Postdoctoral Fellowship Outline Stage 2022-23: Scheme guidance notes

Please read these scheme notes carefully. Any incorrectly submitted application will be ineligible for award.

Aim of the scheme

The British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship offers outstanding early career researchers the opportunity to strengthen their experience of research and teaching in an academic environment. This scheme aims to help develop the award holder's curriculum vitae and boost their prospects of obtaining a permanent academic post. The primary emphasis is on the completion of a significant piece of publishable research, and the integration of the award holder into the community of established scholars within their field. The Fellowship is tenable for three years, starting autumn 2023 in a UK based university or higher education institution or independent research organisation. The Fellowship is non-renewable.

Number of awards

It is expected that up to 45 Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Humanities and Social Sciences will be available to start in autumn 2023. This scheme is extremely competitive, and the success rate in recent years has rarely exceed 10%. The Academy will typically receive hundreds of applications for the available awards.

Suitable subjects for award

Suitable subjects for the Fellowship include any field of study within the Humanities or Social Sciences. 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.

Responsibilities of Postdoctoral Fellows

Award holders are expected to develop lines of original enquiry in their subject, as well as to gain some experience of teaching (no more than five hours per week). The British Academy expects an annual report from Postdoctoral Fellows, detailing the progress of their research, teaching experience and publications. Any books arising from the work done during the Fellowship should be posted to the British Academy.

Financial basis of the scheme

Postdoctoral Fellows will be employees of the institution at which they hold their award and are therefore subject to the terms and conditions of employment of that institution. The scheme is covered under the Full Economic Costing (FEC) regime. Currently, the Academy funds 80% of salary costs, directly allocated and indirect costs under FEC. Research expenses are covered at 100% within the upper limit, which is set at £6000 over the three years. Please note that virement of funding between headings will not be permitted. **Full detail of the FEC is not required by the Academy at the Outline Stage of application.** The initial salary will be expected to be commensurate with the early career stage of the applicant, and therefore equivalent to posts with similar duties and levels of responsibility within the host institution pay grades.

Timetable of the 2021-22 competition

Outline Stage applicants are invited to supply information about their past academic experience, publications and research proposal. A referee will be required to answer a questionnaire about the applicant and their research proposal. Please note that referees are unable to upload documents and will need to complete the statement on Flexigrant. Outline stage applications do not need to include costings.

The Second Stage of application is by invitation only. The Second Stage requires the additional Head of Department Statement, details of the Full Economic Costing and research expenses, and a sample of written work.

Applications must be submitted and approved of by 5pm (UK time) 12 October 2022. Referee contribution must be complete before the application can be submitted for approval.
Organisational approval must be recorded by 5pm (UK time) 12 October 2022.

Outline Stage 2021-22
Scheme Opens – 27th July 2022
Deadline for Submission 12th October 2022
Result of Outline Stage Announcement - January 2023

Second Stage 2021-22
Scheme Opens – 18th January 2023
Deadline for Applicants 22nd February 2023
Result of Second Stage Announcement – End of June 2023

Earliest Start Date: 1st September 2023.
Latest Start Date: 1st January 2024.

Please note that all awards will need to begin within the above time period and the start date cannot be pushed back past 1st January 2024.

Eligibility

1. British citizens and any nationals from the European Economic Area are eligible, regardless of where their doctorate was obtained. Anyone of any nationality who has a doctorate from a UK university is eligible. If an applicant does not meet the prior categories, they may be accepted if they can demonstrate 'strong prior association' with the UK academic community. This typically means a current significant period – with a minimum period of one year, which will need to be completed prior to your application being submitted - of employment at a UK institution in either a teaching or research position which is not permanent. Postgraduate degrees (MA or MSc) do not count.

2. Early Career Status: There is no age criterion for these awards. Instead, eligible applicants are expected to be at an early stage of their career. **This is defined as being within three years from the date of your successful Viva Voce examination**.

3. This period extends from 1st April 2020 to 1st April 2023. Exemption from this criterion may be granted for reasons occurring after the date of the viva voce examination such as: maternity leave, illness, family commitments etc. if you wish to apply for exemptions, please send us an email at posts@thebritishacademy.ac.uk where we will review these on a case by case basis.

4. The applicant must already be of postdoctoral status at the time when the Research Awards Committee meets. Applicants who expect to have had their viva by 1 April 2023, are eligible for consideration, but will have to withdraw their application if the examination is not completed on time.

5. No applicant who has been appointed to a permanent academic post in an institution of higher education at any time in their career will be eligible.

