

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and The British Academy

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Last review date	September 2025
Next review date	September 2026

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

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The British Academy and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation are inviting applications for early career researchers in the humanities and social sciences to attend a research collaboration symposium on the broad theme of Truth, Justice and Peace.
 - 1.2 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.
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2 Purpose and Focus

- 2.1 Recognising that the humanities and social sciences are critical to illustrating the complexities of histories, societies, cultures and politics, this symposium will aim to draw on a broad range of disciplines and expertise to reimagine notions of truth, justice, and peace for the 21st century.
 - How can a re-examination of the categories and concepts used to discuss issues of truth, justice and peace lead to a more nuanced approach to these issues?
 - How might we understand, for example, the conception, articulation and representation of transitional justice mechanisms past and present in relation to narratives of dignity, shame and identity?
 - How do differing understandings of truth, justice and peace – within and across groups, communities and nations – not only shape but also potentially hinder or contest the discourses and practices through which sustainable and inclusive peace is pursued?
 - How do new forms of knowledge and communication, digital and otherwise, affect these peacebuilding and reconciliation processes?
- 2.2 Culture, heritage and memorialisation – understood not only as visual and material culture, but also as identity, language and faith transmitted over time – can be both inclusive and peaceful as well as exclusive and marginalising. Dignified approaches to peace and justice require a complex, context-specific understanding of the needs of individuals and communities.
 - How might we understand, for example, the conception, articulation and representation of concepts such as reconciliation and justice in relation to the complexities surrounding notions of truth and peace?

- How can intersectional perspectives, including considerations of social inequalities, help us understand differing conceptions of truth, justice and peace, and the ways in which processes of inclusion and exclusion shape the design and implementation of transitional justice mechanisms?
- How can representations of truth, justice and peace in literature and visual art illuminate the exploration of these?
- How does a comparative and/or historical context further shed light on these complexities?
- How do individuals and communities narrate conceptions of truth and justice in a range of forms, and how are they put into practice in concrete peacebuilding, reconciliation or conflict transformation processes?

- 2.3 This symposium will aim to draw on the broad range of disciplines and expertise present to explore the way that scholars and communities conceptualise and implement truth, justice and peace, how transitional justice and peace processes inform and are informed by local knowledge, traditions, interests and values, and how senses and histories of identity may be implicated in the pursuit of truth, justice and peace.
- 2.4 The symposium format will allow for extensive discussion and debate, with considerable time set aside for this and wider networking opportunities. The symposium will also provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about the work of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the British Academy.

3 The Symposium

- 3.1 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 Truth, Justice and Peace. 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.
- 3.2

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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 workings visits in Germany or in the United Kingdom that can be taken up at any time following the symposium.
- 3.5 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.
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4 Eligibility

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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 10 June 2026.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 UK-based attendees may only participate in two British Academy Knowledge Frontiers Symposia in any 24-month period.
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5 Selection Criteria

- 5.1 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.
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6 Application Process

- 6.1 Applicants should provide:
 - A completed application form
 - 6.2 Applications must be submitted online using the British Academy's Grant Management System (GMS), [Flexi-Grant®](#).
 - 6.3 **The deadline for submissions is Wednesday 29 October 2025 at 17:00 (UK time).**
 - 6.4 We will seek to notify successful applicants by the end of November.
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7 Logistics

- 7.1 The symposium will take place in Bonn, Germany, from the 10-12 June 2026. 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.
 - 7.2 All travel to and from the symposium will take place by train. This will require participants to either be able to be at London St Pancras early on Wednesday 10 June (approximately this is expected to be at 05.15) or able to travel to Brussels on the evening of 9 June to break up the journey. Where necessary, the Academy will provide accommodation on the night of Tuesday 9 June in either Brussels or London to facilitate early arrival at London St Pancras or in Brussels. Departure from Bonn will take place on Saturday 13 June.
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8 Further Information

- 8.1 Further information is available from s.rahman@thebritishacademy.ac.uk
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9 About The British Academy

- 9.1 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.

10 About the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

- 10.1 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 61 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).