

## **Innovation Fellowships Scheme 2024-25**

### **Route B: Policy-led (Digital Society)**

**In collaboration with Bridging Responsible AI  
Divides (BRAID), supported by DSIT and AHRC**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

In this document you will find the answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) relating to the Innovation Fellowships Scheme 2024-25 – Route B: Policy-led (Digital Society). Please read this document, the Scheme Guidance Notes and Application 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 period of 12 months. Awards are expected to commence between 1 – 31 March 2025. Due to the timing of the availability of funds, this start date cannot be varied.

## **What is the maximum level of award paid for the Innovation Fellowships Scheme – Route B: Policy-led?**

Route B (Policy-led) awards are on a Full Economic Costing (FEC) basis. For further guidance on FEC, please contact your organisation's Finance or Research Office, and they will be able to assist you with your application.

Applicants must enter the costs in the application form, Financial Details section, at 100% FEC. The maximum that can be claimed is £150,000 at 100%, of which the Academy will pay 80% (i.e. up to £120,000 if the full sum is requested).

There are four elements to the Full Economic Costing. The Directly Incurred Salary Costs are the costs of the time of the Lead Applicant. Directly Incurred Research Expenses include costs of travel and subsistence, as well as project costs. Note that there is a minimum spend expected on this research expense element of at least £12,500 at 100% FEC (£10,000 at 80% British Academy contribution). The other elements are Directly Allocated (Estates) Costs and Indirect Costs which cover costing for space, central support services and other necessary costs incurred by the employing institution in supporting the Fellow.

## **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 three-year pilot run from 2021 to 2024.

## **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.

## **The Innovation Fellowship is described as being 'in collaboration with Bridging Responsible AI Divides (BRAID), supported by DSIT and AHRC – practically, what does this mean for successful applicants?**

The British Academy has been funded by the UK Government, Department for Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT, formerly known as BEIS) to continue its support for the Innovation Fellowships scheme.

In addition to this funding, the Bridging Responsible AI Divides (BRAID) programme, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), are partnering with the Academy to co-fund this cohort of Innovation Fellowships.

This Fellowship scheme will be administered in a complementary fashion to BRAID's [fellowship](#) scheme, and we will wish to ensure that activities and support mechanisms are in place so that Fellows across both schemes are connected and able to build on each other's work and form a productive cohort together. Innovation Fellows will also have access to the range of benefits provided in BRAID's Fellowship programme.

This means that Fellows will also be willing to actively engage with the BRAID programme, attending online monthly cohort support sessions when possible, and attending an enrichment event in Edinburgh, Scotland in May 2025.

## **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, these terms 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 when prompted to in the application form. Lead Applicants who do not have a doctorate may have equivalent experience, which they should explain fully 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. Depending on the partner’s requirements, the Innovation Fellow may be based in the partner’s office, or another mutually agreed site of the partner, or the Fellow may be based primarily at their UK-based institution (e.g. a Higher Education Institution or Independent Research Organisation). Please refer to the scope of individual Fellowships in the Scheme Guidance Notes for any additional partner specific guidance.

### **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 or Independent Research Organisation). If your organisation is not currently registered on the Academy’s grant management system, Flexi-Grant, please contact us via [grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto: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 or Independent Research Organisation), 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’?**

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. 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 the applicant would also be eligible.

**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 Higher Education Institution or Independent Research Organisation.

**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 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.

**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.

**Is it possible to apply for a joint project, with two academics and a partner institution?**

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.

**I have a background in STEM but my work is applicable to the Humanities and Social Sciences. Am I eligible to apply?**

Applicants for this scheme should have relevant experience to the scope of the Fellowship and the interests of the partner organizations. Applicants should also bear in mind that these partnerships have been established by the British Academy as the National Academy for Humanities and Social Sciences and as such their experience should also be relevant to the interests of the SHAPE disciplines (Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts for People and the Economy). While the British Academy and our partners do not have preconceived ideas about the disciplinary background of Fellows, applicants will need to demonstrate a solid understanding of the relevant policy areas.

