

British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship 2026-27 – Scheme Guidance

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Last review date:	June 2026
Next review date:	June 2027

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

1 Aim of the Scheme

- 1.1 Through this scheme, the Academy intends to both support outstanding individual researchers with excellent research proposals, and to promote public understanding of and engagement with the humanities and social sciences. The primary aim of the scheme is, therefore, to allow successful applicants to obtain time freed from their normal commitments.
- 1.2 The time bought by the scheme should be devoted to the completion of a major piece of research. In addition, the Academy will look for evidence of a clear commitment to a strategy of public engagement and communication of the research outcomes during the period of the Fellowship. The scheme thus contributes to the Academy's strategic commitment to the support of ideas, individuals and intellectual resources and to public engagement.
- 1.3 Awards will be judged both on the quality of the research proposed and on the capacity of the applicant to communicate with a broad audience. Applicants are invited to indicate ways in which their proposed programme will contribute to advances in understanding, including public understanding, of their subject area and to the identification of appropriate strategic priorities in the social sciences and humanities. The Fellowships are tenable for a period of not less than 6 months and not more than 12 months beginning in the autumn of 2027. ***The earliest start date is 1 September 2027 and the latest start date is 1 January 2028.***

2 Financial Basis of the Scheme

- 2.1 The Mid-Career Fellowships are covered under the Full Economic Costing (FEC) regime, and no spending can take place outside of the timeframe of the Fellowship. Any activities requiring expenditure after the original award end date would require prior approval through a no-cost extension request.
- 2.2 The primary purpose of this scheme is to buy out 100% of the time of the researcher awarded the Fellowship. The Academy's contribution to the Directly Incurred expense of the Principal Investigator's salary cost will be capped at a maximum contribution of £80,000 at 80% FEC.
- 2.3 The total value of the Fellowship, including Directly Incurred Salary, Directly Incurred Research Expenses, Directly Allocated (Estate Costs) and Indirect Costs is not expected to exceed £152,000 at 80% FEC.

- 2.4 The Research Costs element of the Fellowship is limited to a maximum of £8,000 at 80% FEC. The total Directly Incurred cost (which includes the award holder's salary and Research Costs) is limited to £80,000 at 80% FEC.
- 2.5 The table below shows the maximum cost of each budget heading at 100% FEC and the maximum Academy's contribution to each heading at 80% FEC:

Budget Heading	Expected Maximum at 100% FEC	Expected Maximum at 80% FEC
Directly Incurred (Staff)	£100,000*	£80,000*
Directly Incurred (Research Costs)	£10,000*	£8,000*
Directly Allocated (Including Estate Costs)	£90,000	£72,000
Indirect Costs		
Total	£190,000	£152,000

* Absolute limit capped to a combined total of £100,000 at 100% FEC, £80,000 at 80% FEC.

N.B. Please note that all costs should be submitted at 80% FEC. The Host Organisation will be accountable for paying the additional 20% of the costs.

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

3 Eligible Costs

- 3.1 For the Research Costs portion of the Mid-Career fellowship, funds may be sought to cover the direct expenses incurred in planning, conducting, and developing the research. Please see the table below outlining the eligible and ineligible costs on this scheme.

Item	Eligible	Ineligible
Project planning and development costs (cost of travel for discussion in the UK and overseas)	☒	
Travel and maintenance for the Fellowship-holder to conduct fieldwork, travel to archives or related project activities	☒	
Travel to disseminate results of the research at conferences or other public events held either in the UK or abroad	☒	
Costs associated with organising events, talks, conferences or presentations in the UK or abroad	☒	
Research assistance (Must come under Research Costs rather than DI - Staff)	☒	
Consumables (i.e. purchase of datasets, photocopies, microfilms, etc., and any other minor items that will be used up during the course of the project)	☒	
Specialist software (excluding commonly available office packages)	☒	
Costs of interpreters in the field	☒	
Short-term consultancy or salary costs of expert staff (Must come under Research Costs rather than DI - Staff)	☒	
The costs of preparing illustrations, including photography, acquisition of images, draughtsmanship and cartography or other bespoke illustrative material; and the costs of reproduction rights for text or images (see note 1)	☒	
Caregiving costs where this is unavoidable (see note 1)	☒	

Computer hardware, including laptops, electronic notebooks, digital cameras etc.		☒
Books and publications		☒
Permanent resources and equipment or any elements that should properly be ascribed to departmental or university overheads		☒
The preparation of camera-ready copy, copy-editing, proof-reading, indexing, or any other editorial task		☒
Subventions for direct production costs (printing, binding, distribution, marketing etc.)		☒
Costs of publication in electronic media (including Open Access Fees)		☒
Travel/maintenance expenses for purposes such as lecture tours, or writing up results of research		☒

Note 1: The case made must be explicitly approved by the Academy.

