

Strategic Plan 2023-2027

# Understanding our world, shaping a brighter future



## **We mobilise the humanities and social sciences to understand the world and shape a brighter future.**

From artificial intelligence to climate change, from building prosperity to resolving conflicts – today's complex challenges can only be addressed by deepening our insight into people, cultures and societies across time and place.

We invest in researchers and projects across the UK and overseas to create new knowledge and insights, we engage with the public in fresh thinking and debates, and we bring together scholars, government, business and civil society to influence policy for the benefit of everyone.

### **Our strategic priorities for 2023-2027**

# **Strengthening and championing the humanities and social sciences**

# **Mobilising our disciplines for the benefit of everyone**

# **Opening up the Academy**



## Foreword



# Addressing the unprecedented challenges that societies around the world face gives an even greater urgency for deep understandings of cultures, histories, geographies, languages, values, institutions, economies, behaviours, laws and beliefs – all of which are the subjects of the social sciences and humanities.

This Strategic Plan sets out how over the next five years we want to strengthen knowledge and insights into peoples and societies across time and place and to share them widely with others so that people around the world can learn, progress and prosper wisely. Prosperity is multi-faceted and includes (but is not limited to) economic security, health and wellbeing, peace and stability, a thriving democracy. It also extends to the prosperity of our planet.

The Academy has an important role to play in sustaining innovative, discovery research in social sciences and humanities through the funding we provide. We are building our SHAPE Observatory to become a trusted repository of data on the health and value of our disciplines. We are conscious of the changing nature of research and we are looking at how we might respond to new areas, such as the growth of digital humanities and the development of computational social sciences, as well as supporting more traditional modes of scholarship.

We are also seeking to open up the Academy in several ways. We want to continue our efforts to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in all that we do, reaching out to and drawing in more diverse people, knowledge and ideas. We will also strengthen our support for early career researchers through our Early Career Researcher Network and participation in the UK Young Academy, our global writing workshops and other initiatives. We aim to enhance our strategic engagement with the British International

Research Institutes in Europe, the Middle East and Africa and our international collaborations with other academies through groups such as the G7 and G20 and partners in the Global South.

We want to do more to enable all researchers, both those we fund and those we do not, to mobilise their knowledge and learning for public benefit. We want to use our convening power more effectively to enable the insights and expertise of our Fellows and other researchers in the social sciences and the humanities to engage with key societal concerns nationally and internationally, many of which require deep cultural and historical insights to address. We are also committed to doing more to share the benefits and value of the research that we fund through reviewing our publications activities and developing an enhanced programme of public events. To that end we are transforming our basement from a warren of pokey rooms into new, state of the art events spaces and investing in a significant upgrade of our digital facilities, enabling us to reach new participants in London and world-wide through our enhanced technology.

We want to build on our role in establishing SHAPE (Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts for People and the Economy / Environment) and to work with others to bring about greater recognition of the essential contributions these subjects make to our collective wellbeing and individual prosperity. This includes engaging with those in the natural, physical and life sciences, both critically and collaboratively.

In the last few years, for example, our Fellows, grantees and staff have worked closely with colleagues in the medical sciences through the pandemic on a global programme on vaccine hesitancy, with environmental scientists on nature-based solutions to address climate change, and with computer scientists on ethics and AI. We will actively seek other opportunities to work with colleagues across a range of disciplines through our international and national funding, policy and public engagement programmes, connecting knowledge to find new insights and address complex problems. The Academy is also keen to strengthen its links in the coming years with the cultural sector and the arts more widely. Our Fellows are the intellectual leaders and drivers of

all that we do, serving the Academy in many ways, not least through peer review of our many research award schemes, from our Postdoctoral Fellowships to our Global Professorships. Our staff are very effective in enabling the Academy to engage in our huge range of activities with professionalism, skill and efficiency. I am incredibly proud that the Academy was at the forefront of developing the Researchers at Risk scheme, working with the other national academies, Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA), government and other funders. We work productively with many partners, funders and collaborators in the UK and overseas but remain steadfast in our independence and impartiality. As we collectively seek to move the Academy forward over the next few years, we will do so on the basis of values which we think characterise the British Academy: integrity, diversity, creativity, rigour and collaboration.

It is an immense privilege to be President of such a vital and vibrant institution, and I look forward to working with the whole of the Academy's community to realise our ambitions.

**Professor Julia Black CBE**  
President of the British Academy

# About the Academy



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We are the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences.

We are a *fellowship* of outstanding scholars and distinguished researchers.

We are a *community* for everyone engaged in the humanities and social sciences.

We are a *funder*, supporting research and working for the benefit of the public.



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What we are for

Our purpose is to *deepen* and *share* understanding of people, societies and cultures across time and place, enabling everyone to learn, progress and prosper.

What we do

We *mobilise* the humanities and social sciences to understand the world and shape a brighter future.

From artificial intelligence to climate change, from building prosperity to resolving conflicts – today’s complex challenges can only be addressed by deepening our insight into people, cultures and societies across time and place.

We invest in researchers and projects across the UK and overseas to create new knowledge and insights, we engage with the public in fresh thinking and debates, and we bring together scholars, government, business and civil society to influence policy for the benefit of everyone.



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**What we believe in**

We are guided by the following values in everything we do:

*Integrity* – being honest, independent, impartial, trustworthy, and fair

*Diversity* – fostering a culture that is enriched by different perspectives

*Creativity* – seeking new knowledge and insights

*Rigour* – pursuing the highest levels of excellence and intellectual distinction

*Collaboration* – working effectively and respectfully with everyone.



# Our

Our vision is to put the humanities and social sciences at the heart of understanding our world and shaping a brighter future.