**Partner (DCMS, DSIT – AIPD, DSIT - AISI, DRCF and Ofcom)**

**Can I contact the partner about my application prior to or post submission?**

Prior to application submission, applicants must **not** contact the partner regarding the application. Questions may be directed to [grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk).

**What happens after my application is submitted with regards to security checks by the government partner organisation?**

For security reasons, and in line with the partner's policy, successful applicants – with the exception of applicants working with Ofcom, who required a basic criminal record check -

will have to be security cleared before the final arrangements for a Fellowship can be confirmed.

Fellows will be required to receive security clearance at the [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#). Please see the table below with regards to the security clearance required for each partner. Award-holders are expected to provide information in a timely manner. Additionally, award-holders and their employing organisations, will be required to sign an agreement with the relevant partner.

Once the offer has been made to the successful candidate, and the offer accepted by the candidate and their employing organisation, the security clearance will need to be processed. The formal confirmation will be contingent on the candidate obtaining the required level of security clearance. This clearance may not be obtained by the award starting date, 1-31 March 2025. In practical terms, upon acceptance of the offer by the award-holder and their employing organisation, the award will commence between 1-31 March 2025. After which, the award will be suspended while the security checks are undertaken and the agreement prepared. Once the security checks are confirmed and the agreement is signed, the award will resume. The funding will be paid in full to the award-holder’s employing institution in March 2025, however, the funds will need to be held in suspense by their employing organisation until the security checks have been confirmed and the agreement signed by all required parties. The time taken up by the security checks will be covered by a no-cost extension, which will enable award-holders to devote the full 12 months to the Fellowship.

<b>Partner &amp; Policy Areas</b>	<b>Security Clearance Level</b>	<b>Nationality Requirements</b>
<b>DCMS: 1a.</b> AI, Intellectual Property (IP) and the Creative Industries	Counter Terrorism Clearance Level / Baseline Personnel Security Standard	Must be UK nationals, Commonwealth/Irish nationals, British protected persons, EEA/Swiss Nationals, Turkish nationals, or qualifying family members of EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals, and otherwise be in accordance with the <a href="#">Civil Service Nationality Rules</a> – please see this <a href="#">flowchart</a> explaining these rules for more information.
<b>DCMS: 1b.</b> Driving Economic Growth through DCMS Sectors	Counter Terrorism Clearance Level / Baseline Personnel Security Standard	Must be UK nationals, Commonwealth/Irish nationals, British protected persons, EEA/Swiss Nationals, Turkish nationals, or qualifying family members of EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals, and otherwise be in accordance with the <a href="#">Civil Service Nationality Rules</a> – please see this <a href="#">flowchart</a> explaining these rules for more information.
<b>DSIT: AI Policy Directorate</b>	Counter Terrorism Clearance Level / Baseline Personnel Security Standard	<p>It would be preferable for applicants to have <a href="#">CTC</a> to allow them to work unescorted in our London building (100 Parliament St).</p> <p>CTC: Must be UK nationals, Commonwealth/Irish nationals, British protected persons, EEA/Swiss Nationals, Turkish nationals, or qualifying family members of EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals, and otherwise be in accordance with the <a href="#">Civil Service Nationality Rules</a> – please see this <a href="#">flowchart</a> explaining these rules for more information.</p> <p>There are some aspects of the AI Safety Institute’s work which are commercially or nationally sensitive. For applicants wishing to work in these areas, CTC would be required. In other cases, Fellows that would prefer to get <a href="#">BPSS as a minimum</a> could still be considered.</p>

<b>DSIT: AISI</b>	Counter Terrorism Clearance Level / Baseline Personnel Security Standard	<p>It would be preferable for applicants to have <a href="#">CTC</a> to allow them to work unescorted in our London building (100 Parliament St).</p> <p>CTC: Must be UK nationals, Commonwealth/Irish nationals, British protected persons, EEA/Swiss Nationals, Turkish nationals, or qualifying family members of EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals, and otherwise be in accordance with the <a href="#">Civil Service Nationality Rules</a>– please see this <a href="#">flowchart</a> explaining these rules for more information.</p> <p>There are some aspects of the AI Safety Institute’s work which are commercially or nationally sensitive. For applicants wishing to work in these areas, CTC would be required. In other cases, Fellows that would prefer to get <a href="#">BPSS as a minimum</a> could still be considered.</p>
<b>DRCF</b>	Baseline Personnel Security Standard	No nationality requirements.
<b>Ofcom</b>	Basic criminal record check	No nationality requirements.