6. The British Academy does not allow for resubmissions for the Postdoctoral Fellowship. If you have previously applied and failed to reach the Second Stage of the competition, you are not eligible to re-apply. Previously unsuccessful applicants will only be able to submit another application if specifically invited to do so by the British Academy.

It is important for those considering an application to think carefully about whether they and their proposed project are at a sufficiently advanced stage to be submitted to such a competitive scheme.

Proposed institution

Awards are made to individual scholars for their merit. This is not an award to the host institution, though it must be held in an institutional setting. Applicants are advised to give serious consideration to their choice of institution and must ensure that it is a suitable environment for their field of research.

Suitable institutions include any UK university or recognised UK research organisation based in the UK. Some institutions based overseas are included, such as the British International Research Institutes or overseas campuses of UK universities.

Applicants and their proposed host organisations must be able to explain how support for the career development of the award holder will be delivered and why the proposed host organisation is best placed to ensure that relevant opportunities are made available in the event of success.

The Academy is open to proposals where the full range of career development may be led by one host organisation but delivered in partnership with others. For example, in a research-based organisation, where teaching experience might be gained in a partner organisation, or where an applicant works in a

centre which is part of an established inter-university collaboration. Payment of the funding awarded will continue to be made to the lead organisation only. The Academy expects a clear statement about the arrangements for the sharing of funding to be included in the financial detail's justification section of the application at the second stage of the assessment process.

Applicants are encouraged to consider moving to a different institution for the Postdoctoral Fellowship from that at which the doctorate was undertaken. However, the Academy will in no way disadvantage applicants applying within the same institution, if there is a strong case for remaining - whether for academic or personal considerations. You may use the 'Personal Statement' section of the application form to expand on this if needed.

The grants management system, Flexi-Grant, requires that the institution approves the application, to indicate that they agree to provide further information, including the Full Economic Costing of the application at the Second Stage of the competition. Institutions may require plenty of notice and may well have internal deadlines. Contact with the proposed institution at the earliest possible opportunity is strongly recommended.

Appendix 1 sets out advice to potential host institutions and explains what the Academy expects host institutions to provide in terms of facilities, teaching opportunities and as an employer. The proposed host institution will be asked to confirm the formal acceptance of a Postdoctoral Fellow once an award has been approved.

When naming a potential host institution, applicants should bear in mind that they are committing themselves to that institution. The Full Economic Costing basis of the award means that the flexibility to move institutions prior to taking up an award is severely limited. Only rarely in exceptional cases may agreement to transfer an award be given.