# vision

## Our strategic priorities for 2023–2027

We have identified three strategic priorities for 2023–2027 to realise our vision.

### *Strengthening and championing the humanities and social sciences*

It is central to our role as the national academy for humanities and social sciences to support, strengthen and champion these disciplines. We will work with others to help bring about greater recognition of the essential contributions our subjects make, emphasising that understanding people and societies across time and place is core to our humanity and provides knowledge and insights which are essential to fostering a better, more sustainable and more prosperous world.

### *Mobilising our disciplines for the benefit of everyone*

We want to be relevant and responsive to society as well as to the academic communities we represent and serve. We want to use our convening power and expertise in understanding people, societies and cultures—past, present and future—to address major contemporary challenges. We are committed to sharing more widely the benefits and value of the research that we fund, enabling people to learn, progress and prosper.

### *Opening up the Academy*

We want to inspire as many people as possible to engage with the humanities and social sciences and we will embed principles of equality, diversity and inclusion into everything we do. We want to broaden the diversity of our Fellowship, our staff and our funded researchers and to help foster a research community that is more representative of society. We will broaden the Academy's community by engaging with researchers that we do not currently fund, as well as those we do, particularly at early stages in their careers. We will also extend our national and international reach through new physical and digital facilities at our redeveloped London base, and through an enhanced programme of public events across the UK for students, scholars and everyone with curious minds.

These strategic priorities will guide our work over the next five years and with our values will guide how we achieve our core objectives:

- 1 To invest in the very best researchers and research
- 2 To celebrate and promote the humanities and social sciences
- 3 To inform and enrich debate around society's greatest questions
- 4 To ensure sustained international engagement and collaboration
- 5 To make the most of our people, partnerships and resources to secure the Academy for the future.

This Strategic Plan is underpinned by a more detailed operational plan and performance reviewed annually by our Council according to agreed criteria.

# Objective 1

## *To invest in the very best researchers and research*



### Context

Our flagship funding schemes for researchers are designed by our Fellowship and staff and are central to our role in facilitating research of the highest quality and sustaining a vibrant and innovative research culture. Our investment in humanities and social sciences allows the most talented scholars to tackle the most pressing new issues, challenge mainstream thinking or bring fresh insights, perspectives and methodologies to the oldest questions, generating knowledge that benefits everyone. We are different from many other research funders in that our funding schemes focus primarily on individual researchers, supporting them at various stages of their careers to pursue innovative, high quality research through individual awards and our small grants scheme. We recognise the particular challenges that researchers face today, and so we are especially keen to nurture the ambitions of the next generation. We are committed to fostering the growth of a more diverse research culture, and to doing more to attract applicants from institutions and communities of researchers who do not currently apply to our schemes. To this end, we can build on significant progress in reviewing our funding programmes, our processes, and current outcomes in terms of the diversity of applicants and grants awarded.

### Our vision for 2027

We will continue to be a sector-leading provider of fellowships and grants at key career stages, evolving our schemes in the light of changing needs, and we will be recognised for our critical role in supporting UK research to remain world-leading. We will work in partnership with other academies and other funders to help bring together STEM and SHAPE research through promoting work across disciplines, enabling new kinds of discovery and applied research. We want to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into our funding schemes and the support we provide. The research base we fund will become more diverse, inclusive and broadly reflective of society as a consequence of our actions, initiatives and partnerships, informed by and promoted through our Early Career Researcher Network. The latter will have been expanded to become a nationwide UK presence and, in doing so, we will have drawn many more researchers into the Academy. With our support, this dynamic community will have begun to play a vital role in fostering the exchange of experiences, ideas and best practice that will fuel the skills and career ambitions of the next generation of talented scholars. We will also support researchers to pursue research-related careers outside academia. The fruits of the research that we foster will be disseminated to interested audiences in innovative as well as established ways, and our funded researchers will be recognised for their contributions to the UK and global knowledge base, and for the contributions that they make to society as a whole.



## To deliver our vision we will

- Continue to offer funding schemes which play a distinctive role in the funding landscape. We will maintain our emphasis in our Fellowship and grant schemes of being responsive to the interests of researchers and supporting knowledge generation through discovery, and we will also offer targeted or thematic funding in our key areas of policy focus. We will seek to acquire new funding streams to provide targeted support for excellent researchers in under-represented groups in academia
- Encourage innovation in what we fund and how we fund. We will fund research which challenges existing thinking and creates new knowledge, insights and analysis. We will introduce new approaches to grant assessment, continuing our trialling of randomised allocation. We will continue to encourage and enable our funded researchers to experiment with new modes of scholarship, public and policy engagement, dissemination and new technologies
- Work in partnership with the other national academies and other funders on joint agendas and to help bring together STEM and SHAPE research through promoting work across disciplines, enabling new kinds of discovery and applied research. This includes participation in joint initiatives such as the Young Academy
- Expand the regional footprint of our Early Career Researcher Network and make full use of the insights arising from engagement with a greater diversity of researchers to pioneer sector-leading activities, including interventions aimed at less-represented groups
- Engage with current and past award holders to bring our funded researchers closer to our Fellowship, to gather feedback in order to refine the support we provide, and to help us develop the insights and examples which demonstrate the value of SHAPE research
- Create opportunities to foster research, support researchers, and promote national and international collaboration, including through engagement with the British International Research Institutes (BIRI), and activities including work-in-progress seminars, writing workshops, and grant-writing webinars
- Invest further in existing national and international research spaces and infrastructure
- Respond to evolving trends in the academic publishing landscape, and lead on new initiatives for supporting the dissemination of research, including open access



## Supporting researchers at key stages in their career

We offer a range of funding programmes to support talented UK-based researchers, including the following.

