

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

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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 Introduction

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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 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.
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## 2 New British Academy Policy

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- 2.1 The British Academy has introduced a new requirement for all applicants wishing to apply to British Academy schemes. All academics must now register with ORCID and give their ID number in the application form (regardless of being the PI or Co-I). This is a free to use service which connects researchers to their outputs and can be used regardless of connection to institutions. If you do not already have an ORCID ID, you can register for the service on their [website](#).
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## 3 Application guidance

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- 3.1 Applications can only be submitted online using the British Academy's online Flexi-Grant® Grant Management System (GMS) system via (<https://britishacademy.flexigrant.com/>). If you have not previously used Flexi-Grant® GMS, please follow the registration process from the Flexi-Grant® homepage.
- 3.2 The application will always be treated as confidential by both the British Academy and external partners.
- 3.3 Registered approving organisations will be available in the search bar. If your organisation is not listed, then please contact us at [grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk) to request the addition of the organisation.
- 3.4 It is required that research organisations be approved as eligible by the British Academy no later than two weeks before the deadline of this call (6 August 2025). This means that they will need to be in touch with the Academy well before this date for the approval process to have been undertaken.

- 3.5 When completing your application on Flexi-Grant®, it is recommended that you take particular note of the following points:
- 3.6 **Personal details** – When registered in the British Academy Flexi-Grant® system, a user has the option to add or update personal information. This is not essential to the progress of this application but represents a personal record of your account in the system. It is useful if this information is kept up to date.
- 3.7 **Automatic log-out** – You are strongly advised to save your work regularly to prevent accidental loss of information. If the system does not detect any activity for two hours, it will log out and save the application at that time. Please note that moving between pages within an application form will save the page that you are exiting but completing a field on a page is not considered an activity.
- 3.8 It is recommended that you write the text for longer fields in a word processor such as Word and then copy and paste into the relevant text box to avoid being timed out in this way.
- 3.9 **Multiple sessions** – You should not have multiple browser windows/tabs of your application open at the same time. Only one user should edit an application at a time.
- 3.10 **Word limits** – When completing text boxes that have a word limit, you should note that if you exceed the specified amount, you will not be able to save when you press the save button. As an alternative, you should type the text for the longer-length boxes in a word processor. You will then be able to check the word count and paste it into the British Academy Flexi-Grant® system.
- 3.11 **Plain text** – If entering plain text, please avoid using symbols as some may not be accepted by the British Academy Flexi-Grant® system. You can generate and view a PDF of your application to check that the application appears as you want it to by clicking on ‘print form’.
- 3.12 **Email addresses** – It is essential that you enter an accurate email address where requested as it may cause delay in the submission/processing of your application if any of these are incorrect. You cannot make changes to email addresses after your application has been submitted for approval.
- 3.13 **Submission** – You will not be able to submit your application until you have completed each section in full. It is your responsibility to ensure that your application is submitted in sufficient time for it to be approved by your employing institution.
- 3.14 **You should submit your application for approval by a designated approver at your host organisation at least five working days before the closing date to allow for your host organisation’s administrative procedures.**

- 3.15 Please note that the institutional approver is a person within the host organisation, usually within the central research support office, who has authority for approving all applications submitted to the British Academy. The institutional approver should not be directly involved in the proposal.
- 3.16 **Application deletion** – You can delete your application at any time although it is often easier to re-edit your existing application. We will be able to recover a deleted application for a period of seven days after deletion. After this it will be permanently removed from the system.

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## 4 Completing the application form

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- 4.1 The application can be completed by using the navigation tabs on the application summary page, with each page categorised as follows:
- Page 1: Eligibility Declaration Page
  - Page 2: Fellowship Proposal
  - Page 3: Applicant Details
  - Page 4: Applicant Career Summary
  - Page 5: Financial Details
  - Page 6: Equal Opportunities Statement
  - Page 7: Head of Department Statement
- 4.2 A full list of question fields to be completed as part of the application can be found in the following sections.
- 4.3 Each section represents a page of the application form. The subheadings reflect the questions within each of these pages. The summary text contains useful guidance on completing questions. The right-hand column contains useful guidance on its completion. A red asterisk (\*) indicates which questions are mandatory. Please read these sections carefully before completing the form.

