

## **Sections Review: Proposed questionnaire (subject to Council approval)**

### **Introduction.**

Thank you for taking the time to give your views for the review of Sections 2023. The Academy has committed to undertaking such a review every five years or so, and given the recent consultation and launch of the British Academy Strategy 2023-27 [link], the timing felt particularly opportune to undertake a review this year. Reviewing the way we organise our Fellowship is important to ensure that we can deliver on our commitment to a thriving Academy rooted in contemporary excellence, with effective Fellowship engagement, and support diversity in all its forms.

The review and the questions are focussed on Sections matters only. In this exercise we are not asking for your views on broader issues around the Academy's strategic aims, governance or the role of Fellows more broadly. We are also not seeking views on the Academy's election processes as part of this exercise, as we want to focus our attention on the Sections themselves at this time. However, we accept that many of these issues will inevitably overlap with Section matters and we do of course welcome suggestions and comments from Fellows on any of these topics at any time.

The questionnaire should take around XX minutes to complete. You do not have to answer every question.

You may raise issues related to your specific Section, but we also encourage practical suggestions about how we organise the Academy's Fellowship as a whole. Your responses will be treated entirely confidentially. However, if you would like a direct response to an issue, there is an option to provide your name.

As well as the survey we will be encouraging Sections and other committees to discuss these issues structures over March/April 2023, to ensure we collect a balance of individual and collective views. Once all feedback has been received, a working group will develop a set of options and of course there will then be further opportunities to discuss and consult on these as they are progressed. We recognise that for any changes to work, they need not only to be practicable but also to have the broad support of the Fellowship itself. Our recommendations will be brought to AGM 2024 for formal approval.

[data privacy statement]

1. My primary section [drop down box]
2. Year of Election to the Academy
3. The current Sections structure is fit for purpose. [1-5]
  - a. Would there be more effective ways of organising the Fellowship? [link to regulations]
  - b. What does your Section (or other Sections you know) currently do well? What could be improved?
4. Sections could do more to support the Academy's ambitions in terms of disciplinary, institutional and individual diversity? [1-5]
  - a. Suggestions and comments
5. Sections have disciplinary coherence [1-5]
  - a. Does your Section (or other Sections you know) have important disciplinary coherence OR an interesting interdisciplinary range OR would a different disciplinary distribution between Sections be preferable?
6. My Section is the right size [1-5]
  - a. Are other Sections you know the right size? Would the Academy benefit from more, smaller Sections or fewer larger ones?
7. Section Standing Committees (SSCs) are fit for purpose [1-5]
  - a. Is there more that SSCs could do to support their Section?
8. We should review how Sections are named and determined [1-5]
  - a. There are differences in how Sections are named or determined – e.g. some are subject specific, some are defined by period, whilst some cover multiple and distinct research areas. Should we consider reviewing this, and if so, in what other way should we name/determine Sections? Should the current nomenclature of Sections (H1, S1 etc.) be dropped completely? [1-5]
9. The Academy should ensure that the Section structure faithfully reflects, and changes with, the disciplinary landscape across humanities and social sciences, including new and emerging sub-disciplines. [1-5]
  - a. What data or process could it use to do this?
10. We should find ways to facilitate greater interaction between Fellows across disciplines [1-5]
  - a. Suggestions and comments
11. The humanities/social sciences divide is fit for purpose [1-5]
  - a. Could we arrange ourselves in a different way?

12. The current number of 52 new elected Fellows annually, broadly split between humanities and social sciences, feels about right. [1-5]
  - a. If this does not feel right to you, should we elect more or fewer every year? (Is there an ideal number of new Fellows that we should be electing every year?)

#### OTHER MATTERS

13. I support the recent proposal of having six to eight ring-fenced interstitial and independent (i.e. not Sections-based) candidates elected in the annual round of elections. [1-5]
  - a. Should these Fellows be additional to the current 52 elected, or absorbed within the 52? Might these routes to Fellowship be the kind of initiative that could usefully be built upon in the future?
14. I would support a review of the value and purpose of the Corresponding Fellowship. [1-5]
  - a. How could they be better utilised?
15. Cross-membership is a real positive in terms of interdisciplinarity, cross-fertilisation and the sharing of ideas about differences between Sections and Section practices. [1-5]
  - a. Or would we be better off with a reduced focus on cross-membership (by, for example, capping the numbers each Section can have)? If we think they are a good idea in principle, are there ways in which we can expand them further to ensure they are an integral part of how the Sections do their business?
16. Any further comments or suggestions not covered by the themes above.
17. Your responses will be treated entirely confidentially. However if you would like a response to any issues raised, please provide your name.