



BRITISH
ACADEMY

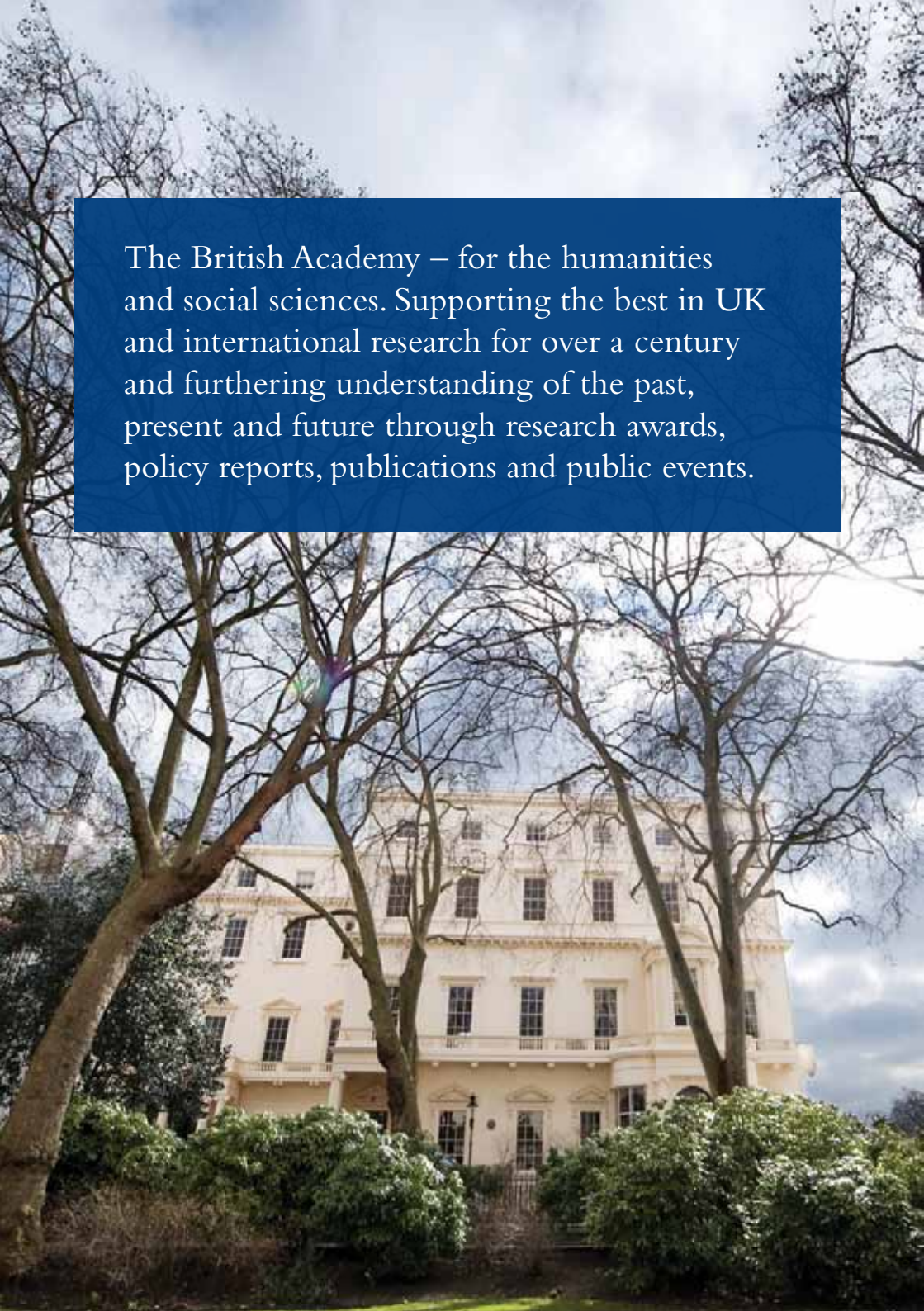
for the humanities and social sciences

Strategic Framework

2013-2018



The British Academy – for the humanities and social sciences. Supporting the best in UK and international research for over a century and furthering understanding of the past, present and future through research awards, policy reports, publications and public events.



