

BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant Scheme Guidance 2026

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

1 New British Academy Policy: Independent Scholar Applicant Deadline

- 1.1 From the 2026 round (this round) of Small Research Grants, independent scholars will now be required to submit applications at least 5 working days before the round closing date.
 - 1.2 The deadline for submission by independent scholars for this round is the **27 May 2026**. Any applications received after this date will not be processed or considered.
 - 1.3 Should you have any queries on this policy or have mitigating circumstances, please contact the Research Funding team at grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk.
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2 Incoming Changes to Resubmission Policy

- 2.1 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.
 - 2.2 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.
 - 2.3 Applicants are still limited to **one** resubmission for each proposal.
 - 2.4 Applicants may choose to submit a new proposal. Subject to sufficient changes from previous proposals, this would not be considered a resubmission and can be made without limitation.
 - 2.5 If an applicant would like further clarification as to if a new proposal would be considered a resubmission, they should contact the Research Funding team at grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk.
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3 Purpose of Grant

- 3.1 Grants are available to support primary research in the humanities and social sciences. The first recourse for funding should be to your own institution (where applicable).
- 3.2 The maximum grant is £10,000 over two years – applications will not be considered for less than £500.

- 3.3 Applications for collaborative or individual research projects are equally welcome under this scheme. Applications from international groups of scholars are welcome, provided there is a UK-based scholar as lead applicant for the duration of the award period.
- 3.4 Funds are available to facilitate initial project planning and development; to support the direct costs of research; and to enable the advancement of research through workshops or visits by or to partner scholars. Applicants may seek support for any combination of eligible activity and cost up to the overall limit of £10,000. The Academy will assess applications equally on their merits, with no preference as to mode of enquiry.
- 3.5 Grants are **not** intended to support interchange between UK and overseas scholars where there is no planned programme of activity to meet a clearly specified research objective (dissemination of results of research conducted under the aegis of the project for which funding is sought is a permitted purpose, but applications will only be considered if this dissemination occurs through workshops bringing together a closed group of participants to advance a specifically identified research idea, rather than open call conferences), nor are grants intended solely to support attendance at open conferences organised by a third party or international organisation.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 NB - The British Academy welcomes proposals for high-quality research in all its subject areas. 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.

4 Level and Duration of Awards

- 4.1 Applicants should not apply for expenditure that will take place over more than 24 months. (Note that if application includes an element for dissemination of results of research at conferences, the timing of such a conference must be within the 24-month limit and the end date of the award calculated accordingly to include this element).

- 4.2 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.

5 Deadline for Applications and Timeline

- 5.1 The Academy offers awards in this scheme in two rounds of competition each year.
- 5.2 **Applications must be submitted by 3 June 2026, 17:00 (GMT).** Applicants will **not** be allowed to make any changes to their applications after the 3 June.
- 5.3 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.**

Independent Scholar Deadline	27 May 2026 (5pm UK Time)
Closing Date	3 June 2026 (5pm UK Time)
Research to Commence	No earlier than 21 September 2026, no later than 27 March 2027
Results Notified by	4 September 2026

6 Eligibility

- 6.1 Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:
- 6.2 Grants are available for research, at postdoctoral or equivalent level, in the fields of the humanities and the social sciences. Equivalent experience may include holding, or having held, an established post, having a record of publications in the field and/or having teaching experience.
- 6.3 Postgraduate students are not eligible to apply.**
- 6.4 Applicants must be ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands (that is, classed as 'ordinarily resident' for tax purposes) **or** currently employed overseas by a recognised UK overseas research organisation.
- 6.5 Whilst co-applicants must fulfil all the other eligibility criteria, they are able to be based anywhere in the world.
- 6.6 UK research organisations based overseas may apply to be recognised by demonstrating that they satisfy **both** the following conditions:
- 6.7 Organisations which are, or which are constituent parts of, charities registered with the Charity Commission; and
- 6.8 Which must be able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake research in the field or discipline in which they wish to be funded, and to lead the research for which funding is received.
- 6.9 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.

