

Global Innovation Fellowships: German Council on Foreign Relations

Scheme Notes for Applicants

2025-26 Competition

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Please read the scheme notes carefully. Any application incorrectly submitted will not be eligible for award.

Applications should be submitted well in advance of the deadline; we recommend at least five days prior to allow for institutional approval.

1 Programme Aims

- 1.1 The British Academy has been funded by the Department of Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT) to support the Innovation Fellowships.
- 1.2 The objective of the Global Innovation Fellowships is to provide opportunities to UK-based early- and mid-career researchers from across the humanities and social sciences to develop their skills, networks and careers in the creative and cultural, public, private and policy sectors to address challenges that require innovative approaches and solutions. Through the Global Innovation Fellowships, researchers in the SHAPE community will be supported to create new and deeper links beyond academia, so enabling knowledge mobilisation and translation, as well as individual skills development.
- 1.3 This is the third call for this programme, offering opportunities for Global Innovation Fellowship award holders to embed themselves and be based in the office of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) in Berlin. Awards from the previous rounds can be seen [here](#).
- 1.4 The German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) is committed to fostering impactful foreign and security policy on a German and European level that promotes democracy, peace, and the rule of law. DGAP's experts provide decision-makers in politics, business, and civil society with strategic advice based on their foreign policy research and train young professionals in international leadership programmes. DGAP conducts action-oriented, practical research, developing concrete solutions for pressing foreign policy concerns and contributing expertise to strategically address the challenges of an increasingly unstable world.
- 1.5 The aim is to have a mutually beneficial partnership between the fellowship award holder and DGAP with each able to take advantage of fresh perspectives and expand their networks and reach. It will enable the award holder to strengthen and create new links across policy and academia, enabling knowledge mobilisation and translation, and the opportunity to develop new approaches and solutions to policy challenges through providing a different perspective.

The Academy is offering up to two 1-year fellowships hosted in DGAP's office in Berlin. These are offered as awards for up to £150,000 for 12 months in duration (with Full Economic Costing at 80%).

Applications must be submitted by 24 September 2025, 17.00 (UK time).

2 Person Specification and Applicant Eligibility

- 2.1 The British Academy is inviting applications from early-career and mid-career researchers who are working on the themes outlined below who could contribute fresh perspectives to the specified challenges. Please note that applications from independent researchers cannot be accepted in this round of the scheme.
- 2.2 Applicants might have expertise from a range of disciplinary, conceptual and methodological perspectives, including analytical, policy and practical perspectives.
- 2.3 Eligible 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. You must be an early-career or mid-career researcher based at an institution in the UK (e.g., a Higher Education Institution [HEI] or Independent Research Organisation [IRO]), from disciplines within the Humanities and Social Sciences that is listed as an approving-organisation in the British Academy's grant management system, Flexi-Grant. This institution will be issued the Terms and Conditions of the award, if successful.
- 2.4 This is an opportunity for award holders to form new collaborations and draw on the insights this brings to inform, influence and develop their future development. We seek open-mindedness, a willingness to explore new perspectives and to experiment with innovative approaches. You will have an appetite for working across academia, policy and practice, and will demonstrate a commitment to being genuinely challenge driven and dedicated to integrating the perspectives, needs and priorities of the partner organisation.
- 2.5 All applicants should strongly consider the potential for engagement between academic and non-academic environments and the value this would bring to their career and the value they can bring to the work and purpose of the DGAP.
- 2.6 Applicants must also meet the requirements set out below in the 'Working at and with the DGAP' section.
- 2.7 Applicants may not hold more than one British Academy award of a comparable nature at any one time.
- 2.8 Postgraduate students are **not** eligible to apply for grant support from the Academy, and Applicants are asked to confirm in the personal details section(s) 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.

