

BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grants

Frequently Asked Questions

I am currently studying a post-graduate course. Are there any funds I can apply to?

Unfortunately, the Academy does not have any funds available to provide funding for students. Funding is provided for research at post-doctoral level only.

I have just completed my Ph.D. Can I apply for a grant?

The Academy welcomes applications from recent postdoctoral scholars. In order to be eligible, you must have successfully passed your viva voce examination and completed any corrections.

I do not have a Ph.D. Can I apply for a grant?

We do accept applications from those who have equivalent experience, for example an individual in an established post, and/or who has teaching experience, and/or who has a track record of publications in their relevant field is eligible to apply.

The only restriction to this would be if you are currently registered as a Ph.D. student whilst in your academic post, as Ph.D. students are not eligible to apply.

Can I use the funds to pay for my/my Co-I's salary or time?

No. No Small Grant funds can be used to pay for the salary or for the time of either the PI or a Co-I. If you do want to include salary costs for a consultant, they must be listed as an Other Participant. This applies equally to independent scholars and those employed by a university or research organisation.

I am not affiliated to a UK academic institution. Can I apply for funding?

Yes. Affiliation to a UK academic institution is not a requirement for Small Research Grants, rather these awards are open to all postdoctoral scholars ordinarily resident in the UK. You can apply as an 'Independent Scholar' – this means you are applying independently from an institution.

I am on a fixed-term employment contract, can I apply through my institution?

If your employment contract lasts the duration of your research project, or is likely to be extended, then you may apply via your institution if you wish to do so. If your employment contract will end before or during your research period, we would recommend contacting your Research Office to find out if your institution is happy to support your application and administer any potential award. If your institution is not able to do so, then please apply as an Independent Scholar.

I am applying as an Independent Scholar. Do I still need to press the 'Submit for Organisational Approval' button?

Yes. Because you apply as an Independent Scholar, your application will be checked for eligibility in the way that it would be if you were to have access to an institution research or finance office. If your application is deemed eligible, the Academy will provide the 'organisational approval'.

Independent scholars are required to submit for organisational approval 5 working days before the round's final closing date. This is to give Academy staff adequate time to process applications. Any applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

I am currently a Principal or Co-Investigator on an ongoing British Academy Small Research Grant. Am I eligible to apply?

No. Applicants must not hold an ongoing British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grant at the time of application, whether as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator. A grant is considered ongoing if the end date of the project has not yet passed.

I am currently a Principal or Co-Applicant on another British Academy grant. Am I eligible to apply?

Duplicate applications for the same purpose to more than one Academy scheme will not be accepted.

Please note the following:

- An International Fellowship co-applicant can apply to this scheme providing there is no duplication of costs.
- You may apply for a Postdoctoral Fellowship concurrently for the same project, and you may hold both awards if both applications are successful, as long as there is no duplication of costs.
- You may apply for a Mid-Career Fellowship concurrently for the same project, and you may hold both awards if both applications are successful, as long as there is no duplication of costs.

- You may apply for a BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowship concurrently for the same project, and you may hold both awards if both applications are successful, as long as there is no duplication of costs.
- Talent Development Awards can be held at the same time, for different projects, provided there is no duplication of costs.

Can I apply if I have an outstanding report with the British Academy?

No. All applicants whether as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on a previous award, must have submitted all outstanding final reports due to the British Academy before applying.

Can I apply as Primary Applicant on one Small Research Grant and Co-Applicant on another?

No, you can only submit one application per round. This applies to both Primary and Co-Applicants. This also includes current award holders; you cannot submit an application until your current project is completed.

I was unsuccessful in applying to the Academy in a previous round. Are resubmissions accepted?

Yes, the Academy will accept **one** resubmission of a previously unsuccessful application. For applications that did not pass the quality threshold assessment stage, a fresh proposal must be prepared, and a new statement of support supplied by a referee (who may be either the same or different from that named on the first application). Applicants should clearly demonstrate if and how the proposal has been modified. For resubmissions, this must be noted in either the 'Source of Funding' section of Page 1 or 'Previous Support Dates' section of Page 4 of the application form.

After the 2026 round, applications that are unsuccessful may not be submitted in the round immediately following the original submission. Applicants must wait at least one full round before resubmitting the same proposal. Resubmission is permitted in any round after this. In practice, this will mean that unsuccessful applications from the 2026 round of competition cannot be resubmitted in the 2026-27 round and could be submitted in the 2027 round at the earliest. After this, applicants may choose to resubmit the application in any following round.

I passed the quality threshold but was unsuccessful in the randomisation process, can I make an identical resubmission?

Yes, for Proposals which have previously passed the quality threshold assessment stage, but were not selected in the randomisation process, these can be resubmitted without modification, however this does **not** guarantee that they will pass the threshold upon resubmission, and this will still be considered as their second and final submission. For resubmissions, again this must be noted in either the 'Source of Funding' section of Page 1 or 'Previous Support Dates' section of Page 4 of the application form.

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Can I submit multiple applications if the research proposals are different from one another?

No, you can only submit one application per round regardless of whether the applications propose different avenues of research.

Does my Co-Applicant(s) have to be based in the UK?

No, a 'Co-Applicant' can be based overseas, provided there is a UK based Principal Investigator.

I am not sure whether to list someone as a Co-Applicant or other participant. What is the difference?

A 'Co-Applicant' is a joint director of the project with equal responsibility for the academic management of the project. An 'other participant' can be anyone else actively associated with the project.

How many Co-Applicants can my research project have?

For the BA\Leverhulme Small Research Grants scheme each application can have a maximum of two Co-Applicants.