Postdoctoral Fellowships are targeted at early career researchers. Around 45 awards are made each year, contributing up to 80% of the recipient's salary and effectively freeing up the researcher from teaching and administrative responsibilities, and enabling them to focus on the next research project that will boost their prospects of a permanent academic post.

Mid-career Fellowships help outstanding individual researchers, already established in their field, to devote time to complete a major piece of research. Around 30 such awards are made each year, with a strong emphasis placed on public engagement and dissemination of the results.

Small Research Grants enable researchers to develop a research project by covering a range of associated costs up to £10,000 in total. Around 350 grants are made each year, supporting the work of around 100 UK institutions and research bodies. Recipients also report that these grants are invaluable in leveraging more substantial research funding.

We are committed to listening to researchers and to ensuring that our portfolio evolves to meet their needs and sustains a thriving research ecosystem.

## Encouraging innovation and partnership to tackle today's key challenges

Our Innovation Fellowships enable researchers in the humanities and social sciences to partner with organisations and businesses in the creative and cultural, public, private and policy sectors to address societal challenges that require innovative approaches and solutions.

These year-long Fellowships are open to early and mid-career researchers, who apply with a partner organisation. The scheme aims to improve links between researchers, policymakers and industry at local and regional levels, as well as mobilising knowledge and translating insight into better policy and practice.

Topics explored by recent recipients of this Fellowship include: strategies for tackling the County Lines phenomenon; trademark infringement in the era of social media; 'creative ageing' and 'social prescribing' to enhance wellbeing, and ways of improving the visibility of working women in historical archives. A parallel, policy-led scheme supports researchers working directly with the Foreign and Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and other UK Government departments.

## The Early Career Researcher Network

We know that the first few years as a researcher can be challenging. We set up the Early Career Researcher Network to help strengthen the skills and career prospects of many more humanities and social science researchers than we are able to fund.

The pilot scheme, launched in Scotland, the Midlands and South West, now has more than 2,000 members across 47 institutions. Members benefit from access to a wide range of skills development resources and in-person and online activities hosted by the Academy, other funders and research institutions, and by ECRs themselves.

A dedicated online community and directory of over 1,500 academics enables them to extend their professional networks, forge collaborations and explore issues key to ECRs.

The Network is very much ECR-led, so that it can develop to meet the needs of researchers themselves. As well as supporting the next generation of talented scholars, the Network is already bringing a greater diversity of perspectives into the Academy, helping to inform our thinking and ensure that we continue to nurture the research ecosystem as a whole.

# Objective 2

## To celebrate and promote the humanities and social sciences



### Context

As the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences, we play a leading role in championing these disciplines, celebrating and promoting their contribution to our understanding of the world and what it means to be human. We also inform and enrich policy relating to the funding and assessment of research, and on education and skills more generally. As the UK higher education sector, and the humanities in particular, continue to experience significant challenges, we are committed to advocating for our disciplines and to providing them with strategic leadership. With others, we worked to create the concept of SHAPE and we recently launched the SHAPE Observatory, which monitors the health of our subjects and demonstrates their value. In recent years we have also significantly expanded our public engagement activity, seeking to demystify research, share fresh discoveries and inspire curious minds at events across the UK and at our annual Summer Showcase, and through our digital channels, awards and prizes.

### Our vision for 2027

We want the significance of humanities, social science and arts research to be better understood and widely supported. Our SHAPE Observatory will be established as the independent, authoritative and objective resource for the sector to monitor and access evidence regarding the health and development of the social sciences and humanities disciplines and their wider value for society. We will have used this evidence base to crystallise a Vision for SHAPE research and innovation in 2030', setting out the strategic vision for the role of our subjects in society and their place in the research and innovation ecosystem. Our advocacy, media and campaign work will have increased awareness and understanding of the SHAPE concept, and our engagement with academia, funders, business, civil society, media and the policy community will have initiated a positive evolution in perceptions regarding the contemporary relevance and value of our subjects. Our public programmes will be enhanced and reach more people, both in the UK and internationally, as we make full use of the transformation of our London home and the investment we are making in new technology. The Academy will have become a global platform for the latest thinking and research for understanding the human world and shaping a brighter future.

## To deliver our vision we will

- Use our insights and expertise as a research funder, combined with the insights from our own disciplines, to engage with policymakers and other funders to shape the research and innovation landscape, transform the policies which support the wider ecosystem, and develop a SHAPE Vision for 2030
- Invest significantly to grow the SHAPE Observatory, scaling up its capabilities to analyse the health of our disciplines, to help safeguard the sustainability and capacity of the SHAPE research base and to demonstrate its value
- Provide the resources to galvanise academics, funders, business leaders, policymakers and the media to mobilise the SHAPE concept positively and embed SHAPE ideas and innovative solutions as central to enabling individual and societal progress – including on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Consider the Academy's role in engaging schoolchildren in the social sciences and the humanities by mapping existing provision, identifying where the needs are, and exploring potential collaborations
- Develop and enhance our programme of events for everyone with curious minds. We will capitalise on the physical transformation of our central London home to convene talks, debates and exhibitions, as well as expanding our engagement across the UK
- Make full use of our new digital facilities, and experience gained from our innovations during the COVID-19 pandemic, to expand dramatically the national and global reach of our events and engagement, providing digital as well as physical spaces for sharing diverse perspectives and facilitating constructive and engaging conversations
- Develop our journal to promote new ideas and research, engage with issues of political, cultural and social importance, and to stimulate interdisciplinary debate



## Demonstrating the value of the humanities and social sciences

Insights from our SHAPE Observatory shed light on the relevance of the humanities and social sciences today. Findings from our review of evidence published in 2020 include:

Humanities and social sciences graduates underpin key sectors of the UK economy. Eight of the ten fastest growing sectors in the UK economy employed more graduates from the humanities and social sciences than from other disciplines.