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## 5 Summary

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### Summary table

When your application form is complete, all sections on this summary table will be marked as 'Complete'. The 'Complete' status will only appear when all the mandatory fields in that section have been completed. All mandatory fields are marked with an asterisk '\*'. Only then will a 'Submit' button appear for you to be able to submit your application.

If you are unable to see the submit button but your application appears complete on the Summary page, you will need to check the Contributors tab to ensure that your invited contributors have completed their pages and marked them as complete. Once this has been done, and all the other pages have been completed, the 'submit' button should appear.

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## 6 Page 1. Eligibility Declaration Page

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### 6.1 UK Residency\*

Please note, you must be ordinarily resident in the UK - have a registered UK address - to be eligible for this scheme. If you answer 'No' to this question, unfortunately your application is not eligible.

### 6.2 Experience, PhD or Equivalent\*

Please note, PhD or equivalent experience is required in order for your application to be considered. Please select the relevant options in the dropdown menu. Postgraduate students are not eligible to apply for grant support from the Academy and lead applicants must not be currently working towards a PhD, nor awaiting the outcome of a *viva voce* examination.

### 6.3 Outstanding Reports\*

Please note, any outstanding reports must be submitted by the earliest start date of your proposal, otherwise your application will be withdrawn. Please select 'Not Applicable' if you have not previously been granted an award and therefore do not have any reports to submit.

### 6.4 Project Costs - FEC\*

Please confirm your proposed costs are entered on the application form at 100% Full Economic Cost.

**N.B. 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% FEC, of which the Academy will pay 80% FEC (i.e. up to £120,000 if the full sum is requested).

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## 7 Page 2. Fellowship Proposal

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### 7.1 Scope of Fellowships\*

The Fellowships take place in the context of the Academy's policy work. The partners will be:

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)

- Government Office for Science (GO Science)

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](#).

The Academy and the partners invite applications for Fellowships in any of the following areas:

- **Landscape Recovery** (Defra)
- **Public Engagement** (DESNZ)
- **Climate, Society and International** (Go Science)

## 7.2 **Start Date/End Date\***

To select a date in the future using the calendar feature, click on the month and year in between the two arrows at the top of the box. To change the year keep clicking on the box – a second click will produce a decade. Use the arrows to move back or forward in time. To change the month, a second box will appear where you can select the month you wish and then you can type the year you require in the box provided. Click on the date and the calendar will take you to the month and year you have selected where you can select the relevant date for display.

Please note that awards may be held for a period of 12 months from a starting date between 1-31 March 2026.

Applicants must select a start date between 1 – 31 March 2026. 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.

## 7.3 **Research Expertise in Chosen Area of Interest\***

Applicants are advised that they may apply to work with one of the British Academy's partners. Applicants should set out clearly how their 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 as stated in the Scheme Guidance Notes.

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.

The limit for this field is 2000 words.

#### **7.4 Potential topics and research questions\***

Please note, this question represents an expression of interest in specific topics and research questions and does not confirm the focus of the Fellowship. Successful applicants will finalise the outcome of a work programme with the partner after being awarded the Fellowship.

The limit for this field is 500 words.

#### **7.5 Experience of communicating and engaging with a wider audience\***

Please outline your ability and experience of engaging with audiences outside your area of expertise and of communicating your work to non-specialists.

The limit for this field is 300 words.

#### **7.6 Policy Engagement\***

Please explain your expertise, experience and interest in engaging closely with policy counterparts, and particularly the value you can bring to working with officials in the chosen partner.

Please outline your ability and experience of working in teams involving interdisciplinary projects or policy or practice areas outside your usual role, and of contributing to interdisciplinary research. For example, if you are a researcher, please outline your ability and experience of working with policymakers or practitioners.

The limit for this field is 1000 words.

#### **7.7 Benefit and Impact – Policy\***

Please explain what anticipated benefit and impact is envisaged that can be brought to bear on the chosen partner's policymaking process, the contribution to the Academy's policy work, and the applicant's future policy engagement ambitions.

The limit for this field is 1000 words.

## **7.8 Planned Research Outputs\*/Plans for Publication and Dissemination\***

Under 'planned research outputs', please only state the type of output expected. Expected activities and outputs will be specific to the policy areas and teams the Fellow will be working with and can 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 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.

Please note that all activities and outputs are subject to agreement from the partner, in line with the partner's policy.

The word limit is 300 words.

Please give detail about plans to disseminate findings from the Fellowship to wider audiences within and beyond academia under plans for publication/dissemination, for which the limit is 500 words.

