

# **Innovation Fellowships Scheme 2025-26, Route B Policy-led (Sustainable Futures) Scheme Guidance Notes**

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Last review date	March 2025
Next review date	March 2027

**Please read the scheme notes carefully.**  
**Incorrectly submitted applications will not be considered.**

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# 1 Aims and Purpose of the Scheme

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- 1.1 The British Academy has been funded by the UK Government, Department for Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT) to continue its support for the Innovation Fellowships scheme.
- 1.2 This scheme provides funding and support for established early-career and mid-career researchers in the Humanities and Social Sciences to partner with organisations and businesses in the creative and cultural, public, private, commercial, or policy sectors that have a base in the UK, to address challenges that require innovative approaches and solutions that are relevant to the UK. Through the Innovation Fellowships, our researchers in the SHAPE community are supported to create new and deeper links beyond academia, enabling knowledge mobilisation and translation, as well as individual skills development.
- 1.3 This call will enable researchers to partner with a central government department for 12 months. Successful applicants will work within specific policy areas set out by their chosen partner. These policy areas broadly correlate to the British Academy's own [Sustainable Futures](#) policy programme.
- 1.4 These Fellowships are designed to ensure close interaction with policymakers, right at the heart of the partner's work. Government departments operate in a context where timely access to high-quality evidence-based analysis might be the difference between success and failure. Exerting influence, negotiating, and leveraging others' power at the right moment is crucial. This can make it difficult for researchers operating outside such organisations to influence policymaking – the Innovation Fellowship Route B: Policy-led Fellowships are designed to help change this.
- 1.5 The British Academy and the partners for this call aim to support up to six Innovation Fellowships in this round. The opportunities and areas of policy interest for this call are discussed below.
- 1.6 Prior to application submission, applicants must not contact the partner organisation regarding the application. Questions may be directed to [grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk).

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## 2 Features of the Scheme

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- 2.1 The Innovation Fellowships is a dual route scheme, consisting of Route A: Researcher-led and Route B: Policy-led. **This call is for the Innovation Fellowships – Route B: Policy-Led (Sustainable Futures).**
- 2.2 Route B Innovation Fellows work with policy partners specified by the British Academy. For this round, the partners are:
- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
  - Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)
  - Government Office for Science (GO-Science)
- 2.3 Henceforth the term ‘partners’ signifies information applicable to the partners for this call listed above. Information that refers to a specific partner is signified by the relevant acronym.
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## 3 Applying to the Scheme

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- 3.1 Applicants should apply to work with **one** of the British Academy’s partners, as above. They should set out how their experience and proposed work meets the requirements of the partner, and how it relates to and would help bring innovative ideas to the policy area they are applying for.
- 3.2 The researcher’s employing institution must be a UK-based Higher Education Institution (HEI) or Independent Research Organisation (IRO). If successful, the relationship with the partner will be managed by the researcher, i.e. the applicant, with responsibility for the success of the award residing with the applicant’s employing institution. The relationship must be conducted in line with the Terms and Conditions of Award.
- 3.3 **The Fellows will finalise the outline of a work programme with the partner after being awarded the Fellowship and applicants are asked to bear this in mind when putting their application together. Applicants are therefore not required to provide a specific research proposal as part of their application and instead, should focus on demonstrating how their skills and experience would make them a good fit with the topics and research areas specified in the relevant scope (see Section 5 & 6 below).**

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## 4 Person Specification

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- 4.1 Applicants must be an early or mid-career researcher based at a UK institution (e.g. a Higher Education Institution or Independent Research Organisation) with expertise in a Humanities and/or Social Science discipline. A range of methodological approaches or perspectives may be appropriate – the requirements of each partner are listed below.
- 4.2 While the British Academy and its partners do not have preconceived ideas about the disciplinary background of Fellows, applicants will need to demonstrate a solid understanding of the relevant policy areas. Fellows will need to assess qualitative and quantitative evidence to produce evidence-based conclusions and/or policy advice/steers. Depending on the nature of the project agreed with the partner, this may require the application of analysis tools (such as Excel and/or a coding package such as R or Python). Strong research and/or evaluation skills from a relevant disciplinary background are required, and applicants would benefit from a background in relevant policy areas, although demonstration of relevant transferable skills and a desire to develop knowledge of a new policy area is also encouraged.
- 4.3 Applicants should be open-minded, and willing to explore new perspectives and innovative approaches. They will have an appetite for working across academia and policy. They will be challenge-driven and receptive to integrating the perspectives, needs and priorities of the partner. They will be prepared to develop their programme of work with the partner, allowing them to work in a collaborative manner, as opposed to undertaking an isolated programme of work.

