

Future of English Research Grants 2022

Call for proposals

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About the grant

The British Council is pleased to announce its call for the *Future of English* Research Grants 2022. Through this scheme, we will support a programme of research to provide data, develop new and innovative research methods, and give actionable insights for policy makers, educators and other key stakeholders on key trends associated with the role of English as a global language. Projects funded through this scheme will focus on areas of interest identified by the *Future of English* project (see Background section below). The aim of the Scheme is to provide output which will facilitate and support UK and overseas stakeholders at all levels – from ministries of education to individual institutions and educators – to achieve their goals in relation to the use of English in local and global contexts.

The *Future of English* Research Grants 2022 will prioritise projects which are Official Development Assistance (ODA) compliant and contribute to the economic development and welfare of developing countries as their main objective (see <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2021-flows.pdf> for the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of ODA-eligible countries).

All interested applicants must submit an expression of interest by **18.00 (UK time) Wednesday 17 November 2021**.

The deadline to submit applications is **Friday 14 January 2022**.

Optional PhD Studentship funding

In addition to the main *Future of English* Research Grants, applicants applying for a grant will have the option of applying to a *PhD Studentship* fund which will support a full-time PhD studentship focused on an area relevant to the applicant's main grant proposal. Details of the PhD Studentship Fund and criteria for application are provided separately in Appendix 1.

Background

In 2021 the British Council initiated an ambitious project to identify key trends that will define the role of English as a global language in the coming decade. The *Future of English* project is intended to identify the issues and opportunities for countries around the world in achieving their goals for the use of English in their contexts.

The Future of English (FoE) is a multi-stage project which will set a research agenda with global scope and local relevance. The project is intended to: provide insights on trends that will define the role of English as a global language over the next decade; inform language policy and education reform interventions; and lay out a research agenda capable of generating hard evidence and data to inform those policy decisions and evaluate their impact.

The project is divided into three phases:

- **Phase 1** took the landmark publication *English Next* by David Graddol (<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/english-next>) as its starting point and evaluated Graddol's predictions before looking forward to the future by producing a new set of sixteen predictions for the next decade.

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- **Phase 2** utilised the unique position of the British Council and the relationships it has with local policy makers to hold a series of regional policy roundtables in which the new predictions made by the FoE project in Phase 1 were interrogated and revised. An external consultancy experienced in futures methodology was engaged to analyse the roundtable data to help revise and refine the predictions from Phase 1.
 - **Phase 3** will develop new ways of engaging with UK and global experts, policy makers, academics, parents, teachers, employers, students and other key stakeholders to track trends through robust evidence-based data collection and evaluate and interpret the trends over time. The FoE Research Grant Scheme is a central part of Phase 3.

What is the purpose of the *Future of English Research Grant Scheme*?

- ✓ To critically evaluate the key trends identified by the FoE project.
- ✓ To develop new and ambitious methods for measuring and tracking the key trends.
- ✓ To find effective means of measuring and understanding the impact on English as a foreign language of greater digital engagement and new technology
- ✓ To develop baseline data to enable longitudinal studies of the trends.
- ✓ To evaluate educational interventions, analyse policy innovations and recommend new solutions designed to facilitate positive impact for the future use of English, particularly in support of development, prosperity and security in global ODA contexts.
- ✓ To improve access of researchers, educators, policy makers, and other stakeholders worldwide to high quality and relevant research from the UK.
- ✓ To facilitate and encourage the establishment and maintenance of active research links between researchers, educators and policy makers in the UK and overseas.

Who can apply?

Applications must have a single Principal Investigator (PI) who is an established member of a UK higher education institution (HEI) or approved Independent Research Organisation (IRO) eligible to receive UKRI funding.

The PI will be the point of contact for any communication related to the application and, if a grant is awarded, will take the lead responsibility for the conduct of the research and the observance of the terms and conditions. Correspondence regarding the application and the grant if the application is successful will be addressed to the principal investigator only (and in the case of any offer letter, to their research office).

There is no limit on the number of Co-Investigators (CI's). However, the project proposal attached as a part of the application should make clear how each CI will make a significant contribution to the conduct of the research.

The award agreement will be with the institution to which the PI is attached (the Administering Institution) and not with any individual.

We encourage applications that include CI's from consortia of UK and/or overseas institutions, particularly those that offer a cross-disciplinary approach.

It will be the responsibility of the Administering Institution to manage the distribution of the grant if awarded to any other institutions to which CI's belong, and to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant by those institutions.