My project is due to start before the decision date. Can I apply?

No. The scheme notes will specify the earliest date that research may commence for each round of competition.

What is the latest date I can apply to start my project?

Please look at the scheme notes which will specify the latest date that research must have commenced by.

What do you mean by endangered or emerging subjects?

The definition around this is broad and typically endangered or emerging subject areas are those that are newly formed, becoming more prominent or those that are in danger of becoming lost.

Does my referee have to be based in the UK?

No, references written in English from appropriate overseas referees are welcomed by the Academy. The only stipulation is that your referee is external to the institution from which you are applying.

What information will my referee have to provide?

Your referee is asked to respond to a series of short statements, commenting upon the importance and feasibility of the research proposal and the applicant's abilities.

Is there any guidance available for referees supporting an application?

Yes. There is a section in the Application Guidance (Section 14) titled "Guidance for Referees", which outlines all the necessary steps and information.

Can I include a bibliography/reference list and, if so, where should I place this?

It is not a mandatory requirement that you include a reference list. If you choose to include this as part of your application, then it should be placed as part of the main text in your research proposal – you cannot upload this as an additional document.

Who can offer institutional authorisation for my application?

Institutional authorisation must be given by the registered approver in the British Academy Flexi-Grant® Grant Management System (GMS). This is variable at each institution and will often be the Research Grants or Contracts Office or equivalent. You should seek advice at your home institution.

If you apply as an independent scholar, the Academy will provide institutional authorisation.

Please ensure that you give enough time for your institutional approver, or the Academy if you are an Independent Scholar, to approve your application before the deadline.

Note: Independent scholars must submit applications **5 days** ahead of the deadline. This allows the Research Funding Team adequate time to review your application and flag any queries, a function that would usually be fulfilled by a university funding department. **Any application from an independent scholar received after this date will not be considered.**

When I apply for funding through any of the awards offered by the British Academy, can I include in the application the cost of APCs (Article Processing Charges) to enable any articles that may arise from the research to be published in learned journals that offer a 'Gold' open access option?

No. Currently the Academy's position is that publication costs are not eligible.

Is the Apprenticeship Levy an eligible cost for this scheme?

No. This is not currently an eligible cost. Please see the scheme guidance notes for a list of eligible and ineligible costs.

Does the Academy require the outputs of the research it funds to be made available in any open access format?

No, this is not currently a stipulation of any Academy award.

I have another question, who should I contact?

If you cannot find the answer to your question in the FAQs, the scheme guidance notes or on our website, please email your query to grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk and a member of the team will respond.

Annex: BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grants

Partial Randomised Allocation Trial

Why is it described as a ‘partial’ randomised allocation trial?

Applications submitted to the programme will need to pass an initial quality threshold determined through the traditional peer review process. Assessors will be asked to confirm that applications are good enough to be considered for funding against specific criteria – the quality and interest of the research proposal; the ability of the applicant (and any co-applicants) to make a success of it based on their past track record; the feasibility of the methodology; the feasibility of the timescale; the appropriateness of costs requested. Thereafter, all applications that pass the quality threshold will be entered into the random allocation process.

What does the Academy think the benefits of this approach will be?

We believe that this approach will have wide benefits.

- We hope that the transparency and simplicity of the system will improve research culture more generally
- Between the very best applications, we will be removing the potential for bias and partiality, which may be fairer to traditionally overlooked groups.

- Allow us to give applicants limited feedback, especially to those who do not pass the quality threshold.
- Overall, we believe that partial randomisation will ease the burden on applicants and research officers without impacting the quality of applications and assessment. An application needs to pass our rigorous quality threshold, but it does not need to be checked and edited time and time again, so more time will be freed up for both applicants and research officers.

How long will the trial last?

The initial phase of the partial randomisation trial ran successfully from 2022 to 2025. Based on these successes, the British Academy has agreed that the trial should continue for a further 3 years – 6 more rounds of competition – through to 2028. Awards made under this scheme can be held for between 1 and 24 months, so to establish understanding of the full impact of the change will require a significant proportion of at least the initial awards to have been completed and reported upon.

How will the Academy evaluate how successful the trial has been?

The Academy has commissioned internationally recognised experts, Professor Philip Clarke (Professor of Health Economics, Director Health Economics Research Centre, University of Oxford) and Professor Adrian Barnett (Professor, School of Public Health and Social Work, Queensland University of Technology) to work with applicants, award-holders, research offices and assessors in evaluating the impact of the trial. This approach creates a perfect randomised experiment for testing the impact of funding on researchers' careers, something that has yet to be answered using such a high-quality study design. This study will be the largest ever international experiment to examine the impact of funding on researchers' careers.

How will feedback to applicants be enabled through this trial?

One of the most common questions that the Academy is currently asked is about the provision of feedback. This proposed new approach would enable all applicants to be given feedback on this scheme in future. If the answer is no to one (or more) of the specific questions that the initial assessment addresses – the quality and interest of the research proposal; the ability of the applicant (and any co-applicants) to make a success of it based on their past track record; the feasibility of the methodology; the feasibility of the timescale; the appropriateness of costs requested, then an applicant could be informed that their application was considered to be weak on that specific aspect. If the answer is yes to all the questions, and they are subsequently unsuccessful in the randomised allocation, then we would be able to inform them that this was the reason they were unsuccessful.

Is this trial going to be extended to other schemes offered by the British Academy?

No. The Academy believes that the high volume, high quality, small-scale funding for more innovative and experimental pilot studies typically supported through the Small

Grants scheme is well suited to this partial randomised allocation approach. There are no plans to extend this to other schemes.