

British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship 2025-26 – Scheme Guidance

Contents

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 1 | Aim of the Scheme | 2 |
| 2 | Financial Basis of the Scheme | 2 |
| 3 | Eligible Costs | 3 |
| 4 | Suitable Applicants..... | 5 |
| 5 | Suitable Fields..... | 6 |
| 6 | Relationship of these awards to other schemes offered by the British Academy | 6 |
| 7 | Application and Assessment Procedures | 8 |
| 8 | Code of Practice..... | 11 |
| 9 | Responsibilities of Applicants..... | 12 |
| 10 | Additional Needs Fund | 12 |
| 11 | Contact details..... | 12 |
| 12 | Duration and Start of Award | 13 |
| 13 | Timetable of 2025-26 Competition..... | 13 |

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| Last review date | June 2025 |
| Next review date | June 2026 |

Please read the scheme notes carefully. Incorrectly submitted applications will not be considered.

1 Aim of the Scheme

- 1.1 Through this scheme, the Academy intends to both support outstanding individual researchers with excellent research proposals, and to promote public understanding of and engagement with the humanities and social sciences. The primary aim of the scheme is, therefore, to allow successful applicants to obtain time freed from their normal commitments.
- 1.2 The time bought by the scheme should be devoted to the completion of a major piece of research. In addition, the Academy will look for evidence of a clear commitment to a strategy of public engagement and communication of the research outcomes during the period of the Fellowship. The scheme thus contributes to the Academy's strategic commitment to the support of ideas, individuals and intellectual resources and to public engagement.
- 1.3 Awards will be judged both on the quality of the research proposed and on the capacity of the applicant to communicate with a broad audience. Applicants are invited to indicate ways in which their proposed programme will contribute to advances in understanding, including public understanding, of their subject area and to the identification of appropriate strategic priorities in the social sciences and humanities. The Fellowships are tenable for a period of not less than 6 months and not more than 12 months beginning in the autumn of 2026. ***The earliest start date is 1 September 2026 and the latest start date is 1 January 2027.***

2 Financial Basis of the Scheme

- 2.1 The Mid-Career Fellowships are covered under the Full Economic Costing (FEC) regime, and no spending can take place outside of the timeframe of the Fellowship.
- 2.2 The primary purpose of this scheme is to buy out 100% of the time of the researcher awarded the Fellowship. The Academy's contribution to the Directly Incurred expense of the Principal Investigator's salary cost will be capped at a maximum contribution of £80,000 at 80% FEC.
- 2.3 The total value of the Fellowship, including Directly Incurred Salary, Directly Incurred Research Expenses, Directly Allocated (Estate Costs) and Indirect Costs is not expected to exceed £152,000 at 80% FEC.
- 2.4 The Research Costs element of the Fellowship is limited to a maximum of £8,000 at 80% FEC. The total Directly Incurred cost (which includes the award holder's salary and Research Costs) is limited to £80,000 at 80% FEC.

- 2.5 The table below shows the maximum cost of each budget heading at 100% FEC and the maximum Academy's contribution to each heading at 80% FEC:

| Budget Heading | Expected Maximum at 100% FEC | Expected Maximum at 80% FEC |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Directly Incurred (Staff) | £100,000* | £80,000* |
| Directly Incurred (Research Costs) | £10,000* | £8,000* |
| Directly Allocated (Including Estate Costs) | £90,000 | £72,000 |
| Indirect Costs | | |
| Total | £190,000 | £152,000 |

* Absolute limit capped to a combined total of £100,000 at 100% FEC, £80,000 at 80% FEC.

N.B. Please note that all costs should be submitted at 80% FEC. The Host Organisation will be accountable for paying the additional 20% of the costs.

Applications should be submitted well in advance of the deadline. We recommend at least five days prior to allow for institutional approval.

3 Eligible Costs

- 3.1 For the Research Costs portion of the Mid-Career fellowship, funds may be sought to cover the direct expenses incurred in planning, conducting, and developing the research. Please see the table below outlining the eligible and ineligible costs on this scheme.

| Item | Eligible | Ineligible |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Project planning and development costs (cost of travel for discussion in the UK and overseas) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