3 Scope of the Fellowships

- 3.1 Applications are invited in any of the following four areas.
- 3.2 **Security, Defence, and Resilience:** The character of conflict is changing. For example, from cyberattacks on infrastructure and disinformation campaigns to economic coercion and proxy conflicts, hybrid threats are threatening democracies. A Fellowship in this area could explore: how state and non-state actors are employing hybrid tactics to challenge established security institutions; the role of traditional and new military concepts, hardware and technology; the evolution of deterrence and resilience strategies in the context of blurred peace-war boundaries; the governance of cyber and information security in open societies; the role of alliances like NATO and the EU in countering hybrid threats; and how hybrid conflict intersects with conventional military planning and strategic stability.
- 3.3 **Europe as an International Actor:** Europe's ability to act collectively on the global stage is being tested by shifting geopolitical alignments, technological disruptions, and internal divergence. A Fellowship in this area could investigate: the institutional and political enablers, or constraints, on Europe's strategic autonomy; pathways to strengthen EU-level capacity for joint action in foreign, defence, economic and technology policy; how smaller and larger European states navigate questions of sovereignty versus collective decision-making; and what lessons can be drawn from past cooperation or fragmentation in the face of international crises, including in the Indo-Pacific, Africa, and the Western Balkans.
- 3.4 **Strategy-Making in a Geopolitical World:** A Fellowship in this area could explore a wide range of challenges and perspectives on global order and disorder, and the major geopolitical shifts that are forcing changing to strategic postures including in Germany. A Fellowship in this area could address: how different national strategic cultures interpret and respond to current transitions in the international order; the evolving role of great powers and middle powers in setting global agendas; the future of nuclear deterrence, arms control, and crisis management; strategic competition in areas such as space, AI, and maritime security; and the role that Germany can play at the European and global level to defend its interests while protecting international rights and global goods.
- 3.5 Successful applicants would be expected to produce policy-relevant analysis for German decision-makers. They do not need an understanding of German politics, but they should be able to offer new approaches to typical foreign policy dilemmas in their chosen field and be ready to engage with policymakers and further stakeholders in Germany.

- 3.6 There are not any preconceived ideas about the disciplinary background of the award holder, but the applicant will need to demonstrate a solid understanding of the relevant issues, including the applicable policy landscape and the systemic challenges that it faces. Language skills where relevant are desirable but not essential.
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4 Working at and with the DGAP

- 4.1 These Fellowships will be fully integrated into the DGAP structure and are placed within a centre and/or research area focussed team in DGAP's offices: the award holder will have a line manager and additional support and mentoring will be provided.
- 4.2 Work-planning is a mixture of demand and self-tasking. An indicative list of tasks includes: writing papers and shorter notes, oral briefings for officials and policymakers, meeting external stakeholders and partners, as well as organising and speaking at events. The award holder will agree the outline of a work programme with their DGAP line manager and team.

It is expected that each award holder will develop a range of outputs, however, it is a requirement that each award holder must complete by the end of their award at least one substantial policy paper in their area of interest of around 2,500-4,000 words accompanied by a policy brief of no more than 1,000 words.

- 4.3 The ability to communicate clearly and succinctly, highlighting policy relevance to non-experts is of importance to all DGAP's work. So too is the ability to work collaboratively with others and to do so at pace, sometimes delivering to tight deadlines.
- 4.4 The award holder will need to agree to respect DGAP's values and standards of behaviour and sign an agreement to that effect. Failure to do so may result in the termination of the Fellowship award.
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5 Duration and Start of a Global Innovation Fellowship

- 5.1 Global Innovation Fellowships are expected to commence by September 2026. An earlier start date of March or April 2026 may be possible, in this case the applicant will need to explain how they will plan and manage their relocation on this faster timeline.
- 5.2 This call is expected to be able to support 1-2 awards.
- 5.3 Awards are expected to run for 1 year.

