**Applying for a PhD**

All PhD projects advertised with the Natural History Museum are in conjunction with other universities/institutes and/or Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs). When applying for a PhD, make sure you check the application guidelines and deadline of the DTP and/or university associated with the project, as they may vary.

We recommend that you get in touch with the supervisors to discuss the projects you’re interested in before applying. You can find the contact information of all museum supervisors via the adverts on these pages. Contact information of supervisors at other institutions can be found via institutional webpages.

Most PhDs require you to submit a CV, references or details of referees, and a supporting/cover letter, but make sure you check these requirements on individual adverts. Many DTPs and universities also have their own tips and advice on how to apply for a PhD, and information on how they assess applications.

Applicants are expected to have been awarded or be predicted to achieve a first-class or strong upper second-class undergraduate degree in a related subject. Although many successful applicants do have a Masters degree, this is not mandatory unless your undergraduate degree was in a very different field from that which are interested in pursuing a PhD in.

The cover letter is your opportunity to tell the supervisor why you’re the right candidate for their project, so make sure you speak with them in advance and give yourself enough time to think about and write your letter. Whilst specifics of individual DTPs might vary, here are some ideas to keep in mind when writing your cover letter. Remember to write a different cover letter for each project you apply to.

* **Talk about the project!** What about the project interests and inspires you? Why are you applying for this project specifically?
* **Why does this DTP/university/institute/supervisory team appeal to you?** i.e. as well as researching the project, look at the other work your supervisor has done, or the training opportunities that the DTP offers. Why is this something you want to get involved with?
* **What skills have you acquired that are relevant to this project?** If you’ve done research or have academic experience that overlaps with the scope of the project, that’s great, but maybe you’ve got relevant work or voluntary experience, too.
* **What skills have you acquired that are relevant to doing a PhD?** Transferable skills are really relevant here e.g., commitment to a long-term goal, project management, communication skills, team work. These don’t have to be limited to a degree: if you’re applying from the workplace, think about the skills you’ve acquired in your job.
* **Why are you passionate about science?** Is there something you’ve read in the news that you found particularly interesting? Have you done any science communication or engagement work? Why do you want to pursue a PhD? Here’s your chance to show why you’re a motivated and passionate scientist of the future!