

Call for Applications

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and The British Academy Knowledge Frontiers Symposium

Wednesday 5 – Saturday 8 June 2024
Berlin, Germany

Introduction

1. The British Academy is inviting applications for early career researchers in the humanities and social sciences to attend a research collaboration symposium on the broad theme of ‘Natures, Cultures and Communities’.
2. The symposium aims to incentivise and establish international engagement and collaboration between early career researchers based in Germany and the United Kingdom from a broad range of disciplines within the humanities and social sciences, encouraging the exchange of ideas across both disciplinary and national boundaries.

Purpose and Focus

3. Through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world has committed to undertake one of the most profound social and environmental transformations in human history. In a context of climate change and environmental duress caused by ecological crisis, questions of coping in conditions of extreme vulnerability and stress and new forms of stewardship arise. These require new forms of collaborative knowledge-making and political action, leading to potentially radical alterations in the relationships between nature, culture and community.
4. This will have a profound impact on how we live and the environment in which we experience our daily lives. It creates new demands and opportunities for the humanities and social sciences to interrogate the drivers, narratives about and controversies around such predicaments, and to contribute centrally to identifying ways forward. This raises new dilemmas around, and ways of understanding, the relationships between human and non-human natures, including how these could be re-theorised and what moral, ethical, political and practical implications might flow from such rethinking.
5. The symposium invites participants to think of ‘natures, cultures and communities’ across different times and contexts to explore and address the need for creative interventions in social and environmental crises, and how communities in the future, today and in the past have managed (or otherwise) rapid social and natural upheaval and technological change.
6. It is expected that the theme will be explored through several avenues at the symposium, such as:
 - How has and will human activities, beliefs, values and imaginations shaped and be shaped by natures, cultures and communities?
 - What can varying modes of research and their interplay, such as archaeological, historical, literary, aesthetic, cultural, socioeconomic, political and longitudinal, contribute to our understanding of human-environment interactions past, present and future?

- How have communities, traditions, mindsets and hierarchies altered previously in the face of natural and cultural change and how could/may they do so in the future looking ahead to the transformations before us?
7. The symposium format will allow for extensive discussion and debate, with considerable time set aside for this and wider networking opportunities.

The Symposium

8. The symposium will bring together around fifteen early career researchers from the UK and fifteen from Germany (understood as up to ten years after obtaining a PhD) from across the humanities and social sciences to discuss key questions around the theme of 'Natures, Cultures and Communities'. The symposium is designed specifically to encourage collaboration and networking. In advance of the symposium, participants will be able to discuss their research and exchange ideas among themselves; begin to discuss the session themes; and make connections for possible future activities.
9. In order to incentivise long-term collaboration and networking, seed funding will be made available for which participants can apply. These collaborations must be international in their makeup, and can be either partnerships or groups. Time will be set aside on the final day of the symposium for a 'sandpit' style session in which participants write up their proposed collaboration and submit applications by the end of the session. Over the course of the symposium there are further networking sessions set up to facilitate the development of collaborations and proposals. The application form for seed funding will be circulated in advance of the symposium to ensure participants are fully aware of the opportunity and requirements.
10. Participants will also be eligible to apply for CONNECT, a follow-up programme for participants of Frontiers of Research Symposia offered by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. It provides allowances for short working visits in Germany or in the United Kingdom that can be taken up at any time following the symposium.
11. In addition to funding a number of collaborative proposals, the symposium will aim to provide opportunities for a range of other outputs. Participants, for example, could be invited to contribute to a publication focused on the symposium theme, either through individual papers or in partnership with other symposium participants, record audio outputs or write blog posts that will be compiled into a series dedicated to the symposium. Further information about such opportunities will be provided at the symposium.

Eligibility

12. For the purpose of this symposium, early career is defined as being within a ten-year period from the award of a doctorate. Participants must be based at research institutions in the UK.
13. Participants must be able to travel on dates and times, and on trains or other modes of transportation chosen by the British Academy. All travel to the symposium will take place on Wednesday 5 June 2024.
14. Attendance is mandatory for the entire symposium. If this is not met it will result in a participant not being eligible for the seed funding available.

