

# International Fellowships 2026

## Application FAQs

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## Changes to 2026 round

We have made a number of changes to the scheme ahead of the 2026 round. The changes are detailed below, and some are further explained by our FAQs.

**Applicant eligibility will move to 0-5 years post PhD.** This is a change from 0-7 years post-PhD. Career breaks, parental leave and other periods of leave outside of academia will still be discounted from this time period. The applicant must already be of postdoctoral status, i.e. have had their viva voce, by the time the International Fellowships Final Awards Panel meets on the 1 June in the year of application.

**Applicants must hold a PhD from a non-UK institution.** Applicants who hold a UK PhD are eligible for the British Academy's Post Doctoral Fellowships scheme. Those with UK-based Masters will still be eligible to apply.

**Reduction in the number of applications per sponsor (i.e. UK host academic).** The UK sponsor will now only be able to support one application per round.

**No longer require a statement from a nominated referee.** There will no longer be a requirement to provide references as part of an International Fellowships application, bringing the scheme in line with all other Academy schemes.

## Applicant Eligibility

### How is 5 years active full-time postdoctoral experience defined?

Applicants should have no more than five years of active full-time postdoctoral experience at the time of application, including teaching experience, time spent in industry on research, honorary positions and/or visiting researcher positions.

We do consider eligible career breaks, including maternity/paternity leave, sick leave, and extended periods of unemployment or work outside of academia. If someone has had a period of part-time work which brings them up to meeting the 5-year mark they are allowed to apply as long as they explain the reasons for it.

Career breaks should be clearly detailed and explained in the application, for example "Start and end dates – career break – maternity/paternity/parental leave."

### I will not have my viva voce examination until early 2026/ My viva voce examination has not been scheduled yet. Can I still apply?

If you are reasonably confident that your viva voce examination will be held before 1 June 2026, then you may apply. However, if there are any changes last minute that push your viva voce date beyond the 1 June 2026, you will have to withdraw your application.

**Is there an age limit for applicants?**

We do not have an age limit for the scheme, but applicants are expected to be within 5 years of completing their PhD, excluding eligible career breaks.

**Is there a limit to how many times I can apply?**

There are no limits to the number of times someone can apply for a Fellowship (except that only one application per overseas researcher may be submitted per round and you can only apply while you meet the criteria for number of years of active postdoctoral experience). Additionally, if someone is successful and declines, they can reapply.

**I am unemployed, can I apply?**

Applicants not currently in employment are eligible to apply.

**I am currently a PhD student, can I apply?**

We only consider PhDs to be complete only after a successful viva/defence. Therefore, you must pass your viva/defence before the Final Awards committee meet on 1 June in the year of application.

**If I am currently based in the UK, can I apply?**

If you are currently based in the UK, you are not eligible to apply. You may become eligible for a future round if you've lived and worked outside of the UK for at least one year prior to the round closing.

**Am I eligible if I have recently been based in the UK?**

Applicants who have worked in the UK must be outside of the UK in the year prior to the application deadline.

However, if you were in the UK for a mobility grant or other short-term visits (this must be < 3 months research visit within the last year), you would still be eligible. Applicants who have recently completed a visiting fellowship/professorship in the UK must have been out of the UK for a minimum of three months to be eligible to apply.

**I am a visiting researcher in the UK, can I apply?**

People that currently hold a visiting researcher position in the UK are not eligible to apply, regardless of if it is a paid position or not.

## **UK Sponsor**

**Can an Emeritus Professor act as a UK Sponsor?**

Emeritus professors can act as UK Sponsors as long as they stay at the host institution for the duration of the Fellowship and the host institution approves the application.

### **Can a UK Sponsor support more than one International Fellowships application?**

No, a UK sponsor can only support one application per round.

### **Is it possible to have more than one UK Sponsor?**

It is not possible to have more than one UK sponsor on the application form. If your work will be supported by another researcher, you may wish to include this in your proposal and your UK Sponsor could discuss this in their statement of support.

### **How do I find a UK Sponsor/does the British Academy help me find one?**

The British Academy does not help researchers find a UK Sponsor. It is up to the lead applicant to find them. We suggest that you find academics whose research clearly aligns with your own interest and to then reach out to them to see if they will support your application.

## **Research Proposal**

### **Can I include publications that are under submission?**

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

## **Organisation Eligibility**

### **Are institutions based in British Overseas Territories eligible Host Organisations?**

Institutions in British Overseas Territories are not eligible to be the host organisation for a British Academy International Fellowship award holder.

### **Does the UK Host Organisation have to be a university?**

To be eligible, the UK Host Organisation has to be a publicly funded institute in the UK. Applications cannot be accepted from private or commercial organizations. The following types of organisations will be eligible to apply to host the award:

- i. Higher Education Institutes that received funding from one of the UK higher education funding bodies.
- ii. Research institutes (RIs), for which research councils have established a long-term involvement as major funder as part of the national research base.
- iii. Approved relevant Independent Research Organisations.

The International Fellowships scheme is about research and building links, not gaining teaching experience, so the research culture of the organisation is important rather than teaching opportunities.