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| Travel and maintenance for the Fellowship-holder to conduct fieldwork, travel to archives or related project activities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Travel to disseminate results of the research at conferences or other public events held either in the UK or abroad | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Costs associated with organising events, talks, conferences or presentations in the UK or abroad | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Research assistance (Must come under Research Costs rather than DI - Staff) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Consumables (i.e. purchase of datasets, photocopies, microfilms, etc., and any other minor items that will be used up during the course of the project) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Specialist software (excluding commonly available office packages) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Costs of interpreters in the field | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Short-term consultancy or salary costs of expert staff (Must come under Research Costs rather than DI - Staff) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| The costs of preparing illustrations, including photography, acquisition of images, draughtsmanship and cartography or other bespoke illustrative material; and the costs of reproduction rights for text or images (see note 1) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Caregiving costs where this is unavoidable (see note 1) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Computer hardware, including laptops, electronic notebooks, digital cameras etc. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Books and publications | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Permanent resources and equipment or any elements that should properly be ascribed to departmental or university overheads | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| The preparation of camera-ready copy, copy-editing, proof-reading, indexing, or any other editorial task | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Subventions for direct production costs (printing, binding, distribution, marketing etc.) | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Costs of publication in electronic media (including Open Access Fees) | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Travel/maintenance expenses for purposes such as lecture tours, or writing up results of research | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Note 1: The case made must be explicitly approved by the Academy.

4 Suitable Applicants

- 4.1 These Fellowships are awarded to individuals employed at UK universities, other UK institutions of higher education or Independent Research Organisations. The British Academy is particularly looking to support Mid-Career researchers on this scheme. The Academy takes no account of an applicant's age or current status (e.g. Professor, Lecturer) in determining eligibility for these Fellowships.
- 4.2 Rather, these Fellowships are intended primarily to provide opportunities for researchers who have already made an outstanding contribution to their field and have achieved distinction as an excellent communicator and 'champion' in their field, and who would **usually be within no more than 15 years from the award of their doctorate.**
- 4.3 In considering eligibility, the Academy will make due allowance for applicants who have had career breaks; and for established researchers who do not have doctorates, who should be within 15 years of their first academic appointment. The 15-year post-PhD criterion is not strictly enforced – if a candidate fits roughly within this timeframe and/or can justify their status as a Mid-Career scholar, they are very welcome to apply. Ultimately, it will be up for the assessors to judge their suitability as part of their overall assessment criteria. Applicants can outline these circumstances under the Personal Statement section on the application form.
- 4.4 There is no 'minimum' time limit from the award of the doctorate for the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme, but applicants who have been awarded their PhD within the last few years should bear in mind that they will be competing with those who will have a whole range of experience so they would need to have a strong case in terms of their track record of research, publication and public engagement already to be sure it is worth applying for a Mid-Career Fellowship.
- 4.5 Applicants will be asked in their proposal to set out specific plans for the dissemination of their research to a broad audience, in addition to publication in the usual academic press and journals.

5 Suitable Fields

- 5.1 Applicants for the Mid-Career Fellowships should be intending to pursue – or, in the case of those applying to support a programme of communication, have pursued – original, independent research in any field of study within the humanities and social sciences.
- 5.2 The Academy will take into account the aim of providing support for areas in which there are specific vulnerabilities within the humanities and social sciences. All applicants are invited to state how they see their particular programme, whether directly meeting current challenges or not, contribution to the identification of future priorities and challenges.
- 5.3 To amplify this final point, the Academy does not set thematic priorities to which all applicants are expected to relate their proposal. Rather the onus is on the individual to indicate if, and how, their research will contribute to meeting national challenges. The primary factor in assessing applications will remain the quality of the proposal.
- 5.4 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.

6 Relationship of these awards to other schemes offered by the British Academy

- 6.1 Applicants should note that the Mid-Career Fellowships will provide only limited research expenses to the successful candidates. The principle applied by the Academy is no duplication of funding for the same purpose. The table below shows the British Academy funding schemes which are, and are not, allowed to be held in tandem by the same award holder.

| Scheme | Mid-Career Fellowship | BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowship | BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant | Postdoctoral Fellowship | Talent Development Award |
|--|-----------------------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mid-Career Fellowship | | No | No | No | No |
| BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowship | No | | Yes | No | Yes |
| BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant | No | Yes | | Yes | No |
| Postdoctoral Fellowship | No | No | Yes | | Yes |
| Talent Development Award | No | Yes | No | Yes | |

* Applicants may apply for both a Mid-Career Fellowship and a BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant, but if both are successful, only one can be held.