7 Eligible Costs

- 7.1 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; initial workshops with potential partners)
 - Travel and maintenance for UK scholars; including travel to disseminate results of the research at conferences held either in the UK or abroad
 - Travel and maintenance for overseas scholars engaged in collaborative research activity with UK partner(s)
 - Research assistance (based in UK or abroad)

- Workshops to advance the programme of research (principally the costs of travel and maintenance for key participants, though organisational costs may be considered)
 - Consumables
 - specialist software
 - costs of interpreters in the field
- 7.2 Bids for the cost of child or parent care may be considered if the carer is conducting research away from home and it is not possible to make alternative arrangements.
- 7.3 These costs can also be requested through our [Additional Needs Fund](#) if the costs sought would otherwise exceed the maximum grant value – please see below. The costs of normal regular childcare whilst at home are **not** eligible for support.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 Applicants may apply for short-term consultancy or salary costs for expert staff, or short periods of research assistance.
- 7.6 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.
- 7.7 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.
- 7.8 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.
- 7.9 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

- 7.10 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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8 Funding

- 8.1 The British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust are continuing their partnership to support the funding of the Small Research Grants Scheme. The awards are co-funded on an on-going basis by the Leverhulme Trust and public funding from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. The Academy also expresses its partnership with the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS).
- 8.2 **Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS):** The British Academy has partnered with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) who will co-fund two Small Research Grants for this round.
- UK applicants should submit an application for a British Academy Small Grant and ensure that their Chinese co-applicant submits an application to CASS in English and Chinese (on its prescribed application form) at the same time.
 - China-based applicants must be of postdoctoral (or above) status and have a permanent position (spanning the duration of the project) at a CASS institute.
 - China-based applicants must first submit an expression of interest, together with a written recommendation letter issued by their CASS institute to the Bureau of International Cooperation of CASS (<http://www.bic.cas.cn/>) before submitting a proposal to the British Academy in the same year.
 - Applications will be considered by each side, who will jointly agree the final list of successful applicants to receive co-funded awards.
 - **The application to the British Academy must indicate the total cost requested (up to £10,000)** and if the award is recommended for co-funding, the British Academy will cover costs of the participants from the UK side (up to £5,000) and CASS will cover costs of the participants from the Chinese side (up to RMB 50,000).
- 8.3 The Academy also offers awards supported by private funders with a thematic focus including:
- [British Accounting and Finance Association](#) – research in the fields of accounting finance, broadly interpreted to cover all aspects of historical and contemporary research in relevant subjects.

- [**Honor Frost Foundation**](#) – research in the fields of maritime archaeology including shipwrecks, submerged landscapes, maritime ethnography, cultural heritage, research relating to outreach and community engagement with maritime archaeology etc.
- [**Journal of Moral Education Trust**](#) – research in the fields of moral education, moral psychology, moral philosophy and ethics, civics and citizenship education and subjects bearing on how human beings engage or disengage with moral life.
- [**Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain**](#) – research in the fields of philosophy that bears on educational questions and issues.
- [**Sino-British Fellowship Trust**](#) – funds individual or collaborative projects in Britain or China in the humanities and social sciences.
- [**Society for the Advancement of Management Studies**](#) – research in the fields of management and business studies.
- [**Wellcome Trust**](#) – research in the fields of health and wellbeing.

- 8.4 The British Academy also has several endowed funds, from which grants are made for particular and restricted purposes. Please view our [Special Funds Page](#) for more information.
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9 Independent Scholars

- 9.1 Please note that new British Academy policy dictates that applications from independent scholars will now **need to be received 5 working days ahead of the final closing date**. This is to give Academy staff adequate time to process applications and for applicants to make any changes requested by the Academy. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the application not being processed or marked as submitted.
- 9.2 In the 2026 round, applications by independent scholars must be received by the 27 May 2026.**
- 9.3 An independent scholar is a researcher who chooses to apply independently from an institution. This can be for a variety of reasons, such as they are unaffiliated from a research institution (potentially as they are retired or an early career scholar), or if they are on a fixed term contract which will end before the project does.
- 9.4 Independent scholars should complete the form as standard and select 'independent scholar' as their primary organisation on the form. They should still click the 'submit for organisational approval' button as the Academy acts as the research office in such cases. The Grants team will perform checks of the application at this stage, with two possible outcomes. If no amendments are required, we will provide 'organisational' approval. If they are required, the applicant will be emailed advising them on what needs to be rectified and will return the application to them. Once complete, the applicant will be able to resubmit to the Academy.
- 9.5 Independent scholars **must** submit their applications at least five days before the deadline to allow sufficient time to make any amendments if necessary. An application submitted past this deadline will not be considered for this round.
- 9.6 An application will only be marked as submitted once British Academy staff have processed the application and given organisational approval.
- 9.7 If selected for funding, independent scholars will receive the grant funds directly and will be asked to provide their bank details. It is the responsibility of the scholar to keep receipts for purchases which will need to be sent to the grants team at the end of the award period along with a final expenditure statement.
- 9.8 Remuneration for PIs or Co-Is is not a feature of this scheme. This applies to both independent scholars and those employed by universities equally.

