

Innovation Fellowships Scheme 2023-24

Frequently Asked Questions – Route A: Researcher-led

In this document you will find the answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) relating to the Innovation Fellowships Scheme 2023-24 – Route A: Researcher-led. Please read this document and the Scheme Guidance Notes carefully.

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Scheme Overview

How long is the grant period and what is the latest date I can apply to start my project?

Awards can be held for a minimum period of 6 months and up to a maximum period of 12 months. Awards are expected to commence no earlier than 1 March 2024 and no later than 31 March 2024.

Is the starting date (between 1-31 March 2024) fixed?

The start date period (1-31 March 2024) cannot be varied because of the timing of the availability of the funds. A later start date would not be possible.

What is the maximum level of award paid by the British Academy for the Innovation Fellowships Scheme – Route A: Researcher-led?

Route A (researcher-led) awards are on a Full Economic Costing (FEC) basis. For further guidance on FEC, please contact your organisation's Finance or Research Office, they will be able to assist you with your application. The British Academy (the funder) will pay the award at 80% FEC, and will pay up to £120,000. If you would like to receive the full amount payable for this award (i.e. £120,000), applicants will need to enter £150,000 on the application form. This is because all costs must be submitted at 100% FEC on the application form. The British Academy will reduce the costs to 80% FEC if an award is offered.

Will the Innovation Fellowships Scheme be a regular scheme?

Our current expectation is that this scheme will be offered again in future, following the successful pilot run in 2021-22 and second round in 2022-23.

Can you provide more information about the Route B: Policy-led Innovation Fellowships?

The British Academy will release information about the funding calls for Route B: Policy-led Innovation Fellowships (2023-24) in due course. For 2022-23, there were two Route B: Policy-led funding calls. The first was with our partner, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). And the second was with our partners, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

How do I apply?

Applications can only be submitted online using the British Academy's [Flexi-Grant® Grant Management System](#) (GMS). If you have not previously used the British Academy's Flexi-Grant® GMS and were not previously registered in the e-GAP system, please follow the registration process from the Flexi-Grant® homepage. Applications cannot be submitted on paper or in any other format.

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.

Lead Applicant

How do you define being an 'early-career/mid-career researcher'?

For the Innovation Fellowships scheme, we welcome and encourage applications from researchers who consider themselves to be early-career or mid-career researchers. Applicants must self-define their career stage in the application, providing further details about career breaks or other circumstances, if relevant. Applicants do not have to fit within a certain time-frame since their PhD in order to prove their career-stage. However, applicants must self-define their career stage and demonstrate this accordingly in their applications. Typically, it can be defined as within 15 years of being awarded your PhD (although this will be interpreted flexibly to accommodate any career breaks, parental/caring leave or non-traditional career trajectories). However, this typical definition is a guide only. Applicants may self-define their career stage as they see fit. Applicants should be aware that if they are more advanced in their career, the assessors may determine that they are not within the bounds of the scheme. Therefore, applicants should explain their career stage clearly in response to the question on career stage in the application form. Lead Applicants who do not have a doctorate may have equivalent experience, which they should define in the personal statement section.

Where would the Innovation Fellow, i.e. Lead Applicant, be based?

The Innovation Fellow will be expected to spend their allocated time of between 0.4 and 0.8 FTE working with their UK-based partner organisation in their UK-based office or another mutually agreed site of the partner.

Does the place-based partnership, referred to in the Scheme Guidance Notes, mean that I – the Lead Applicant – need to have a partner organisation in/near the place where I work rather than any other places in the UK?

'Place-based' refers to the fact that the Innovation Fellow will be expected to spend their allocated time of between 0.4 and 0.8 FTE working with their partner organisation in their office or another mutually agreed site. While the British Academy welcomes projects and partnerships that are focused in a researcher's region or location, they do not have to be, but may be based anywhere in the United Kingdom.

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

The Academy welcomes applications from recent postdoctoral scholars. You must be 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 organisation is not currently registered on the Academy's grant management system, Flexi-Grant, please contact us via grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk to discuss possible registration. Please note that applications from independent researchers cannot be accepted in this scheme.

I am an early-career/mid-career researcher in an established post at a UK institution, but I do not have a doctorate. Am I eligible to apply for an Innovation Fellowship?

If you are able to make a case that your career experience is equivalent to that of PhD level and you are in an established position at a UK-based institution (e.g. a Higher Education Institution [HEI] or Independent Research Organisation [IRO]), then you will be eligible to apply. However, we recommend that you make reference to this under the 'Personal Statement' part of application form so that the assessors are fully informed.