The selection process

Initial assessment of applications is made by subject specialist assessors. Decisions on these outline applications will be communicated to all applicants by January 2023.
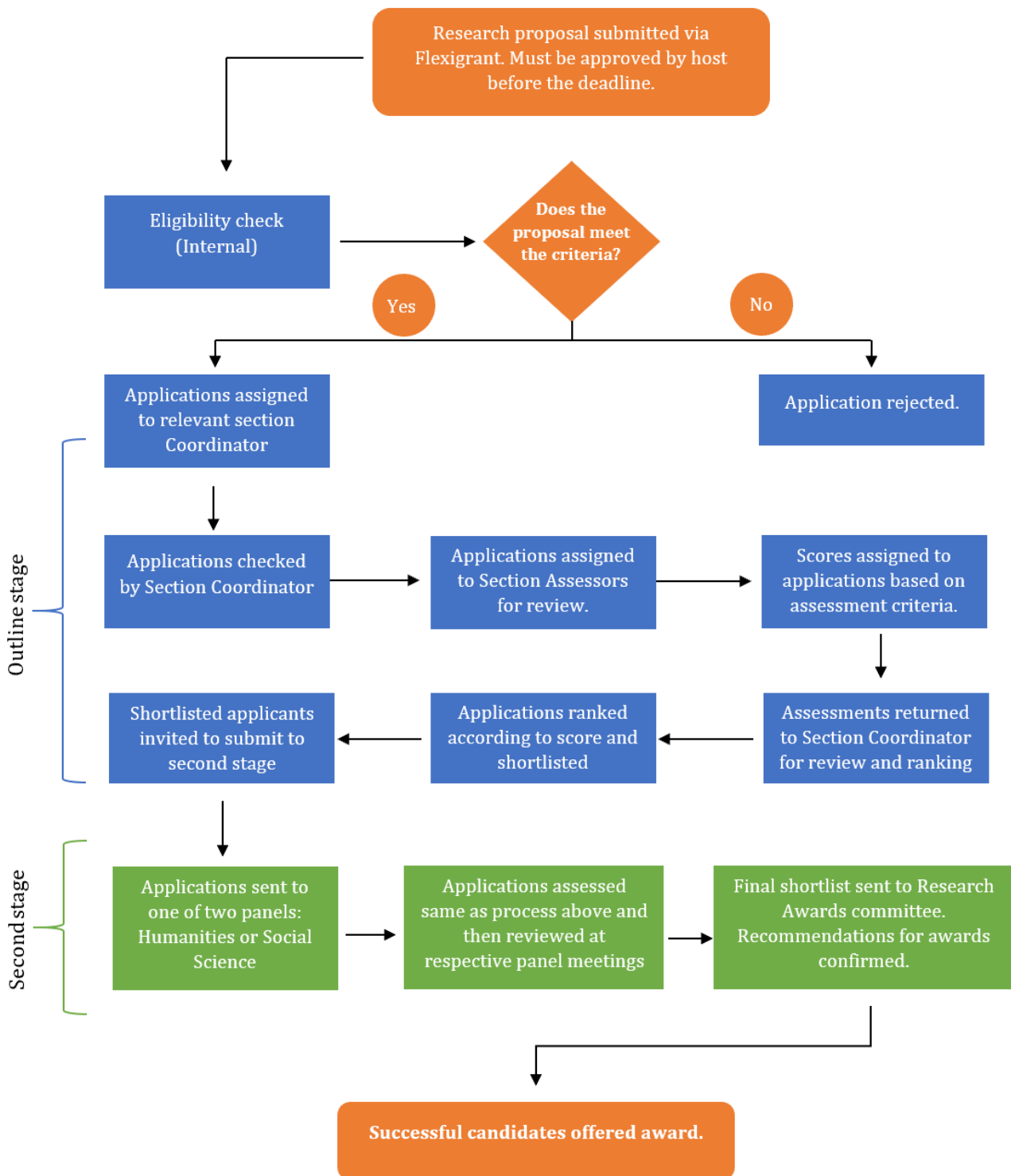
Assessors will consider the scholarly importance of the project, the ability of the applicant, the feasibility of the proposed research programme (focusing on proposed methodology and timescale), and the applicant's publication record, bearing in mind the early career focus of the award. Assessors may consider language competence where understanding material in a foreign language is crucial to the research objective.

The initial assessment of applications is made by peer reviewers, whose comments and recommendations are then considered by the Research Awards Committee. Specific advice may also be sought from other experts. There are no interviews prior to offers being made.

By late January 2022, the British Academy expects to invite submission of Second Stage applications from a smaller number of applicants, probably no more than 15–20% of the original field. The Second Stage application allows the applicant to update their proposal, publications and academic experience. It will also require detailed financial costings, and the submission of a sample of written work.

The Second Stage submission will be considered by specially appointed selection panels. Recommendations are then placed before the Academy's Research Awards Committee, which will meet in May 2023. Offers will be issued to successful applicants, and the prospective host institution will be asked to give its consent before the award is confirmed.

The following page shows a flowchart diagram presenting the assessment process described above.

Research proposal submitted via Flexigrant. Must be approved by host before the deadline.

Eligibility check (Internal)

Does the proposal meet the criteria?

Yes

No

Applications assigned to relevant section Coordinator

Application rejected.

Outline stage

Applications checked by Section Coordinator

Applications assigned to Section Assessors for review.

Scores assigned to applications based on assessment criteria.

Shortlisted applicants invited to submit to second stage

Applications ranked according to score and shortlisted

Assessments returned to Section Coordinator for review and ranking

Second stage

Applications sent to one of two panels: Humanities or Social Science

Applications assessed same as process above and then reviewed at respective panel meetings

Final shortlist sent to Research Awards committee. Recommendations for awards confirmed.

Successful candidates offered award.

<u>Applications not completed correctly (including references) and submitted on time will not be considered.</u>

Notes on the British Academy Flexi-Grant® Grants Management System

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 does not form part of the specific application form for any individual scheme but represents a personal record of your account in the system. Please keep this information up to date.

Automatic log-out: you are strongly advised to save your work regularly to prevent accidental loss of text. The Flexi-Grant website will automatically log people out if no activity is detected. It is recommended that you work offline in a separate word processor and copy and paste completed text online once complete.

Multiple sessions: do 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.

Word limits: if you exceed the word limit, you will not be able to save the page you are working on. Longer-length text should be completed separately and backed up in a word processor.

Plain text: if entering plain text, please avoid using symbols as some may not be accepted by the Flexi-Grant: This includes the following symbols: < >

PDF documents: In the outline stage applicants are not expected to upload any documents. When uploading PDF documents, please add your name and a heading at the top of every page to show what the document is (e.g. CV or list of publications). Please avoid uploading documents containing illustrations with fine details or colour as this can cause problems when creating a PDF of the application. Each PDF cannot exceed 3 Mb in size.