4 Suitable Applicants

- 4.1 These Fellowships are awarded to individuals employed at UK universities, other UK institutions of higher education or Independent Research Organisations. The Academy takes no account of an applicant's age or current status (e.g. Professor, Lecturer, Curator) in determining eligibility for these Fellowships.
- 4.2 Rather, these Fellowships are intended primarily to provide opportunities for researchers who have already made an outstanding contribution to their field and have achieved distinction as an excellent communicator and 'champion' in their field, and who would **usually be within no more than 15 years from the award of their doctorate.**
- 4.3 In considering eligibility, the Academy will make due allowance for applicants who have had career breaks; and for established researchers who do not have doctorates, who should be within 15 years of their first academic appointment. The 15-year post-PhD criterion is not strictly enforced – if a candidate fits roughly within this timeframe and/or can justify their status as a Mid-Career scholar, they are very welcome to apply. Ultimately, it will be up to the assessors to judge their suitability as part of their overall assessment criteria. Applicants can outline these circumstances under the Personal Statement section on the application form.
- 4.4 There is no 'minimum' time limit from the award of the doctorate for the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme, but applicants who have been awarded their PhD within the last few years should bear in mind that they will be competing with those who will have a whole range of experience so they would need to have a strong case in terms of their track record of research, publication and public engagement already to be sure it is worth applying for a Mid-Career Fellowship.
- 4.5 Applicants will be asked in their proposal to set out specific plans for the dissemination of their research to a broad audience, in addition to publication in the usual academic press and journals.

5 Suitable Fields

- 5.1 Applicants for the Mid-Career Fellowships should be intending to pursue – or, in the case of those applying to support a programme of communication, have pursued – original, independent research in any field of study within the humanities and social sciences.
- 5.2 The Academy will take into account the aim of providing support for areas in which there are specific vulnerabilities within the humanities and social sciences. All applicants are invited to state how they see their particular programme, whether directly meeting current challenges or not, contributes to the identification of future priorities and challenges.
- 5.3 To amplify this final point, the Academy does not set thematic priorities to which all applicants are expected to relate their proposal. Rather the onus is on the individual to indicate if, and how, their research will contribute to meeting national challenges. The primary factor in assessing applications will remain the quality of the proposal.
- 5.4 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.

6 Relationship of these awards to other schemes offered by the British Academy

- 6.1 Applicants should note that the Mid-Career Fellowships will provide only limited research expenses to the successful candidates. The principle applied by the Academy is no duplication of funding for the same purpose. The table below shows the British Academy funding schemes which are, and are not, allowed to be held in tandem by the same award holder.

Scheme	Mid-Career Fellowship	BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowship	BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant	Postdoctoral Fellowship	Talent Development Award
Mid-Career Fellowship		No	Yes	No	No
BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowship	No		Yes	No	Yes
BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Postdoctoral Fellowship	No	No	Yes		Yes
Talent Development Award	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Resubmission of the same proposal may be made once in the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme. An applicant is eligible to re-apply with a *revised* or *different* proposal so long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

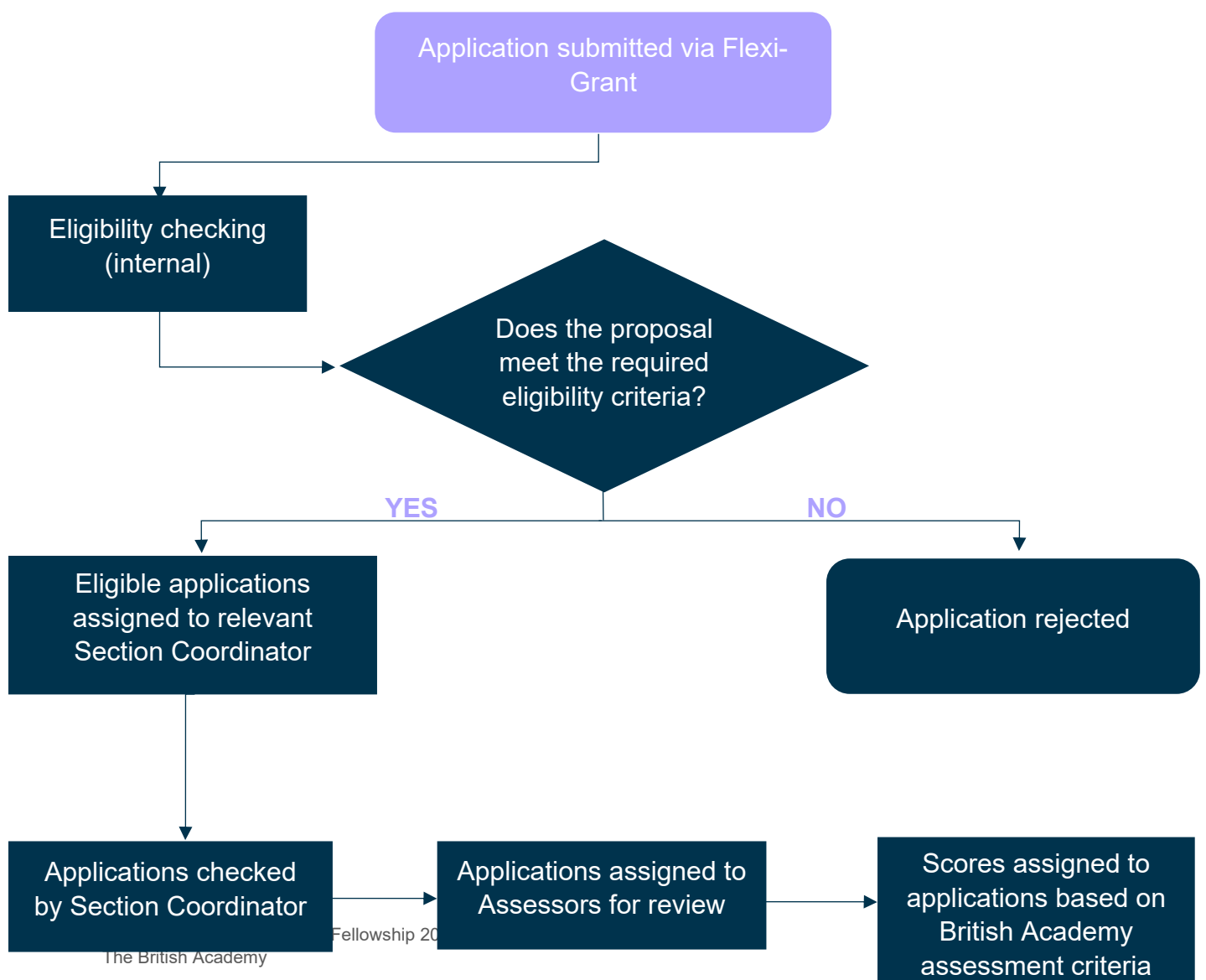
Previous Mid-Career Fellowship holders are not permitted to submit another application to this scheme.

7 Application and Assessment Procedures

- 7.1 The deadline for application approval by your employing institution is **5pm (BST) 26 August 2026**.
- 7.2 Applications are expected to provide full financial details of the Full Economic Costing and research expenses.
- 7.3 Applicants are invited to supply information about their current academic commitments, publications, research proposal and detailed costings.
- 7.4 Applicants are required to nominate one referee (**from outside their own employing institution**), who is as independent from the applicant as possible. The referee is not intended to be an advocate for the applicant – rather their role is expected to be to help provide a rounded assessment of the proposal indicating both strengths and weaknesses. The applicant should ensure that the supporting statement from their chosen referee is submitted on the British Academy [Flexi-Grant®](#) Grant Management System (GMS) as early as possible, to allow enough time for applicants to meet any internal deadlines set by their employing institution.
- 7.5 **The deadline for employing institutions to approve applications and submit them to the British Academy is 5pm (BST) 26 August 2026 – this deadline is final, and no late applications can be accepted.**
- 7.6 **The reference must be submitted before the application can be approved by the host organisation. Any application without a supporting reference will not be able to be submitted.**
- 7.7 Your referee must be drawn from outside your own employing institution, and before listing your referee on your application form you should seek permission that they are happy to provide this before the deadline for the submission of this application in [Flexi-Grant](#).

- 7.8 It is essential that you enter the correct email address for your referee, otherwise your referee will not receive the automated messages delivered from [Flexi-Grant](#). If your referee has more than one email address, you must check which address they are using to ensure they can access your application. We strongly advise that you complete your application as easily as possible to allow your referee enough time to provide their reference in the system and to allow for any unexpected delays.
- 7.9 Please note that the reference must be provided through [Flexi-Grant](#), it cannot be provided as an email attachment nor sent by post in hard copy.
- 7.10 There is likely to be strong competition for the available Fellowships. Initial assessment of applications is made by peer reviewers, whose comments and recommendations are considered by the Research Awards Committee, which makes the final decision on the Fellowships to be offered. There are no interviews prior to offers being made. The final results are expected to be confirmed at the end of March 2027.

The flow chart on the next page illustrates this process.



- 7.11 Applicants may wish to note that the following summary is given to assessors to form the basis of their judgements on the applications submitted:
- a) Is the applicant at an appropriate career stage, usually within 15 years of the award of a doctorate, with due allowance for career breaks? Has the applicant already made an outstanding contribution to their field?
 - b) Is the proposal of outstanding quality?
 - c) Is the applicant's proposed communication strategy well thought out and likely to contribute strongly to the public engagement aim of the scheme?
- 7.12 Please note that academic merit and the focus on communication are the primary bases on which assessment will be made and may be judged together.
- 7.13 Assessors will evaluate the proposal against the following criteria, as appropriate to the aims of the scheme: its originality, its relationship to, and the volume of, research already undertaken in the field, the quality of the research proposed, the suitability of the methodology, the feasibility of the research programme, its timeliness, the communication plan, and the public benefit of the intended outcomes. Assessors may also consider evidence of language competence where relevant to the proposal, particularly where the understanding of material in a foreign language is crucial to the achievement of the research objectives. In addition, assessors will evaluate the applicant's ability to undertake the proposal, including the contribution they have already made to their field, their academic age, and stage of career. Backlogs of publication (including any reasons provided by applicants) may also be considered when assessing the current proposal.

8 Code of Practice

- 8.1 The Academy has adopted 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.
- 8.2 **Regrettably, feedback is not a feature of the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme.** The Academy is unable to discuss the decisions of the awarding Committee, which is governed by the Code of Practice. Submission of the application form constitutes the applicant's agreement to all terms, conditions and notices contained in the Scheme Notes.

9 Responsibilities of Applicants

- 9.1 Applicants are expected to avoid research misconduct. Research misconduct includes the fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or in reporting results, misrepresentation, mismanagement or inadequate preservation of data and/or primary materials, making up data or results and recording and reporting them, such that the research is not accurately represented in the public research record.

10 Additional Needs Fund

- 10.1 The British Academy has set aside specific funding to support [additional needs](#) that applicants and award holders may require. This funding would be in addition to the amount already requested for research expenses. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This additional financial support cannot be guaranteed but the British Academy is keen to be as inclusive as possible in supporting applicants and award holders with any additional needs to facilitate the best possible research. Some examples of what may be considered for this funding are:
- Specific equipment to overcome barriers to people with disabilities undertaking research.
 - Assistance to allow applicants living with sensory impairment to carry out their research.
 - Bids for the cost of child, parent or other caring responsibilities may be considered if the carer is conducting research away from home and it is not possible to make alternative arrangements.
 - The costs of normal regular care whilst at home are not eligible for support.

11 Contact Details

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

12 Duration and Start of Award

12.1 Applicants Awards can be held for 12 months. Awards are expected to commence between 1st September 2027 – 1st January 2028.

13 Timetable of 2026-27 Competition

Competition Opens: 10 June 2026

Application Deadline: 26 August 2026, 17:00 (BST time)

Notification of Result: Late March 2027

Starting period of Award(s): 1st September 2027 – 1st January 2028

Duration of Award(s): up to 12 months