

PhD Position, University of Westminster & Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

London, Oct 01, 2026

Application deadline: Apr 30, 2026

Sara Dominici, University of Westminster

Project title: "Collaborative Research as Pedagogical Method: Reinterpreting Photographic Collections at the RGS-IBG".

The University of Westminster and the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded Collaborative doctoral studentship from October 2026 under the AHRC's Landscap Award scheme.

The project will be jointly supervised at RGS-IBG by Dr Sarah Evans, Research and Collections Engagement Manager, and at the University of Westminster by Dr Sara Dominici, Reader in Photographic History and Visual Culture, Dr Alison Hess, Lecturer in Museum and Gallery Studies, and Dr Jennifer Fraser, Director of Student Partnership in CETI and Principal Lecturer in Gender and Critical Education Studies.

Project overview

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) (RGS-IBG) cares for hundreds of thousands of colonial-era photographic images. Yet, these resources are largely underused. Through a pedagogy of student partnership informed by the ideas of educator Paulo Freire, this CDA will bring together archival, visual and material culture methods with the practical challenges of real archive collections through a case study of one of the RGS-IBG's most significant photographic collections: the almost entirely overlooked work of Elizabeth Wilhelmina Ness (1881-1962). The doctoral researcher will use this material to develop an innovative pedagogical approach that fosters a critical interrogation of this troubling photographic heritage, bringing Ness' work into dialogue with undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Westminster. By examining and showcasing how the plurality of perspectives of students can bring more diverse narratives and interdisciplinary perspectives into a co-produced reinterpretation of colonial-era records, the project aims to formulate a new model of teaching and learning that will be applicable to the pedagogical mission of both cultural institutions and universities.

Award details

Award provides Home (UK) tuition fees and an annual stipend (grant) at UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) rates, plus London weighting. International students will be responsible for the difference between the Home fee waiver and the International fee. The award also provides access to professional development opportunities, placements, additional funding and the London and the East of England Hub.

Informal enquiries about the project should be directed to the lead supervisor, Dr Sara Dominici (s.dominici1@westminster.ac.uk)

Please include in your application:

- Personal Statement (maximum 1,500 words) explaining why you are interested in researching this topic, including what you would bring to the project and how you think you would develop it to reflect your own interests and expertise.
- A sample of writing. This could be a piece of academic writing (e.g. MA dissertation) or a text written in the course of any current or previous professional work.
- Your CV
- Two references (at least one academic)
- Transcript of university-level grades and qualification certificates

The University of Westminster and RGS-IBG will jointly assess the applications and hold interviews in order to reach a decision.

Application deadline: 30 April 2026 (for a start date of 1 October 2026)

Interviews (online): week commencing 25 May 2026

Full details here:
<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research-degrees/studentships/ahrc-doctoral-landscape-award/collaborative-research-as-pedagogical-method-reinterpreting-photographic-collections-at-the-rgs-ibg>

Reference:

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