## **7.9 Primary\* and Secondary Subjects**

Your application must be relevant to the Humanities and/or Social Sciences and you will need to select the relevant subject areas and fields from the drop-down list.

## **7.10 Multidisciplinary Proposal**

If the proposed engagement is especially multidisciplinary in its approach, please explain more in detail.

This is an optional field. The limit is 750 words.



#### 7.11 **Regional Interest\***

This field provides the opportunity to give further indications of the relevance of your subject area.

#### 7.12 **Ethical Issues\***

This field is mandatory and must be addressed by all applicants.

Are there any special ethical issues arising from your proposal that are not covered by the relevant professional Code of Practice? Have you obtained, or will you obtain, ethical approval from your employing institution or other relevant authority?

It is not expected that any special ethical issues will arise that are not already covered by relevant professional Codes of Practice. The normal expectation, therefore, will be that applicants should answer the pair of questions with the answers no and no.

If there are any special issues arising, but they have already been cleared by approval from a relevant authority, please answer yes and yes.

If any special issues arise and approval has not yet been obtained, please answer yes and no, and provide more explanation.

#### 7.13 **Source of Funding**

Please provide details of other support given or applied for in connection with the current proposal.

Please indicate whether any other grant applications relating to this project have been submitted, either to the British Academy or to any other funder. Applications submitted to the Academy by separate applicants will not be accepted if it is considered that both (or all, if more than two) applications relate to the same project, whose components would not be viable as independent pieces of research.

The Academy has no objection to its grants being held in conjunction with awards from other bodies, if there is no duplication of expenditure.

**Applicants are requested to keep the Academy informed of the outcomes of any other applications by email to**

**[grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk)**. Failure to do so may jeopardise the application's prospects of success. In cases where simultaneous applications to the Academy and to another funding agency covering the same elements of a project are both successful, the applicant will be asked to choose which award to accept.

Only if there is no duplication and no unnecessary inflation of a project will an applicant be permitted to retain both awards (subsequent requests to alter the plan of research simply to allow the applicant to retain both awards are unlikely to be considered favourably).

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## 8 Page 3. Applicant Details

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### 8.1 Applicant Contact Details\*/Nationality\*

Please take care to review and complete your personal details accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in the processing of your application.

You can update your personal details by checking 'my account' and selecting the link to 'my contact details' and 'my organisation' and ensuring the relevant details are up to date.

### 8.2 Employing Organisation\*

Please select your current employing institution. The majority of appropriate establishments are registered in the system. If your employing institution 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. Applications are welcome from early-career researchers and mid-career researchers. Please note that applications from independent researchers cannot be accepted in this scheme.

All applications must be approved by the employing institution authorities e.g. research grants office, finance department, etc. The approving department will receive email notification once you have completed your application and submitted it. They will be asked to provide approval and then submit the application to the British Academy. **The deadline for this round is the deadline by which approval must be given.** Remember that the application cannot be submitted for approval before the Head of Department has submitted their contribution, so it is essential to obtain the supporting statement well before the deadline.

It is strongly recommended that the applicant maintains an open dialogue with the approving department at their employing institution as the British Academy cannot be held responsible for emails being caught in spam filters or not being received.

**It is recommended that you allow at least five working days for this process. Once the approving department has checked your**

application, they will contact you if any changes are required, please note if changes need to be made these will have to be done before the deadline as they cannot be done afterwards.

**N.B. Please be aware that it is your responsibility to ensure that you complete your application in time for your employing institution to process it and provide their approval by the closing date.**

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## **9 Page 4. Applicant Career Summary**

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### **9.1 Statement of Qualifications and Career\***

Please give details of up to 4 qualifications **in reverse chronological order**.

### **9.2 Present Appointment\*, Employing Institution\* and Department\***

Please give details of your current appointment. 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 employing institution 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.

### **9.3 Career Stage\***

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.

This is a mandatory field, the limit is 150 words.

#### 9.4 **Personal Statement\***

Applicants are invited to include any information relating to their professional career which they may wish to be taken into account in assessing this application. For example, details of a career break, or the effect of working on a part-time contract may be relevant. Applicants who do not have a doctorate may have equivalent experience, which they should define in this section. This is an optional field, the limit is 500 words.

#### 9.5 **ORCID ID\***

Please enter your ORCID ID number. The British Academy now **requires** all academics to be registered with ORCID when applying for funding. This is a free to use service which connects researchers to their outputs in place of traditional publication lists.