I do not currently have a PhD but I am working towards one via research or publication, am I eligible to apply for an Innovation Fellowship?

Unfortunately, if the potential award of a PhD by research or publication involves some kind of formal recognition as being a 'registered PhD student' then, regardless of a researcher's other experience which would otherwise qualify them for eligibility, they are not eligible because PhD students are ineligible for any of our schemes.

Is it acceptable for an applicant to have an appointment that continues beyond the end of the Fellowship end date, but not necessarily 'long term'? I.e. can somebody who is not a permanent employee apply provided that their current pre-existing contract runs beyond the end of the Innovation Fellowship award?

Yes, this is acceptable as the contract is pre-existing and covers the duration of award, i.e. the contract is not dependant on this award.

I am an independent researcher, am I eligible to apply for an Innovation Fellowship?

Regretfully, we are unable accept independent scholars as Lead Applicants for this scheme, Lead Applicants are required to have a current long-term position (that lasts for at least the duration of award) at a UK-based HEI or IRO.

I am employed at my university on a part-time contract – am I eligible to apply for an Innovation Fellowship or are only full-time researchers eligible?

Applications are accepted from researchers currently employed on both full and part-time contracts (i.e. anything less than 1.0 FTE). An applicant who works part-time would need to be supported by their employing institution to be able to devote sufficient time (a minimum of 0.4 FTE) to enable the purposes of the award to be fulfilled.

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, providing there is no duplication of costs. We are only expecting to pay for the time of the award holder between 0.4 and 0.8 FTE, and therefore for the remainder of the time the applicant is able to carry on other duties. It is not expected that funding from another body will be required to add to the British Academy's contribution.

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 teaching and administrative 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 other organisation to renew the contract, then also, yes, the applicant would be eligible.

Please can you provide further clarification on what you mean by 'employed' within your eligibility criteria for Innovation Fellowships?

The purpose of the scheme is to provide an opportunity for those with a salaried position at a UK-based HEI or IRO to devote time to the Fellowship. Most of the funding sought by Lead Applicants will be to support the costs associated with their time (through direct salary contribution), and their salary must not depend on the Innovation Fellowship itself.

Is the salary element of the Innovation Fellowship funding intended for the award-holder or for teaching replacement?

The basis of the Innovation Fellowship is that the Fellowship is offered on the Full Economic Costing model, under which costs are calculated on the basis of the salary of the Innovation Fellows themselves. The Innovation Fellow must commit between 0.4 and 0.8 FTE time to the Fellowship, providing justification for the time percentage as part of the application, especially if the time commitment is below 0.5 FTE. In agreeing to support the award, the institution is agreeing to enable the Innovation Fellow to have the time to concentrate on the programme of knowledge exchange or communication set out in the original application. How the employing institution uses the money awarded for the Fellowship is up to the institution. The Academy is not paying specifically for a replacement, so we 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 an 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 knowledge exchange and activity has been carried out as planned, and that teaching and other commitments did not impact the Fellowship.

I have applied for an Innovation 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 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.

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

Applying for and taking up another British Academy award is acceptable. However, there must be no duplication of funding for the same purpose. Applicants may not hold more than one British Academy award of a comparable nature at any one time. For example, it would not be possible to hold two British Academy Fellowship awards at the same time; but it may be possible to hold a British Academy Fellowship and a British Academy grant (i.e. Talent Development Award or BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant) at the same time.

Please note that an application cannot be accepted if there is a report outstanding on any previous research grant awarded by the Academy to the Lead Applicant or Co-applicant named in the current proposal. Failure to follow this guidance will result in your application being withdrawn from this round of competition. Duplicate applications for the same purpose to more than one Academy scheme will not be accepted.

I have submitted an application for Route A (Researcher-led) of the Innovation Fellowships Scheme and am waiting for the result/have been unsuccessful. Am I permitted to apply for Route B (Policy-led) of the Innovation Fellowships Scheme?

Yes, you are permitted to apply through both routes, but you cannot be successful via both routes, i.e. hold an Innovation Fellowship for both Route A and Route B at the same time.

Is it at all possible for a joint project, with two academics and a partner institution? Or is it just for single academics?

One Lead Applicant is required for this scheme, and the way that the scheme is designed means that it would not be possible to have two Lead Applicants on one project. However, the Lead Applicant may specify other participants who do not equate to being a Co-applicant. Other participants will be beneficiaries of the activity proposed by the Lead Applicant and will not be directly involved with the organisation of activity.

Co-applicant

How do I find a Co-applicant/partner organisation and can the British Academy help me find one?

