



BRITISH  
ACADEMY

*for the humanities and social sciences*

# BRITISH ACADEMY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2016–2020



The study of peoples,  
cultures and societies  
– past, present and future

# PURPOSE, ROLES AND VALUES

## PURPOSE

The British Academy's purpose is to inspire and support high achievement in the humanities and social sciences throughout the UK and internationally, and to promote their public value.

## ROLES

We have three principal roles:

**A Fellowship** of distinguished scholars from all areas of the humanities and social sciences, elected by their peers, that facilitates the exchange of knowledge and ideas and promotes the work of our subjects.

**A Funding Body** that supports the best ideas, individuals and intellectual resources in the humanities and social sciences, nationally and internationally.

**A Forum** for debate and engagement that stimulates public interest and deepens understanding, that enhances global leadership and policy making, and that acts as a voice for the humanities and social sciences.

## VALUES

At the heart of all our work are the core values of excellence, independence and diversity.

**Excellence:** We are committed to the highest standards across all the Academy's activities, from recognising and supporting outstanding research, especially by early career scholars, to our engagement with policy development and public discussion.

**Independence:** We seek, in all our activities, to safeguard scholarly interests and academic freedom, independent of government and of individual university or other particular interests.

**Diversity:** We are committed to promoting and encouraging greater diversity in those we fund, elect to our Fellowship, and work and partner with, reflecting the excellence of the research community, wherever it is found.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Our work will be shaped by four strategic objectives:

1. Championing the Humanities and Social Sciences
2. Advancing Excellent Research
3. Shaping Policy and Public Understanding
4. Delivering Global Leadership in Research

## 1. Championing the Humanities and Social Sciences

*To promote our disciplines, uphold their value and importance and stimulate public interest in them.*

Our priorities:

- a. To speak for the humanities and social sciences, to government, policy makers, opinion formers, the media and other funding bodies, demonstrating their contribution to economic and social well-being and the cultural fabric of society.
- b. To provide leadership in shaping national policies to support and protect the health of our disciplines and strengthen core academic skills, with special attention to languages and quantitative methods.
- c. To strengthen public engagement with humanities and social science research, and with the work of the Academy and our Fellows, through a wide range of events and communications activity.
- d. To use the Academy's convening power to create forums where informed views on higher education and research can be exchanged and debated.

## OUR PURPOSE

The British Academy's purpose is to inspire and support high achievement in the humanities and social sciences throughout the UK and internationally, and to promote their public value.

### 2. Advancing Excellent Research

*To create funding opportunities for outstanding people and innovative research across the humanities and social sciences, and to recognise and celebrate high achievement.*

Our priorities:

- a. To provide a range of distinctive, largely response-mode funding schemes that support the best and most original researchers across the humanities and social sciences.
- b. To provide, in particular, fellowships for the most outstanding early career researchers, bringing on the next generation and contributing to a sustainable research community.
- c. To communicate new scholarly findings, through a programme of academic conferences and meetings, lectures and publications.
- d. To elect into our Fellowship humanities scholars and social scientists from both the UK and overseas who have attained the highest distinction in research.
- e. To seek other ways of developing and recognising a wider range of outstanding researchers beyond our Fellowship, especially early career scholars.

### 3. Shaping Policy and Public Understanding

*To enhance understanding of the contribution of humanities and social science research to public life and debate, and their role in the process of making public policy.*

Our priorities:

- a. To strengthen understanding of human behaviour, and how communities, societies and cultures function and change.
- b. To influence and help shape public policy, highlighting the contribution our subjects make in addressing policy challenges.
- c. To convene policy makers, Fellows and other experts to provide focused, evidence-based advice on current policy issues, ranging from economic growth to constitutional change, international relations to the environment, cultural heritage to social well-being.

### 4. Delivering Global Leadership in Research

*To develop UK research in international arenas and provide leadership that helps shape the research agenda on global challenges and strengthen understanding of other cultures and societies.*

Our priorities:

- a. To provide focused funding to enable UK researchers to work in other countries and on international topics, including support for a network of British research institutes overseas, and to attract outstanding researchers to the UK.
- b. To strengthen understanding of other societies and their histories and cultures, and encourage the sharing of international perspectives and insights.
- c. To strengthen global research links and expertise by developing relations with international academics and other non-UK partners that promote research excellence and foster collaboration and mobility.
- d. To influence European and wider policies as they affect the funding and conduct of UK humanities and social science research.



## UNDERPINNING THE STRATEGY

We will nurture the people and resources necessary to underpin the delivery of our strategic objectives and maintain our position as the recognised champion of the humanities and social sciences in the UK.

### People

In all our activities the Academy will seek to deliver our strategic objectives by:

- Drawing on the expertise of our Fellows and funded researchers to build a community where research can be shared, and new ideas developed, exchanged and brought to the public domain
- Attracting, developing and retaining our dedicated and talented staff
- Working closely with partner organisations and our wider academic and research communities.

### Resources

We will seek to generate the resources necessary to achieve our strategic objectives by:

- Making effective and efficient use of our facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs of our Fellows and our wider academic and public communities.
- Running our grant schemes and fellowships cost-effectively, without excessive bureaucracy, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of our Fellows
- Seeking ways of generating strategically coherent funding streams that add value and strengthen our financial independence
- Exercising proper standards of governance and oversight at all times.

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