Introduction



The British Academy is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences. It supports outstanding researchers from the UK and beyond, and promotes these disciplines around the world. An independent, self-governing organisation of 900 Fellows (with a further 300 overseas) elected for their distinction in research, the Academy fosters and speaks for the UK's world-leading research in the humanities and social sciences.

The humanities and social sciences help us to understand what it means to be human, to make sense of our lives and the choices we make. From history to psychology, archaeology to economics, philosophy to law, they show us how people have created their world, and how they in turn are created by it. In a world which is changing rapidly in its economic, political and social structures, in its perspectives on mutual obligation and trust and in the sense of identity of many of its peoples, these disciplines provide a crucial foundation for understanding our past, present, and future – and thus on how and why we do, can, and should act. Such understanding, always of fundamental value, is of special importance at times of stress and questioning. Alongside, and working with, the natural sciences, engineering and medicine, the humanities and social sciences provide the high-level skills and ground breaking research essential to an economy driven by ideas and knowledge, to social and cultural well-being, and to the UK's place and reputation in the world.

The UK economy is 75% services, and heavily reliant on the analytical, negotiating and communication skills that humanities and social sciences disciplines develop, together with subject-specific knowledge. Most technical, scientific, or manufacturing activities could not function effectively without these skills. Business services account for over 20% of UK output, and the cultural and creative industries for nearly 10% of the economy. Overall, humanities and social science subjects are studied by 970,000 undergraduates in

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the UK (46% of the total), and 230,000 postgraduates (60% of the total). They attract 250,000 overseas students annually (nearly 60% of the total), contributing to the economy and to the UK's international links. Many of the leaders in public life – government, commerce, public sector – were educated in humanities and social science disciplines, including 90% of the current Cabinet and shadow Cabinet, 60% of chief executives of FTSE 100 companies, and 65% of civil service Permanent Secretaries.

Research and scholarship in humanities and social sciences have intrinsic value as vital sources of human knowledge and understanding. They also make vital contributions to the economy, cultural enrichment and an educated citizenry – to prosperity in its fullest sense. 65,000 academic staff (36% of the total) teach these subjects, and they account for 50% of active researchers (28,000) in the UK.

In the years to 2018, the context within which the Academy operates is likely to remain testing. Extensive recent changes in higher education in the UK will continue to have wide-ranging consequences. The Academy's disciplines will need to engage with the challenges of attracting students in a context of higher undergraduate tuition fees (in England), ensuring funding for postgraduate study, and attracting and supporting entrants to the academic profession. The research and publication landscape is changing rapidly, and the potentially far-reaching outcomes of the next national Research Excellence Framework occur during this period. The intrinsic value of scholarly endeavour is likely to need sustained defence. Funding for research, and for the Academy's own activities, may face further constraints.

More broadly, we face many challenges in the years ahead – economically, politically, socially, constitutionally – including tough

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decisions on public spending. Addressing these challenges will require the kind of radical and thought-through solutions which expertise from the Academy's disciplines can provide.

The Academy represents the UK's research excellence worldwide, and provides leadership to foster UK and collaborative research links across the world by acting as a global gateway, sometimes in the face of difficult diplomatic relations. UK higher education is highly international, in the makeup of its students and staff, and in its operations. It faces growing competition: across the world, universities are offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses taught in English. UK research, not least in humanities and social sciences, is internationally recognised as of exceptionally high quality – and is often international in its subject-matter and collaborations. But other countries are investing heavily in research and becoming more competitive. Research is a global undertaking, and strong links with researchers around the world are essential to maintain the UK's internationally renowned research base, as well as promoting lasting ties of real economic, political and cultural value. More generally, the world is changing with extraordinary rapidity, and countries of major significance to the UK – economically, politically and culturally – are assuming new positions of influence. The insights of researchers in humanities and social sciences can help us understand these changes and how best to respond.