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## 5 Scope of the Fellowships with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

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- 5.1 Fellows will work with the Landscape Recovery evidence and policy teams, within the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). Landscape Recovery is one of [Defra's Environmental Land Management schemes within the Farming and Countryside Programme](#). The Landscape Recovery scheme is for landowners and managers who want to take a large-scale, collaborative, long-term approach to producing a range of environmental and climate goods on their land. It will allow Defra to facilitate and fund ambitious projects through bespoke, 20+ year agreements.
- 5.2 The Landscape Recovery scheme has high environmental ambitions for restoring habitats, species, rivers and tackling climate change through carbon storage and peatland restoration as well as prioritising strong social outcomes built on access, engagement and participation. Landowners and managers applying to Defra's Landscape Recovery scheme design projects that deliver both the core environmental objectives of the scheme and a range of socio-economic co-benefits.
- 5.3 There are currently 56 projects in the Landscape Recovery scheme, each on a contiguous site of at least 500 hectares, involving farmers, landowners, tenants, environmental and community organisations. Projects are designed by the landowners and managers themselves and have an initial development phase to organise and refine their plans.
- 5.4 The Innovation Fellowship with Defra will be working with, and alongside, policymakers and analysts to shape understanding of how to get the most from the Landscape Recovery projects. It is expected that Fellows will produce findings that can inform policy and research questions for Defra and its partners. Defra works with a great number of collaborating research institutions and with its Arm's Length Bodies, including the Forestry Commission, Natural England, Environment Agency and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee as well as other bodies such as English Heritage.
- 5.5 The central topics that Fellows will be working on are as follows:
- Large-scale projects: the scheme is designed to deliver outcomes that require collaborative action across a big area, such as restoring ecological or hydrological function across a landscape. **What can we learn about how these projects reflect their context, including differences in the actors involved, their coordination and the extent to which these dynamics are context dependent?**
  - **How might government interpret and stimulate place shaping agency and environmental change across a range of actors?**

- Long-term public funding (for example for 20 years or longer): the scheme will support outcomes that take a long time to deliver, such as peatland restoration, river restoration, woodland management, or habitat restoration. **How can government (at all levels) support long term and sustainable environmental change through these projects?**
- Bespoke agreements: the scheme can fund activities that contribute to priority outcomes but are specific to the locality which would otherwise be difficult to facilitate through other schemes. **How can government and other actors ensure local specificity and character remains at the heart of achieving a combination of socio-economic and environmental policy goals?**
- Blended funding and governance: the provision of development funding is designed to enable projects to develop their own momentum with scope to attract private investment into nature recovery. Such blended finance may pose a number of questions relating to project governance and decision making, including design, determining outcome priorities and access to the site. **What can we learn from these experiences that both enable innovative finance to contribute to nature recovery policies, such as restoring biodiversity and peatland, whilst ensuring access to decision-making and benefits for the full range of communities involved?**

5.6 For additional context, the following cross-cutting questions illustrate the type of factors that the Fellowship could explore in and around these central topics:

- How might landscapes, nature be defined and what is meant by their recovery?
- How do other countries restore nature and how does their approach differ from Defra's?
- Is Landscape Recovery inclusive? What are the social benefits of Defra's Landscape Recovery scheme?
- What are the barriers to producing successful applications from under-represented groups/areas? How does Defra remove these?
- What skills/knowledge are needed to apply for funding and run a successful project?
- What role do rural communities play in enhancing our landscapes and restoring nature?
- Where first? How to prioritise landscape and nature restoration?

- What is the role for government in protecting and enhancing local agency in environmental policy?
- How are farmers organising themselves and collaborating to the benefit of nature?
- Who should pay and benefit from nature restoration?
- How important are non-monetizable benefits such as beauty, heritage and engagement to project success? Can Defra improve how these are accounted for in project impact assessments?
- What governance arrangements are most effective in providing local involvement in large scale environmental schemes?
- Can food and nature be farmed for in England?
- What models of best practice are emerging across the country?
- What are the barriers to projects being initiated, having success and being sustained?

5.7 Work-planning will centre on the programme of work and analysis agreed at the outset. Fellows will work as part of the Landscape Recovery evidence team and will be embedded within Defra, partly based in one of Defra's numerous office locations across the country (typically London, York, Bristol and Newcastle). Flexible working arrangements will be supported in this role, ensuring Fellows can work at times that allow them to meet caring and other responsibilities as well as from a variety of locations including home or academic institution. Support and supervision will be provided by a dedicated line manager, and Fellows will also receive support from other analysts and researchers, work closely with relevant policy teams (attending team meetings, for example) and be encouraged to work with wider stakeholders, including visiting partner organisations and projects. Defra also have a number of shared office facilities across government in different locations which will be made available to Fellows where appropriate. The Fellow will be expected to reserve some time for responsive and demand-led analysis.