SHAPE graduates are highly employable and resilient to economic upheaval. Contrary to popular perception, employment rates for SHAPE graduates and postgraduates are almost identical to those for their STEM counterparts, at just under 90%.

SHAPE graduates have the skills that are valued by employers now, and are key to thriving in 21st century work. These include critical thinking and analysis, creativity, communication skills, and capacity for independent learning as well as working effectively with others.

## The Summer Showcase

Each June, we throw open our doors for a lively two-day festival of ideas. The Summer Showcase offers free public talks, performances and exhibits which bring to life the best new thinking for a wide-ranging audience of curious minds, students, policymakers, government, funders and the media.

From contemporary experiences of migration, to the evolution of Chinese calligraphy; and from the relationship between poetry and wellbeing, to the genesis of conspiracy theories – each Showcase demonstrates the exceptional breadth of humanities

and social sciences research and how it enhances our understanding of the world, and our place in it today.

As well as inspiring visitors, the Showcase encourages researchers to develop innovative approaches to public engagement and enter into dialogue that will, in turn, enhance research. The event attracts several hundred schoolchildren each year, and almost half of public visitors are under 35. The event includes a dedicated 'late' for early career researchers with funding advice and opportunities for networking.

## Recognising excellence in our disciplines

Each year we recognise and celebrate achievement across the humanities and social science through a range of medals and prizes. These are awarded on the recommendation of specialist committees and presented each autumn.

Our Book Prize for Global Public Understanding, worth £25,000 and open to authors anywhere in the world, is awarded to the best non-fiction book that demonstrates original research and advances understanding amongst public audiences. Recent recipients include *When Women Kill: Four Crimes Retold* by Chilean writer Alia Trabucco Zerán, and *Waves Across the South: A New History of Revolution and Empire* by historian Professor Sujit Sivasundaram.

The President's Medals recognise outstanding service to the cause of the humanities and social sciences. Past winners include historian and broadcaster Professor David Olusoga, author Margaret Atwood and the factchecking organisation Full Fact.

We are also able to recognise excellence in specific fields such from archaeology to linguistics, literature to political science, through generous gifts and bequests from Fellows and supporters.

## Objective 3

# *To inform and enrich debate around society's greatest questions*



### Context

Social sciences and the humanities help us understand people, societies and cultures across time and place. They foster creativity, imagination, knowledge and insight, and already make a tremendous contribution to understanding of ourselves and those around us, and to addressing the greatest challenges facing our world today. Our policy work mobilises research in the humanities and social sciences and leverages our unique capacity to convene world-class expertise from Fellows and other scholars, global thought leaders, business and civil society. We bring rigorous, authoritative and independent perspectives to major policy challenges globally, nationally and locally. Over the period of the last strategy, we made a series of significant and distinctive policy contributions across a wide range of topics, including data and artificial intelligence; truth, trust and expertise; the implications of Brexit; purposeful business and the economy; education and skills; climate change, just transitions and nature-based solutions; health and societal wellbeing; and inequalities and the post-COVID future. Alongside our policy activity, we enable many more people to engage with topical insights from SHAPE research through our public programme of talks and discussions and through our digital presence, both of which have grown substantially in reach and authority over the past few years. At a time when many debates within our society have become polarised and antagonistic, we have a vital role to play in enhancing the rigour, balance and ambition of public debate.

### Our vision for 2027

We will marshal insights, ideas and innovations from the social sciences and humanities to help understand, frame and tackle the greatest cultural, economic and societal challenges of our time – from mitigating climate change and addressing inequalities, to harnessing digital innovation for social good and catalysing citizen engagement. We will help set agendas in policy and political debate, and shape understanding and practices through our analysis, reports and publications and by using our convening power to drive discussions. We will be known for providing knowledge and insights which derive from the very best cutting-edge thinking in social sciences and the humanities, in truly interdisciplinary and intersectoral ways.

## To deliver our vision we will

- Deliver ground-breaking insights into how our governance and political institutions need to be equipped to face the major policy challenges ahead, from net zero to resilience to future global shocks like the Covid-19 pandemic, starting with a major commission for the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology on science, trust and policymaking
- Support deep policy research and ambitious state-of-the-art programmes which achieve significant change on a global scale through an innovative 'Global Convening' call, focussed on tackling the global challenges of Just Transitions, 'Good' Cities and Global (Dis)Order
- Establish new collaborative programmes of research with civil society and community-based partners to explore the role of social and cultural services, institutions and infrastructures in supporting our quality of life
- Continue our extensive focus on vaccine engagement in the G7 and the drivers of historic and geographic health inequalities here in the UK working with colleagues in the medical sciences
- Explore the ways in which digital technologies, tools and practices shape and are shaped by our society to understand 'what makes a good digital society?', looking at how advances in digital technology help to address, rather than exacerbate, inequalities
- Build on our funded research and policy work on environmental sustainability and biodiversity to further develop our engagement with partners internationally, helping to deliver a just transition and continuing to emphasise the role of the SHAPE disciplines in delivering a sustainable net zero future in the UK
- Combine more in-depth thinking with agile, responsive interventions into evolving policy and societal issues and debates, informing and enriching the nature of policy discussion
- Enhance the role of SHAPE researchers in co-creating solutions by building collaborations across government, civil society, business and academia and by bringing in often-overlooked groups or perspectives
- Deploy innovative models for marshalling insights from the social sciences and humanities to inform and enrich thinking, including strengthening our policy lab functions, applying cutting-edge engagement techniques and convening high-profile commissions to produce landmark policy studies



## Shaping policy responses to COVID-19

We moved swiftly to mobilise the insight and expertise of our Fellowship and funded researchers in response to the pandemic. This work took many forms, and often involved close collaboration with the other national academies.

