and heritage partner?

The research methodology will be:

The desk research phase will include the academic literature review and a review of grey literature on the



# SEAHA

EPSRC CENTRE FOR DOCTORAL TRAINING  
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING IN  
ARTS HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

use of relevant drone technology to inform a preliminary model for audience development in the heritage sector. This will also involve identifying best practice and key institutions for field work and interviews. The heritage and industry partner will facilitate access for expert interviews.

The experimentation and field work phase will test the preliminary model for audience development. Experiments with drone technology (including audio-visual and racing) will be conducted in partnership with the heritage and industry partner (the latter provides drone training), testing out different technologies, formats and audience reactions. Furthermore, semi-structured expert interviews with key players at heritage institutions and at drone events (e.g. drone film festivals, drone races) will be conducted to explore opportunities and barriers for audience development around drone technology. The audience/user perspective and practices will be captured through observations and semi-structured interviews at drone culture and heritage events and also include the experiments (see above). All data will be coded and analysed in NVIVO.

The analysis will draw on the material from the desk research, the experiments and the field work to map out the technology and culture around drone use for building heritage audiences, including opportunities, barriers and potential partnership models for innovation and collaboration between the drone culture industry and the heritage sector. This will result in a final model for drone-related audience development in the heritage sector. In addition to the academic form, this will also be disseminated to the heritage and drone sectors through a non-academic online resource, including a best practice guide for the heritage sector – supported by the industry and heritage partner.

As a SEAHA student, you will have unparalleled access to research infrastructure and expertise across three universities and 70+ heritage, research and industrial partners. In addition to the university doctoral training requirements, SEAHA students take part in an exciting range of cohort activities, ranging from residential events and group projects, to conferences and careers events. Please visit the <http://www.seaha-cdt.ac.uk/> for details.

**Academic entry requirements** *(below is the standard copy, please amend as appropriate)*

Applicants should have a minimum of a 2:1 undergraduate degree and desirably hold or expect to achieve excellent grades in a masters degree, in a relevant subject from a UK university or comparable qualifications from another recognised university.

**English language entry requirements** *(below is the standard copy, please amend as appropriate)*

Proof of meeting the UCL English language proficiency requirements where necessary. For SEAHA candidates, a standard level certificate is normally required. See <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/life/international>

Applicants whose first language is not English must have successfully completed a Secure English language Test (SELT) in the last two years. Applicants who have obtained or are studying for a UK degree may apply without a SELT. However, the university may request a SELT is taken as part of any award made.

English language IELTS requirements are minimum of 6.0 in each component.

If you have an English language qualification other than IELTS, please contact us to see if you are eligible to apply for a studentship. The UK Home Office will not accept TOEFL tests as proof of meeting the English language requirements



# SEAHA

EPSRC CENTRE FOR DOCTORAL TRAINING  
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING IN  
ARTS HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

## Eligibility criteria

See <http://www.seaha-cdt.ac.uk/study-with-us/studentships/eligibility-criteria/>

## Funding

This project is a four year integrated MRes/PhD studentship in the SEAHA Centre for Doctoral Training ([www.seaha-cdt.ac.uk](http://www.seaha-cdt.ac.uk)), funded by the EPSRC, UCL, the University of Brighton, the University of Oxford, and SEAHA heritage and industrial partners. The project is fully funded for UK resident students, and fees-only for other EU students. Limited possibility of funding for international students may also be available.

## Contact

If you have any questions about this project, funding or application process, please contact:

Dr Frauke Behrendt, [F.Behrendt@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:F.Behrendt@brighton.ac.uk)

## How to apply

The application should be submitted by email direct the SEAHA inbox at the University of Brighton:

**[SEAHA@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:SEAHA@brighton.ac.uk)**

and not by the UCL or UoB online admissions system.

To submit an application by **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June**, please include all of the following:

- a substantial covering letter (2–3 pages) including a clear explanation of your motivation for your proposed project
- a statement of your understanding of your eligibility according to the information provided at: <http://www.seaha-cdt.ac.uk/study-with-us/studentships/eligibility-criteria/> and <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/students/help/eligibility/>
- a research proposal (approx. 2,000 words) including project research questions and methodology
- a full detailed CV
- contact details for two academic references (names, postal and email addresses)
- proof of meeting the UCL/UoB English language proficiency requirements where necessary.

We will only consider complete applications.

**Interviews will be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> July.**