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## 6 Scope of the Fellowship with Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)

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- 6.1 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) is delivering the government mission to make the UK a clean energy superpower, with clean electricity by 2030 and accelerating the UK's journey to net zero. DESNZ's work is helping ensure clean energy for all, keeping bills down and seizing the opportunities to lead the world in new green industries, taking back control of energy with Great British Energy and encouraging greater energy efficiency across the UK.
- 6.2 The Fellow will work in the Net Zero Strategy Directorate with the Public Engagement policy team (PE). The PE team leads on development of the government's Public Participation Strategy (the strategy) which was committed to in the Government's response to the Climate Change Committee's Progress Report, published December 2024. This is due for publication in 2025. The strategy will support the delivery of the government mission to be a Clean Energy Superpower, particularly accelerating to net zero. It will set out how government will support people to adopt technologies and enhance public engagement. Following publication of the strategy there will be a programme of work running over several years.
- 6.3 The Fellow will be working with, and alongside, policymakers working on the development and delivery of the strategy and be embedded within the team. The team works to promote and increase the application of social and behavioural research in policy design and delivery related to net zero, together with expanding the use of engagement methods in policy work.
- 6.4 It is expected that the project will produce findings that can inform policy work related to public participation. The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential research topics that could be developed alongside the strategy:
- Supporting the development of resources for policy makers and/or stakeholders
    - Archetypes/segmentation and persona development to support policy design, communication and delivery of net zero across homes and energy, transport and nature. This will seek to illustrate the attitudes, knowledge and preferences of individuals to improve policy design. This could include the role of and interaction of AI with personas.
    - Creating range of tools for stakeholders to support their activities in taking a place-based approach to public participation, e.g. an engagement toolkit, net zero narrative communication guidance for trusted messengers, an exemplar-based toolkit for participatory approaches in policy design.

- Measuring public participation (enablers) in net zero
  - How to measure the role of people in the transition to net zero. Establishing a range of metrics by which government can measure people's role and actions so they can participate in the transition in a way which supports the aspirations, needs and concerns of people and communities. This could interface with carbon emission impacts but would seek to bring other key and potentially novel metrics to be included in the approach.
- Participatory methods
  - Public participation partnerships: an exploration of how government can work with local and community groups to enhance the delivery of the strategy. Opportunities could be identified to pilot public engagement activities with such groups and explore how to scale-up a working model.
  - Citizen engagement: demonstrating the value of engagement activities, learning what works from local, national and international examples.
  - The role of AI in developing and delivering government public engagement activities including two-way approaches.
  - How participatory methods interact with and support representative democracy. This could include a comparative study of local versus national engagement exercises and how these feed into democratic structures at local and national levels.
- How closely perceived fairness compares with metrics of how progressive or inclusive policies are.
- How government can harness and make best use of the interface between AI and behavioural science to support people and communities to make choices that are right for them.
- Learning historical lessons from policy design that aims to support people's choices. Historical examples could explore how contextual opposition and challenges have previously been overcome; issues relating to fairness or place in impacting policy development; key lessons regarding policy that seeks to put people at the centre of policy design.

- 6.5 Please note that if publication of any research is expected, government officials will need to be sighted and have final clearance before any publication. This process will include sighting relevant policy officials and analysts for feedback, following which the research will be written up in a report to be shared with senior officials for final feedback and sign-off prior to any publication.
- 6.6 Work-planning will centre on the programme of work and analysis agreed at the outset. This Fellow will be embedded within a team in the Net Zero Strategy directorate in DESNZ and will be partly based in DESNZ offices, which are located in Aberdeen, Birmingham, Cardiff, Darlington, Edinburgh, London, Salford. This can be discussed with the Fellow.

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## 7 Scope of the Fellowship with Government Office for Science (GO-Science)

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- 7.1 The Government Office for Science seeks to ensure that government policies and decisions are informed by the best scientific evidence and strategic long-term thinking. Led by the Government Chief Scientific Advisor (GCSA), GO-Science aims to provide expert, timely, and trustworthy science advice both by producing the advice, and by supporting departmental science systems and mechanisms. Its priorities are: science for national security and resilience, a more scientific civil service, science for strategic advantage, and science for current and future challenges. In addition, the GCSA has designated 2025-2026 as the 'Year of Climate Change Adaptation' and therefore adaptation is an ongoing priority theme.
- 7.2 The fellow will work in the Climate, Society and International (CSI) team, which leads GO-Science work on climate change adaptation, mitigation (particularly net zero), social sciences (particularly for emergencies) and biodiversity, among other topics. CSI has recently published the climate adaptation research innovation framework ([CARIF](#)), which outlines the key areas where research and innovation are needed to guide and advance research and innovation efforts in climate adaptation. CSI also acts as secretariat for the Social and Behavioural Science for Emergencies ([SBSE](#)) group, and a community of practice for people centred grid transformation.
- 7.3 The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential research topics that could be considered for the fellowship:
- **Synthesizing the social science evidence to support adaptation action.** Much of the work on adaptation has been of a technical nature, approaching the challenge as technical and particularly concerned with the built environment and engineering solutions. There is a need for social science evidence, and this could include questions such as:
    - What can be done to enable transformational adaptation with a 'whole of society' approach in the UK and how can such a transformation be aligned with other transitions (e.g. net zero).
    - How can adaptation be mainstreamed in policy as a social process (as opposed to being a static state or objective)?
    - What can we learn from social and behavioural norms in other countries regarding adaptation?
  - **Addressing the social dimensions of net zero.** This could include questions such as:
    - What is the social science evidence on balancing interventions to encourage behavioural change between those which focus on

individual high agency level actions and those which are societal scale.