Email addresses: it is essential that you ensure your email address is up to date and actively monitored, or you may miss important notification emails.

Submission: 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 your host organisation at least five working days before the closing date to allow for your host organisation's administrative procedures. You should also check whether your institution has its own internal deadlines. We strongly advise that you contact your referee as early as possible to avoid any last-minute issues before the submission deadline.

Application sharing: you can invite other contributors to join the application. All contributors must be registered on the Flexi-Grant grants management system and mark their work as 'Complete' before you can submit your application – including the referee.

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 seven days after deletion. After this, it will be permanently removed from the system.

Application returned for editing: The organisation approver can return your application to you for further editing, but the original deadline remains in place.

Completing the application form

A full list of question fields to be completed as part of the application can be found in the table below.

*Indicates a mandatory field.

Summary page

Summary table	'Complete' status will only appear when all the mandatory fields in that section have been completed. The **'Submit'** button will only appear once all mandatory fields have been completed. This includes the Referee Statement – **this must be marked as 'Complete' by the Referee or the Submit button will not appear!**

Page 1: Research proposal

*Subject area	Please select the subject most relevant to your research.
*Research proposal title	Self-explanatory.
*Abstract	Summarise your proposed research for an informed general audience. 150 words.
*Proposed host institution	Please indicate here your choice of host institution, including the appropriate faculty, department, research institute or college where you propose to work.
*Reason(s) for choice of host institution	Please explain the reason(s) for your choice of UK host institution (the university/research institute, department). This is expected to be a brief paragraph setting out the main reason(s) for the choice of host institution. 150 words max.
Proposed mentor	Please provide the name of your proposed mentor and their role at the institution. 100 words max.
*Previous research	Please give a description of research already undertaken, normally referring to the doctoral thesis. 600 words max.
*Proposed programme	Please give a detailed description of the research programme, including methodology. Applicants should be aware of the importance that assessors place on the viability, specificity and originality of the research programme and of its achievability within the timescale, which should be specified in the Plan of Action. If there is a need to include a short bibliography to help a reader understand the context, this should be included here and is counted within the word limit of the field. Applicants should be aware of the importance that the assessors place on the scholarly importance of the project and on its feasibility, especially in terms of the proposed methodology and timescale. The limit on this field is 2000 words.
*Plan of action	Try to be as realistic as possible, but keep in mind that research programmes will develop over time and this plan of action is not something that is expected to account for every minute and is not unchangeable. Your chances of award will be affected by the assessors' perception of how viable and realistic this plan is. 800 words max.

*Planned research outputs	Please indicate here what the expected output(s) from your research programme might be. As appropriate, please indicate as follows: monograph, journal article(s), book chapter(s), digital resources, other (please specify). 300 words max.
*Plans for publication and dissemination	Please state in more detail here what plans you have for publication or other dissemination of your research, including potential publishers, journals, conferences etc that are appropriate for your research subject: 500 words max.
Digital resource	If the primary product of the research will be a digital resource, have you obtained guidance on appropriate standards and methods?
*Deposit of datasets	How and where will any electronic or digital data (including datasets) developed during the project will be stored, along with details on the appropriate methods of access. 500 words max.
*Start date/end date	Self-explanatory.
Language competence	Self-explanatory.
Endangered or emerging subject area	Applicants should be intending to pursue original, independent research in any field of study within the humanities or social sciences. There are no quotas for individual subject areas and no thematic priorities. The primary factor in assessing applications will remain the excellence of the proposal. The Academy will, however, where appropriate, take into account the aim of providing particular support for certain important fields, either emerging areas of scholarship or areas of research that are endangered or under threat. 300 words max.
*Ethical issues	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? If the answers are yes to special ethical issues and no to having obtained prior approval, please describe here the non-standard ethical issues arising from your research and how you will address them.

Page 2: Eligibility criteria

*Primary subject, secondary subject	If you are unsure about eligibility criteria, please email us.
*Time period	Please indicate if your application is relevant to a specific time period.
*Audiences	Please indicate if your application is relevant to any particular audience.
*Regional interests	Please indicate if your application is relevant to a specific region of the world.
*Employing organisation	Please select the organisation at which you wish to be based for the British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship (if successful).