International co-investigators

We encourage consortia that include CI's based in overseas institutions, and priority will be given to applications that include one or more CI's attached to a HEI or research organisation based in one or more ODA-eligible countries. As noted above, it will be the responsibility of the Administering Institution to distribute the grant to the international CI's institution and ensure compliance with any terms and conditions of the grant.

Collaboration with NGO's and partner organisations

We encourage applications which include involvement with NGOs, third-sector organisations and Civil Society groups as Project Partners, particularly those based in ODA countries that are the target of the project proposal submitted as part of the application. Project Partners can support the collection and interpretation of data, facilitate access to individuals and groups central to the project proposal, and facilitate the dissemination of findings to key stakeholders in the target context. Project Partners do not make a significant contribution to the design and conduct of the research in the same way as a CI. Costs associated with the involvement of Project Partners should not exceed 30% of the total cost of the grant in the application.

Additional requirements

- We define research as original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding in order to make a significant contribution to the field. The research must not have already taken place or be underway.
- The research output / final report must be in English (though there may also be a version in another language).
- Funding will be agreed for a maximum initial period of one to three years.
- The main scheme is not intended to fund the field work of PhD candidates or similar; if you wish to fund a PhD student as part of your bid, you should apply for the PhD Studentship Fund in addition to the main FoE grant.

Where can my research be based?

While the lead institution, to which the grant will be paid, must be based in the UK, we will prioritise proposals that target ODA-eligible countries (see <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2021-flows.pdf> for the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of ODA-eligible countries).

We will further prioritise research that relates to the British Council's 25 priority countries in: the Americas (Brazil & Mexico); East Asia (Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia & Vietnam); the

Middle East (Egypt, Iraq & Saudi Arabia); South Asia (Bangladesh, India & Pakistan); Sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Sudan); Europe (France, Germany, Poland & Spain); and Wider Europe (Turkey, Ukraine & Russia).

What amount of funding will be made?

Applications for *Future of English* grants should be for amounts of up to **£250,000**.

Eighty per cent of the value of the award(s) will be paid upon completion of relevant checks and the signing of the contract. The final twenty per cent will be paid upon completion of the contract. The application must clearly state what expenditure items the award will fund. The scheme will not fund items of equipment which institutions would normally be expected to possess (for example, computing equipment such as laptops), nor will it normally fund conference or seminar attendance to disseminate findings unless specifically invited to do so by the British Council.

In addition, applications for the PhD Studentship fund can be made for up to **£75,000**. There is no obligation to apply for a PhD Studentship in addition to the main grant. (See Annex 1.)

How can I apply?

- Potential applicants should send an expression of interest to FoEgrants@britishcouncil.org to register for an information webinar **before 18.00 (UK time) on Wednesday 17 November 2021**. Expressions of interest should be made by the intended PI for the application, provide a description of their eligibility, and indicate which of the following two webinars they will attend:
 - **Webinar 1: Friday 19 November 2021 12.30-13.30**
 - **Webinar 2: Friday 26 November 2021 14.00-15.00**
- The webinars will cover all aspects of the research call, including details of the previous phases of the *Future of English* project, via Microsoft Teams Meetings.
- After you have submitted an expression of interest, a calendar invitation with a link will be sent to you.
- Registered participants may email any questions in advance to the dedicated inbox: FoEgrants@britishcouncil.org.
- A Frequently Asked Questions document will be made available to all registered participants after the information webinars.
- Registered participants for the webinars will be provided with:
 - an information pack providing more detail on the FoE project and the thematic areas of interest
 - details of the application documents that will be required
 - instructions and links to submit an application.

Selection Process

You will have your response evaluated as set out below:

Stage 1: A check will be made to ensure all required documents have been provided and completed according to the specifications. Incomplete or incorrect submissions will be disqualified and not evaluated further.

Stage 2: The proposal will then be evaluated in accordance with the criteria and weightings set out below.

A British Council panel will evaluate the proposals against the following criteria:

- Research focus, methodology and approach (50%)
- Knowledge of the sector, professional experience, qualifications and competencies (30%)
- Value for money (20%)

All applicants will be required to provide a gender equality statement as part of their application.

We reserve the right to contact applicants to request or negotiate an amendment to any aspect of the proposal, such as budget items or project timeline, in order to best meet the objectives of the scheme.

What are the conditions of the award?

The successful applicants will own the intellectual property rights of the research output, including a final report of an agreed length, and will licence these rights to the British Council to use and disseminate the research output / final report at its own discretion with no limitation on time or territory. This will be specified in the individual contacts for successful applicants.