Resubmission of the same proposal may be made once in the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme. An applicant is eligible to re-apply with a *revised* or *different* proposal so long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

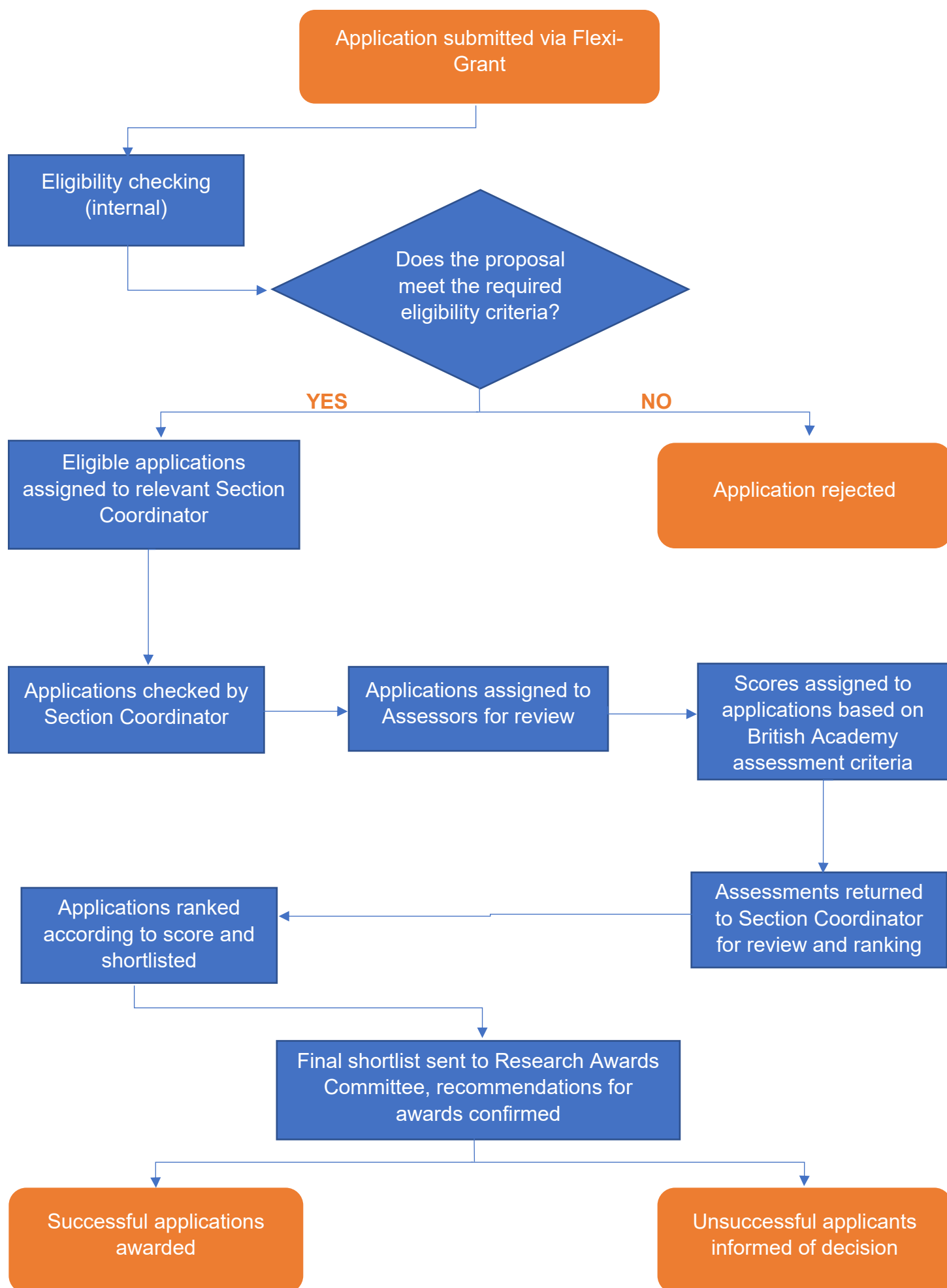
Previous Mid-Career Fellowship holders are not permitted to submit another application to this scheme.

7 Application and Assessment Procedures

- 7.1 The deadline for application approval by your employing institution is **5pm (BST) 20 August 2025**, applicants are invited to supply information about their current academic commitments, publications, research proposal and detailed costings.
- 7.2 Applications at this stage are expected to provide full financial details of the Full Economic Costing and research expenses.
- 7.3 Applicants are required to nominate one referee (**from outside their own employing institution**), who is as independent from the applicant as possible. The referee is not intended to be an advocate for the applicant – rather their role is expected to be to help provide a rounded assessment of the proposal indicating both strengths and weaknesses. The applicant should ensure that the supporting statement from their chosen referee is submitted on the British Academy [Flexi-Grant®](#) Grant Management System (GMS) as early as possible, to allow enough time for applicants to meet any internal deadlines set by their employing institution.
- 7.4 **The deadline for employing institutions to approve applications and submit them to the British Academy is 5pm (BST) 20 August 2025 – this deadline is final, and no late applications can be accepted.**
- 7.5 **The reference must be submitted before the application can be approved by the host organisation. Any application without a supporting reference will not be able to be submitted.**
- 7.6 Your referee must be drawn from outside your own employing institution, and before listing your referee on your application form you should seek permission that they are happy to provide this before the deadline for the submission of this application in [Flexi-Grant](#).