Page 3: Lead applicant details

*Lead 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. Please use the search bar to find your home institution and add the organisation to your application. If your organisation is not available, then it may not be registered in our system. Before requesting the addition of a

	new organisation, please check that it is not affiliated with any organisations that is already registered. If it needs to be added please email us.
*PhD awarding university	Please state the university from which your doctorate was awarded.
*Nationality	You must select at least one Nationality, and up to three if applicable.

Page 4: Lead applicant career summary

*Statement of qualifications and career	Please give dates of your academic qualifications and career. In reverse chronological order.
*Present appointment, employing institution and department	Please give requested details regarding your current appointment.
Permanent academic post	Have you ever held a permanent academic post?
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, particularly in relation to exemption criteria. For example, details of a career break, or family care responsibilities. This is an optional field. 150 words max.
PhD awarded date, PhD submitted date, PhD expected date	To be eligible, you must expect to have had the viva voce examination by 1 April 2022.
*Name of doctoral supervisor	Self-explanatory.
*Name of internal and external examiner	Self-explanatory.
*Other academic experience	Please provide details of all academic posts held prior to your present position (with dates), including any teaching experience gained during doctoral registration.

Please include details of any experience in organizing conferences, workshops and wiki-based discussions. If none, please state none. 500 words max. |
Publications	Please list your principal and/or relevant publications in reverse chronological order, to a maximum of six.
Unpublished research	Please list any extant unpublished projects funded by the Academy or any other agency, and their expected publication date (or other explanation).
Previous support dates	Please give details of any research application submitted to the British Academy within the last five years: Please note that only one British Academy research grant may be held, or applied for, at any one time.
Where did you hear of this scheme?	Self-explanatory.

Pages 5: Equal opportunities

Equal opportunities	This page is not mandatory, however the Academy is committed to supporting diversity in our funding and would appreciate applicants completing the following details to enable us to monitor and analyse how inclusive our processes are.

	The information provided will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used for statistical purposed 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.

Page 6: Lead applicant referee statement

Referee	Applicants are required to nominate one referee. The nominated referee will have to answer several questions about the applicant and their research proposal. This is all completed online on Flexi-Grant. Please note that the Referee's contribution must be completed (and marked as complete) on the Flexi-Grant system before the applicant can submit the application for approval. You are strongly advised to ensure that your referee submits the reference well in advance of the final deadline for this round of competition, which is 5pm (UK time) 12 October. **Please note this deadline is the final deadline: organisation approval must be recorded before the 5pm deadline on 12 October.** Your referee should be familiar with your project and able to comment on its significance, feasibility, and on your abilities. We recommend the External Examiner for your PhD. The reference may be supplied by a scholar based outside the UK if you wish. **Please note your referee cannot be your mentor, a past supervisor or an internal examiner.** Before listing your referee on your application form, you should seek permission from them that they are happy to provide this before the deadline. It is essential that you enter the correct email address for your referee (especially if they are using more than one email address) otherwise your referee will not receive the automated messages delivered from the British Academy GMS. We strongly advise that you submit your application as early as possible to avoid any last-minute issues with your referee. There have been cases where applicants have been rejected by last minute failures to secure a reference. An application cannot be considered unless the reference has been submitted on time. Please note that references must be provided through the British Academy GMS, they cannot be provided as an email attachment nor sent by post in hard copy.

Submission of application

Once you have submitted your application for approval by your host institution, an automatic email will be sent to the organisation approver for your host institution. The organisation approver will either: approve and submit your application, 'send back' your application for edits/corrections or decline your application. You must complete your application with enough time for your host institution to review and approve your application.

Host institutions must record their approval by 5pm, 12 October 2022.

It is recommended that you allow at least five working days for this process. Please check with your proposed host institution as their internal timetables may require earlier submission. If your host organisation approver requests modifications, they can return your application to you for editing.

Once an application has been approved by the organisation approver, it cannot be returned.

Please note that once the closing date has passed, host organisation approvers cannot approve applications and submit them to the British Academy. Unapproved applications are removed from consideration.

Code of Practice

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. Regrettably, feedback is not a feature of this programme. 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.

Anyone registered with special needs, please get in contact with us if you require additional support. Part time study, for example, may be possible to support your needs.

Assessment criteria

Assessors evaluate each proposal based on academic merit: Taking into account its originality, its relationship to, and the volume of, research already 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 and the intended outcomes. Assessors will 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. 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.

Outcome of application

Once your application has been fully submitted, you will not be contacted again by the British Academy until decisions have been made. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by the end of January 2022. Results are issued by email.

Applicants in any doubt about their eligibility or any other aspect of their application are advised to contact the **Research Funding Office** at the **British Academy**.

Email: posts@thebritishacademy.ac.uk