Rapid reviews of existing research were undertaken concerning, for example, behavioural aspects of adherence to rules regarding face masks, vaccine uptake and misinformation. Workshops explored issues such as the factors making certain communities more vulnerable to COVID-19, and we provided

briefings for MPs and policymakers on a variety of associated topics. Our explorations of the long-term societal impacts of the pandemic, and the lessons for policymakers, culminated in two landmark reports for UK Government – 'Understanding the COVID decade' and 'Shaping the COVID decade'.

The pandemic highlighted the critical need for SHAPE insights alongside those from STEM in tackling major challenges facing humanity, and we continue to explore ways to foster a positive post-COVID future.

## Just transitions to a sustainable future

Tackling the issues raised by climate change and biodiversity loss requires behavioural, historical, political, economic and other forms of insight from the humanities and social sciences, alongside contributions from science and technology.

A key focus of our policy work is on 'just transitions' – on how to ensure that the shift away from carbon-intensive activities and into a greener economy minimises harm to people and communities whilst maximising the benefits of climate action.

An extensive programme of activity has explored a wide range of issues such as the potential impacts of

decarbonisation across different sectors and industries globally, and on livelihoods, the young and already marginalised communities; the particular challenges of achieving just transitions in cities and urban areas, and lessons from Indigenous peoples and 'nature-based' solutions.

Insights from this work have been shared with policymakers both nationally and internationally, including at the COP, and demonstrate the critical role of our disciplines in helping to achieve better and more equitable outcomes for people and planet.

## Generating insights to help create a better digital society

The first major project in our Digital Society programme focuses on technology and inequality. In response to a request from the Government Office for Science, it asks how advances in digital technology can mitigate or exacerbate existing inequalities, and how the latter pose challenges for access and skills related to digital technology.

The project draws upon the expertise and participation of an extensive network of policy, practice and research communities. The initial findings have informed six

lessons for public policy to reduce digital poverty and its impacts across the UK.

Building on our earlier work on data, artificial intelligence and the future of work (with UCL Public Policy), and exploring themes touched on in our childhood policy and COVID-19 work, the project illustrates how the Academy's convening power can be used to tackle major questions about the impact of technology on peoples, cultures and societies.

## Objective 4

# To ensure sustained international engagement and collaboration



### Context

The most pressing problems facing the world today are global, complex and interconnected, and addressing them requires international collaboration and the mutual sharing of knowledge, insights and ideas. Our international engagement is based on principles of collaboration, equitable partnership, mutual support and capacity building. We facilitate the international mobility of researchers and enable collaborative co-production of cutting-edge research. We contribute to policy around the world by mobilising research which promotes a deep awareness of the immense diversity of perspectives; the plural and often deeply contested ways of understanding the world and the challenges that it faces. We seek to foster the research capacity of our partners abroad while also enabling the development of early career scholars. We also support the eight British International Research Institutes (BIRI), a diverse group of global research partners in the arts, humanities and social sciences: these are institutions with a long history, which are working to provide hubs of international collaborative SHAPE research. Our network of Corresponding Fellows, comprising distinguished scholars based overseas, enhances the Academy's international reach.

### Our vision for 2027

We will develop further the Academy's role as an international convening organisation that is outward-facing and inclusive in tackling shared global challenges with equitable partnerships across the world, particularly the Global South. We will work with government and other funders to shape policy on how international research is facilitated and funded, insisting on the need for collaborative, co-productive international research programmes which keep the understanding and knowledge provided by the humanities and social sciences at the centre of the international research agenda. We will continue to advocate for and support the international mobility of scholars, such as through the Global Talent visa, enabling researchers to come to the UK and for UK-based researchers to work around the world. We will bring expertise and insights in the humanities and social sciences to a wide range of global challenges. We will work with international organisations to provide UK leadership in the humanities and social sciences, engaging with researchers and policymakers regionally and globally. We will also seek to expand and build on the success of the Researchers at Risk scheme by securing funding to help scholars seeking refuge from conflict zones in many parts of the world. We will support the BIRI to become more interconnected, more financially resilient and equipped to engage in more independent and collaborative research. We will have deepened our relationship with our Corresponding Fellows and drawn in more scholars from the Global South to our work. Through each of these actions and activities, we will deliver our aim of strategic and global leadership for our disciplines and the researchers who work on them, no matter where they are based.

## To deliver our vision we will

- Work with international partners and organisations, such as through the G7, nationally, regionally and internationally to develop broad programmes of work that recognise and support the value of the Academy's reputation as a neutral voice with a long-term perspective
- Strengthen and expand our support for international collaboration, such as through our international fellowship programmes and Knowledge Frontiers Symposia
- Work collaboratively with UK and overseas partners to continue to expand and make more inclusive our networks, and to build relationships dedicated to the creation of co-operative and co-productive international partnerships. Emphasise the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion by including people and organisations from the broadest range of countries in our partnerships
- Promote the value of international mobility through our work and in our engagement with government, providing opportunities for UK-based researchers to work abroad, and for researchers to move to the UK to develop their career, for example through the Global Talent visa
- Develop and expand the Researchers at Risk scheme, supporting academics at risk, working with government and other partner organisations
- Work with the BIRI to develop their potential, focusing on strategic planning, governance, financial sustainability, communications, engagement, and opportunities for collaboration
- Enhance the global geographical diversity of our Corresponding Fellows and explore ways in which we can bring Corresponding Fellows closer to the Academy and involve them in more of our work



## Nurturing global research talent and mobility

We provide a range of opportunities that enable researchers in the UK and internationally to engage together, grow collaborations, develop their careers and to undertake innovative research.