In this document the Academy lays out its mission, roles and values, and the priorities that it will seek to address over the next five years. It is an ambitious strategy, which builds on the Academy's traditional scholarly strengths and seeks to develop its public role, harnessing the expertise of the academic community to help address a challenging period, nationally and internationally.

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The Academy is an important source of research funding in a plural system, and will seek to deploy its resources in a distinctive and complementary manner.

I am grateful for the contributions received from Fellows, and from the many individuals and organisations, within and beyond the academic world, who have offered comments as this strategy has developed, and who have signalled a willingness to work with the Academy to help deliver it. These include other academies, universities, research and funding councils, learned societies and subject associations, cultural bodies, publishers, think tanks, philanthropists, charitable foundations and the business world. It is heartening to have received offers of partnership from bodies whose aims are complementary. We shall pursue them with enthusiasm, in the knowledge that enlarging and strengthening the Academy's partnerships will be vital for success. The Academy's ability to deliver this strategy is of course also dependent on the availability of resources, from government and from other supporters, as well as the *pro bono* contributions of its Fellows and others, and the dedicated work of its staff.

The Academy's subjects, humanities and social sciences, always of fundamental importance, have never been of greater value to our cultural, political, economic and social lives than in current times.



Professor Nicholas Stern

(Lord Stern of Brentford, Kt), President

Mission, roles and values

1. Statement of fundamental purpose: The British Academy's mission is:

To inspire, recognise and support high achievement in the humanities and social sciences throughout the UK and internationally, and to champion their role and value.

2. Roles: The British Academy has three principal roles:

- i. **A Fellowship**, composed of distinguished scholars from all areas of the humanities and social sciences, elected by their peers, which promotes the work of these disciplines and facilitates the exchange of knowledge and ideas.
- ii. **A Funding Body**, supporting the best ideas, individuals and intellectual resources in the humanities and social sciences, wherever they are located.
- iii. **A Voice**, providing independent advice about the health of disciplines and the needs of research, contributing evidence to strengthen policy making, enhancing public understanding and debate, and representing the humanities and social sciences in the UK and internationally.

3. Values: The British Academy's work is informed by three fundamental values:

- i. **Excellence:** The Academy is committed to the highest standards; it strives to make rigour and clarity the hallmark of all its activities. This applies to its recognition and support of established and emerging scholars, to its contributions to debate and to the conduct of its research funding.

Mission, roles and values (continued)

- ii. **Independence:** In its work on behalf of its disciplines, the Academy seeks to safeguard scholarly interests and academic freedom, independent of government and of individual university or other particular interests.
- iii. **Distinctiveness:** The Academy draws on the unique scholarly resource of its Fellowship; it covers the full range of the humanities and social sciences, and it supports research with public and private resources that complement other forms of support available.

Strategic priorities 2013–18

The British Academy's work will be shaped by six strategic priorities:

- 1. Championing the Humanities and Social Sciences**
- 2. Advancing Research**
- 3. Fostering Excellence**
- 4. Strengthening Policy Making**
- 5. Engaging with the Public**
- 6. Promoting Internationalism**

1. Championing the Humanities and Social Sciences

OUR OBJECTIVE: to take a lead in representing the humanities and social sciences, promoting their interests and vigorously upholding their value.

The British Academy will aim to:

- a. Speak for the humanities and social sciences, to government, policy makers, opinion formers and the media.
- b. Take a lead, working with partners, in debates and consultations that affect higher education and research, addressing issues such as research funding and assessment, the health of disciplines, academic freedom, research integrity and academic publishing.
- c. Provide a high-level forum, where informed views on higher education and research can be aired and debated, including convening the national Strategic Forum for the Social Sciences, and maintaining networks with learned societies, subject associations etc.

Strategic priorities 2013–18 (continued)

- d. Provide leadership in shaping national strategies and policies to strengthen core academic skills, with special attention to languages and quantitative methods.
- e. Demonstrate the value that humanities and social science contribute to economic growth and social and cultural well-being.

2. Advancing Research

OUR OBJECTIVE: to provide distinctive and complementary funding opportunities for outstanding people and innovative research.

