



## The British Academy/Wolfson Fellowships 2022-23 Competition

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. Personal eligibility
2. Subject remit
3. Funding
4. Institutions
5. Current British Academy award-holders
6. Start date
7. References
8. Publishing
9. Other opportunities
10. Mentors
11. COVID-19

1. Personal eligibility

#### **I have just completed my PhD. Can I apply for a Fellowship?**

The Academy welcomes applications from recent postdoctoral scholars who have been appointed to a full-time or part-time permanent or fixed term academic post for the duration of the award (at least three years). In order to be eligible, you must be in a permanent or fixed term post and have successfully passed your viva voce examination and completed any corrections.

#### **I do not have a PhD. Can I apply for a Fellowship?**

We accept applications from those who have equivalent experience i.e. an individual in an established academic post (to which they were appointed no more than nine years ago) without a doctorate is eligible to apply. However, if you are currently registered as a PhD student whilst in your academic post you are not eligible to apply.

#### **I am on a fixed term contract that covers the proposed period of the Fellowship. Can I apply for one of these awards?**

Yes. It is essential, however, that the period of the contract covers the whole proposed period of the Fellowship. The purpose of the scheme is to allow successful applicants to obtain time freed from their normal teaching and administrative commitments. Unless your employing institution is in a position to confirm at the point of application that, if your current contract ends during the proposed Fellowship, it is guaranteed to be renewed, you will not be eligible. Such a guarantee would need to be confirmed in the Head of Department's statement of support.

#### **I do not have a permanent position or a fixed-term contract that covers the duration**

**of the Fellowship. Can I apply?**

No. This particular scheme is only open to applicants who are in permanent posts or have fixed-term contracts that last longer than the term of the award. The purpose of the funding is to buy out the time of those in permanent or long-term academic posts, not to support scholars to obtain such posts. The British Academy offers other opportunities for this through our [Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme](#). You can see full details of this on our website or by referring to the 'Other opportunities' section of these FAQs.

**I received my doctorate more than nine years ago but took time out for maternity leave /paternity leave / adoption leave / caring / due to illness / due to disability. Can I apply?**

If your career has been interrupted for reasons such as those mentioned above, we will consider your case sympathetically. In the personal statement you would need to set out the case for consideration to be given, referring, for example, not only to the periods of interruption, such as for maternity/paternity leave, but to the subsequent impact of having young children to care for as well.

**I received my doctorate more than nine years ago but have no claims for career breaks or other interruptions. Am I still eligible to apply?**

The nine years' limit is counted back from the closing date of the round **30 November 2022**. Anyone whose viva was held before 30 November 2013 should address the issue of why they should be considered still to be eligible in the personal statement field.

Applicants that have had interruptions in their academic career for maternity or parental leave, caring responsibilities or ill-health will be favourably received. Cases can also be made by those who have spent time outside of academic life, where the additional experience gained will benefit the proposal. Anyone who has been pursuing a straightforward academic career path and is very clearly outside the target range of nine years would not be considered a high priority and is therefore unlikely to be supported.

**My PhD viva was before 30 November 2013, but I have been working in industry/studying/living abroad. Am I still eligible?**

Applicants who had their viva prior to this date can still apply. However a case would need to be made in the 'personal statement' section of the application form (including any ways in which the applicant meets the 'early career' definition). The basis for these cases is typically around career breaks for paternity/maternity leave, illness, or caring responsibilities. It is unlikely, however, that a case would be accepted for time spent working in industry and on other qualifications, rather than for an interruption to an applicant's career path.

**Will the scheme be available to applicants that are up to nine years post-PhD in future rounds?**

This is expected to be a one-off extension to the eligibility criteria for this round of competition only. Future rounds of competition will be up to seven years post-PhD (as in previous rounds). This round has been extended as the British Academy understands the disruption that has been caused by the Covid-19 pandemic to those early in their careers, who have had to move to teaching online and have had their research, publishing and conference opportunities limited.

**I am not affiliated to a UK academic institution. Can I apply for a Fellowship?**

Eligibility criteria are clearly stated in the scheme notes. Eligible applicants must have a permanent or fixed-term post at a UK university or other research institution such as an Independent Research Organisation (this includes museums and galleries), be resident in the United Kingdom and be within nine years of the award of their doctorate. Independent scholars are not eligible to apply.

