

Placement opportunity for ESRC-funded students

The following information has been provided by the host organisation and outlines the opportunity available. Any queries about this placement should be addressed to the host organisation at the details provided below.

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| Name of host organisation: | UKRI Network Plus/Polarities; University of Manchester |
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Brief description of the host organisation:

University of Manchester is the Co-Lead on the UKRI Network Plus investment 'Shifting Global Polarities'. The initiative brings together more than 30 leading experts globally, within academic and policy circles, to address research gaps and needs during a period of significant societal, geopolitical, and environmental change across Eurasia. Key themes the network aims to address include social upheaval, geopolitics and security, environmental crisis, human rights, Russia-China relations and post-conflict reconstruction, aiming to create new syntheses, knowledge and networks, build new capacities, and train and mentor early career academics. This is a multi-institutional initiative partnering with the Universities of Glasgow, Manchester and Oxford, along the Institute of Development Studies, the Royal United Services Institute and international partners in the US, Ukraine, Finland and Japan. More details can be found on the [website](#).

Placement opportunity available

The research student will contribute to a research project led by Dr Marco Biasioli (University of Manchester) on the cultural activities of the Russian diaspora in places of high migration after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The project is an element of the work of the UKRI Shifting Global Polarities Network, led by the University of Birmingham, on which Dr Biasioli is a Co-Investigator. The project fits with, and builds on, the research priorities and expertise already present within the Network, particularly:

- the ongoing reconfigurations shaping Eastern Europe, including patterns of human mobility;
- the interactions between diasporic communities and host societies;
- forms of resistance to illiberal regimes;
- Russian culture in exile.

The project will explore how post-2022 Russian diaspora communities maintain or adapt cultural practices in their host countries, and what these practices reveal about identity and belonging. The chosen placement student will develop their skills in qualitative

research (coding, thematic and discourse analysis), migration and mobility research, and policy and academic writing, including publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

The student will be expected to work collaboratively with Dr Biasioli to:

- transcribe, code and qualitatively analyse the interviews (which have already been completed)
- produce a policy-oriented report, which will be shared with the Network and the Network partners and will inform the Network's activities moving forward.
- co-produce an article in a peer-reviewed journal with Dr Biasioli on the cultural practices of the post-2022 Russian diaspora.

Skills and experience required for the role

Skills and experience needed to successfully carry out the project include:

- Fluency in Russian and English
- Knowledge of contemporary Russian culture
- Knowledge of debates around decolonisation and cosmopolitanism
- Capacity to work in a team and meet deadlines

Working arrangements and location of the placement

The duration of the placement is three months, is open to current ESRC-funded students and is available on a full-time or part-time basis.

There is scope to work in Manchester with Dr Biasioli for a significant part of the proposed work. Reasonable travel and subsistence costs would be covered by the Network. The student will benefit from the expertise and assistance of Dr Biasioli. Hybrid working arrangements can also be considered (the student would be required to utilise their own laptop). The student will be embedded within the Russian and East European Studies department at the university, and will be supported through regular supervision meetings.

How to apply

Closing date: 30 April 2026

Application format: CV (2 sides), cover letter (1 side indicating how your experience fits the remit of the placement opportunity), and a completed ESRC placement and funding permissions form.

Applications should be submitted to: Jon Oldfield – j.d.oldfield@bham.ac.uk

Anticipated start date: May/June 2026

Recruitment process

The host organisation is responsible for processing the applications received for this opportunity and applications will be processed as follows:

Applications will be assessed by the Network Plus team to determine fit with the task as outlined.

The most suitable candidate will be invited for a short, informal chat (online) to serve as an opportunity for both parties to check understanding and discuss the objectives for the placement.

Host contact details

Any queries about this opportunity should be addressed to the host organisation.

Please direct queries to **Jon Oldfield**, j.d.oldfield@bham.ac.uk