- 5.4 The cost of relocation, visas and any associated costs for the applicant and their dependants are eligible under this programme
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6 Applicant and Award Flexibility

- 6.1 The Global Innovation Fellowships are intended to be flexible awards. The following guidelines will normally apply. However, in exceptional circumstances, additional flexibility may be available. Please contact international@thebritishacademy.ac.uk for further information.
- a) **Career background and history** – The Academy is aware that individuals will have had different opportunities to balance their research with other commitments during their career or may come from diverse or non-traditional career backgrounds. For example, having taken extended leave including parental or medical leave, or having returned to research following time in other roles or having had periods of significant teaching or administrative workload that may have impacted on the applicant's research. There is a question in the application form (the personal statement) that will enable applicants to provide further information so that the Academy can take this into account when assessing applicants' track record.
 - b) **Reasonable adjustments** – Applications from researchers with disabilities are welcome and encouraged. The Academy will provide adjustments to ensure they can participate fully in the selection process. If an adjustment is required when accessing the application form or for any other part of the application process then please contact international@thebritishacademy.ac.uk. In addition, costs that are required for the researcher to undertake their award will be considered eligible regardless to what is set out in paragraph 40 below. The Academy welcomes any questions applicants may have on this matter. The costs of reasonable adjustments required to support researchers with disabilities will also be an eligible cost throughout the duration of the award.
 - c) **Maternity, paternity, shared parental leave, adoptive or extended sick leave** - There is provision for maternity, paternity, shared parental leave, adoptive or extended sick leave for the award holder as defined in the UK host organisation's standard organisational policy. An extension will be added to account for any time lost within the original period of the award and an additional amount of time will be added on top for up to 6 months.
 - d) **Childcare arrangements** - Support for the cost of childcare support when undertaking award activity, such as travel for conferences, will be considered as part of the allowable research expenses during the award

for the award-holder through the grant. This includes instances where the award holder or staff wish to support their child(ren) themselves, such as travelling with them whilst undertaking their research.

- e) **Relocation and visa arrangements** - The Academy will cover relocation costs for the award-holder during the award, as well as their dependents. The cost of a visa and any associated costs for the applicant and their dependants are eligible under this programme.
- f) **Portability of awards** – If the award holder moves UK host organisation before the start or during the award, the award will be moved to the new UK host organisation provided that the new host is an eligible UK-based host organisation.

7 Value of Funding and Support Provided

7.1 The award will have a maximum award value of £150,000 on an 80% Full Economic Costing (FEC) basis.

7.2 80% FEC is understood in the following manner:

Directly incurred staff costs including PI and team salary and oncosts. 80% FEC contribution

Other Directly Incurred including travel, accommodation, top-up contribution, visas and consumables 100% FEC contribution
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Directly Allocated (including estates costs) and Indirect Costs 80% FEC contribution

7.3 The grant awarded is expected to be used solely for the purposes specified in the application and agreed in the award-letter.

7.4 The award is intended to be made on a full-time basis.

- 7.5 The Academy recognises that the upper limit on the contribution that the Academy's funding can make to this award – £150,000 – 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 will be expected to make additional contributions to the overhead costs involved.
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8 Eligible costs

- 8.1 Funding will be provided on the Full Economic Costing (FEC) basis primarily to cover the salary of the Applicant. The Innovation Fellow will be expected to spend their time in the DGAP's office and/or other mutually agreed sites.
- 8.2 The Academy will provide 80% of the FEC of the Fellowship. The Academy requests that the 80% FEC cost figure is entered into the application form (not the 100% FEC figure). The maximum value of the award made by the Academy is £150,000, meaning that the total cost of the Fellowship at 100% FEC may be up to £187,500. This includes all direct and indirect costs incurred by the employing institution, including space, central support services, and other necessary costs incurred by the employing institution on behalf of the Fellow.
- 8.3 Eligible costs will be funded under the following headings:
- **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
 - **Estates and indirect costs.** The award can include the employing institution's estate and indirect costs incurred as a result of direct staff costs.
 - **Relocation and visa costs.** The Academy will pay for reasonable relocation costs including one return travel to Berlin before the commencement of work at DGAP, travel to commence the fellowship in Berlin and travel to return to the UK at the end of the fellowship. Any required visa costs will also be covered by the award.
 - **Accommodation and top-up contribution.** The Academy will pay up to £2,000 per month for accommodation in Berlin and a top-up contribution of up to £500 per month for the award holder.