- What methods and case studies exist in the social science literature regarding the practical ways to conduct public engagement regarding electricity grid transformation, and the trade-offs between urgency of net zero and the need to properly engage and consult people.

- **Bringing social science insights to bear on biodiversity loss.**

Transformational societal change has been said to be required in conservation and sustainable use of nature in order to reverse biodiversity loss. Achieving this requires social science insights, which could include questions such as:

- What would this social change look like? How might the impacts of biodiversity loss cascade into other areas such as migration, food insecurity, and other areas and how will this shape resilience and vulnerability.

7.4 Work-planning will centre on the programme of work and analysis agreed at the outset. Fellows will work as part of the Climate Society and International team and will be embedded within GO-Science, partly based in one of the GO-Science office locations which include Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Darlington, Edinburgh, London, and Salford. This can be discussed with the Fellow, and flexible working arrangements will be supported. Support and supervision will be provided by a dedicated line manager, and Fellows will also receive support from other analysts and researchers, work closely with relevant policy teams (attending team meetings, for example) and be encouraged to work with wider stakeholders. The Fellow will be expected to reserve some time for responsive and demand-led analysis.

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## 8 General requirements and expectations of Fellows

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- 8.1 Fellows will conduct research and analysis in one or more areas of work to address a specified set of policy-driven research question(s), which are agreed at the outset of the Fellowship. Fellows will be working with and alongside teams within their chosen partner but will also be conducting independent research and analysis. As set out above, the nature of the work to be undertaken during the Fellowship will vary according to which department and policy area a Fellowship focuses on, with some Fellows working relatively independently, and others more firmly embedded within a team within their partner.
- 8.2 Work-planning will centre on the programme of work and analysis agreed at the outset. However, those Fellows who are more embedded and integrated within teams will be expected to reserve some time for responsive and demand-led analysis. An indicative list of these tasks might include:
- Providing evaluation or policy research design advice to departments
  - Writing papers and shorter evidence and policy briefing notes
  - Oral briefings for senior officials and ministers
  - Meeting external and cross-government partners
  - Organising and running masterclasses on evidence and/or evaluation methodologies.
- 8.3 The ability to communicate clearly and succinctly, highlighting policy relevance to non-experts is important to all work. So too is the ability to work collaboratively with others and to do so at pace, sometimes delivering to tight deadlines. The Fellows will need to agree to respect their department's values and standards of behaviour, including following the [Civil service code](#) and sign an agreement to that effect. Failure to do so may result in the termination of the Fellowship.

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## 9 Security Clearance and Nationality Requirements

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- 9.1 For security reasons, successful applicants will need to be security cleared before the final arrangements for a Fellowship can be confirmed. Security checks will need to be processed once an offer has been made to the successful candidate – the formal confirmation of the offer will be contingent on the person obtaining this level of clearance. Loss of clearance during the Fellowship period, for example, due to personal conduct, will risk termination of the Fellowship. All security clearance decisions are personal to the applicant and depend on a range of factors. For further information on security clearance, please view the gov.uk website.
- 9.2 The Fellows for all partners would need to receive security clearance at the [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#). There are no nationality requirements.
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## 10 Activities and Outputs

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- 10.1 Award-holders will be expected to play a role in promoting the approaches and methods that are the focus of their award in their own academic environments and the partner they are working in. Expected activities and outputs will be specific to the policy areas and partner teams the Fellow will be working with. They may involve, but are not limited to:
- Evidence notes/policy briefings – reports, notes and responses to key challenges/approaches for developing connections with policy leaders or innovators
  - Data analysis – identifying and analysing datasets that may be relevant to enhancing understanding and framing new solutions
  - Case studies – exploring practical or policy-orientated solutions, engagement between academic and non-academic environments and the wider benefits to individuals/communities/regions
  - Briefings/blogs/presentations/podcasts/videos and other outputs to reach a variety of policy audiences and environments
  - Conferences/workshops/webinars/training/toolkits/- outputs which enable and embed knowledge exchange with a wider academic and policy audience
  - Academic papers are encouraged but will need to be cleared with the partner prior to writing up and publication.
- 10.2 All activities and outputs are subject to agreement from the partner, in line with their departmental policy.

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## 11 Subjects Covered

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- 11.1 Suitable subjects for the Fellowship include any field of study within the Humanities or Social Sciences. While all proposals should be situated in an appropriate field of study, they may vary considerably in their approach to conceptualisation, methodology and/or outputs, depending on the discipline. In some cases, creative and professional practice may play a significant role in shaping the methods and/or outcomes of research. In all proposals, whether practice-led or not, a clear scholarly rationale is required for the choice of research methods, processes and outputs.
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## 12 Value of Funding and Support Provided