Our Knowledge Frontiers Symposia provide opportunities for early career researchers to collaborate internationally to initiate new partnerships and develop their cross-disciplinary experience. These are complemented by the International Writing Workshops that support early career researchers to stimulate professional networks, provide advice on career development and promote the uptake of research emanating from developing countries. Our International Fellowships are aimed at the most promising early career researchers internationally to pursue their own high-quality and innovative lines of research.

Our International Interdisciplinary Research Projects build on these opportunities by supporting larger-scale teams of researchers to collaborate internationally to engage with questions concerning the relationship between different forms of expertise. Our Global Professorships then support internationally-recognised mid-career and senior academics to pursue ambitious, curiosity-driven research that breaks new ground.

These, and other programmes and activities including our role as an Endorsing Body for the Global Talent visa, strengthen the UK's research capacity and ability to engage with and be engaged by international researchers.

## Supporting Researchers at Risk

In March 2022, in response to the threat to researchers in Ukraine, we partnered with the Council for At Risk Academics (CARA) and the other UK national academies to create Fellowships for Researchers at Risk. The programme supports academic researchers to continue their work with a UK institution, and includes financial support to cover salary, research expenses, and living costs for researchers and their dependants.

As of the beginning of 2023, 144 Fellowships had been awarded to researchers across the physical and

biological sciences, medical sciences, engineering, humanities, social sciences and the arts, with the involvement of more than 60 UK host institutions.

Stephen Wordsworth, Executive Director of CARA, said of the scheme: "Academics around the world caught in conflict carry in their heads the accumulated intellectual capital of their societies; so it is vital to save them now, so that one day they can return to help build better, safer societies."

## The British International Research Institutes

As independent bodies supported by the British Academy, the eight British International Research Institutes (BIRI) are dynamic centres of multi-disciplinary arts, humanities and social science research located in regions crucial for the UK's international engagement. Their reach covers the Mediterranean and southern Europe (Greece and Italy), Turkey, and five BIRI in the Global South (covering much of Africa, the Middle East, Iran and Central Asia).

They combine invaluable regionally-embedded expertise and networks with strongly outward-facing contacts, partnerships and collaborations with UK and international institutions, serving as bridges for the multi-lateral flow of knowledge and skills, and

making unique connections between scholars and wider communities in ways that would otherwise never happen. Their resources include world-class libraries, laboratories and archives, providing meeting points for a great diversity of researchers, and offering key support for rising next-generation scholars through targeted funding opportunities.

The BIRI generate and co-create world-class new knowledge across a vast time-depth, from research on human origins and the first civilisations, to present and future-facing challenges such as the impact of climate change on the politics of water, or the causes and consequences of forced migration. All are committed to the promotion and protection of cultural heritage.

## Objective 5

*To make the most of our people, partnerships and resources to secure the Academy for the future*



### Context

We are fortunate in our ability to draw upon an exceptional range of talented people, partnerships and resources in pursuit of our ambitions. The distinguished Fellows who make up our Fellowship are the intellectual leaders and drivers of all that we do, serving the Academy in a variety of ways including providing expert peer review, and leading and supporting our policy and public engagement work. We benefit from a dedicated and expert staff, who have driven forward our work with ingenuity and fortitude in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have reviewed all our activities and employment practices through the lens of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and have begun to embed a more inclusive culture and approach to all that we do. Our home in central London is a major asset, which will be transformed following the refurbishment we have recently begun. We are continuing to invest in digital technology to transform the way that we work. Less tangible but no less important are the networks of partnerships and relationships that we have cultivated with the other national academies, universities and other educational institutions, government, policymakers, business, philanthropic partners and civil society. As we embark on our strategy for the next few years, we are taking steps to protect and nurture each of these so that they become powerful enablers of all that we set out to achieve.

### Our vision for 2027

Our Fellows, including Corresponding Fellows, will be more engaged in the work of the Academy, and we will have built on our recent People Strategy and the experiences of the pandemic to ensure that our staff are engaged, motivated and appropriately supported in their work. Our EDI working groups will have informed a range of strategic responses and initiatives to diversify the Academy and those we fund, and we will have made clear progress regarding both our Fellowship and staff. We will also have developed and implemented a dedicated strategy for using our leadership role and influence to help create a research base more broadly reflective of society. We will have made significant progress in diversifying our income, and in self-generating a greater proportion of our core operating costs through the work of our trading subsidiary, Clio. We will have gained additional funds from government and donors to support our funding, policy and engagement activities and to provide a sound financial base for the Academy. We will have strengthened our relationships across government, and with policymakers, the academic community, awards alumni, business, civil society and international partners. We will have completed the transformation of our London home and begun to make full use of our new facilities. Our building will be a beacon for SHAPE subjects and achievements, and an amplifier of all that we do. Our newly refurbished spaces will be vibrant and alive with ideas and conversations involving diverse groups, and our new digital facilities will have greatly enhanced our global profile and reach.



