

The British Academy/Wolfson Research Professorships 2021-22 Competition

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Personal eligibility

I do not hold the title of ‘Professor’ am I eligible to apply for the Wolfson Research Professorships?

Yes, candidates need not already hold the title of ‘Professor’ before applying, but those who do not should bear in mind that there is no commitment placed on the employing institution to regrade their post on their return to ordinary duties.

Will my age be considered in establishing my eligibility for the Wolfson Research Professorships?

No, the Academy takes no account of an applicant’s physical age in determining eligibility for these awards, but eligible applicants will be in an established post from which they will not expect to retire during the course of the award.

I am employed in an established post at an Independent Research Organisation. I do not have teaching commitments, but my time to focus on research is constrained by my other duties. Am I eligible to apply for the Wolfson Research Professorships?

Yes, we expect that curators based in IROs who are research-active but whose time to focus on their own research is limited by their day-to-day duties will be eligible to apply to have time freed from those normal duties to concentrate on their own research project. They will be eligible to apply and will be considered by the assessors as equally relevant to this scheme as university-based staff.

I am not affiliated to a UK academic institution. Can I apply for a Professorship?

Eligibility criteria are clearly stated in the scheme notes. Eligible applicants must have a permanent or fixed-term post at a UK university or other research institution such as an Independent Research Organisation (this includes museums and galleries) and be resident in the United Kingdom. Independent scholars are not eligible to apply.

I am on a full-time contract but only wish to dedicate and charge part of my time to the Professorship. Can the overall cost of the award be shared with funding from another body on a part-time basis?

No, the Professorships are paying for a replacement for the award-holder who is expected to devote themselves fully to the research for which the Professorship has been awarded during the period of the award, except for those duties from

which they cannot be relieved as stated in the application form. The award cannot be held on a part-time basis to enable time to be focussed on another project at the same time.

I am employed on a part-time contract – am I eligible to apply for a Wolfson Research Professorship or are only full-time researchers eligible?

Applications are accepted from researchers currently employed on both full and part-time contracts (i.e. anything less than 1.0 FTE). Funding is expected to be used primarily to meet the costs of replacement teaching, with any balance available to the award-holder as research expenses.

These awards are not covered under the Full Economic Costing (FEC) regime. The value of each award is a fixed sum of £204,000 of which £189,000 or £63,000pa for three years is for the costs of a replacement and £15,000 or £5,000pa for three years is for travel and research expenses.

I was unsuccessful in applying to the Academy in a previous round. Are resubmissions accepted?

Yes, resubmission of the same proposal may be made once in the Wolfson Research Professorships scheme. An applicant is eligible to re-apply with a revised or different proposal so long as they still meet the eligibility criteria.

2. Subject remit

I am working in the Life Sciences/Engineering/Medical Sciences. Am I eligible to apply?

No, Applicants for the BA/Wolfson Research Professorships should be intending to pursue original, independent research in any field of study within the humanities or social sciences.

I am working in a field that involves primarily creative, practice-based outputs. Am I eligible to apply?

Potentially, yes. The remit of BA funding schemes does not include primarily practice-based outputs such as in musical composition and performance, visual practice, creative writing and film-making. Such outputs will be considered to fall within the BA's remit only when they form part of an integrated project of demonstrable critical or historical significance.

3. Funding

I am on a fixed term contract which covers the proposed period of the Professorship, would I be eligible to apply for the scheme?

Yes. It is essential, however, that the period of the contract covers the whole proposed period of the Professorship. The purpose of the scheme is to allow successful applicants to obtain time freed from their normal teaching and administrative commitments. If the member of staff's current contract ends during the proposed Professorship period, or before it starts, but there is a commitment from the University to renew the contract, then also, yes, the applicant would be eligible.

I do not have a permanent position or a fixed-term contract that covers the duration of the Professorship. Can I apply?

No. This particular scheme is only open to applicants who are in permanent posts or have fixed-term contracts that last longer than the term of the award. The purpose of the funding is to buy out the time of those in permanent or long-term academic posts, not to support scholars to obtain such posts.

Does the total contribution towards time buy-out of at least £189,000 need to be spent evenly across the three years of the award (i.e. £63,000 p.a.)?