15. UK-based attendees may only participate in two British Academy Knowledge Frontiers Symposia in any 24-month period.

Selection Criteria

16. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:
 - a. Proven research interest and/or experience in the symposium's theme;
 - b. Commitment to interdisciplinary engagement and research;
 - c. Value of symposium to applicant's career development.

Application Process

17. Applicants should provide:
 - A completed application form
18. Applications must be submitted online using the British Academy's Grant Management System (GMS), [Flexi-Grant®](#).
19. **The deadline for submissions is Wednesday 24 January 2024 at 17.00 (UK time).**
20. We will seek to notify successful applicants by March 2024.

Logistics

21. The symposium will take place in Berlin, Germany, from the 5-8 June 2024. The costs of travel, visas and accommodation for participants will be covered. Participants should attend the entire symposium programme and be available to travel on transport options chosen by the British Academy.
22. All travel to and from the symposium will take place by train. This will require participants to be able to be at London St Pancras early on Wednesday 5 June (approximately this is expected to be at 05.15). Where necessary, the Academy will provide accommodation on the night of Tuesday 4 June to facilitate early arrival at London St Pancras. Departure from Berlin will take place on Saturday 8 June.

Further Information

23. Further information is available from m.murphy@thebritishacademy.ac.uk

About The British Academy

The British Academy is the UK's national body for the humanities and social sciences – the study of peoples, cultures and societies, past, present, and future. The British Academy's purpose is to inspire and support high achievement in the humanities and social sciences throughout the UK and internationally, and to promote their public value. We have three principal roles:

- A Fellowship of distinguished scholars from all areas of the humanities and social sciences, elected by their peers, that facilitates the exchange of knowledge and ideas and promotes the work of our subjects.

- A Funding Body that supports the best ideas, individuals and intellectual resources in the humanities and social sciences, nationally and internationally.
- A Forum for debate and engagement that stimulates public interest and deepens understandings, that enhances global leadership and policy making, and that acts as a voice for the humanities and social sciences.

About the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

The Alexander von Humboldt (AvH) Foundation promotes academic cooperation between excellent scientists and scholars from abroad and from Germany. To this end it grants more than 700 research fellowships and research awards annually. These allow foreign scientists and scholars to conduct a research stay in Germany and to collaborate closely with their hosts and partners. Scientists or scholars from Germany can carry out a research project abroad as a guest of one of well over 30,000 Humboldt Foundation alumni around the globe – the Humboldtians. Nowadays the foundation's network embraces scientists and scholars from all disciplines in more than 140 countries - including 59 Nobel Laureates.

Each year, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation grants

- *Humboldt Research Fellowships* to highly qualified foreign scholars and scientists who have either completed their doctorates in the last four years (postdoctoral researchers) or less than twelve years ago (experienced researchers), enabling them to undertake long-term periods of research in Germany;
- *Georg Forster Research Fellowships* to postdoctoral and experienced researchers from transition and developing countries;
- *Humboldt Research Awards* to internationally recognized foreign scholars and scientists (nominations by German scholars/scientists);
- *Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Awards* to outstanding scholars and scientists from abroad who have completed their doctorates less than eighteen years ago;
- *Feodor Lynen Research Fellowships* to highly qualified German scholars and scientists who have either completed their doctorates in the last four years (postdoctoral researchers) or less than twelve years ago (experienced researchers), enabling them to spend periods of research abroad;
- *Alexander von Humboldt Professorships* to top-rank researchers of all disciplines working abroad who are eligible to be appointed to full professorships in Germany to carry out ground-breaking and long-term research (nominations by German universities);
- *German Chancellor Fellowships* for prospective leaders in fields such as politics, public administration and business as well as society and culture from the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, Brazil, India and South Africa.