**I am employed at my university or IRO on a part-time contract – am I eligible to apply for a Fellowship or are only full-time scholars eligible?**

Applications are accepted from scholars currently employed on both full and part-time

contracts (i.e. anything up to 1.0 FTE). The grant maximum is £130,000 across three years and the awards can be used flexibly but at least £90,000 must be used for time buy-out of the Fellowship holder's research time which would cover the salary costs of any full-time or part-time contract. How the institution uses the money awarded for the Fellowship is up to it – we are not paying specifically for a replacement so cannot insist on a full-time teaching replacement being appointed, but it would be good if an opportunity, albeit a short-term one, was opened up for another early career appointment as a result. The Fellowship is not designed to top up the hours of a part time contract to the equivalent of a full-time position, but rather to release someone from their existing commitments.

**I am on a full-time contract but only wish to dedicate and charge part of my time to the Fellowship. Can the overall cost of the award be shared with funding from another body on a part-time basis?**

Yes, the expectation is that the time buy-out offered by this award would not cover 100% of the award-holder's time. You would need to make a case for this in the personal statement section of the application form including the feasibility of completing the research proposed in the three-year timescale.

**If a member of staff is on a fixed-term contract which covers the proposed period of the Fellowship, would such a person be eligible to apply for the scheme?**

Yes. It is essential, however, that the period of the contract covers the whole proposed period of the Fellowship. The purpose of the scheme is to allow successful applicants to obtain time freed from their normal academic commitments. If the member of staff's current contract ends during the proposed Fellowship period, or before it starts, but there is a commitment from the University or IRO to renew the contract, then also, yes, the applicant would be eligible.

**I am a registered PhD student. Can I apply?**

No. These awards are offered at postdoctoral level. If you are in a permanent or fixed term academic post but also currently registered as a PhD student, you are also not eligible to apply.

## 2. Subject remit

**I am working in the Life Sciences/Engineering/Medical Sciences. Am I eligible to apply?**

No, the British Academy is the UK's national body for the humanities and social sciences and we only fund research proposals from within these subject areas.

**I am working in a field that involves primarily creative, practice-based outputs. Am I eligible to apply?**

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.

**Can research from a PhD project be used?**

Applicants are required to give a detailed description of the research programme in 'Proposed Programme' section in the application form. It is worth noting that assessors place importance on the viability, specificity and originality of the research programme and its achievability within the timescale. Therefore, if the research originates from a PhD project that is acceptable, so long as it is clear that it is not simply a plan to publish work that has already been done but is clearly developing this further.

### 3. Funding

#### **Is the salary element of the Fellowship funding intended for the award holder or for teaching replacement?**

The Fellowship will provide early career academics with the most valuable commodity – time – by releasing them from some of their academic duties to pursue their research. At least £90,000 of the maximum of £130,000 available for the Fellowship over a three-year period must be used for time buy-out to enable the award-holder to focus on research which would cover part of the salary costs of any full-time or part-time contract. How the institution uses the money awarded for the Fellowship is up to it – we are not paying specifically for a replacement so cannot insist on a full-time teaching replacement being appointed, but it would be good if an opportunity, albeit a short-term one, was opened up for another early career appointment as a result. All the Academy needs to be assured about at the end of the Fellowship is that the programme of research and public engagement has been carried out as planned, and that teaching and other commitments did not get in the way.

#### **Does the total contribution towards time buy-out of at least £90,000 need to be spent evenly across the three years of the award (i.e. £30,000 p.a.)?**

No, the award is offered on a flexible basis. Applicants can, for example, choose to have more time bought out in years one and two and less in year three. Each year of the award does, however, need to include Fellowship activity of some type (public engagement duties, for example). The assessors will, however, take into account the feasibility of the programme as a whole as part of the decision-making process, and applicants should bear in mind the need to have a coherent plan for the three years of the award, including the time to implement it successfully.

#### **Is the total cost of research, travel, public engagement and dissemination capped at £40,000? Are there any caps within these categories?**

Yes, the total amount that can be used for expenses for research, travel, public engagement, and the dissemination of findings locally, nationally and globally is capped at £40,000. There are no caps within these categories which are displayed as separate items in the application form.