- 7.7 It is essential that you enter the correct email address for your referee, otherwise your referee will not receive the automated messages delivered from [Flexi-Grant](#). If your referee has more than one email address, you must check which address they are using to ensure they can access your application. We strongly advise that you complete your application as easily as possible to allow your referee enough time to provide their reference in the system and to allow for any unexpected delays.
- 7.8 Please note that the reference must be provided through [Flexi-Grant](#), it cannot be provided as an email attachment nor sent by post in hard copy.
- 7.9 There is likely to be strong competition for the available Fellowships. Initial assessment of applications is made by peer reviewers, whose comments and recommendations are considered by the Research Awards Committee, which makes the final decision on the Fellowships to be offered. There are no interviews prior to offers being made. The final results are expected to be confirmed at the end of March 2026.

The flow chart on the next page illustrates this process.



- 7.10 Applicants may wish to note that the following summary is given to assessors to form the basis of their judgements on the applications submitted:
- a) Is the applicant at an appropriate career stage, usually within 15 years of the award of a doctorate, with due allowance for career breaks? Has the applicant already made an outstanding contribution to their field?
 - b) Is the proposal of outstanding quality?
 - c) Is the applicant's proposed communication strategy well thought out and likely to contribute strongly to the public engagement aim of the scheme?
- 7.11 Please note that academic merit and the focus on communication are the primary bases on which assessment will be made and may be judged together.
- 7.12 Assessors will evaluate the proposal taking into account the following criteria as appropriate to the aims of the scheme: its originality, its relationship to, and the volume of, research already done in the field, the quality of the research proposed, the suitability of the methodology, the feasibility of the research programme, its timeliness, the communication plan and the public benefit of the intended outcomes. Assessors may take into account evidence of language competence where the understanding of material in a foreign language is crucial to the achievement of the research objective. Assessors will also evaluate the ability of the applicant to undertake the proposal, taking into account the contribution they have already made to their field, their academic age and stage of career. Backlogs of publication (including any reasons given by applicants) may also be taken into account in assessing the current proposal.

8 Code of Practice

- 8.1 The Academy has adopted a [Code of Practice](#) for assessing research applications, setting out the principles of equity, integrity and confidentiality governing the treatment of all applications for research support.
- 8.2 **Regrettably, feedback is not a feature of the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme.** The Academy is unable to discuss the decisions of the awarding Committee, which is governed by the Code of Practice. Submission of the application form constitutes the applicant's agreement to all terms, conditions and notices contained in the Scheme Notes.

9 Responsibilities of Applicants

- 9.1 Applicants are expected to avoid research misconduct. Research misconduct includes the fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or in reporting results, misrepresentation, mismanagement or inadequate preservation of data and/or primary materials, making up data or results and recording and reporting them, such that the research is not accurately represented in the public research record.

10 Additional Needs Fund

- 10.1 The British Academy has set aside specific funding to support [additional needs](#) that applicants and award holders may require. This funding would be in addition to the amount already requested for research expenses. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This additional financial support cannot be guaranteed but the British Academy is keen to be as inclusive as possible in supporting applicants and award holders with any additional needs to facilitate the best possible research. Some examples of what may be considered for this funding are:
- Specific equipment to overcome barriers to people with disabilities undertaking research.
 - Assistance to allow applicants living with sensory impairment to carry out their research.
 - Bids for the cost of child, parent or other caring responsibilities may be considered if the carer is conducting research away from home and it is not possible to make alternative arrangements.
 - The costs of normal regular care whilst at home are not eligible for support.

11 Contact details

- 11.1 Should you have any queries, please contact:
grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk

12 Duration and Start of Award

12.1 Applicants Awards can be held for 12 months. Awards are expected to commence between 1st September 2026 – 1st January 2027.

13 Timetable of 2025-26 Competition

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| <p>Competition Opens: 2 July 2025 Application Deadline: 20 August 2025, 17:00 (BST time) Notification of Result: Late March 2026 Starting period of Award(s): 1st September 2026 – 1st January 2027 Duration of Award(s): up to 12 months</p> |
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