No, the award is offered on a flexible basis to pay for the employment of a replacement to relieve the award-holder of normal duties. If allowance for inflation, for example, means less is needed in year 1 and more by year 3 that will be fine so long as the total contribution is not exceeded.

Can costs be claimed for work carried out before the start of the Professorship?

No, costs cannot be retrospectively claimed for work that has already taken place before the start of the Professorship. A project can have started before the official start of the Professorship but only costs incurred after the start date of the award can be claimed for.

4. Institutions

Who can offer institutional authorisation for my application?

Institutional authorisation must be given by the registered approver in the British Academy Flexi-Grant® Grant Management System (GMS). This is variable at each institution and will often be the Research Grants or Contracts Office or equivalent. You should seek advice at your home institution.

I have a permanent or fixed-term position at more than one institution. I want to make an application which buys me out of more than one institution, is this possible?

You are welcome to make an application that covers the time being spent at multiple institutions, and to have either of them named as the lead institution. Only one institution will be able to receive the funding from the British Academy, however there is no stipulation preventing that institution from distributing this to another.

5. Current British Academy award holders

I am currently a Principal Investigator or Co-Applicant on another British Academy grant. Am I eligible to apply?

If you are currently a Principal Investigator or a Co-Applicant on another Academy research award, you may not apply as either Principal or a Co-Applicant on another research award until the conditions relating to the award held have been met. (This does not apply to the BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant, for more information please see below).

I am a British Academy Award Holder for the BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant. Am I eligible for the Wolfson Research

Professorship?

Applicants currently holding a BA Small Research Grant are not excluded from applying.

6. Start date

If successful, when would I be able to start the award?

The earliest start date is 1 September 2022, and the latest start date is 1 January 2023.

I will be on maternity/paternity leave during September 2022 to January 2023, can I defer the start date of the Professorship if successful?

Applicants would need to return to their permanent/fixed-term contract by or on 1 January 2023 (the latest date that the Professorship can start). This is, however, negotiable with the aim of offering appropriate flexibility - the applicant could, for example, arrange to return for as little as one 'keeping-in-touch' day within the September to January start period window and then extend the award accordingly. So, the award would formally start in the relevant period, but can be extended to cover the remaining leave.

My project is due to start before the decision date. Can I apply?

No, as the scheme notes specify the earliest date that research may commence is the earliest start date for the Professorship i.e. 1 September 2022.

What is the latest date I can apply to start my project?

As the scheme notes specify, the latest date that research must have commenced by is the latest start date of the Professorship i.e. 1 January 2023.

7. References

Does my referee have to be based in the UK?

No, references written in English from appropriate overseas referees are welcomed by the Academy.

Can 'person X' be my referee?

The supporting statements from your referee will be reviewed by assessors and their relationship to you will be taken into consideration. The general rule is that they must be as external to you as possible but still have a good knowledge of your academic abilities and output.

8. Evaluators

Can an evaluator be someone from my department?

No, the evaluators should be external people within your field who can be perceived to be as independent as possible and who would be able to assess the feasibility of the project. Applicants will need to submit the details of four people who could act as an external evaluator of the project.

9. Publishing

When I apply for funding through any of the awards offered by the British Academy, can I include in the application the cost of APCs (Article Processing Charges) to enable any articles that may arise from the research to be published in learned journals that offer a ‘Gold’ open access option?

No. Currently the Academy’s position is that costs of publication are not eligible costs.

Does the Academy require the outputs of the research it funds to be made available in any open access format?

No, this is not currently a stipulation of any Academy award.

10. Other opportunities

If I am unsuccessful, can I apply to a future round? When will the next round open?

If unsuccessful in the current round, applicants can apply to the scheme again provided they meet all of the eligibility criteria. Whilst we expect further rounds of the scheme, they are not expected to be offered on an annual basis and we do not have any further information regarding deadlines at this time.

11. COVID-19

The Academy realises that the COVID-19 pandemic makes planning extremely difficult and that researchers’ ability to work and travel may be affected by changing restrictions. The British Academy and the Wolfson Foundation will therefore endeavour to remain flexible and supportive to the award-holders for the duration of their Professorship.