#### **What items are included in the ‘Public Engagement Costs’ category?**

Costs in this category are those that are directly relevant to staging the engagement activity itself (e.g. Zoom subscription, room hire, catering, AV, film making, gallery exhibitions). Included costs are:

- Clerical or administrative support to enable engagement activity to take place.
- Travel for research and dissemination purposes and travel for invited speakers to engagement activities.
- Fees for guest of honour or keynote speaker.
- Analysis and preparation of feedback forms on engagement activities.

The British Academy and Wolfson Foundation are keen to recognise and define public engagement in its broadest sense. We would be open to considering eligible a wide range of potential costs provided that there is a clear and strong case made regarding the benefits to the research and the dissemination of that research. Where this involves payment to other people, however, we would have reservations if these costs constituted a considerable proportion of the £40,000 available for ‘research and travel expenses and dissemination of findings’. Anything more than 10% of this budget (£4,000) would be unlikely to be approved.

#### **Can research assistance be claimed for?**

Costs for research assistance are not generally permitted, except in the case of very specialised assistance for skills it would not be reasonable for the applicant to have or develop during the award. The case would need to be made in the justification section of the financial details page on the online form and should make clear that the costs would be needed based on a reasonable assumption that the skills offered by the third party were sufficiently specialised that the applicant would not have them or could develop them during the award. Costs for non-specialist staff (e.g. Research Assistants) are not permitted.

**Can transcription costs be claimed for?**

Small scale transcription costs can be claimed for however, the applicant will need to justify in the budget why this could not be carried out by the proposed fellow. Transcription costs are categorised as 'consumables' in the application budget.

**Can printing costs be claimed for?**

Photocopying and printing of engagement materials for engagement events can be claimed for, however direct production costs of the research manuscript cannot be claimed for.

**I am planning an engagement event at the British Academy as part of my application. Do Wolfson Fellowship award holders receive a discounted hire rate at the British Academy?**

Currently we do not offer discounts on room hire for Wolfson Fellows or any other award holders for events at the Academy. However, we continue to review the portfolio of support that we offer early career researchers.

**Can a salary be claimed for the mentor?**

There is no salary provision for the mentor.

**Can training costs be requested?**

As part of the fellowship, we will be offering early career training opportunities on communication (including public engagement) and other cohort engagement opportunities with other BA-sponsored Early Career Researchers directly through existing programmes already offered by the Academy. Any request for funds pertaining to training should include a full justification on the application form.

**Can the academic buyout be used for other costs such as redundancy and/or recruitment?**

The time buy-out element of the Fellowship (at least £90,000 of the maximum £130,000 available) can be used by the Institution as it chooses. We are not paying specifically for a replacement so cannot insist on a full-time teaching replacement being appointed, but it would be good if an opportunity, albeit a short-term one, was opened up for another early career appointment as a result. We would not therefore expect/require any of the salary cost to be used on recruitment or redundancy costs since we are not paying specifically for a replacement, but if the organisation wishes to use part of the funding for this purpose, then it would not be a problem. All the Academy needs to be assured about at the end of the Fellowship is that the programme of research and public engagement has been carried out as planned, and that teaching and other commitments did not get in the way.

**Can costs be claimed for work carried out before the start of the Fellowship?**

No, costs cannot be retrospectively claimed for work that has already taken place before the start of the Fellowship. A project can have started before the official start of the Fellowship but only costs incurred after the start date of the award can be claimed for.

#### 4. Institutions

**Who can offer institutional authorisation for my application?**

Institutional authorisation must be given by the registered approver in the British Academy Flexi-Grant® Grant Management System (GMS). This is variable at each institution and will often be the Research Grants or Contracts Office or equivalent. You should seek advice at your home institution.

**I notice that the scheme encourages applications from candidates based in museums and galleries. What should I do if my institution does not appear in the list of approving organisations?**

The Academy welcomes applicants from universities and other research institutions, including museums, galleries and Independent Research Organisations across the UK. If an organisation is not currently listed as an approving organisation, please contact the Research Funding team (at [grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk)) to discuss arrangements for it to be added. The Academy will need reassurance that the organisation is suitable to provide a supportive research environment in line with the aims of the scheme.

**I have applied for a Fellowship, but I will be taking up a new post at another institution shortly. Are these Fellowships transferrable, and if I was offered a Fellowship could I take it with me?**

Yes, these Fellowships are transferrable to another UK institution and if your application is successful then we will advise you on what you need to do in order to take the Fellowship with you to your new institution. Fellowships are not transferrable to institutions outside of the UK.