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- 12.1 Route B: Policy-led Innovation Fellowship awards are offered on a Full Economic Costing (FEC) basis. Applicants must enter the costs in the application form, Financial Details section, at 100% FEC. The maximum that can be claimed is £150,000 at 100%, of which the Academy will pay 80% (i.e. up to £120,000 if the full sum is requested).
- 12.2 There are four elements to the Full Economic Costing. The Directly Incurred Salary Costs are the costs of the time of the applicant as this is a Fellowship award. Directly Incurred Research Expenses include costs of travel and subsistence, as well as project costs. Note that it is expected that not more than 25% of the total budget and not less than £12,500 at 100% FEC (£10,000 at 80% British Academy contribution) will be used for Directly Incurred Research Expenses. The other elements are Directly Allocated (Estates) Costs and Indirect Costs which cover costing for space, central support services and other necessary costs incurred by the employing institution in supporting the Fellow.
- 12.3 **N.B.** This is Fellowship award and not a project grant, therefore it is anticipated that most of the funding sought will be to support the costs associated with the applicant's time (through direct salary contribution).
- 12.4 As applicants are not asked to submit a research proposal, the British Academy acknowledges that applicants cannot provide a full breakdown of their Directly Incurred Research Expenses. Applicants must provide an overall figure for the heading and a breakdown accounting for their anticipated travel and subsistence costs, with a further explanation of the broad types of activities that the remaining funds may be required for. Applicants **must** however specify their Directly Incurred Salary Costs and Indirect Costs.



- 12.5 The Academy recognises that the upper limit on the contribution that the Academy's funding can make to this award – £120,000 – might not be sufficient to cover all of the costs up to 80% of the Full Economic Cost value required. In those cases, an employing institution may need to be willing to make additional contributions to the overhead costs involved.
- 12.6 The applicant must commit between 0.4 and 0.8 FTE time to the Fellowship, providing justification for the time percentage as part of the application, especially if the time commitment is below 0.5 FTE. All of the grants awarded are expected to be used for the purposes specified in the application and agreed in the award-letter.

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## 13 British Academy Additional Needs Funding

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- 13.1 The British Academy has set aside specific funding to support any additional needs that applicants and award holders may have. This funding is available both to applicants, to assist in making an application to British Academy schemes, and award holders.
- 13.2 Further information about Additional Needs Funding can be found on the [British Academy website](#).

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## 14 Duration and Start of Award

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- 14.1 Awards can be held for 12 months. Awards are expected to commence between 1-31 March 2026.
- 14.2 This start date is to allow time for security checks and onboarding to be completed by successful applicants after an offer has been made. In the instance that arrangements should be finalised in advance of March 2026, with the agreement of the Fellow and the Fellow's institution, it would be possible for their start date to be brought forward.

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## 15 Timetable of 2025-26 Competition

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**Competition Opens:** 4 June 2025  
**Application Deadline:** 6 August 2025, 17:00 (UK time)  
**Interviews:** Approx. early October 2025  
**Notification of Result:** Approx. late October 2025  
**Starting period of Award(s):** Between 1-31 March 2026  
**Duration of Award(s):** A duration of 12 months

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## 16 Number of Awards and Strength of Competition

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- 16.1 It is expected that up to 6 awards will be made for this round of the Route B: Policy-led (Sustainable Futures) strand. This is a fairly new scheme and the strength of competition remains difficult to estimate. We are unable to give guidance on the likely success rate.
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## 17 Responsibilities of Award-Holders

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- 17.1 Award-holders will be expected to act as champions for academic-policy engagement within their institutions and partner organisations, and to liaise with and feed insights into relevant British Academy policy programmes, as well as through broader British Academy networks. This is expected to involve:
- working within and across the partner organisation as required by the agreed programme of work and the role
  - discussing their analyses and insights with the British Academy policy team, engaging in regular catch-ups and discussions about their work
  - sitting upon a relevant British Academy policy advisory group
  - engaging with individuals both within and beyond academia as relevant to the programme of work
  - proactively identifying opportunities to promote and advance the role of the [SHAPE](#) subjects
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## 18 Reporting

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- 18.1 In addition to the responsibilities above, award-holders are required to complete two reports:
- A final report from award holders within three months of the award's end, detailing the progress of the activities in which they participated.
  - A post-award report three years after the award's end showing the impact of the award on their subsequent career.

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## 19 Eligibility

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- 19.1 Applicants must be ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom with a current long-term appointment that will continue for at least as long as the period of the award at a UK-based institution (e.g. a Higher Education Institution or Independent Research Organisation). If your organisation is not currently registered on the Academy's grant management system, Flexi-Grant, please contact us via [grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk) to discuss possible registration.
- 19.2 **Applicants must also meet the requirements set out above in the 'General requirements and expectations of Fellows' section; in particular, the requirements about security clearance.**
- 19.3 Applications are welcome from early-career researchers and mid-career researchers. Applicants must self-define their career stage in the application, providing further details about career breaks or other circumstances, if relevant. Applicants do not have to fit within a certain time-frame since their PhD in order to prove their career-stage. However, applicants must self-define their career stage and demonstrate this accordingly in their applications. Typically, these terms can be defined as within 15 years of being awarded your PhD (although this will be interpreted flexibly to accommodate any career breaks, parental/caring leave or non-traditional career trajectories). However, this typical definition is a guide only. Applicants may self-define their career stage as they see fit. Applicants should be aware that if they are more advanced in their career, the assessors may determine that they are not within the bounds of the scheme. Therefore, applicants should explain their career stage clearly in response to the question on career stage in the application form. Applicants who do not have a doctorate may have equivalent experience, which they should define in the personal statement section.
- 19.4 Applicants for the Innovation Fellowships scheme should be intending to pursue challenges that can benefit from the contribution of Humanities or Social Sciences expertise.
- 19.5 **N.B.** Postgraduate students are **not eligible** to apply for grant support from the Academy, and applicants are asked to confirm in the personal details section that they are not currently working towards a PhD, nor awaiting the outcome of a *viva voce* examination, nor awaiting the acceptance of any corrections required by the examiners. Please note that applications from independent researchers **cannot be accepted** in this scheme.

