

British Academy/Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowships 2026-27: Scheme Guidance Notes

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Last review date	September 2026
Next review date	September 2027

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

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of these Fellowships, funded by the Leverhulme Trust and other non-government sources and administered by the British Academy, is to provide a period of research leave of up to one year for established scholars. During this time academics will be able to concentrate on bringing a major piece of research towards completion while their normal teaching and administrative duties are covered by a full-time replacement. The Fellowships are tenable for one year and must be taken up in the Autumn of 2027.
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2 Value and duration of awards

- 2.1 These awards are not covered under the Full Economic Costing (FEC) regime. The only costs payable will be the salary of a replacement lecturer, who should normally be at an early career stage and appointed at the usual starting salary for first-time appointments, together with associated employers' costs of NI and USS (and London Allowance where applicable); and limited research expenses up to a maximum of £5,000. No other directly incurred, directly allocated or indirect costs can be met by the British Academy or the Leverhulme Trust in connection with these Fellowships.
- 2.2 There is no specified maximum value of the award. Funding must be used in the direct delivery of the award. Any underspend will be required to be refunded to the British Academy.
- 2.3 Awards will be paid in quarterly payments on acceptance of the award from Autumn 2027. Payments will be made to the institution where the Lead is based.
- 2.4 Projects can be for up to 12 months in duration.
- 2.5 The call is expected to be able to support up to 11 awards: 10 funded by the Leverhulme Trust and 1 Thank Offering to Britain Fellowship. The Thank Offering to Britain Fellowship will be funded by the proceeds of the Thank-You Britain Appeal – an appeal initiated by the Association of Jewish Refugees as a mark of gratitude to Britain for its provision of a home for Jews persecuted by the Nazi regime. **N. B. For the 2026-27 round, there are no other specially designated private funds available. The list of past awards is for informational purposes only and does not reflect current availability.**
- 2.6 Applications are made through the one scheme and all applicants will be considered through the open call. Applicants who meet the overall standard for award and meet the subject criterion of the special awards will be awarded the relevant named Fellowships.

3 Suitable Subjects for awards

- 3.1 The British Academy welcomes proposals for high-quality research in all its subject areas. Suitable subjects for the Fellowship include any field of study within the Humanities or Social Sciences.
 - 3.2 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.
 - 3.3 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.
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4 Suitable Applicants

- 4.1 The Academy invites applications from serving members of staff employed in UK universities, other UK institutions of higher education or Independent Research Organisations.
- 4.2 These Fellowships are intended primarily to provide opportunities for researchers who have already published works of intellectual distinction and who have been hampered in their efforts to accomplish a major piece of research by heavy teaching, administrative duties or curatorial duties over a lengthy period, with little prospect of relief from any source. The British Academy is looking particularly therefore to help established researchers.
- 4.3 The principal purpose of the Fellowship is to enable concentrated effort to be directed towards completing a major piece of research, which will not only be an important contribution to knowledge and understanding but will also help to enhance the future career and career prospects of the Fellowship-holder.
- 4.4 If the projected work involves collaboration with other scholars, applicants are asked to explain their individual contribution to the project, which should be clearly identifiable.
- 4.5 The British Academy takes no account of an applicant's physical age or current status (e.g. Professor, Lecturer, Curator) in determining eligibility for these awards. Rather, in all cases Fellowship-holders are expected to be able to disseminate the results of their research not only through publications, but also through feeding into their future academic career after the Fellowship ends.

5 Eligible Costs

- 5.1 For the Research Costs portion of the award, funds may be sought to cover the direct expenses incurred in planning, conducting, and developing the research, up to a maximum of £5,000. 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	☒	
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	☒	
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.

6 Deadline for applications and timeline

- 6.1 **Applications must be submitted by 5pm (GMT) 11 November 2026.**
Applicants will not be allowed to make any changes to their applications after this date.
- 6.2 Applicants will be notified of application success by late March 2027.
- 6.3 The earliest start date for awards is 1 September 2027 and the latest start date is 1 January 2028.