The British Council reserves the right to make information on the successful applications and any reports and research output freely and publicly available. The British Council will inform applicants as to whether they are successful or not. The British Council is not obliged to enter into further discussions or offer advice on applications. The decision of the British Council regarding these grants is final.

Administering Institutions must agree to the terms and conditions of the scheme, which will be outlined in detail in the contract for successful applicants.

What are the benefits of the award to the successful institutions?

- Financial support which enables the research to take place.
- Opportunity to receive funding for a full-time PhD studentship as a core part of the research.
- Publication and dissemination of the research by the British Council as an example of quality research from the UK, with full acknowledgement of the researchers and their affiliated institutions.
- The right to refer to the research as funded by the British Council.
- Support with access to appropriate partners, teachers and learners overseas as agreed on a case-by-case basis.
- Opportunity to present a webinar through our website or online communities.
- Promotion of the report through British Council internal and external networks.
- Participation in a Community of Practice that will facilitate knowledge transfer between the successful applicants, other UK institutions and experts, international researchers and educators, and policy makers in the UK and other international contexts.

What is the timeframe for the Future of English Research Grant?

- Submit an expression of interest and register for information webinars **before 18.00 on Wednesday 17 November 2021**.
- Attend one of two information webinars on **Friday 19 November 12.30-13.30 or Friday 26 November 14.00-15.00**.
- Submit all application documents including project proposal, budget, and Gender Equality Statement by **14 January 2022**.
- The evaluation process will take place between **17 January and 21 January 2022**.
- Decisions on awards will be communicated to the applicants **by 24 January 2022**.
- Contracts will be finalised by **14 February 2022**.
- Subject to contract execution and due diligence checks, grant payments will be made **by end of March 2022**.

What	When
Call published	5 November 2021
Submit expression of interest	17 November 2021
Information webinar 1	19 November 2021 12.30-13.30
Information webinar 2	26 November 2021 14.00-15.00
Submit all required application documents	14 January 2022
Evaluation process	17 January to 21 January 2022
Decisions on awards communicated to applicants	24 January 2022
Contract finalised	14 February 2022
Subject to contract execution and due diligence checks, grant payments will be made	End of March 2022

Reporting Requirements

A reporting schedule must be included in your proposal. This should cover the following and include an indication of the proposed length of any written outputs:

Progress Report - to be submitted to the British Council at the mid-point of your project.

Final Report - to be submitted to the British Council at the end of your project. This would normally include rationale, methodology, findings, discussion and implications, and references.

Detailed Financial Report - to be submitted to the British Council at the end of your project. Please note that in the event of underspend any re-allocation of funds under the Project must be formalised before the expiration of the Grant Agreement in accordance with the Change Control Clause - see Annex 3_Standard Terms.

We will also expect successful applicants to join a **Community of Practice**, established by the British Council, which will facilitate regular project updates, information exchange and discussion of best practice. The Community of Practice will include open webinars, F2F seminars, and other dissemination opportunities to be agreed with the successful applicants. The Community of Practice activities will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information between the grant holders, the British Council, and policy makers, educators, NGO's and third sector organisations and professionals in a range of international contexts.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Applicants are encouraged to ensure equal opportunities in the teams implementing their proposed activity. For the British Council's approach, see our Equality Policy at:

https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/equality_policy_1.doc

For the UKRI approach see <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

Gender equality statement

All applications to the Future of English Research Grant scheme will be required to provide a **Gender Equality Statement**. This statement will form a key part of the evaluation of applications and must clearly describe how applications include meaningful yet proportionate consideration as to how the project will contribute to reducing gender inequalities, as required under the International Development (Gender Equality) Act (2014).

The Gender Equality Statement will be no longer than one page and included in the relevant section of the application documents. Applicants should review guidance on including a Gender Equality Statement provided by UKRI¹, including the criteria that must be addressed while considering gender impact as described in the Gender Equality Statement Guidance².

It is expected that some projects will have less impact on gender and gender relations and professional judgement of the applicants should be exercised to ensure appropriate consideration of the context and intended aims of the project.

Ethics, Safeguarding and Child Protection

It is essential that all legal and professional codes of practice are followed in conducting work supported by this scheme. Applicants must ensure the proposed activity will be carried out to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity. In the online application form, applicants must clearly articulate how any potential ethical and health and safety issues have been considered and how they will be addressed, ensuring that all necessary ethical approval is in place before the project commences and all risks are minimised.

