PHD GRANT "DIGITAL HUMANITIES AND HERITAGE STUDIES"

IFRA-Nigeria and University of Ibadan

Deadline for application: 29 October 2025

The "French Institute for Research in Africa" (IFRA-Nigeria) based at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, is funding one PhD student at the University of Ibadan as part of a project in digital humanities with a focus on heritage studies. A co-supervision of University of Ibadan and IFRA Nigeria will be offered.

The grants have a strong link with the valorisation and dissemination through digitisation of the Lagos National Museum Archives and aim to give an important input to the research about archives and their digitization, decolonial processes and the practices of restitution of artefacts or archives. The "archival turn" questions the very notion of the archive, particularly when it is produced in a colonial situation. What kind of history of domination can the reading of archives provide? What do these documents tell us about the colonial vision of African societies? How the archives participate to the debate of the culture and identity and are instrument of "invention of traditions", sometimes constructing a folkloric vision of their own archives and local "traditions"? The classification and use of the archives say a lot about their political and colonial aim, for example when we come across "intelligence reports". A critical approach is fundamental to deconstruct the logic of power and the way culture is seen, even at present, as an instrument of domination of a narrative. Also, the debates surrounding digitization are not economically and politically neutral: at present days, the fact that many of Africa's digital projects are hosted on Western servers raises questions about the "ownership" of archives, their access and the long-term sustainability of digitization. These questions are pursued by the research on the Museum of Lagos Digital Archives project, founded by French institutions, with an aim of sustainability and open access. In this sense, the analysis of archives can also lead us to reflect on the construction of a museum inherited from the colonial period: how do museum staff perceive, think about and use nowadays these archives? What is the impact of their digitisation? What about the reception and understanding of the « return » through digitalization? Providing access to archives is then a must: how the Nigerian institutions can take (symbolically and economically) advantage of this process?

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Academic quality of the research proposal: link with the topic, originality, feasibility.
2. The inclusion of an ethnographic fieldwork research with a methodology clearly mentioned (participant observation, interviews etc… but also some more innovative methodologies linked to audio-visual means or productions).
3. Candidates' profile: a good result in a Master's degree in Human and Social Sciences or/and Digital Humanities is essential for admission to the PhD programme.
4. A calendar of the research within the 3 years and a previous contact with supervisors both at UI and IFRA, before the application.

IFRA-Nigeria is committed to equal opportunities and inclusion and strongly supports applications of women and minorities.

How to apply

Applications should be submitted using the dedicated email posted on the scholarship call: o.edafe@ifra-nigeria.org

Applicants are required to have obtained admission or submitted an application for a PhD place at the University of Ibadan before applying for the scholarship. The already admitted applicants must not have defended their pre-field proposal.

Supporting documents:

- CV (maximum of three pages)
- Research proposal (3000-3500 words, including references and a bibliography)
- Degree certificates and transcripts

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What is the expected duration of the PhD?

The funding lasts 3 years, the PhD candidate is supposed to complete her/his thesis in 3 years.

What about the amount of the scholarship?

Each scholarship will be fully funded for the three years.

Are there other advantages?

In addition to financial support, successful applicants will benefit from access to scholarly platform made available by IFRA-Nigeria. As such, they are expected to play an active role in the life of IFRA-Nigeria as it relates to the area of the applicants' field of study. Successful candidates will have to conduct the PhD studies at the University of Ibadan and at least one of their supervisors will be an academic from IFRA-Nigeria.

Is there a specific format for the CV or the personal statement?

No, there is no specific format, however, please ensure that the documents you provide include relevant information and are succinct (do not include religion or origin).

Contact

In case of further questions, please contact Mrs Uzuazor Edafe Okosodo, Secretary, Communication and Logistics Assistant, IFRA-Nigeria: o.edafe@ifra-nigeria.org