

# Neil Ker Memorial Fund Scheme Guidance 2025-2026

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

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## 1 Purpose of Grant

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- 1.1 The objective of this fund, established by the family and friends of Neil R Ker, FBA, is to promote the study of Western medieval manuscripts; that is, enabling investigation of their production (including decoration), readership and use in particular.
- 1.2 In general, awards do not exceed **£2,000** and are tenable for up to **12 months**
- 1.3 Awards are offered to support any aspect of research, including travel and research assistance. Grants are not available to fund attendance at conferences or seminars. The fund is not intended to support research visits to read manuscripts for their textual/historical or literary purposes.
- 1.4 Applications are invited from both early career and established scholars of any nationality, engaged on original research intended to produce monographs, editions or studies of documents, texts or illustrations, that include the analysis of the material features of original manuscripts.
- 1.5 All applications should demonstrate that funds are sought for a clearly defined, discrete piece of research, which will have an identifiable outcome on completion of the Academy-funded component of the project.

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## 2 Level and Duration of Awards

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- 2.1 Grants do not normally exceed £2,000 but in exceptional circumstances, bids of up to £7,500 will be considered for research taking place over a maximum period of 24 months, but more normally 12 months.
- 2.2 Applicants should not apply for expenditure that will take place over more than 24 months.
- 2.3 There is no bar to reapplying for further funding, providing the conditions of award relating to the preceding grant have been satisfactorily fulfilled. Please note, however, that once a pilot project has been successfully completed further applications relating to the main project may be more appropriately directed elsewhere for funding (ESRC/AHRC). There is no guarantee that a re-application will be successful, so applicants with longer-term projects in mind should ensure that their research is so designed that a single phase will have an appropriate and worthwhile outcome, even if further phases are not funded.

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### 3 Deadline for Applications and Timeline

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- 3.1 The Academy runs this scheme once a year
- 3.2 **Applications must be submitted by 7 January 2026, 17:00 (GMT).**  
Applicants will not be allowed to make any changes to their applications after the 7 January.
- 3.3 Please note the earliest point at which research can commence, and to help regulate the flow of applications, the latest starting date also. The Academy is inviting proposals in this round with **the closing date noted below.**

<b>Closing Date</b>	7 January 2026 5pm (UK Time)
<b>Research to Commence</b>	No earlier than 1 April 2026, no later than 31 December 2026
<b>Results Notified by</b>	31 March 2026

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### 4 Eligibility

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- 4.1 Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:
- 4.2 Grants are available for research, at postdoctoral or equivalent level, in the study of Western Medieval Manuscripts. Equivalent experience may include holding, or having held, an established post, having a record of publications in the field and/or having teaching experience.
- 4.3 Postgraduate students are not eligible to apply.
- 4.4 Applicants may be based anywhere in the world
- 4.5 Awards will not be made retrospectively: this means that the work for which support is requested **must not** have commenced before the award is announced.

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### 5 Eligible Costs

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- 5.1 Funds may be sought to cover the direct expenses incurred in planning, conducting, and developing the research, including:
- Project planning and development costs (cost of travel for discussion in the UK and overseas)
  - Travel and maintenance when away from home
  - Research assistance (based in UK or abroad)
  - Consumables

- Specialist software
  - Costs of interpreters in the field
- 5.2 Consumables include the purchase of datasets, photocopies, microfilms, etc, and any other minor items that will be used up during the course of the project.
- 5.3 Applicants may apply for short-term consultancy or salary costs for expert staff, or short periods of research assistance.
- 5.4 Provided they are central to the research process, and an adequate case is made, the costs of preparing illustrations (including photography, acquisition of images, draughtsmanship and cartography or other bespoke illustrative material) may be considered.
- 5.5 The cost of reproduction rights for text or images may be considered provided there is a contract for publication in place. Costs associated with deposit of digital material in an appropriately accessible repository may be considered.
- 5.6 Costs related to conservation may be considered provided there is a clear research context to the work that falls within the remit of the Academy; if an application is purely for technical or practical work with no research objective, it is not eligible for funding. Incidental translation expenses may be considered.
- 5.7 The following items are **not currently eligible** for funding (applicants registered with special needs may consult the Academy about possible exceptions):
- Institutional overheads, or any element that should properly be ascribed to institutional overheads
  - Computer hardware including laptops, electronic notebooks, digital cameras, etc
  - Books and other permanent resources
  - 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
  - Payment to the principal researcher(s) in lieu of salary or time contribution, or for personal maintenance at home
  - Replacement teaching costs
  - Travel and maintenance expenses for purposes such as lecture tours or to write up the results of research
  - Attendance at or organisation of conferences either in the UK or abroad to disseminate the results of research.

