

British Academy Costed Extensions: FAQs

Q. The British Academy is offering costed extensions – who can benefit from this?

A. The British Academy has received additional funds from BEIS limited to specific schemes (Postdoctoral Fellowships, Mid-Career Fellowships, and Newton International Fellowships) and to be used to offer limited funding for costed extensions. Within each scheme, priority is being given to holders of Fellowships that are most immediately due to finish, and who can make a case that their research progress has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Each eligible award holder will need to justify what difference an extension is expected to make.

Q. Will the extension be available to all Fellowship award-holders?

A. No, the funding available will be offered only to those most imminently due to finish Fellowships from eligible schemes and for whom the impact will most immediately be felt. The Academy will continue to make the case for additional funding to assist other award-holders who have been impacted but whose awards will not finish until later.

Q. Why are some award-holders not included in this offer? Does the Academy not recognise that all researchers have been impacted by the pandemic?

A. The Academy receives its funding for researchers from BEIS and has been given funds for limited specific schemes (see above). This funding is only available in the current and next financial years. We will continue to make the case for further help, in particular in future years to those who are at an earlier stage of their award.

Q. What is the Academy doing to help those who hold other awards?

A. The Academy continues to offer all award-holders the flexibility to request no-cost extensions and, where permitted and relevant, virement of funding between purposes, for example when travel costs are no longer viable. Cases for changes of this kind can be submitted via the Change Request Form process in the BA Flexi-Grant system and discussed with relevant staff administering the scheme to which the award is relevant.

Q. How will award-holders be able to make the case for a costed extension?

A. The Academy will contact relevant award-holders eligible to apply for a costed extension and invite them to make a case by completing a special Costed Extension Request Report in relation to their award in the Flexi-Grant system. They will have until early August to submit the request.

Q. Will the costed extension be granted automatically?

A. No, a case will need to be made stating clearly how the research has been impacted by the pandemic and justifying the extension. A clear statement of what additional activities (research and dissemination) will be expected to take place during the extension, if granted, will be required and the expected outcomes of this. The Academy expects to treat all requests sympathetically and for the process to be completed rapidly and with a light touch, but a clear case needs to be made. This was the message given by the Government in allocating the additional funds to funders like the Academy.

Q. Who will judge whether the case for justification has been adequately made?

- A. Assessment will be made by relevant Academy staff in consultation with the relevant Vice-President. Appeals against any negative decision may be made to the Chief Executive in line with the Academy's standard Code of Practice.

Q. How long will the costed extension last?

- A. Each approved extension will be for a maximum of 6 months, except for the Mid-Career Fellows (MCFs) which will be for a maximum of 3 months. Requests for extensions of less than the stated maximum will also be considered.

Q. What if a no-cost extension has already been agreed for Covid-related purposes – will this costed extension be in addition to that period?

- A. No, the costed extension will be expected to run from the original end date of the Fellowship and will replace any no-cost extension that has already been agreed for Covid-related purposes.

Q. What if an award-holder already has an offer of a permanent post? Can the extension be transferred to a new institution?

- A. It is unlikely that a case for a costed extension can be successfully made where an award-holder already has a new job to which they can move. The aim of the Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme is to help early career researchers develop their careers to the point of being outstanding candidates for permanent posts. If they have secured such a position it is difficult to see the case for the extension making sufficient difference to their longer-term career development.

Q. What is the financial basis of the costed extension? Is it on a full economic costing basis and will the employing institution be invited to recalculate costs?

- A. The costed extension will be calculated on the same basis as the original award and will essentially offer a repeat of the costs of up to the last 6 months (or 3 months for MCFs) of the existing schedule of payments. The Academy is unable to offer costs towards increments or inflation to be built in, to enable clear modelling of the use of the available funding. The employing institution will not be invited to recalculate costs.

Q. How will receiving a costed extension impact on any reporting requirements for the Fellowship?

- A. The final report form will need to be submitted as usual within three months of the revised end date of the Fellowship. An additional question will be included in the final report form requesting specific information on additional outcomes that the costed extension enabled.