

Guidelines for the BritCult Postgraduate Forum

updated in April 2026

Format and Overall Aim

The forum is open to all postgraduates with a PhD project in British cultural studies (either via their primary sources, their geographical, political-historical, or economic scope, and/or their research methods). The Postgraduate Forum usually is the opening of the annual BritCult Conference and is intended to give people the opportunity to present their research projects and obtain expert feedback on their work in progress. There are no thematic restrictions and the papers usually offer a very broad variety of topics. There will usually be a mixed audience from students, other postgraduate researchers, to professors (of approximately 30 people).

Apart from succinctly giving the audience an idea about what your research is about, the presentation should aim at opening up discussions and an exchange of ideas. You present your PhD project to get constructive feedback and further suggestions from experts in British cultural studies. Not everyone will be familiar with the finer points of your topic, hence the input most probably will concern your project outline, methodology, line of argumentation, and selection of material.

Formal Framework

- Papers should be in English and not longer than 15 minutes.
- They will be followed by a discussion also not longer than 15 minutes.

Structure of Your Paper

- Present a "work in progress".
- Give the audience a brief introduction into your topic: what are you dealing with? Which texts/materials/data are you using? What is so fascinating or intriguing about it that you want to spend quite an amount of time on it?
- State your basic premises, hypotheses and research questions: what do you try to find out? Why?
- Which methodology and which theoretical approaches do you use?
- Give one or two brief examples, but avoid centering your paper around the presentation of a case study.
- Point out problems that you have not been able to solve so far, or open questions, which the audience might be able to answer.

Style of Presentation

- On the one hand: no one expects a shining, finished product.
- On the other hand: "work in progress" does not mean that you should give an improvised, spontaneous talk.
- Make sure that you keep to the time limit (15min).
- If you are not sure about the availability of technical equipment and/or software, or if you have special wishes, contact the organisers in advance.
- Bring a backup presentation on a USB stick to be on the safe side.

Discussion

- The discussion is not an exam. You do not have to have an answer for every question; you do not have to be able to spontaneously integrate all the contributions into your project. Take notes and think about them later. Feel free to ask people to clarify their point.
- Take questions and remarks as productive input for your project and not as personal criticism.
- You will not be able to discuss your topic exhaustively in the 15 minutes following your presentation. Fortunately, the postgraduate forum opens a three-day conference where you can talk to people, discuss your project during the coffee breaks, and collect new ideas.