We have a duty of care to safeguard the children and vulnerable adults we work with. Please refer to the Safeguarding policy here: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/how-we-work/policies/safeguarding>

Where proposals involve any contact with children, each organisation and individual will need to adhere to the relevant national requirements to ensure they have been fully vetted to work with under-18s. Please also refer to the Research Councils UK 'Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct' (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/researchers/grc/>), the Inter Academy Partnership report 'Doing Global Science: A Guide to Responsible Conduct

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

² <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/UKRI-250221-Gender-equality-statement-guidance.pdf>

in the Global Research Enterprise' (<http://www.interacademycouncil.net/24026/29429.aspx>) or contact us for further guidance.

Applicant screening

In order to comply with UK government legislation, the British Council may at any point during the application process carry out searches of relevant third-party screening databases to ensure that neither the applicant institutions nor any of the applicants' employees, partners, directors or shareholders are listed as:

- an individual or entity with whom national or supranational bodies have decreed organisations should not have financial dealings;
- being wanted by Interpol or any national law enforcement body in connection with crime;
- being subject to regulatory action by a national or international enforcement body;
- being subject to export, trade or procurement controls or (in the case of an individual) as being disqualified from being a company director; and/or
- being a heightened risk individual or organisation, or (in the case of an individual) a politically exposed person.

If the applicant or any other party is listed in a Screening Database for any of the reasons set out above, the British Council will assess the applicant as ineligible to apply for this grant call. The applicant must provide the British Council with all information reasonably requested by the British Council to complete the screening searches.

Appendix 1: PhD Studentships

The *Future of English* Research Grants 2022 includes an *optional* application for a funded full-time PhD Studentship to be attached to the applicant's main research grant project. Each institution will be limited to a maximum of one PhD studentship. The PhD Studentship fund will be able to fund up to three studentships in total across all of the successful grants. The aims of the Studentships are to support the primary research focus of the Grants and to offer a professional development path to emergent researchers in this area of interest.

The PhD Studentships

1. Each Administering Institution for the main grant applications can apply for a PhD Studentship.
 - The funding will cover:
 - full-time Domestic tuition fees for a 3-year period;
 - a cost-of-living stipend of £15,000 per year for a three-year PhD programme.
 - The maximum amount of funding will be £75,000 for a 3-year PhD programme.
 - If applicable, the difference between Domestic and International student fees needs to be agreed between the institution and the PhD student. The British Council encourages institutions to facilitate the inclusion of PhD candidates from ODA countries, and as such, PhD Studentship applications which commit the Administering Institution to covering the difference between domestic and international fees for PhD candidates from ODA countries will be prioritised.
2. The PhD area of focus needs to be clearly outlined and must support or extend the primary focus of the main Grant, i.e. these must be related.
3. The PhD Studentship supervisor must be either a primary investigator (PI) or co-investigator (CI) based at the Administering Institution applying for the main Grant.
4. PhD candidates funded by the FoE PhD Studentship Fund will have the opportunity to spend up to three months a year as interns with the British Council on British Council projects. The internships are considered to be an integral part of the funded Studentship. The internships will give the PhD candidates valuable experience in working on real-world issues and research projects relevant to their field of interest and study. It will also enable the PhD candidates to build strong relationships and networks with stakeholders inside and outside the British Council.
5. The main Grant must not be contingent on being awarded a PhD Studentship; as such, applications that include a PhD Studentship should include two cost overviews in their main grant proposal – one including the PhD Studentship and another including

resourcing and costs for activities that would need to be covered by research assistants should the PhD Studentship application not be successful.

6. Institutions awarded the PhD Studentship will be expected to manage the administration and financial procedures of the award directly; in each case, the British Council will pay the award to the institution, not the student.
7. There is no obligation to apply for a PhD Studentship in addition to the main Grant.

PhD Studentship applicants must complete the PhD Studentship application in addition to the main Grant application form and must include the following information:

- Description of the specific focus area of the PhD Studentship (500 words or less).
- Name of the PI or CI who will act as supervisor.
- The total amount requested for the Studentship, clearly indicating the amount for Domestic tuition fees.
- A formal letter from the head of the department in which the PhD Studentship will be based confirming support of the PhD Studentship application.

Questions

- Potential applicants registering an expression of interest for the Information Webinars for the main grant will have the opportunity to ask questions related to the PhD Studentships at the webinars.
- Please direct any questions in advance of the Information Webinars to FoEgrants@britishcouncil.org.