9 Non-eligible Costs

- 9.1 The following items are **not eligible** for funding (applicants registered with special needs may consult the Academy about possible exceptions prior to application):
- **Directly allocated salary costs.** No directly allocated costs can be attributed to this award.
 - 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.

10 Timetable

- 10.1 The deadline for applications to be submitted to this call is **24 September 2025 at 17.00 (UK Time)**. This includes the employing institution approver approving the completed application by the submission deadline. Any applications submitted after that deadline will be ineligible.
- 10.2 The final awards panel will meet after the call for applications are closed. When the Panel meets it will include an interview element as part of its assessment. Applicants are required to be available to attend these interviews on **Wednesday 29 October 2025** as a mandatory part of the assessment process.

11 Reporting

- 11.1 Award holders are required to complete three reports:
- An interim report at the midpoint of the Fellowship reporting on progress and lessons learnt to date.
 - 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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12 Head of Department Supporting Statement

- 12.1 Applicants are required to obtain a statement of support from their Head of Department as part of this application.
- 12.2 The Head of Department should be the person who heads the Department, Faculty, Institute or other unit of an Independent Research Organisation (IRO) in which you are currently working. As Head of Department, they will be expected to comment their level of support for the application and on the career development benefit to be gained by the Applicant if the award is made. They will be expected to also 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.

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.

- 12.3 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.
- 12.4 Heads of Department must be invited to contribute to your application via the Flexi-Grant system. Please see further guidance below:
- 12.5 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 participants' 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.

Please also note that an application cannot be submitted until all required contributors have submitted their contribution first. We recommend that supporting participants fulfil their requirements at least 5 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.

13 Selection Criteria

- 13.1 All eligible proposals submitted in response to this call will be assessed by relevant peer reviewers and then considered by a final selection panel, which will conduct **interviews** with a shortlist of applicants.
- 13.2 Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:
- 13.3 The research expertise of the applicant in their chosen area of interest;
- a) The experience and interest of the applicant in engaging closely with policy counterparts;
 - b) The anticipated benefit and impact on the policymaking process in the chosen area of interest and the applicant's future policy engagement ambitions;
 - c) The ability of the applicant to engage orally in their chosen research area of expertise, and particularly to be able to provide policy relevant, clear and succinct oral briefings (will be assessed at interview if applicants are invited to interview);
 - d) Value for money.

- 13.4 All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the application in January 2026.
- 13.5 The approving organisation will be asked to give its consent before the award is confirmed.

14 Application and Assessment Procedure

- 14.1 All applicants must register in the British Academy's online [Flexi-Grant](#) system to enable the processing and assessment of their application. All applications must be submitted in English.
- 14.2 All applications will be subject to an eligibility check undertaken by appropriate British Academy staff before being put forward for assessment, and **applications that are not completed correctly and on time will not be considered.**

The deadline for submissions and UK institutional approval is 24 September at 17.00 (UK time). Applicants will not be allowed to make any changes to their applications or submit any additional information after the 24 September deadline.

15 Code of Practice

- 15.1 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. The Code of Practice may be viewed on the Academy's website at <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/funding/code-practice>.
- 15.2 Feedback is not a feature of the Global Innovation Fellowships scheme and the Academy is, regrettably, unable to enter correspondence regarding the decisions of the awarding Committee, which are governed by the Code of Practice. Please note that by applying in this scheme, applicants undertake to accept the terms under which applications are assessed.

16 Contact Details and Further Information

- 16.1 Please contact international@thebritishacademy.ac.uk for further information.