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## 20 Employing Institution Eligibility

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- 20.1 Applicants must be based in an institution which must be listed as an approving-organisation in the British Academy's grant management system, Flexi-Grant. This institution (e.g. a Higher Education Institution or Independent Research Organisation) must be based in the United Kingdom and will be issued the Terms and Conditions of Award, if successful.
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## 21 Eligible Costs

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### **Directly Incurred Salary Costs**

This is a Fellowship award paying for the time of the person appointed as the Innovation Fellow. Therefore, the cost for the time of the applicant should be submitted as Directly Incurred Salary Costs. The award can be used to support the employing institution's salary costs of the applicant for the duration of the award at between 0.4 and 0.8 FTE. It is expected that the majority of funding requested will cover the applicant's salary costs.

### **Directly Incurred Research Expenses**

A minimum of £12,500 at 100% FEC (BA contribution at 80% of £10,000) for each award must be used to cover engagement with the project and partner by the Fellow. Such costs include the following:

Travel and subsistence within reasonable limits.

Directly incurred project costs (e.g. workshops, website development, podcasts, transcription costs, specialist software).

**N.B.** Reasonable limits are judged as including activities that would represent a direct benefit to the proposed collaboration between the applicant and their chosen partner.

Applicants may wish to refer to the list of proposed activities and outputs for further guidance on relevant project costs.

Partners are keen to support flexible working arrangements and will work with successful applicants to determine a mutually agreeable working arrangement. Applicants should therefore provide a reasonable estimate of their anticipated travel costs to their chosen Innovation Fellowship partner.

**Directly Allocated Costs (incl. Estate costs)**

Standard Directly Allocated Costs (including Estates Costs) may be attributed to this award. However, it cannot include any directly allocated salary costs.

**Indirect Costs**

The award can include the employing institution's indirect costs incurred as a result of direct staff costs. The Indirect Costs heading will be calculated by the institution according to TRAC and needs to be declared only by means of a single figure, with no need for information about its derivation or justification. These include nonspecific costs charged across all projects based on estimates not otherwise included as Directly Allocated Costs. They include costs of the institution's administration such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services.

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## 22 Non-Eligible Costs

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22.1 The following items are **not eligible** for funding:

- Research assistance
- Purchasing of assets
- Equipment costs
- Computer hardware including laptops, electronic notebooks, digital cameras, etc
- Books and other permanent resources
- The preparation of camera-ready copy, copy-editing, proof-reading, indexing, nor any other editorial task
- Subventions for direct production costs (printing, binding, distribution, marketing etc)
- Costs of publication in electronic media
- Carbon offsetting
- Open access fees

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## 23 Head of Department Supporting Statement

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- 23.1 The applicant is required to obtain a statement of support from their Head of Department as part of this application.
- The Head of Department should be the person who heads the Department, Faculty, Institute or other unit of an Independent Research Organisation in which you are currently working.
  - As Head of Department, they will be expected to comment on:
    - Their level of support for the application and the career development benefit to be gained by the applicant if the award is made.
    - N.B. They will be expected to confirm that the applicant will be released from duties at the employing institution for the duration of the award and be able to return to the employing institution once the award ends.
  - The statement submitted by the Head of Department should be on letterheaded paper, dated and signed by the Head of Department.
  - Please note that the Head of Department statement must be received before you can formally submit the application for approval, and you are strongly advised to ensure that your Head of Department submits the statement well in advance of the formal applicant deadline for this round of competition as noted above.
  - If the applicant is also Head of Department, the statement must be provided by another suitable individual, e.g. Deputy Head or Head of School.

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## 24 Inviting Participants to Contribute to Applications

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- 24.1 Your Head of Department must be invited to contribute to your application via the Flexi-Grant system. Please see further guidance below:
- The participants will need to register for an account on the British Academy's Flexi-Grant® Grant Management System (GMS) via (<https://britishacademy.flexigrant.com/>), or have an account on [Flexi-Grant](#), prior to being invited to contribute to the application.
  - They can be invited through the 'Contributors' tab displayed on the application form summary page. Once they have been invited, they will receive an email notification with instructions on how to contribute.