The British Academy will aim to:

- a. Provide largely response-mode funding schemes, focused on individuals, to support the best and most original research, drawing on the expert judgement of the Academy's distinguished Fellowship.
- b. Provide fellowships for the most outstanding early career researchers and for more established researchers, bringing on the next generation and contributing to a sustainable research community.
- c. Provide small-scale funding awards, supporting innovative, often pioneering research ideas and helping early career researchers gain a footing on the research ladder.
- d. Communicate new scholarly findings, through a programme of academic conferences and meetings, lectures and publications.

3. Fostering Excellence

OUR OBJECTIVE: to strengthen, extend and diversify ways of recognising and celebrating high achievement in the humanities and social sciences.

The British Academy will aim to:

- a. Elect into its Fellowship a balance of humanities scholars and social scientists who have attained the highest distinction in research, from both the UK and overseas.
- b. Strengthen forms of recognition and involvement in its activities for leading academics, especially early career scholars, outside the Fellowship.
- c. Provide endorsement of a range of long-term scholarly research undertakings, which create intellectual resources on which research can build.
- d. Develop its portfolio of prizes and medals to reward and promote exceptional achievement.
- e. Increase the diversity, consistent with a commitment to excellence, of the profile of those to whom the Academy gives recognition.

4 Strengthening Policy Making

OUR OBJECTIVE: to provide independent contributions to public policy development, enhancing the policy making process.

The British Academy will aim to:

- a. Bring the expertise of its Fellows and others to bear on public policy issues, ranging from economic growth to constitutional change, international relations to the environment, cultural heritage to social well-being.
- b. Convene policy makers, Fellows and other experts under the Academy's auspices to provide focused advice on current policy issues and initiatives.
- c. Provide a neutral space for discussions on major public policy issues, which research and expertise can help to illuminate.
- d. Promote the importance of academic rigour in evidence relevant to policy, and promote informed public debate about it.

5. Engaging with the Public

OUR OBJECTIVE: to stimulate public interest in and understanding of the humanities and social sciences, and to contribute to public debate.

The British Academy will aim to:

- a. Organise a wide-ranging programme of public meetings in London and other parts of the UK, involving Fellows and eminent participants from the UK and overseas.
- b. Develop a programme of high-profile debates on major issues of the day, aimed at raising the level of public discussion.

Strategic priorities 2013–18 (continued)

- c. Deepen public understanding of the role and value of the humanities and social sciences, through publications, website, media links and social media.
- d. Engage with younger audiences, in order to stimulate curiosity and interest in the humanities and social sciences.

6. Promoting Internationalism

OUR OBJECTIVE: to promote UK research in international arenas, to foster a global approach across UK research and to provide leadership in developing global research links and expertise.

The British Academy will aim to:

- a. Provide focused funding support, to enable UK researchers to work overseas and on international topics, and to attract outstanding researchers to the UK.
- b. Develop relations with overseas academies and other international partners, fostering scholarly collaboration and mobility, building links with countries where research is excellent and also those where research links can benefit from stimulus.
- c. Support a network of research institutes overseas, which act as a hub for UK research in their region, contributing to the effectiveness of UK research.
- d. Influence European and wider policies as they affect the funding and conduct of research.
- e. Deliver independent expertise for developing policy and shaping the research agenda on global challenges and issues of international concern.

7. Enabling Mechanisms

In addition to the strategic priorities outlined above, we will implement enabling mechanisms, on People, Finance, Communications and Facilities.

The British Academy will implement enabling mechanisms to:

- a. Develop its skilled and dedicated staff in order to ensure effective delivery of its strategy.
- b. Generate, optimise and allocate financial resources necessary to achieve its objectives.
- c. Communicate to a range of audiences, and through a variety of media, the work of the Academy, and the expertise of its Fellows and others, and strengthen awareness of the value of the Academy's disciplines.
- d. Exercise careful husbandry of the Academy's infrastructure and facilities, and enhance them in cost-effective and environmentally friendly ways to meet the needs of Fellows, and members of the academic and wider communities.





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