

Call for Applications**The British Academy and the Royal Irish Academy
Knowledge Frontiers Symposium
The Future**

31st January & 1st February 2023
London, United Kingdom

Introduction

1. The Royal Irish Academy and the British Academy are inviting applications for early career researchers in the humanities and social sciences to attend a research collaboration symposium on the broad theme of ‘the future’. The symposium aims to incentivise and establish international engagement and collaboration between early career researchers from Ireland and the United Kingdom from a broad range of disciplines within the humanities and social sciences, encouraging the exchange of ideas across both disciplinary and national boundaries and supporting the development of bilateral, international research collaborations.

Purpose and Focus

2. At a time of unprecedented social, cultural, environmental and technological change, the perspectives of humanities and social science researchers in understanding the role of cultural forces (histories, identities, ethics, narratives, values) in imagining and living the future are needed as never before. The urgent need for these perspectives is increasingly being recognised as many of the greatest challenges facing humanity will not be technological, but rather social and cultural.
3. The ‘future’ is also shaping the approach and methodology of humanities and social science disciplines with the emergence of big data, large-scale humanities infrastructures, immersive technologies and digital heritage. Shifting disciplinary boundaries, the proliferation of diverse communities of knowledge, practice and thought suggest the need for inquiry into the nature of knowledge and evidence, and their formative requirements and professional moorings today and in the future. This requires an interdisciplinary and international outlook, as well as of effective co-design and co-production of knowledge between the expert and the lay or the theoretical and the applied.
4. The symposium invites participants to think of ‘the future’ across different times and contexts to explore and address the need for creative interventions in social and environmental crises, how communities of the past have managed (or otherwise) rapid social upheaval and technological change, and whether we can humanise the digital future.
5. It is expected that the futures theme will be explored through sessions focusing on:
 - Futures of the past, such as experiences of rapid social and cultural change, evolving notions of heritage, and how imaginations of the future can be rooted in our pasts;
 - Environmental futures, such as humanities and social science approaches to climate change, migration, natural disasters and global inequalities;
 - Co-designing and co-producing knowledge in the future, such as examining how valid knowledge, knowledge associations and evidence are developed,

communicated and disseminated, and the factors which can serve as barriers in different political, historical, linguistic or cultural settings.

6. The symposium format will allow for extensive discussion and debate, with considerable time set aside for this and wider networking opportunities.
7. The symposium will also provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about the different programmes and activities of the Royal Irish Academy and the British Academy.

The Symposium

8. The symposium will bring together up to thirty early career researchers (understood as up to seven years after obtaining a PhD) based in the UK and Ireland from across the humanities and social sciences to discuss key questions around the theme of ‘the future’. The symposium is designed specifically to encourage collaboration and networking between early career researchers. In advance of the symposium, participants will be able to discuss their research and exchange ideas among themselves; begin to discuss the session themes; and make connections for possible future activities.
9. In order to incentivise long-term collaboration and networking, seed funding will be made available for which participants can apply. These collaborations must be international in their composition and can be either partnerships or groups. Time will be set aside on the final day of the symposium for a ‘sandpit’ style session in which participants write up their proposed collaboration and submit applications by the end of the session. The application form for seed funding will be circulated in advance of the symposium to ensure participants are fully aware of the opportunity and requirements.
10. In addition to funding several collaborative proposals, the symposium will aim to provide opportunities for a range of other outputs. Participants, for example, could contribute to a publication focused on the symposium theme, either through individual papers or in partnership with other symposium participants, record audio outputs or write posts that will be compiled into an online blog series dedicated to the symposium supported by the Royal Irish Academy and the British Academy.

Eligibility

11. For the purpose of this symposium, early career is defined as being within a seven-year period of the award of the applicant’s doctorate.
12. Participants must be based at institutions in Ireland or the United Kingdom.
13. Participants must have fluency in spoken and written English.
14. Participants must be able to travel on dates and times, and on flights or other modes of transportation chosen by the British Academy and the Royal Irish Academy.
15. Attendance is mandatory for the entire symposium. If this is not met it will result in a participant not being eligible for the seed funding available.
16. UK-based attendees may only participate in two British Academy Knowledge Frontiers Symposia in any 24-month period.

Selection Criteria

17. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a. Proven research interest and/or experience in the symposium's theme;
- b. Commitment to interdisciplinary engagement and research;
- c. Value of symposium to applicant's career development.

Application Process

18. Applicants should provide a completed application form (including a CV which should not exceed two pages).

19. Applications must be submitted online using the British Academy's Grant Management System (GMS), [Flexi-Grant®](#). The deadline for submissions is Wednesday 7 December at 17.00 (UK time).

20. We will seek to notify successful applicants by early January.

Logistics

21. The symposium will take place in London, United Kingdom from 31st January to 1st February 2023. The costs of travel and accommodation for participants will be covered following agreement in advance with the organisers.

Further Information

Further information is available from Saima Saleem at s.saleem@thebritishacademy.ac.uk.

About The Royal Irish Academy

The Royal Irish Academy/Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann is an independent, all-island learned society established under Charter in 1785. The Royal Irish Academy is Ireland's scholarly academy, an independent and strong voice serving the public good through debate and analysis in research and higher education. The Academy's members are chosen for their distinguished contributions to scholarship and research in the sciences, humanities, social sciences and public service. Membership is by election and considered the highest Academic honour in Ireland.

About The British Academy

The British Academy is the UK's national body for the humanities and social sciences – the study of peoples, cultures and societies, past, present, and future. 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. 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 understandings, that enhances global leadership and policy making, and that acts as a voice for the humanities and social sciences.