**The guidance recommends having a partnership agreement in place – I assume this refers to once the award has been confirmed to the applicant and not prior to application submission?**

Yes, this refers to when the award has been confirmed.

## 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.

### Are the referee statement and Head of Department 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 and Head of Department must upload their contributions as attachments 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. The length of the statements should be led by the ability of the referee and Head of Department to cover the points listed in the Application Guidance Notes.



# Head of Department

## **I am the Head of Department at my UK institution (Higher Education Institutions or Independent Research Organisations), what do I do?**

If you are the Lead Applicant and also Head of Department at your Higher Education Institutions or Independent Research Organisations, 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.

# Fellowship Proposal

## **The application form asks for an explanation of my expertise and suitability for the Fellowship, but does not ask for a research proposal. Is a proposal required?**

The application form does not ask for a research proposal because successful applicants will finalise the outline of a work programme with their chosen partner after being awarded the Fellowship. The application requires the applicant to outline their relevant experience in the field and suitability for undertaking commissioned research with the partner, not to give a formal proposal of what this research would be.

## **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. You are also required to list unpublished studies previously funded by any agency, including but not restricted to the British Academy, in the 'Unpublished Research' field of 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 Fellowship 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/policy briefings – 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/presentations/podcasts/videos and other outputs to reach a variety of policy audiences and environments;

- Conferences/workshops/webinars/toolkits and other training opportunities which enable knowledge exchange with a wider academic and policy audience.
- Academic papers are encouraged, but will need to be discussed with the partner prior to writing up and publication.

Please note that all activities and outputs are subject to agreement from the partner, in line with the partner's policy. Please refer to the scope of individual Fellowships in the Scheme Guidance Notes for any additional partner specific outputs.

**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 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, Application Guidance Notes and FAQs, which list full information about the scheme and the questions asked in the application form.

**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**

**The application form does not require a research proposal – how should I approach creating a budget for a work programme I have not planned?**

As applicants are not asked to submit a research proposal, the British Academy recognises that applicants cannot provide a full breakdown of their Directly Incurred Research Expenses. Applicants must provide an overall figure for the heading, accounting for their anticipated travel and subsistence costs, with a further explanation of the broad types of activities that the remaining funds may be required for. Applicants must however provide specific costs for their Directly Incurred Salary Costs and Indirect Costs.

Fellowships within this call are supported by BRAID, who will be hosting an enrichment event for Fellows in Edinburgh, Scotland in May 2025. Applicants should therefore budget for travelling to and attending the BRAID enrichment event in Edinburgh, Scotland in May 2025.

**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.

**Can I cost time for any research assistance?**

For the Innovation Fellowships (Route B: Policy-led), it will not be possible to have Research Assistance as part of your project as it is not an eligible cost.

### **Is Apprenticeship Levy an eligible cost?**

No, this is currently not an eligible cost and cannot be funded under an Innovation Fellowship.

### **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 must be returned to the British Academy.

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

While the Higher Education Institution or Independent Research Organisation may keep timesheets, we would not expect timesheets to be recorded and sent to us.

## **Flexi-Grant**

### **How do I invite a Referee/Head of Department?**

To invite a 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 Referee/Head of Department. You will then be prompted to add the referee's/Head of Department's details and they will be sent an automatic invitation email.

### **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 Scheme Guidance Notes, Application Guidance Notes and FAQs, or on our website, please email your query to [grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk) and a member of the team will respond.