The British Academy does not help researchers find a Co-applicant or partner organisation. It is up to the Lead Applicant to find them. We suggest that you find a partner whose activity clearly aligns with your own interest and to then reach out to them to see if they will support your application.

Does my Co-applicant need to have an academic background, a PhD, or publications?

Co-applicants may have a PhD or equivalent experience. However, they **do not need** to have an academic background, a PhD or publications. We advise Co-applicants to write about their experience in the 'Personal Statement' section of the application form.

Can the principal individual at the organisation with which I am partnering (i.e. Co-applicant) be an Academic or have an academic background?

The Co-applicant may have a PhD or equivalent experience. They do not need to have a PhD or any other form of academic background. **N.B.** postgraduate students are not eligible to apply for grant support from the Academy, and Co-applicants are asked to confirm in the application that they are not currently working towards a PhD, nor awaiting the outcome of a viva voce examination, nor awaiting the acceptance of any corrections required by the examiners.

Can the British Academy confirm if my proposed Co-applicant is suitable?

We cannot comment expressly on proposals or partnerships. It is for applicants to decide if their proposed Co-applicant meets the criteria. The description of eligible Co-applicants (below) allows for flexibility and applicants may choose the most suitable partner organisation accordingly. For Route A (Researcher-led) Fellowships, the Co-applicant is defined as the principal individual from the UK-based partner organisation receiving the Fellowship who will be directly involved in the project and must be ordinarily resident in the UK. A UK-based partner organisation for Route A (Researcher-led) includes: business and commercial organisations, charity and public sector organisations, community organisations, policy-relevant organisations, think tanks or voluntary organisations. The partner organisation must not be the same organisation at which the Lead Applicant is based. The Co-applicant may have a PhD or equivalent experience. They do not need to have a PhD or any other form of academic background.

Please note that the assessors, who assess the applications according to the assessment criteria, will make the final decision on awards.

Can the UK-based Co-applicant be based at an international organisation with offices based in the UK?

The partner (Co-applicant) must have a UK-based office, and the topic that the researcher is studying should have a UK dimension, even if a comparative context with other countries. If the partner has UK-based and internationally based offices, it is fine to spend time at the international office, but the formal partner for the Fellowship must be based in the UK-based office, rather than an international office. The Innovation Fellow will be expected to spend their allocated time of between 0.4 and 0.8 FTE working with their UK-based partner organisation in their office or another mutually agreed site of the partner. Lead Applicants and Co-applicants are expected to be ordinarily resident in the UK. The Lead Applicant must have 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]). Researchers are expected to address challenges that require innovative approaches and solutions that are relevant to the UK. If a researcher's proposed project has the international dimension as the sole focus, with no UK context at all, or very limited context, this would be considered beyond the bounds of the scheme and therefore ineligible.

I am not sure whether to list someone as a Co-applicant or other participant. What is the difference?

Other participants will be beneficiaries of the activity proposed by the Lead Applicant and will not be directly involved with the organisation of activity. For Route A (researcher-led) Fellowships, the Co-applicant is defined as the principal individual from the UK-based partner organisation receiving the Fellowship who will be directly involved in the project.

Can this award pay for the Co-applicant's time?

No funding from the award can be attributed to the Co-applicant's time. However, an in-kind contribution towards the time of the Co-applicant to enable and secure active collaboration of the partner is expected to be provided by the partner organisation without cost to the Academy.

As a potential partner organisation, we would be really interested in partnering with a researcher for the Innovation Fellowships, but we are not sure how to get the message out. Can you help?

We advise contacting institutions, e.g. Higher Education Institutions or Independent Research Organisations, that are local to you, or appropriate learned societies or subject associations. The research offices at these institutions may be able assist further. Additionally, you may wish to browse [our website](#) by searching for key words and topic interests.

Nominated Referee

Does my referee have to be based in the UK?

No. Your reference may be obtained from a person based within or outside the UK, but must be submitted in English. If a reference is not submitted in English, it will not be accepted and may render the application ineligible.

I am unable to provide a letter on the requested letterheaded paper; what should I do?

We realise that not all applicants or academics will have access to the requested letterheaded paper. As long as the reference is provided by an easily identifiable Academic and contact details are provided, we will accept these references on a non-letterheaded paper. The statement should be dated and signed by the nominated referee.

Is the referee statement entered into a field on Flexi-Grant or uploaded as an attachment to Flexi-Grant? If the latter, is there any particular format for the attachment (i.e. font type, size, margin size, page limit)?

