

Opening Lines: further information

Developing inclusive leadership, supportive community, and bold writing practices for future generations of arts, humanities and social sciences researchers

About the programme

Opening Lines is an inclusive writing, research and professional development programme for Early Career Researchers (typically 1-5 years post-PhD) in the arts, humanities and social sciences, prior to the publication of their first academic monograph. The programme takes a 'whole person' approach to academic writing, aiming to establish sustainable approaches to independent research and publication at postdoctoral level. It welcomes postdoctoral early career researchers at all stages on their pathways towards monograph publication, including those on precarious or short term research contracts for larger projects, those in established or temporary academic posts at the start of their careers, and those who are returning from care-related leave or who have taken a career break.

Based on principles of mindful self-compassion, self-enquiry and creative writing, Opening Lines fosters supportive cultures of trust between participants, with the aim of establishing long-term peer-led communities of practices for future career pathways in academia and beyond. Because of this focus on inclusion, wellbeing and community, the programme is particularly beneficial for Early Career Researchers from underrepresented backgrounds and/or with protected characteristics.

The programme is designed and directed by [Dr Jenny Chamarette](#), who has over 15 years' professional experience in Higher Education, with a specific focus on research leadership in equality, diversity and inclusion.

Opening Lines was first launched at the University of Cambridge in 2021, convened by Asiya Islam. You can find out more about the programme by reading some of Asiya's insights [here](#).

The Opening Lines programme will take place at Oxford from **Tuesday 15th February to Tuesday 7th June 2022**. The programme has five components:

1. **Four 3-hour interactive workshops** are the foundations of the programme. The workshops are designed to build trust and supportive networks between participants, as well as providing techniques for managing the practical, personal and social aspects of academic writing in the professional workplace. Each workshop combines writing practices and exercises, evidence-based models to support professional practice, personal exploration, and time for small and large group discussion and reflection.
2. **Four 2.5-hour facilitated peer review sessions** providing a supportive space for participants to give and receive feedback on a short writing extract. The focus is on developing confidence in building and sustaining positive, inclusive and supportive methods of self- and peer-evaluation as an alternative to hierarchical models of academic critique.
3. **Fortnightly 3-hour unfacilitated writing sessions**, together as a cohort
4. **One 2-hour evaluation and action planning session**, combining focus-group evaluation methods with a closing circle for participants to reflect on how they might like to build and sustain the community of the programme, as well as their own research and writing pathways.

5. **One 1:1, 1-hour writing coaching session** designed to help each participant take the next steps in their writing practice and independent research. The approach is holistic and person-centred, providing detailed feedback on writing, as well as coaching on broader obstacles and opportunities for professional development.

The total time commitment required for the programme is therefore 48 hours across 17 weeks; see the full programme below. Sessions will take place online, via Zoom, on Tuesdays from 09:45 to 12:45. There is no cost to participants.

It is essential that participants commit to participation in 100% of the programme sessions. Please do not apply for Opening Lines if you are unable to commit to attending all sessions.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Session type</i>
Tuesday 15 February, 9:45am-12:45pm	Workshop 1 – developing shared principles, themes for future workshops, introduction to writing and the group. <i>Building trusted networks; barriers to writing; nurturing your writing self</i>
Tuesday 22 February, 9:45am-12:45pm	Writing session
Tuesday 1 March, 9:45am-12:45pm	Workshop 2 – <i>finding your voice; audiences and readership (including subject areas); translating thesis to book</i>
Tuesday 8 March 9:45am-12:5pm	Writing session
Tuesday 15 March 9:45am-12:5pm	Peer feedback session 1
Wednesday 16 March 9.30am OR 10.30am OR 12pm	One-to-one writing mentoring
Tuesday 22 March 9:45am-12:45pm	Writing session
Tuesday 29 March 9:45am-12:45pm	Peer feedback session 2
Wednesday 30 March 9.30am OR 10.30am OR 12pm	One-to-one writing mentoring
Tuesday 5 April 9:45am-12:45pm	Writing session
Tuesday 12 April 9:45am-12:45pm	Workshop 3 - <i>creative non-fiction, narrative hooks, and other writing tactics</i>
Tuesday 19 April 9:45am-12:45pm	Writing session
Tuesday 26 April 9:45am-12:45pm	Peer feedback Session 3
Wednesday 27 April 9.30am OR 10.30am OR 12pm	One-to-one writing mentoring
Tuesday 3 May 9:45am-12:45pm	Writing session
Tuesday 10 May 9:45am-12:45pm	Workshop 4 – <i>Proposals, pitching, taking the plunge</i>
Tuesday 17 May 9:45am-12:5pm	Writing session
Tuesday 24 May 9:45am-12:45pm	Peer feedback Session 4
Wednesday 25 May 9.30am OR 10.30am OR 12pm	One-to-one writing mentoring
Tuesday 31 May 9:45am-12:45pm	Writing session
Tuesday 7 June 10am-12pm	Feedback and evaluation session (1 hour)

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a **postdoctoral** researcher (i.e. your PhD/DPhil viva must have taken place before 31st January 2022)

- Be actively engaged in conducting research in one or more Humanities or Social Science disciplines, as defined by the University of Oxford (see <https://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/faculties-and-units> and <https://socsci.web.ox.ac.uk/>)
- Be working towards a research-based academic monograph (applicants can be at any stage in the process, from 'idea conception' onwards)
- Be available and committed to the duration of the programme
- Have an association with the University of Oxford, as defined by one of the following:
 - You hold a current contract of employment (for teaching and/or research) with the University of Oxford or one of its constituent colleges (the contract must be active on 31st January 2022),
 - You have been an enrolled postgraduate research student at Oxford at some point within the calendar year 31st January 2021 – 30th January 2022,
 - You have held a contract of employment ((for teaching and/or research) with the University of Oxford or one of its constituent colleges at some point within the calendar year 31st January 2021 – 30th January 2022 **and** are seeking to pursue an academic career.

We will ask you at the point of application to describe your eligibility for the programme, and will be in touch with you if we require further information. If you have any questions in advance of your application about this aspect of the eligibility criteria, please email caroline.thurston@humanities.ox.ac.uk (for Humanities researchers) or eleonor.pritchard@socsci.ox.ac.uk (for Social Sciences researchers).

How to apply

Eligible applicants should complete an application form at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/OpeningLines/>. You will be asked to provide short answers to the following questions:

- Tell us about the monograph you are writing, or plan to write
- What would you like to gain from the programme?
- What challenges have you faced in the transition from doctoral to post-doctoral research?

Applications will be reviewed by members of the Researcher Development teams in Humanities and Social Sciences, by the Opening Lines programme director, and by a former participant of Opening Lines.

The deadline for receipt of applications is **9am on Monday 31st January**.