- 5.8 Please note, The British Academy has set aside specific funding to support any additional needs that applicants and award holders may require. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. Please find further details, and how to apply, [here](#).

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## 6 Applications to Multiple British Academy Schemes

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Please note that only one Neil Ker Memorial Fund Grant or another similar Academy grant may be held, or applied for, at any one time.

- 6.1 **An application cannot be accepted if there is a report outstanding on any previous research grant awarded by the Academy to the principal investigator or co-applicant(s) named in the current proposal. Failure to follow this guidance will result in your application being withdrawn from this round of competition.**
- 6.2 **Duplicate applications for the same purpose to more than one Academy scheme will not be accepted.**

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## 7 Nominated Referee

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- 7.1 Applicants are required to nominate one referee and ensure that the supporting statement from their chosen referee is submitted on the British Academy Flexi-Grant® Grant Management System (GMS) by the application submission deadline. Please note this deadline is final.
- 7.2 **The reference must be submitted before the application can be approved.** Any application without a supporting reference will not be able to be submitted. Please also note that the reference must be submitted in time to allow you to submit the application for approval by your employing organisation for the same deadline.
- 7.3 **Your referee has to be drawn from outside your own employing institution and from outside the employing institution of your co-applicant(s), if any.**
- 7.4 Before listing your referee on your application form you should seek permission from them that they are happy to provide this by the deadline. **It is essential that you enter the correct email address for your referee, otherwise your referee will not receive the automated messages delivered from the [British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS](#).**
- 7.5 **Your referee must register on Flexi-Grant first, before you can send them this invitation.**
- 7.6 We strongly advise that you complete your application as early as possible to allow your referee enough time to provide their reference in the system. An application cannot be considered for an award unless the proposal and reference have been submitted on time.
- 7.7 Please note that references **must** be provided through the GMS, they cannot be provided as an email attachment nor sent by post in hard copy. **Any references received after the deadline, or outside of the system, or by another academic at the same institution as you or a co-applicant(s) will not be accepted, and your application will be withdrawn from this competition.**
- 7.8 All references are kept confidential from the applicant, and they will not be able to view them. Should the applicant resubmit with the same proposal and referee, the reference will only be shared with the referee to maintain this confidentiality.

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## 8 Assessment Process

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- 8.1 Assessors will evaluate the proposal on the basis of its academic merit, taking into account –
- its originality
  - its relationship to, and the volume of, research already in the field
  - the scholarly importance of the research proposed
  - the suitability of the methodology
  - the feasibility of the research programme
  - the specificity of the scheme of research
  - the presentation
  - intended outcome
  - its suitability for support from the Neil Ker Fund.
- 8.2 Assessors will evaluate the ability of the investigator(s) to undertake the proposed research, considering their track record in terms of publication, their academic age and stage of career. Backlogs of publications (including any reasons given) may be taken into account in assessing the current proposal.
- 8.3 The primary assessment of quality will be based on the specific research objective of the proposal, and whether the methodology and research programme outlined are likely to lead to successful achievement of the objective. The details of how the objective will be achieved - whether through research visits, use of research assistance, workshops, or any combination of eligible activities / costs - will be assessed only in relation to each individual application.
- 8.4 No preference will be shown between individual or collaborative modes of research. There are no quotas for different types of application, and no comparisons will be made across applications on the grounds of their operational and financial specifications.
- 8.5 For projects involving partners from other countries, assessors may take into account the availability of partner funding: in cases where partner funding is likely to be scarce, assessors may give priority to those projects which are likely to contribute to capacity building and lead to benefits for the wider scholarly community.
- 8.6 Assessors may consider evidence of language competence where the understanding of material in a foreign language is crucial to the achievement of the research objective.

- 8.7 Comparative judgements about value for money may be considered at the final stage of assessment. Any special case made for endangered or emerging fields may be taken into account at the final stage of assessment.
- 8.8 **NB. The Administration of the scheme is undertaken solely by the British Academy and all aspects of the application process, assessment process and award management is undertaken by the Academy.**

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## 9 Code of Practice

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- 9.1 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

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## 10 Contact Details

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- 10.1 Should you have any queries, please contact:  
[grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk)