

British Academy and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Innovation Fellowships

Route B Innovation Fellowships Application Notes for Applicants

2026-27 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 Introduction

- 1.1 The British Academy has been funded by the Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade to support the Innovation Fellowships. The Academy is also working on this scheme in partnership with other partners, including the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and Cabinet Office, as per this call. The Innovation Fellowships scheme will provide funding and support for established early-career and mid-career researchers in the Humanities and Social Sciences to partner with organisations and business in the creative and cultural, public, private and policy sectors, to address challenges that require innovative approaches and solutions. Through the Innovation Fellowships, our 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.
- 1.2 The Academy is able to offer awards of up to £120,000 for 12 months in duration (with Full Economic Costing at 80%).
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2 Application Information

- 2.1 Applications can only be submitted online using the British Academy's online Flexi-Grant® Grant Management System (GMS) system via (<https://britishacademy.flexigrant.com/>). If you have not previously used Flexi-Grant® GMS, please follow the registration process from the Flexi-Grant® homepage.
- 2.2 Before completing the online form, all applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements and ensure all necessary information is presented in the application. These requirements are strictly adhered to, and applications without all the necessary information, or evidence to show the assessment criteria are met, will be rejected.
- 2.3 Registered approving organisations will be available in the search bar. If your organisation is not listed, then please contact us at international@thebritishacademy.ac.uk to request the addition of the organisation.
- 2.4 It is required that research organisations be approved as eligible by the British Academy no later than two weeks before the deadline of this call. This means that they will need to be in touch with the Academy well before this date for the approval process to have been undertaken.

- 2.5** The deadline for submissions and UK institutional approval for the next wave of assessment is **18 November 2026 at 17.00 (UK time)**. Applicants will not be allowed to make any changes to their applications or submit any additional information **after the 18 November deadline**.
- 2.6** **When completing your application on Flexi-Grant®, it is recommended that you take particular note of the following points:**
- 2.7** **Personal details** – When registered in the British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS, a user has the option to add or update personal information such as contact details, log-in details (including email address and password), interests, research and employment details, at any time. This represents a personal record of your account in the system and will help to populate the contact details in any application form you complete. It is useful if this information is kept up to date, but it is not essential to the progress of an application.
- 2.8** **Automatic log-out – You are strongly advised to save your work regularly to prevent accidental loss of information.** In particular, you should be aware that if the system does not detect any activity for 1 hour it will log out and save the application at that time. Please note that moving between pages within an application form will save the page that you are exiting but completing a field on a page is not considered an activity. It is recommended that you write the text for longer sections/fields in a word processor such as Word and then copy and paste into the relevant text box to avoid being timed out in this way.
- 2.9** **Multiple sessions** – You should not have multiple browser windows/tabs of your application open at the same time as this may cause information to be lost. Only one user should edit an application at a time, otherwise changes might be lost.
- 2.10** **Word limits** – When completing boxes that have a restricted length (note that it refers to words) you should note that if you exceed the specified amount you will not be able to save when you press the save button. You should type the text for the longer-length boxes in a word processor. You will then be able to check the word count and paste it into the British Academy Flexi-Grant® system. You will then still have a copy of the text to return to in the word processor. The word limit applies to text boxes.
- 2.11** **Plain text** – If entering plain text, please avoid using symbols as some may not be accepted by the British Academy Flexi-Grant® system. You should generate and view a PDF of your application to check that the application appears as you want it to by clicking on ‘print application’.

- 2.12 **Email addresses** – The British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS relies heavily on automatic email contact. It is essential that you ensure you enter accurate email addresses were requested as it may cause considerable delay in the submission/processing of your application if any of these are incorrect. You cannot make changes to email addresses after your application has been submitted for approval.
- 2.13 **Submission of application** – You will not be able to submit your application until you have completed each section in full. You should submit your application for approval by a designated approver at your host organisation **at least 5 working days before the closing date** to allow for your host organisation's administrative procedures. Please note that the institutional approver is a person within the UK host organisation, usually within the central research support office, who has authority for approving all applications submitted to the British Academy.

Once you have submitted your application for approval by your host UK organisation, automatic emails will be sent to your host UK organisation approver asking them to log on to the system. You will not be able to edit your application after it has been submitted to your host UK organisation for approval. The host UK organisation approver will either: approve and submit your application, 'send back' your application and contact you to request modifications (if before the **1 October deadline**) or decline your application and contact you.

Please be aware that it is your responsibility to ensure that you complete your application in time for your host UK organisation to process it (including requesting changes) and provide their approval by the closing date. It is recommended that you allow at least five working days for this process, but please check with your proposed host UK institution as their internal timetables may require earlier submission.

If your host UK organisation approver requests modifications through the British Academy GMS email facility, they can unlock your application, allowing you to edit it. They can do this by selecting 'Return to Applicant'. An automatic e-mail will be sent to you alerting you of this fact. Once you have completed and saved the requested changes, please re-submit your application for approval by your host UK organisation.

Once your host UK organisation has approved your application and submitted it to the British Academy, it will not be possible to make any changes.

- 2.14 **Application sharing** – All applications must be started by the applicant who is to be the Principal Investigator (PI) on the award. You can invite other contributors to join the application (e.g. Finance Office contact etc.), but in order to do so your contributor will need to be registered in the British Academy's Flexi-Grant® system first. You will need to ensure you have their registered email address to invite them to participate in your application. You can let other British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS users view your draft application in advance of submission by providing their email address. They will be able to log in using their existing password and see your application and, depending on permissions, amend your application.
- 2.15 **Application deletion** – You can delete your application at any time although it is often a lot easier to just re-edit your existing application. We will be able to recover a deleted application for a period of 7 days after deletion. After this, it will be permanently removed from the system.
- 2.16 **Application returned for editing** - The approver can return your application to you for further editing before the closing deadline of the call. See 'Submission of Application' above.
- 2.17 **Guidance** – Each question from the application form is listed below, followed by useful guidance to support its completion.
- 2.18 **Further clarification** – If any of this advice is unclear, or you need further information, please do not hesitate to seek clarification from the British Academy's International Team (contact details at the end of these notes).

Please note that it is essential that you **create a PDF** of your completed application (by clicking 'Print Application'), and check it thoroughly, including email addresses, before submitting it for approval by your UK host organisation. It may not be possible to rectify mistakes in time for the deadline.

Word limits apply to plain text only

All fields marked with an asterisk* are mandatory

You should not have multiple browser windows/tabs of your application open at the same time as this may cause information to be lost, only one user should edit an application at a time, otherwise changes might be lost.

3 Completing the application form

- 3.1 The application can be completed by using the navigation tabs on the application summary page, with each page categorised as follows:
- Page 1: Eligibility Declaration
 - Page 2: Research Proposal
 - Page 3: Applicant Details
 - Page 4: Head of Department Statement
 - Page 5: Financial Details
 - Page 6: Equal Opportunities
- 3.2 A full list of question fields to be completed as part of the application is outlined in the sections below.
- 3.3 Each section corresponds to a specific part of the application form. The questions are presented as they appear in the form, followed by guidance to support their completion. Mandatory questions are marked with a red asterisk (*), and must be completed before the application can be submitted. **Please read each section carefully before completing the form.**
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4 Summary

4.1 Summary table *

When your application form is complete, all sections on this summary table will be marked as 'Complete'. The **'Complete' status will only appear when all the mandatory fields in that section have been completed.** All mandatory fields are marked with an asterisk '*'. Only once all mandatory fields are marked as "Complete", and all Contributors are all marked as "Complete" will a 'Submit' button appear for you to be able to submit your application.

5 Page 1. Eligibility Declaration

5.1 Please confirm the following eligibility criteria: *

- Are you an early-career or mid-career researcher with demonstrated expertise aligned to the FCDO's thematic areas?
- Are you 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?
- Have you submitted all outstanding reports for previous British Academy awards, if applicable?
- Have you received your Head of Department's supporting statement?
- Are you able to commit to working with the FCDO for up to 12 months, at 0.6 to 0.8 FTE, as part of this fellowship?

6 Page 2. Research Proposal

6.1 Scope of the Fellowships*

Applications are welcome in any of the following areas:

- Applied History
- Critical Infrastructure and European Warfare
- South Asia Geopolitics and Regional Security
- The UK-France relationship in 2027 and beyond
- UK National Security Strategy

6.2 Start and End Date Confirmation*

To select a date in the future using the calendar feature, click on the month and year in between the two arrows at the top of the box. To change the year keep clicking on the box – a second click will produce a decade. Use the arrows to move back or forward in time. To change the month, a second box will appear where you can select the month you wish and then you can type the year you require in the box provided. Click on the date and the calendar will take you to the month and year you have selected where you can select the relevant date for display.

Please note that awards must be held for 12 months from a starting date no earlier than 1 March 2027.

6.3 **Research Expertise in Chosen Area of Interest***

Please explain your research expertise in one of the areas of interest (see above under 'scope of fellowship'). It is necessary to select only one area of interest and detail your expertise to date in this area.

The limit for this field is 2000 words.

6.4 **Policy Engagement***

Please explain your expertise, experience and interest in engaging closely with policy counterparts, and particularly the value you can bring to working with counterparts at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

The limit for this field is 1000 words.

6.5 **Benefits and Impact***

Please explain what anticipated benefit and impact is envisaged that can be brought to bear on FCDO's policymaking process, and the applicant's future policy engagement ambitions.

The limit for this field is 1000 words.

6.6 **Trusted Research***

International research collaborations are fundamental to the equity, quality, diversity and impact of UK-based researchers and institutions. Most international collaborations will benefit all those involved and the expected usual status for this question is likely to be a null response, however, there will be cases where there are risks.

Research funded through this programme needs to take account of security-related considerations. [UKRI](#), [Universities UK](#) and the [National Protective Security Authority](#) amongst others have published relevant guidance in this area. It is important to ensure that the research funded through this programme has undertaken relevant assurance related to reputational, data, financial, ethical and security risks.

Please use this field to detail any research security risks that the application may encounter and how these will be mitigated. It should be noted that such risks could include the potential dual application of the research, the management of information, data and other knowledge sharing, and activities that could utilise the research to target people in other countries such as through internal surveillance and repression. A set of questions suggested by the NPSA to consider in relation to this issue is as follows:

- Are there any potential ethical or moral concerns for the application of the research? If so, what are they?
- Could the research be used to support activities in other countries with ethical standards different from the UK, such as internal surveillance and repression? If so, how might this be possible and how is it proposed this risk is mitigated?
- Could the research be of benefit to a hostile state military or be supplied to other state actors? If so, how might it be of such benefit and how is it proposed this risk is mitigated?
- Are there any dual-use (both military and non-military) applications to the research? If so, what are they?
- Do you need to protect sensitive data or personally identifiable information? This may include genetic or medical information, population datasets, details of individuals or commercial test data. If so, how will you do so?
- Is your research likely to have a future commercial or patentable outcome which you or your organisation would want to benefit from? If so, what is this outcome?
- Is any of the research likely to be subject to UK or other countries' export licence controls? If so, what aspects of the research will be subject to such controls?

As highlighted by UUK in its above guidance it is important to be aware that failure to comply with export control legislation is a criminal offence and the terms 'technology' and 'information' have much broader definitions in legislation than might ordinarily or commonly be understood. To maximise compliance with export control legislation, individuals should:

- consider potential end-use possibilities of technology: it is the duty of researchers and their institutions to monitor potential end-uses of research, throughout the research life cycle. In some cases, research will have end use applications that are unidentifiable in the early stages of development and continued monitoring is required
- inform researchers about the implications of intangible technology transfer: researchers must be aware that controlled sensitive information transmitted electronically (e.g. via social media, fax and email, videoconferencing, sharing screens remotely) and verbally (e.g. in telephone and face-to-face discussions) may still be subject to export controls.

There is also the [Research Collaboration Advice Team](#), which is collaboration between the UK Government and academia that can provide advice to institutions on national security risks to international research.

Applicants should be aware that government guidance and UK legislation may change, and they will need to take account of any such changes that may affect their proposed research.

The limit for this field is 750 words.

6.7 **Deposit of Datasets***

Digital resources created as a result of research funded by the Academy should be deposited in an appropriately accessible repository. Of course, we do not expect confidential data to be made readily available.

If applicable to your project, you will need to provide details of how and where any electronic or digital data (including datasets) developed during the project will be stored, along with details on the appropriate methods of access. In developing any such accessible datasets you will need to be aware of the FCDO's requirements around the Official Secrets Act and publications.

Applicants should ensure that any necessary technical advice is obtained before commencing work that involves the creation of digital resources. Please confirm whether the primary product of the research will be a digital resource, and if so how and where it will be deposited.

6.8 **Ethical Issues***

This field is mandatory and must be addressed by all applicants. Are there any special ethical issues arising from your proposal that are not covered by the relevant professional Code of Practice? Have you obtained, or will you obtain, ethical approval from your employing institution or other relevant authority?

It is not expected that any special ethical issues will arise that are not already covered by relevant professional Codes of Practice. The normal expectation, therefore, will be that applicants should answer the pair of questions with the answers no and no.

If there are any special issues arising, but they have already been cleared by approval from a relevant authority, please answer yes and yes.

If any special issues arise and approval has not yet been obtained, please answer yes and no, and provide more explanation.

6.9 Source of Funding

Please provide details of other support given or applied for in connection with the current proposal.

Please indicate whether any other grant applications relating to this project have been submitted, either to the British Academy or to any other funder. Applications submitted to the Academy by separate applicants will not be accepted if it is considered that both (or all, if more than two) applications relate to the same project, whose components would not be viable as independent pieces of research.

Applicants are requested to keep the Academy informed of the outcomes of any other applications by email to international@thebritishacademy.ac.uk

Failure to do so may jeopardise the application's prospects of success. In cases where simultaneous applications to the Academy and to another funding agency covering the same elements of a project are both successful, the applicant will be asked to choose which award to accept. Only if there is no duplication and no unnecessary inflation of a project will an applicant be permitted to retain both awards (subsequent requests to alter the plan of research simply to allow the applicant to retain both awards are unlikely to be considered favourably).

7 Page 3. Primary Applicant Details

7.1 Primary Applicant Contact Details*

Please take care to review and complete your personal details accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in the processing of your application. You can update your personal details by checking 'my account' and selecting the link to 'my contact details' and 'my organisation' and ensuring the relevant details are up to date.

7.2 Nationality*

Please state your nationality. You must select one, but you may select up to three if applicable.

7.3 **Present Appointment, Employing Institution and Department***

Please give details of your current appointment.

All applications require one Applicant. 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 at a UK-based institution (e.g. a Higher Education Institution [HEI] or Independent Research Organisation [IRO]). If your employing institution is not currently registered on the Academy's grant management system, Flexi-Grant, please contact us via international@thebritishacademy.ac.uk to discuss possible registration.

Applications are welcome from early career researchers and mid-career researchers. Please note that applications from independent researchers cannot be accepted in this round of the scheme.

7.4 **Employment Status***

Please confirm that you will be employed for the duration of your proposed project.

7.5 **Permanent Position***

Please indicate whether this position is permanent or not.

7.6 **Position Start Date*/ End Date**

Please state the start date of your position and, if applicable, the end date.

7.7 **PhD Confirmation*/ Awarded Date**

Applicants working towards a PhD or awaiting the outcome of their viva/submission of corrections are not eligible to apply.

Please therefore confirm that you have a PhD by answering yes. If you are an established scholar with relevant equivalent experience, but no doctorate, please select 'no' and indicate in the 'personal statement' field why you should be eligible for consideration.

7.8 **PhD Awarded Date**

Please enter the date of the viva voce examination in this field.

7.9 **Personal Statement**

Applicants are invited to include any information relating to their professional career which they may wish to be taken into account in assessing this application. For example, details of a career break, or the effect of working on a part-time contract may be relevant. This is an optional field.

7.10 **Key Career Appointments and Posts***

Please provide a list of your key appointments and posts.

7.11 **Key Career Publications, Grants, and other Career Highlights***

Please provide a list of key relevant publications, grants, and highlights, that you think most appropriate for an award under this scheme.

7.12 **Previous Support Dates***

An application will not be eligible for consideration if there is a report outstanding on any previous research grant awarded by the Academy to the applicant or any Co-applicant.

Failure to follow this guidance will result in your application being withdrawn from this round of competition.

Please give details of any research applications submitted to the British Academy within the last five years. In the case of a further application for continuing research which has received previous Academy support.

Please note that a full report and statement of expenditure for the previous grant must be submitted before further funding can be considered.

7.13 **Where did you hear of this scheme?***

This field is optional. It helps the British Academy to target appropriate resources towards the promotion of the scheme to know where an applicant hears about it. As appropriate please state BA website; BA literature; PhD supervisor; University Research Office; Twitter, other colleague etc.

8 **Page 4. Head of Department Statement**

8.1 **Authorised Member of Staff at UK Host Organisation***

Please state your name and job title. This would normally be expected to be the Head of Department. 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.

8.2 **Confirmation of authority***

Please check this box to confirm that you are in the relevant position to approve this application for submission.

8.3 Head of Department Statement*

Applicants are **required** to include a supporting statement from their Head of Department on the British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS well in advance of the deadline for the submission of your application.

Please enter all the details of your Head of Department by clicking 'Contributors' tab on the Application's 'Summary' page. Please click on the 'Invite' button, enter the Head of Department's email address and then click 'Send Invitation'.

The Head of Department should be the person who heads the Department, Faculty, Institute or other unit in an Independent Research Organisation (IRO) 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.

We strongly advise that you alert your Head of Department as early as possible to allow them enough time to provide their statement in the system. Note that the deadline shown to the Head of Department is the deadline for the whole application to be submitted. The application needs to be approved before the same deadline, and it cannot be submitted for approval before the HOD statement is submitted.

An application cannot be considered for an award unless all contributions have been submitted on time.

Please note that statements **must** be provided through the British Academy Flexi-Grant® GMS, they cannot be provided as an email attachment nor sent by post in hard copy.

Any statements received after the deadline, or outside of the system will not be accepted, and your application will be withdrawn from this competition.

9 Page 5. Financial Details

9.1 Financial Details / Justification*

If you include ineligible costs, your application will be withdrawn from this competition.

Provide details of funding in the relevant fields:

- Directly Incurred Salary Costs;
- Estates and Indirect Costs

Funding will be provided on the Full Economic Costing (FEC) basis primarily to cover the salary of the Applicant.

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 £120,000, meaning that the total cost of the Fellowship at 100% FEC may be up to £150,000. 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.

The Academy recognises that the upper limit on the contribution that the Academy's funding can make to this award – £120,000 – might not be sufficient to cover all of the costs up to 80% of the full economic cost value required. In those cases, an institution may need to be willing to make additional contributions to the overhead costs involved.

Please be aware that if the Fellowship is offered, then there can be no viring of funds between each of these budget headings, and no spending can take place outside the time-frame of the Fellowship.

Applicants should prepare accurate costings for the proposed project costs and should be particularly careful not to overestimate the resources required. Applicants are advised that competition for funds can be fierce, and proposals on the margin for award may have a greater chance of success if they are modestly costed.

Costs should be clearly itemised and justified in terms of the research programme.

If the Academy is being asked to support only a proportion of the total costs, please explain this clearly under proposed programme on the proposal tab.

Please note that grants are cash-limited, and there is no scope for supplementation of an award. Projects should be fully costed from the outset.

Please do not use '£' signs in the amount boxes

10 Page 6. Equal Opportunities

10.1 Equal Opportunities

This section is optional, however, the British Academy would greatly appreciate it if you can complete the details to assist us in our diversity monitoring.

The British Academy is committed to its policy of Equal Opportunity in the provision of its grants and awards. Please help us to monitor the effectiveness of this policy by providing information concerning your age, gender, ethnic origin and disabilities (if any).

The information provided will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only. It will not be seen by those involved in the selection process and no information will be published or used in any way which allows any individual to be identified.

The Academy will only process complete, submitted applications