**We are an IRO/museum/gallery and our staff have curatorial responsibilities not teaching. Can they still apply?**

Yes. The 'Teaching and administration' element of the Fellowship in the context of IROs, museums and galleries should be taken to relate to any non-research activities that are hindering the applicant from focusing more of their time on research and which could be relieved using the element of funding for time buy-out, so research active staff with curatorial responsibilities would be welcome to apply.

**I have a permanent or fixed-term position at more than one institution. I want to make an application which buys me out of more than one institution, is this possible?**

You are welcome to make an application that covers the time being spent at multiple institutions, and to have either of them named as the lead institution. Only one institution will be able to receive the funding from the British Academy, however there is no stipulation preventing that institution from distributing this to another. The fellowship is designed in such a way that the £90,000 contribution towards the buy-out can be used flexibly over the course of the three years.

## 5. Current British Academy award-holders

**I am currently a Principal Investigator or Co-Applicant on another British Academy grant. Am I eligible to apply?**

If you are currently a Principal Investigator or a Co-Applicant on another Academy research award, you may **not** apply as either Principal or a Co-Applicant on another research award until the conditions relating to the award held have been met. (This does not apply to the BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant, for more information please see below).

**I am a British Academy Award Holder for the BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant. Am I eligible for the Wolfson Fellowship?**

You are eligible for the Wolfson Fellowship as long as the BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant will finish by December 2023 as the latest start date for the Wolfson Fellowship is 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

**Am I eligible to submit applications to more than one Academy scheme at the same time?**

This scheme provides time buy-out of the award holder's research time. Therefore, intending applicants for the Fellowship scheme are **not** eligible to apply at the same time to other schemes also offering time buy-out such as the BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowship or the Mid-Career Fellowship. Individuals may, however, also submit an application for support under the BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant scheme but the Academy will take due notice of any duplication of purpose in any offer of award.

## 6. Start date

### **Is there a specific date when the Fellowship must start – or can the start date be delayed?**

The earliest date the Fellowship can be taken up is 1 September 2023 – and the latest start date permitted is 1 January 2024. If the Fellowship cannot be taken up on a date within this timeframe, then regrettably the offer would have to be declined.

### **I will be on maternity/paternity leave during September 2023 to January 2024, can I defer the start date of the Fellowship if successful?**

Applicants would need to return to their permanent/fixed-term contract by or on 1 January 2024 (the latest date that the Fellowship can start). This is, however, negotiable with the aim of offering appropriate flexibility - the applicant could, for example, arrange to return for as little as one 'keeping-in-touch' day within the September to January start period window and then extend the award accordingly. So, the award would formally start in the relevant period but can be extended to cover the remaining leave.

### **My project is due to start before the decision date. Can I apply?**

No, as the scheme notes specify the earliest date that research may commence is the earliest start date for the Fellowship i.e. 1 September 2023.

### **What is the latest date I can apply to start my project?**

As the scheme notes specify, the latest date that research has to have commenced by is the latest start date of the Fellowship i.e. 1 January 2024.

## 7. References

### **What do my referee and Head of Department have to do?**

Your nominated referee and Head of Department will each be asked to fill in a statement in our Flexi-Grant grants management system and will be asked to comment on your abilities, academic record and research proposal; and in the case of the Head of Department to comment on the fit with the department's research goals.

### **Does my referee have to be based in the UK?**

No, references written in English from appropriate overseas referees are welcomed by the Academy.

### **Can 'person X' be my referee?**

The supporting statements from your referee will be reviewed by assessors and their relationship to you will be taken into consideration. The general rule is that they must be as external to you as possible but still have a good knowledge of your academic abilities and output.

## 8. Publishing

### **When I apply for funding through any of the awards offered by the British Academy, can I include in the application the cost of APCs (Article Processing Charges) to enable any articles that may arise from the research to be published in learned journals that offer a 'Gold' open access option?**

No. Currently the Academy's position is that costs of publication are not eligible costs.

### **Does the Academy require the outputs of the research it funds to be made available in any open access format?**

No, this is not currently a stipulation of any Academy award.

## 9. Other opportunities

**I am in a permanent post but received my doctorate more than nine years ago and do not meet the requirements for exception. What opportunities does the British Academy have available for me?**

British Academy Mid-Career Fellowships are open to researchers in established posts at UK universities or other higher education institutions who have outstanding research and public engagement proposals.