- You can monitor the progress of your participant's activity through this section of the application form, and issue reminders as required. Once the recipient has accepted your invitation, their status will be displayed as 'active'. Upon completion of their section of the application form, their status will be displayed as 'complete'.
- Once participants have completed all their sections of the application form, please remind them to select 'Save & Submit' on the application form page or select 'Submit your contribution' on the summary page.
- You will not be able to submit your application form until the status of all participants shows as 'complete' in the 'Contributors' tab.

**24.2 Please also note that an application cannot be submitted until all required contributors have submitted their contribution first. We recommend your supporting participants fulfil their requirements at least five working days before the submission deadline to ensure there is sufficient time for organisational approval. The employing institution approver must approve the completed application by the submission deadline.**

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## 25 Assessment

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25.1 Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- The relevance of the applicant to the Scope of the Fellowship as defined above
- The experience and suitability of the applicant in engaging closely with policy counterparts and future colleagues in government departments, including but not limited to the partner, and/or experience in working with policymakers on similar topics or areas of interest previously
- The anticipated benefit and impact on the partner's areas of interest as expressed above on pages 6 – 13 and the applicant's future policy engagement ambitions
- The anticipated benefit of the proposed partnership with regards to knowledge exchange between academic and non-academic environments
- The anticipated contributions to the British Academy's wider policy work
- The ability of the applicant to provide policy relevant, clear and succinct oral briefings (will be assessed at interview if applicants are invited to interview)
- Comparative judgements about value for money may be considered at the final stage of assessment

- The career benefit to the applicant may also be considered at the final stage of assessment
- 25.2 **N.B. As Fellows would finalise the outline of a work programme with the partner after being awarded the Fellowship, applicants are not required to submit a research proposal. Reviewers will assess applications in relation to above criteria and will not reward applicants for including a research proposal.**
- 25.3 All eligible proposals submitted in response to this call will be peer-reviewed by reviewers with subject/sector-specific expertise, including representatives of the partner organisation. The peer review assessments will be considered by a Final Awarding Panel, which will conduct interviews with a shortlist of applicants. The Final Awarding Panel will meet after the call for applications is closed. When the Panel meets it will include an interview element as part of its assessment. Applicants who are shortlisted at this stage are required to be available to attend these interviews at the beginning of October as a mandatory part of the assessment process.
- 25.4 All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the application by late October 2025 for start date in March 2026. The approving organisation will be asked to give its consent before the award is confirmed.
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## 26 Code of Practice

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- 26.1 The Academy has a [Code of Practice](#) for assessing research applications, setting out the principles of equity, integrity and confidentiality governing the treatment of all applications for research support. The Code of Practice also covers Data Protection, the Academy's ethics policy and the appeals procedure.
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## 27 Feedback

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- 27.1 Feedback is not a feature of the Innovation Fellowships scheme and the Academy is, regretfully, unable to enter correspondence regarding the decisions of the Final Awarding Panel, which are governed by the Code of Practice. Please note that by applying to this scheme, applicants undertake to accept the terms under which applications are assessed.



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## 28 Applications to Multiple British Academy Schemes