## To deliver our vision we will

- Continue to embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion best practice into all that we do, as a Fellowship, as an employer, as a convenor and as a funder, and use our leadership role to shape a more diverse research base and culture
- Enhance Fellow engagement by piloting new opportunities for intellectual discussion, particularly across disciplines
- Draw our Honorary and Corresponding Fellows more into our activities
- Review the role and composition of our subject sections in order to ensure they appropriately reflect current fields of study within the humanities and social sciences
- Seek to be a model employer in all respects, taking steps to ensure that we continue to attract, retain and develop the best talent, provide appropriate reward and recognition, and foster a supportive culture for everyone
- Complete the refurbishment of our building in Carlton House Terrace and launch our new and transformed spaces in 2024, alongside a refreshed programme of activities and events in London and across the UK
- Evolve the focus of our fundraising, following completion of the capital appeal, to support our long-term ambition to build our reserves, to develop new funding streams to support research and continue existing ones, and to enhance our ability to achieve our vision
- Grow the income from Clio, our trading subsidiary, and enhance its profitability following the post-pandemic return to business in order to strengthen our financial position
- Strengthen our networks and our relationships with those organisations and individuals, nationally and internationally, who can enhance our ability to achieve our ambitions, including government, the academic community, policymakers, business, media, civil society and the other national academies
- Utilise developments in digital technology to enable the successful delivery of our ambitions
- Underpin our strategy with sound governance, risk, financial and performance management, and an enhanced commitment to sustainability, identifying and implementing the appropriate actions to become a net zero organisation



## Unlocking potential through a more diverse research culture

Improving equality, diversity and inclusion is crucial to strengthening the UK's research and innovation ecosystem and fostering new knowledge and ideas that will benefit everyone.

We have partnered with UKRI to create the EDI Caucus, an interdisciplinary network of researchers and practitioners which will identify, assess, and share existing evidence on the effectiveness of current practices. New research will be undertaken where it is needed and insights from the caucus will be used to

test and evaluate new initiatives. The caucus uses a co-design approach led by those with lived experience of exclusion to ensure that interventions designed to improve EDI are robustly assessed.

The evidence base generated will be used to inform best practice across the sector, strengthening its capabilities and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to, and benefit from the UK's research endeavours.

## Transforming our London home

Our home in London's Carlton House Terrace is a beautiful and exceptionally well-located building, but its spaces were not designed with 21st century requirements in mind. We are replacing the warren of small rooms and corridors on the lower ground floors with three large event spaces including a new auditorium.

These new spaces will be beautifully designed and in keeping with our historic building but flexible and digitally equipped, enabling us to host a broader range of events, from lectures and hybrid conferences to workshops and installations.

A new staircase, lift, washrooms and hearing loops will greatly improve accessibility and the experience for our visitors, and the use of sustainable materials and methods will reduce our long-term energy use.

This transformation, due for completion in 2024, is key to our ambition to open up the Academy, and will enable us to welcome and reach more people—Fellows, researchers, policymakers, partners and the public—through higher-quality events, both onsite and online.

## Investing in our staff

Alongside our Fellows, our staff are key to everything we do. We have placed significant emphasis on developing our workforce and enhancing our workplace over the past few years, through a comprehensive People Strategy.

Our workforce planning is now more closely linked to organisational priorities and capability gaps, and we have increased our investment in training and learning and development opportunities. Enhanced policies, processes and reporting have been accompanied by a more strategic approach to developing our culture, underpinned by new workplace values.

At the heart of this is a strong focus on wellbeing, and on diversity and inclusion through the employee lifecycle. Other improvements include enhanced salary and grading structures, pay progression, family-friendly benefits, and achievement of Level 1 in the Disability Confident scheme.

There is more that we want to improve and develop but we are encouraged by strong levels of staff engagement, and proud that our progress has been recognised through CIPD and Great British Workplace Wellbeing awards, and inclusion in the Best Practice Institute's UK Top 100 Most Loved Workplaces.

# Our strategy

Our vision is to put the humanities and social sciences at the heart of understanding our world and shaping a brighter future.