**I am recently postdoctoral and on a short-term contract. What opportunities does the British Academy have available for me?**

British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships are open to early career researchers within three years of the award of their doctorate who do not have a permanent academic post. The Postdoctoral Fellowships are intended to help early career researchers who do not yet have a permanent post to be in a stronger position as a result of the award to obtain a permanent post. Around 70% of alumni of the scheme are now in permanent academic posts and more than 250 of them are now Professors.

**I received my doctorate more than nine years ago, do not have a permanent post and do not meet the requirements for exception. What opportunities does the British Academy have available for me?**

British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grants are open to all postdoctoral scholars, including independent scholars who do not have permanent academic posts. These awards offer the opportunity for researchers to obtain small-scale research expenses to carry out a piece of research that will lead to publication, assisting with career development. The scheme is often used as a first grant opportunity by early career researchers.

**If I am unsuccessful, can I apply to a future round? When will the next round open?**

If unsuccessful in the current round, applicants can apply to the scheme again provided they meet all of the eligibility criteria. Whilst we expect further rounds of the scheme, they are not expected to be offered on an annual basis and we do not have any further information regarding deadlines at this time.

## 10. Mentors

**Does my mentor have to be from my institution?**

No. The Academy does not necessarily expect the mentor to be from the same institution as the applicant, as the mentor's role is to give academic support and guidance, not specific support within the institution at which the award-holder is employed.

**What is the specific role of the mentor? What is the time commitment for the mentor? Can someone be a mentor on more than one application?**

The purpose in this case is not to help embed the award-holder in the department, faculty or institute in which they are already working – we would assume that they may already have an internally appointed mentor for this purpose. Rather the aim is to provide career development support in which the mentor helps the award-holders to make critical decisions about their career choices and to act as a signpost to relevant information and resources. A mentor cannot be a collaborator.

The Academy has not set a specific minimum amount of time that a mentor is expected to devote to the relationship, but it is expected to be meaningful (not just, for example, one hour once a term/semester). We would not expect funding specifically to be set aside from the grant to pay for the mentor's time (though appropriate travel costs would certainly be expected to be covered as necessary). It would be entirely up to the potential mentor themselves to decide how many applicants they were willing to support – but clearly, they would need to be prepared for the possibility that all of them (up to a maximum of the six available awards) might end up being successful, and therefore willing to give them equal time and support if they agreed to more than one request.



These are the fourth cohort of awards offered in this scheme, and we will certainly expect to review how the relationships work out in practice to make sure that relevant support is being given.

**Can the mentor be a collaborator on the Fellowship?**

No, the mentor cannot be a collaborator. The mentor is there to provide career development support to help the award-holder to make critical decisions about their career choices and to act as a signpost to relevant information and resources.

**Does the mentor have to be an FBA (Fellow of the British Academy)?**

The expectation in this case is that the mentor does not need to be an FBA (and no specific advantage is expected to be conveyed where an applicant has an FBA as the named mentor) nor do they need to be based in the same institution as the applicant. Any senior colleague who has a good fit with the applicant's interests would be suitable.

**Is a reference or statement required from the mentor?**

Neither a reference nor a statement is required from the mentor. In the 'Other Participants/Role of other participants/Added value of collaboration' section, the applicant is requested to state the name of the mentor, and indicate the extent of previous contact with them (e.g. PhD supervisor, external examiner, colleague, etc). Applicants are then asked to explain the roles other participants will play in the proposed research and engagement, and the added value of the collaboration.

**Can a Museum Curator be a mentor?**

Yes, it is possible for a museum curator to be a mentor. The scheme is designed to be as flexible as possible and those from an IRO background including museums and galleries are encouraged to apply.

**Is it possible for my named mentor to be based outside the UK?**

Yes, it is possible as long as they can support the proposed fellow and their career development.

**Can a mentor also be my lead applicant referee?**

No, your mentor cannot be the same person as the lead applicant referee.

**11. COVID-19**

The Academy realises that the COVID-19 pandemic has made planning extremely difficult and that researchers' ability to work and travel may be affected by changing restrictions. The British Academy and the Wolfson Foundation will therefore endeavour to remain flexible and supportive to the award-holders for the duration of their fellowship.