The referee must upload their contribution as an attachment to the Flexi-Grant system. Generally, the attachments should specifically be a PDF file, on letterheaded paper, dated and signed. While no formatting or page limits apply, it is expected that the content will be in a format that is easy to read and a standard length.

Head of Department

I am the Head of Department at my UK institution (HEI or IRO), what do I do?

If you are the Lead Applicant and also Head of Department at your HEI or IRO, another suitable individual is required to provide the statement of support, e.g. Deputy Head or Head of School.

I am unable to provide a letter on the requested letterheaded paper; what should I do?

We realise that not all applicants or academics will have access to the requested letterheaded paper. As long as the reference is provided by an easily identifiable Academic or Head of Department and contact details are provided, we will accept these references on a non-letterheaded paper. The statement should be dated and signed by the Academic or Head of Department.

Research Proposal

The guidance mentions that the British Academy welcomes projects and partnerships that are focused in their region or location. Is this intended to refer to areas within the UK only?

Yes, the expectation for this scheme is a focus on UK policy, regions and areas, as it is not an international scheme or heavily focused internationally. This does not, however, exclude individuals who wish to make international comparisons.

Can I include publications that are under submission?

Yes. You may include publications that are under submission, but you should make this clear in the application form.

Can I include a bibliography/reference list and, if so, where should I place this?

It is not a mandatory requirement that you include a reference list. If you choose to include this as part of your application, then it should be placed as part of the main text in your research proposal – you cannot upload this as an additional document.

What kinds of activities and outputs can I include?

Eligible activities and outputs can involve, but are not limited to:

- Evidence notes – reports, notes and responses to key challenges/approaches for developing connections with policy leaders or innovators;
- Data analysis – identifying and analysing datasets that may be relevant to enhancing understanding and framing new solutions;
- Case studies – exploring practical or policy-orientated solutions, engagement between academic and non-academic environments and the wider benefits to individuals/communities/regions;
- Briefings/blogs/podcasts/videos and other outputs to reach a variety of audiences and environments, including policymakers (where relevant);

- Conferences/workshops/webinars/toolkits and other training opportunities which enable knowledge exchange.

Please note that the activities and outputs mentioned above and in the Scheme Guidance Notes are suggestions, and are not exhaustive.

Where does the ownership/intellectual property of this award reside?

Unless stated otherwise, the ownership of British Academy-funded intellectual property (IP), and responsibility for its identification, protection, management and exploitation, rests with the employing institution.

I am unable to obtain ethical approval for this project until funding for this award is guaranteed, is this an issue?

No, this not an issue. The Academy will be in touch with you in due course to follow-up. Appropriate ethical approval will need be obtained before the award can proceed.

Do I need to have a partnership agreement in place?

It is good practice to have a partnership agreement, and the Academy strongly encourages applicants to have a partnership agreement in place, i.e. to clarify roles, responsibilities and intellectual ownership/IP. The Academy is not able to provide a template or provide further guidance on partnership agreements, but encourages applicants to seek further assistance from the institution's Research Office about this.

Do you have any template applications for new applicants to view?

No, we do not have template applications available, but we encourage applicants to read the Scheme Guidance Notes and FAQs, which list full information about the scheme and the questions asked in the application form. Additionally, they may wish to view the [award lists](#) of the Innovation Fellowships (Route A: Researcher-led).

Can you please advise if there are any scheme specific Terms and Conditions available?

The Terms and Conditions of Award will be provided when an award is offered and before it is accepted.

Use of Funding

When I apply for funding through any of the schemes 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.

Is Apprenticeship Levy an eligible cost?

No, this is currently not an eligible cost and should not be included in the Final Expenditure Statement.

Can you give more guidance about research assistance in exceptional circumstances?

In exceptional cases, project staff (research assistants) can be contracted by the project partner organisation or the employing institution of the Lead Applicant. This is a Fellowship designed to benefit the Lead Applicant and their partner (the Co-applicant) in the non-academic organisation. It is not a project grant where the Lead Applicant simply leads a team or has a Research Assistant to do work for them that their own time is being bought to cover. So, the exceptional circumstance would be where a strong justification could be given that the Research Assistant would be needed to contribute some aspect of the work that could not realistically be done by the Lead Applicant or their partner (the Co-applicant). **N.B.** The cost of research can only be attributed to Directly Incurred Research Expenses. We advise that the Lead Applicant fully justifies research assistance and the cost in their application. Please note that the assessors who assess the applications according to the assessment criteria will make the final decision on awards.

Is there any way that a final year PhD student could be involved in the project? I understand they couldn't lead, but are they able to take part in the research project as a research assistant? If so would this fall under Directly Incurred Research Expenses?

If a research assistant is to be employed, applicants should provide a brief job description, clearly stating the nature of the work to be undertaken by the research assistant, and the arrangements for ensuring adequate supervision. If the research assistant has already been identified, details should be given under 'other participants', otherwise, applicants should state the skills and qualifications sought. Applicants should justify the period of employment (or number of hours) for which funding is sought (e.g., has a pilot study or sample been conducted to show how long it will take the assistant to achieve the task in question?). Please note that PhD candidates employed as research assistants on projects funded by the Academy should work for no more than 10 hours per week on projects outside their own PhD research. British Academy research grants may not be used to fund work by PhD candidates that is directly related to their PhD thesis. Please see the question and answer above regarding exceptional circumstances for research assistance and the cost etc.

The Lead Applicant would like to involve another academic with different expertise. This would be a small contribution, something like advising on and giving input to part of the project where the Lead Applicant does not have the right expertise. Is this allowable? How should it be presented on the application? Could any costs be claimed for that person's time?

The academic with different expertise could be considered a consultant/relevant expert. The research expenses include consultancy of a relevant expert other than the partner who will contribute to the achievement of the project. We advise the Lead Applicant to list this academic in the 'Other Participants' section, specifying what their role is as a relevant expert. However, if they are in this capacity and therefore having their time paid for, they cannot also be a Co-applicant. Please note that no funding from the award can be attributed to the Co-applicant's time. However, an in-kind contribution towards the time of the Co-applicant to enable and secure active collaboration of the partner is expected to be provided by the partner organisation without cost to the Academy.

Please could you confirm if inflation can be included in our costings for the proposal?

Yes, the university can include their own standard rates of indexation and inflation, a final statement of expenditure. If costs are not fully expended, any unspent funds returned to BA.

Are data archiving costs an eligible cost for the research expenses portion of the budget? Or would they be ineligible as they would likely fall outside of the project duration?

Yes, data archiving costs are an eligible cost. However, the cost to secure the archiving/repository (and how long it is needed for) must be paid for during the duration of the award. For example, it can be paid in advance if the data archiving/repository costs are required for a few years after the project duration ends. But the Lead Applicant cannot hold

onto the grant funds after the project ends to pay the data archiving costs at a later date. We advise the applicant to fully justify the data archiving costs in the application, making it clear why the project data will be stored at that repository.

Will the Lead Applicant need to keep timesheets to record their time on the Innovation Fellowship.

While the HEI or IRO may keep timesheets, we would not expect timesheets to be recorded and sent to us.

Flexi-Grant

How do I invite a Co-applicant/Referee/Head of Department?

To invite a Co-applicant/referee/Head of Department, go to the summary page of your application, click into the 'Contributors' tab (next to the 'Application' tab). In this section you then need to click 'Invite' next to Co-applicant/Referee/Head of Department. You will then be prompted to add the Co-applicant's/referee's/Head of Department's details and they will be sent an automatic invitation email.

Can I add my Co-applicant details for them in Flexi-Grant, or do I need to invite them to Flexi-Grant so they can add the details themselves?

While the Lead Applicant is able to edit the Co-applicant section of the application form, we advise all Lead Applicants to invite the Co-applicant to contribute to the application. This enables the Co-applicant to enter relevant details themselves (e.g. their experience / career summary).

My Referee/Head of Department has not received their invitation, what should I do?

Please make sure that your Referee/Head of Department is logging into the email address to which you have sent the invitation. The email may have gone into their spam folder. If these steps do not work, please log back in and send another reminder to your Referee/Head of Department. We advise that all contributors and supporting participants submit their contributions at least five days before of the application deadline.

I am unable to see the submit button on the application form, what should I do?

You will not be able to submit your application until you have completed each section in full. All of your contributors will need to complete and submit their sections. You will be able to see whether they have submitted their sections by looking at the "Contributors" tab; if they have submitted their sections, it will say "Complete" next to their name. Once all sections have been completed, a "Submit for Organisation Approval" button will appear on your application form.

Another issue can be that the research support is not completed and can be revoked in order to submit the application as research support is not necessary for this application form.

You should submit your application for approval by your employing institution **at least five working days before the closing date** to allow for your employing institution administrative procedures. You should also check whether your institution has its own internal deadlines. We strongly advise that you contact your Referee/Head of Department as early as possible to avoid any last-minute issues before the submission deadline.

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 employing institution.

British Academy Contact Information

I have another question, who should I contact?

If you cannot find the answer to your question in the FAQs, the Scheme Guidance Notes or on our website, please email your query to grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk and a member of the team will respond.