# for 2023–2027 at a glance

## Our three strategic priorities for the next few years

*Strengthening and championing the humanities and social sciences*

*Mobilising our disciplines for the benefit of everyone*

*Opening up the Academy*

## The five core objectives that govern our day-to-day work

1. To *invest* in the very best researchers and research

2. To *celebrate* and *promote* the humanities and social sciences

3. To *inform* and *enrich debate* around society's greatest questions

4. To ensure sustained *international engagement* and collaboration

5. To make the most of our *people, partnerships* and *resources*

## The key enablers of our strategy

Our Fellowship

Our staff

Our funders

Our building, facilities and technology

Our funded researchers

Our Early Career Researcher Network

The research and higher education ecosystem

Our partners and supporters



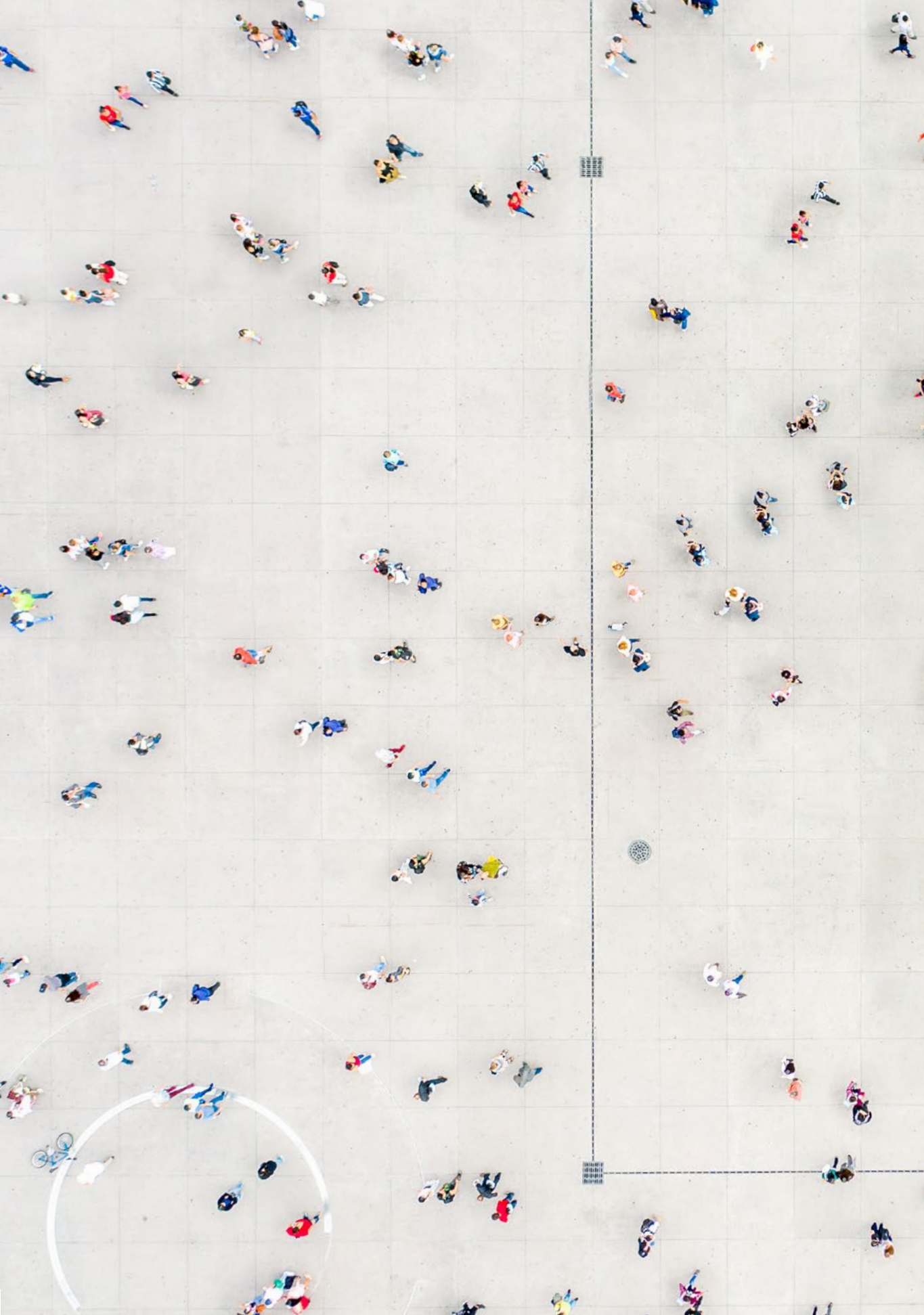
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## Image Captions

- |    |   |    |  |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1  | Orbon Alija. Getty Images.  | 13 | Researcher speaking at the Early Career Researcher Network Midlands launch.  |
| 2  | Professor Julia Black CBE, President of the British Academy.  | 14 | British Academy funded researcher and staff member interacting with members of the public at the interactive exhibition 'The co-evolution of Chinese calligraphy' as part of the British Academy Summer Showcase 2022. |
| 3  | British Academy New Fellows cohort, 2022.   | 15 | Professor David Olusoga Hon FBA OBE, recipient of the British Academy President's Medal 2021, receiving his award from Professor Julia Black FBA CBE, President of the British Academy.                                |
| 4  | Felicia Boshorin, panel speaker at 'The Future of Our Cities' talk at the British Academy Summer Showcase 2022.   | 16 | Solskin. Getty Images.   |
| 5  | Hetan Shah, British Academy Chief Executive and Professor Priyamvada Gopal at the 'Making Research Accessible: Encouraging global cultural understanding through writing' talk at the British Academy Summer Showcase 2022. | 17 | R Frodsham. Wind Farm. Getty Images.   |
| 6  | Jordi Salas. Getty Images.  | 18 | Maki Nakamura. Getty Images.   |
| 7  | Johner Images. Getty Images.  | 19 | Dr Mariia Pschenychna, recipient of the Researchers at Risk fund.  |
| 8  | A member of the public taking part in the virtual reality exhibition 'Reviving the Kusunda language' as part of the British Academy Summer Showcase 2022.   | 20 | British Academy staff member interacting with researchers at an Early Career Researcher Network event.   |
| 9  | British Academy staff member interacting with members of the public at the British Academy Summer Showcase 2022.  | 21 | Fellows interacting at a British Academy Fellows event.  |
| 10 | A member of the public looking through reading materials provided as part of the Garden Talks for the British Academy Summer Showcase 2022.   | 22 | British Academy funded researcher interacting with members of the public at the British Academy Summer Showcase 2022.  |
| 11 | A member of the public taking part in the interactive exhibition 'The co-evolution of Chinese calligraphy, dynasty and democracy' as part of the British Academy Summer Showcase 2022.                                      | 23 | Members of the public at the British Academy Summer Showcase 2022.   |
| 12 | Fellows and researchers speaking at the Early Career Researcher Network Midlands launch.  |    |  |



## **Our core objectives**

- 1. To invest in the very best researchers and research**
- 2. To celebrate and promote the humanities and social sciences**
- 3. To inform and enrich debate around society's greatest questions**
- 4. To ensure sustained international engagement and collaboration**
- 5. To make the most of our people, partnerships and resources to secure the Academy for the future**



### **Find out more**

[thebritishacademy.ac.uk](http://thebritishacademy.ac.uk)

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