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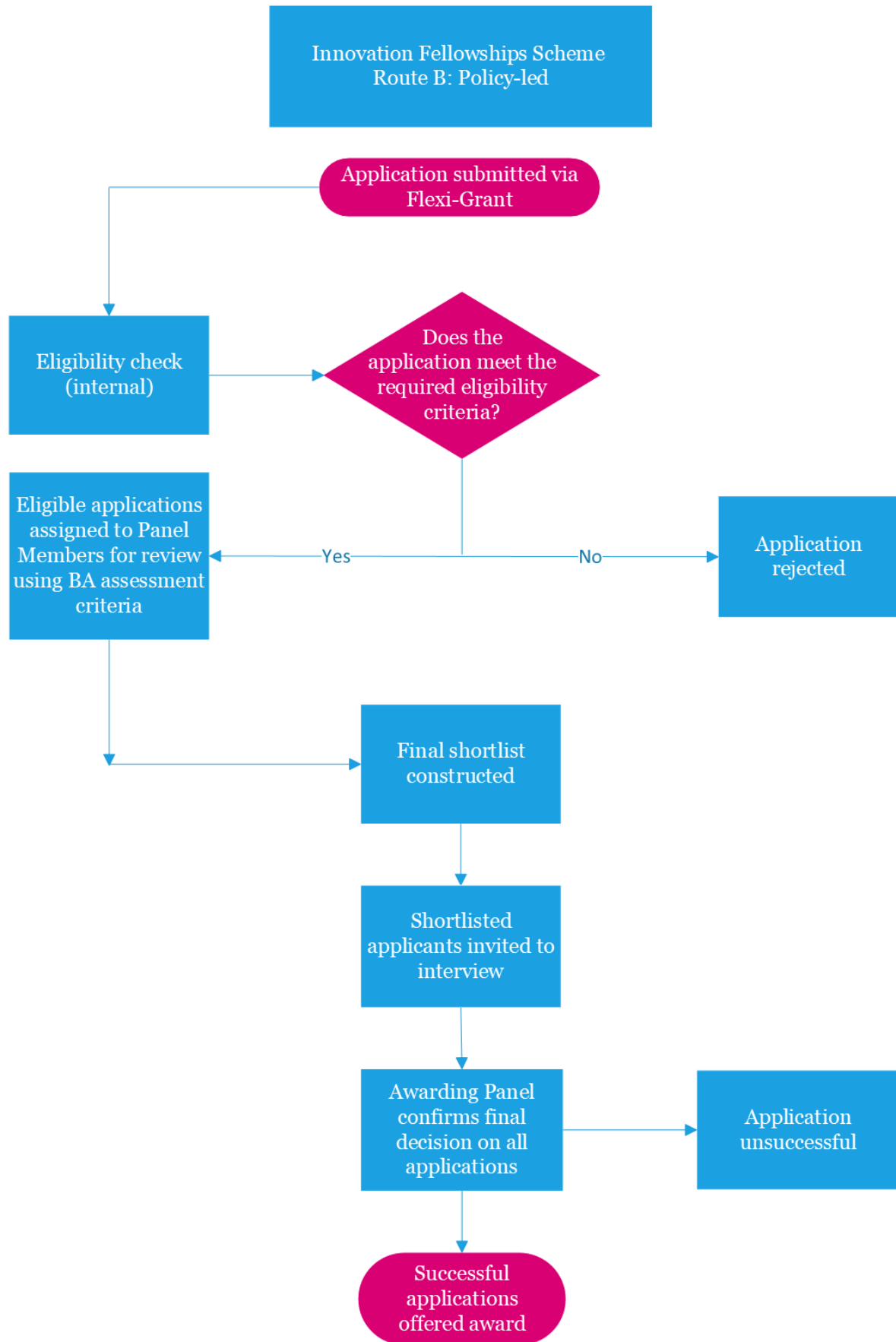
- 28.1 There must be no duplication of funding for the same purpose. Applicants may not hold more than one British Academy award of a comparable nature at any one time. For example, it would not be possible to hold two British Academy grant awards or two British Academy Fellowship awards at the same time; but it may be possible to hold a British Academy grant (i.e. Talent Development Award or BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant) and a British Academy Fellowship at the same time, depending on the amount of time required for the Fellowship.
- 28.2 **Please note that an application cannot be accepted if there is a report outstanding on any previous research grant awarded by the Academy to the applicant named in the current proposal. Failure to follow this guidance will result in your application being withdrawn from this round of competition. Duplicate applications for the same purpose to more than one Academy scheme will not be accepted.**
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## 29 Submission of Application

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- 29.1 Once you have submitted your application for approval by your employing institution, automatic emails will be sent to your employing institution approver asking them to log on to the system. You will not be able to edit your application after it has been submitted to your employing institution for approval. The employing institution approver will either: approve and submit your application, 'send back' your application and contact you to request modifications or decline your application and contact you.
- 29.2 Please be aware that it is your responsibility to ensure that you complete your application in time for your employing institution to process it (including requesting changes) and provide their approval by the closing date. It is recommended that you allow at least five working days for this process, but please check with your proposed employing institution as their internal timetables may require earlier submission.
- 29.3 If your employing institution approver requests modifications through the British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS email facility, they can unlock your application, allowing you to edit it. They can do this by selecting 'Return to Applicant'. An automatic email will be sent to you alerting you of this fact. Once you have completed and saved the requested changes, please re-submit your application for approval by your employing institution.
- 29.4 Once your employing institution has approved your application and submitted it to the British Academy it will not be possible to make any changes.

- 29.5 **Please note that once the closing date has passed, employing institution approvers cannot approve applications and submit them to the British Academy; unapproved applications are removed from consideration. No late applications will be accepted.**
- 29.6 It is recommended that you check that your application is submitted in time. To see the details of the employing institution approver and to check the status of your application, you should log into the British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS and click on the link to the Application Portal where a summary of your application will be displayed.
- 29.7 **N.B.** Please see the additional **Application Guidance** document for applicants applying to the Innovation Fellowships 2025-26 (Route B: Policy-led), which provides guidance on the application form.
- 29.8 The flowchart below provides an overview of the application to award process for a Route B: Policy-led Innovation Fellowship.



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## 30 Outcome of Application

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- 30.1 Once your application has been submitted – complete with a statement of support from your Head of Department – and it has been approved by your employing institution, you will not be contacted again by the British Academy until the decisions have been made. You can track the progress of your application by logging in again to the Flexi-Grant system at any time. Results are issued by email.
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## 31 Contact Information

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- 31.1 Applicants in any doubt about their eligibility or any other aspect of their application are advised to contact the Research Funding Office at the Academy, where staff will be pleased to assist:  
[grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk)
- 31.2 Due to remote working, we recommend contacting us by email only.

### Important Dates

Deadline for application submission and organisation approval: **6 August 2025, 17:00 (UK time)**

Results to be announced by email to address on application: **approx. late October 2025**