If you do not already have an ORCID ID, you can [register for the service on their website](#).

#### 9.6 **Unpublished Research**

Please list up any unpublished studies previously funded by any agency, including but not restricted to the British Academy. Please give details of planned publication dates or explain why the research has not yet been published. Assessors may take backlogs of publication into account.

#### 9.7 **Previous Support Dates**

An application will not be eligible for consideration if there is a report outstanding on any previous research grant awarded by the Academy to the applicant. **Failure to follow this guidance will result in your application being withdrawn from this round of competition.**

Please give details of any research applications submitted to the British Academy within the last five years. In the case of a further application for continuing research which has received previous Academy support, **please note that a full report and statement of expenditure for the previous grant must be submitted before further funding can be considered.**

#### 9.8 **Where did you hear of this scheme?**

This field is optional. It helps the British Academy to target appropriate resources towards the promotion of the scheme to know where an applicant hears about it. As appropriate please state BA website; BA literature; PhD supervisor; University Research Office; other colleague, etc.

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## 10 Page 5. Financial Details

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### 10.1 Financial Details\*/Justification\*

Please provide details of funding in the relevant fields:

- Directly Incurred Salary Costs;
- Directly Incurred Research Expenses;
- Directly Allocated Costs (including Estates Costs);
- Indirect Costs.

Route B: Policy-led Innovation Fellowship awards are offered on a Full Economic Costing (FEC) basis. The maximum that can be claimed is £150,000 at 100% FEC, of which the Academy will pay 80% FEC (i.e. up to £120,000 if the full sum is requested). **N.B. Applicants must enter the costs in the application form, Financial Details section, at 100% FEC.**

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.

**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).

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.

**If you include ineligible costs, your application will be withdrawn from this competition.**

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.

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 and agreed in the award-letter.

Please be aware that if the Fellowship is offered, then there can be no viring of funds between each of these four budget headings, and no spending can take place outside the timeframe of the Fellowship.

It is advised that travel costs should be clearly justified; that the length of time for which subsistence is sought should be justified in the application; that *per diem* rates should be explained. If a claim for child or parental care, or additional needs, is included, please supply sufficient justification for the case to be assessed – alternatively, application may be made for this type of cost to the [British Academy's Additional Needs Funding](#).

Please note that grants are cash-limited, and there is no scope for supplementation of an award. Projects should be fully costed from the outset.

Comparative judgements about value for money may be considered at the final stage of assessment.

**Please do not use '£' signs in the amount boxes.**

## 10.2 FTE Contribution\*

Please state the proportion of time (FTE) to be committed to work on this award. For the Innovation Fellowships (Route B: Policy-led; Sustainable Futures), the applicant must commit between 0.4 and 0.8 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. Please state in this field the proportion to be committed on this award as a figure.

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# 11 Page 6. Equal Opportunities

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## 11.1 Equal Opportunities

This section is optional; however, the Academy would greatly appreciate it if you can complete the details to assist us in our diversity monitoring.

The British Academy is committed to its policy of Equal Opportunity in the provision of its grants and awards. Please help us to monitor the effectiveness of this policy by providing information concerning your age, gender, ethnic origin and disabilities (if any).

**This information will be kept separately from the rest of your application and will not be seen by those involved in making decisions in the selection process.**

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# 12 Page 7. Head of Department Statement

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## 12.1 Head of Department Statement\*

Applicants are **required** to include a supporting statement from their Head of Department on the British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS well in advance of the deadline for the submission of your application.

Please enter all the details of your Head of Department by clicking 'Contributors' tab on the Application's 'Summary' page. Please click on the 'Invite' button, enter the Head of Department's email address and then click 'Send Invitation'.

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.

We strongly advise that you alert your Head of Department as early as possible to allow them enough time to provide their statement in the system. Note that the deadline shown to the Head of Department is the deadline for the whole application to be submitted. The application needs to be approved before the same deadline, and it cannot be submitted for approval before the HOD statement is submitted.

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.

**An application cannot be considered for an award unless all contributions have been submitted on time.**

Please note that statements **must** be provided through the British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS, they cannot be provided as an email attachment nor sent by post in hard copy. **Any statements received after the deadline, or outside of the system will not be accepted, and your application will be withdrawn from this competition.**

**The Academy will only process complete, submitted applications.**