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

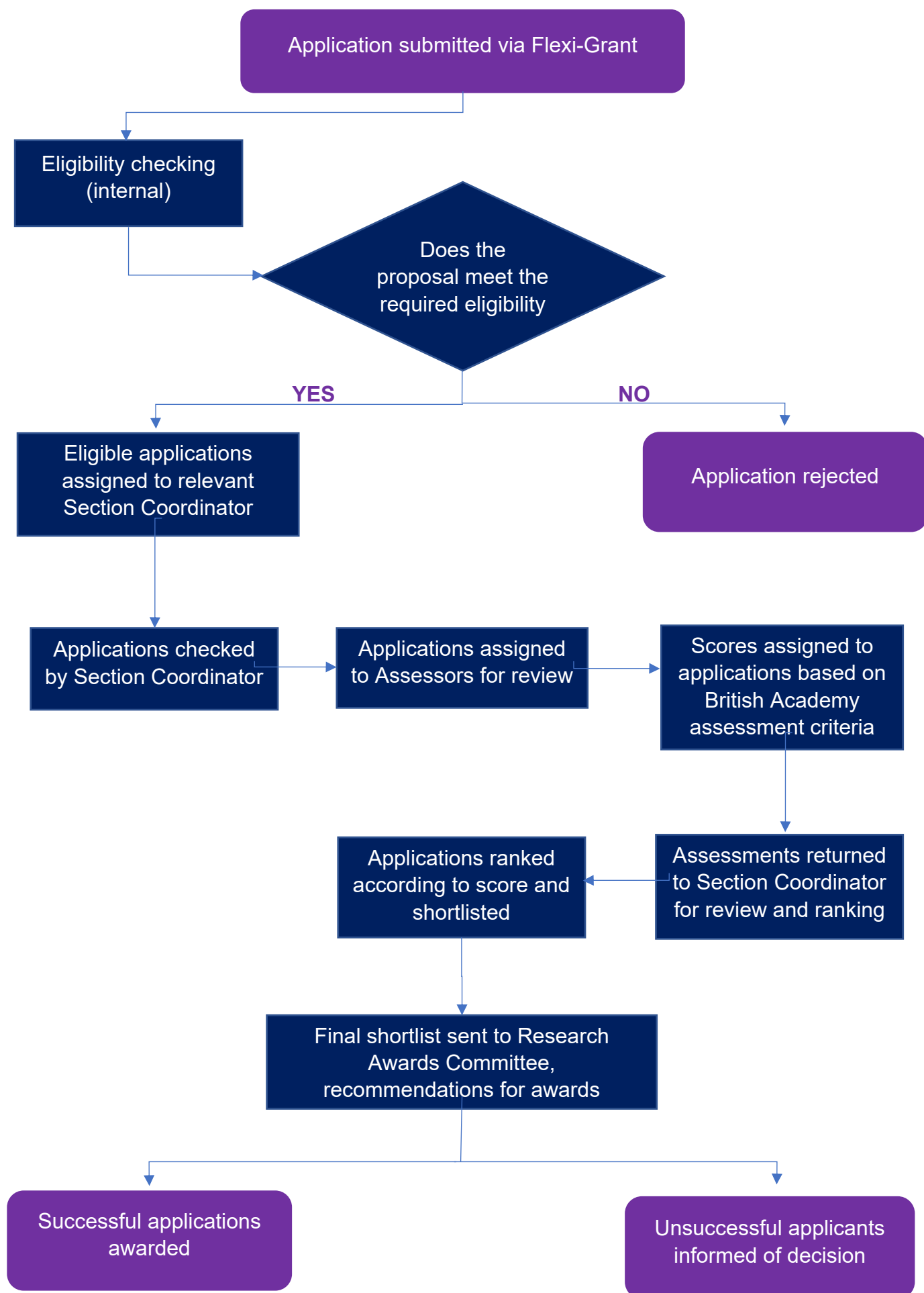
7 Relationship of these awards to other British Academy schemes

- 7.1 Applicants should note that these Fellowships will provide only limited research expenses to the successful candidates. When considering other funding opportunities offered by the British Academy, the principle 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. Please note this is not an exhaustive list – if you have any queries please contact the Research Funding Team on grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk

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	No
Postdoctoral Fellowship	No	No	Yes		Yes
Talent Development Award	No	Yes	No	Yes	

8 Application and Assessment Procedures

- 8.1 The deadline for application approval by your employing institution is **5pm (GMT) 11th November 2026**.
- 8.2 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 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.
- 8.3 The deadline for employing institutions to approve applications and submit them to the British Academy is **5pm (GMT) 11th November 2026** – this deadline is final and no late applications can be accepted.
- 8.4 **The reference must be submitted before the application can be approved.** Any application without a supporting reference will not be able to be submitted. Your referee must be drawn from outside your own employing institution and can be from overseas. However, before listing the referee on your application form you should seek their permission that they are happy to provide the reference.
- 8.5 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. 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 early as possible to allow your referee enough time to provide their reference in the system and to allow for any unexpected delays. Please note that references must be provided through the Flexi-Grant GMS, they cannot be provided as an email attachment nor sent by post in hard copy.
- 8.6 Applications assessed as being worthy of funding will be submitted to the Academy's Research Awards Committee for final decisions on awards.
- 8.7 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 flow chart over the page illustrates this process:



- 8.8 Assessors will evaluate the proposal on the basis of its academic merit, taking into account its originality, its relationship to, and the volume of, research already done in the field, the scholarly importance of the research proposed, the suitability of the methodology, the feasibility of the research programme, the specificity of the scheme of research, its timeliness, and the impact of the intended outcomes. Assessors may take into account evidence of language competence where the understanding of material in a foreign language is crucial to the achievement of the research objective. Assessors will also evaluate the ability of the applicant to undertake the proposed research, taking into account their track record in terms of publication, their academic age and stage of career. Backlogs of publication (including any reasons given by applicants) may also be taken into account in assessing the current proposal.
- 8.9 Only at the final stage of selection, with reference to applicants who are all felt to be of equally outstanding academic merit, will the subsequent considerations play a bigger role in the decision-making process:
- How pressing is the applicant's need for the research leave applied for?
 - What is their entitlement to sabbatical leave, what are existing leave prospects and how do these affect the applicant's need for an award?
 - Assessors may take into account evidence of language competence where the understanding of material in a foreign language is crucial to the achievement of the research objective.
 - Comparative judgements about value for money may be taken into account at the final stage of assessment. Any special case made for endangered or emerging fields may be taken into account at the final stage of assessment.
- 8.10 Please note that applicants whose research interests are relevant to the named Fellowships referenced above must meet all of these standard criteria first. These awards will not be made unless the most relevant applicant is of the same overall standard as the other Senior Research Fellows.

9 Additional Needs Fund

9.1 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.

For more information about this fund, please click on the link below:

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/funding/additional-needs/>

10 Code of practice

10.1 The Academy has adopted a Code of Practice:
<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/code-practice> for assessing research applications, setting out the principles of equity, integrity and confidentiality governing the treatment of all applications for research support.

10.2 **Regrettably, feedback is not a feature of the BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowship scheme.** The Academy is unable to discuss the decisions of the awarding Committee, which are 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.

11 Contact details

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

Important dates:

Deadline for application submission and organisational approval: **5pm (GMT) 11th November 2026.**

Results announced by email: **Late March 2027**

N.B. Emails will be sent to the address registered in the application. Please contact the Research Funding Office if there is a change in your contact details.