10 Applications to Multiple British Academy Schemes

Please note that only one British Academy Small Research Grant or another similar Academy grant may be held, or applied for, at any one time.

- 10.1 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.**
- 10.2 All applicants should have no outstanding final reports owed to the Academy, or ongoing Small Research Grant. An applicant would be considered as having an ongoing project if the end date of a project has not passed, regardless of if they are the PI or co-I on this project.
- 10.3 Duplicate applications for the same purpose to more than one Academy scheme will not be accepted.**
- 10.4 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.

11 Resubmissions

- 11.1 The Academy will accept **one** resubmission of a previously unsuccessful application. If the original application did not meet the quality threshold, 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 (this can be highlighted in the 'Resubmission Details' section on page 2 of the application form).
- 11.2 Proposals which have previously passed the quality threshold assessment, and were not selected in the randomisation process, can be resubmitted without modification. However, this does not carry a guarantee that they will pass the threshold upon resubmission, and this will still be considered as their second and final submission.
- 11.3 There is no function on Flexi-Grant to transfer information from one application to another, so the application must be manually inputted from the previous application to a fresh one. All information, including the referee statement, will need to input through manual transfer and invitation of contributors. We recommend when making applications, that a copy of the proposal is written outside of the system.
- 11.4 We do not have any requirements for the entries to be different, and should you wish to have the same referee for the resubmission we can share the original reference with them to expedite the process. As the referee statement is confidential, it can only be shared with the original referee, and they should contact the Research Funding team directly for this information.
- 11.5 After the 2026 round, applicants 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 the 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.
- 11.6 Applicants may choose to submit a new proposal. Subject to sufficient changes from previous proposals, this would not be considered a resubmission and can be made without limitation.
- 11.7 If an applicant would like further clarification as to if a new proposal would be considered a resubmission, they should contact the Research Funding team at grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk.

12 Nominated Referee

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 The referee should be invited to complete their statement through the 'Contributors' section above the application summary table. Applicants will be asked for their referee's name, title and email address. Once invited an automated email will be sent via Flexi-Grant and referees should create an account before this is received to ensure the process runs smoothly. The email address provided should match those associated with their referee's account exactly to avoid access problems.
- 12.3 **The reference must be submitted before the application can be approved so applicants are encouraged to invite their referee early to avoid delay.** 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. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure their referee is aware of the deadline and process before a submission is received. **Late submissions owing to the referee statement being incomplete will not be accepted.**
- 12.4 **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.**
- 12.5 Referees should be as separate from the application and applicant as reasonably practicable. Owing to this, referees should not hold any position at the applicant's university. This includes both paid and honorary positions.
- 12.6 For academics who are applying as independent scholars, but are currently employed by an institution, your referee must not be drawn from your current affiliated university.
- 12.7 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](#).**
- 12.8 **Your referee must register on Flexi-Grant first, before you can send them this invitation.**
- 12.9 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.

- 12.10 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.**
- 12.11 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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13 Assessment/Partial Randomisation Trial

- 13.1 The British Academy has decided to continue to trial a new approach to the peer review and assessment of British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grants. Applications will be assessed in the normal way by assessors at the initial stage to determine whether an application is fundable or not.
- 13.2 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; and the appropriateness of costs requested.
- 13.3 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. 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. 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. In addition, 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.

- 13.4 All applications that are deemed fundable at this stage - i.e. meeting the quality threshold - will then be entered into a random allocation process.
- 13.5 As a result of this revised process, the Academy will be able to give all unsuccessful applicants feedback on their applications. Applicants whose applications are judged not to meet the quality threshold on one or more of the criteria will be informed of this when given the result at the end of the assessment process. Applicants who are entered into the random allocation process but not selected for award will be informed that their applications were fundable and the only reason for being unsuccessful was that there were not enough funds to support everyone entered into the random allocation.
- 13.6 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. Other benefits include:
- 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 feedback on which elements of the proposal did not pass the quality threshold. Please note that we will not be able to enter into correspondence about feedback or provide further detail.
 - 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.

14 Consent

- 14.1 The British Academy is working with researchers at the University of Oxford to evaluate the Partial Randomised Allocation Trial. These researchers are requesting your consent for the British Academy to share some details of your SRG application to enable you to be involved as a study participant. The researchers will use this information to gather data on your past and future research outputs. We will be in touch after you have submitted your application with further details. Your decision to participate or not is entirely independent from the allocation of funding for the Small Research Grants scheme.
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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.
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16 Contact Details

- 16.1 Should you have any queries, please contact:
grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk