

Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851

Research Fellowship in the Built Environment

2026 Terms and Conditions

Background

1. The 1851 Research Fellowship in the Built Environment is intended to enable those at a more advanced stage in their career to explore important current issues, selected by the Commission.
2. The Commission will provide a broad and general brief, which should be interpreted with verve and imagination by applicants. The Commission is looking for proposals that culminate in a tangible output of practical significance as well as a detailed report with serious, well-researched and practical proposals that address the question and challenge built environment professionals to take the outcomes into account. The Commission will look carefully at how results will be disseminated and how they might feed into policy. The Commission is looking to be surprised, persuaded and enthused by applications of genuine import.
3. The award is normally for two years, but there are opportunities to extend this on a pro rata basis to facilitate part time working where appropriate, subject to prior approval.
4. Fellowships must start by 31 December in the year of award.

Eligibility

5. Applications are welcomed from post-graduates, researchers, practitioners or professionals on a career break. Applicants need not be architects or surveyors – anyone with relevant expertise is eligible to apply.
6. Entries will be accepted not only from individuals but also from formal or informal partnerships. Please note, however, that in all such cases one individual must be identified as the lead applicant who will, if successful, be awarded the Fellowship and will be the point of contact for the Commission. Only the Fellow will be entitled to attend Commission events although other members of a formal or informal partnership may be invited at the Commission's discretion.
7. Candidates should be UK based with a right to live and work in the UK which covers the period of the Fellowship and is not dependent on award of the Fellowship. The Commission cannot act as a sponsor for visa purposes.
8. In all cases candidates should identify a UK based mentor who can contribute objectively to the project and widen the reach of outputs to help make a difference. The mentor will be expected to submit brief interim reports at six-monthly intervals commenting on progress made, difficulties encountered and any recommendations for modification of the approach. Projects may have more than one mentor, but in all cases a single individual must be nominated as the mentor who will provide reports to the Commission. The mentor does not need to be an academic or based at a university but must be a recognised expert in the project area.

Benefits and requirements

9. Fellows will receive a grant of £100,000. Fellows will not, under any circumstances, be entitled to more than this. There are no separate allowances for expenses and the like.
10. The grant will usually be paid in five instalments: £22,500 on commencement of the Fellowship, further tranches of £22,500 after six months, twelve months and eighteen months, and a final £10,000 on completion. Although there is some room for flexibility, not more than £50,000 will be paid in the first year and £10,000 will always be retained to be paid only on successful completion of the Fellowship.

11. Payment of the first instalment is subject to receipt of a satisfactory schedule of milestones and deliverables covering the period of the Fellowship. Payment of subsequent tranches is subject to receipt of satisfactory reports evidencing attainment of the relevant milestones and deliverables or providing satisfactory explanations of any changes made. Fellows should allow a minimum of one month from submission of an interim report to receipt of the next tranche of funding to allow the Committee time to consider the report. Payment of the final instalment is subject to receipt of a satisfactory final report and successful delivery of the tangible outcome specified in the project proposal (such as a book, exhibition, toolkit or similar).
12. The grant can be paid to an individual, an employing organisation, or another institution nominated by the Fellow. In appropriate cases it may be possible to split the grant between more than one recipient. Please note however that Fellows will not, under any circumstances, be considered employees, workers, partners, contractors or agents of the Commission and the Commission accepts no liability for tax, national insurance or other payments that may be chargeable in respect of the Fellowship. The Fellow is entirely responsible for their own tax affairs and for ensuring that they pay any amounts due. The Commission is not able to provide tax advice.
13. The grant can be used to cover any expenses related to the project, including but not limited to payroll costs, overheads, equipment, consumables, travel.
14. Fellows are expected to attend Commission events during the Fellowship, at some of which they may be asked to give a poster presentation on their project.
15. The Commission lays no claim to intellectual property arising from the research conducted during the holding of a Fellowship.

Application

16. Application is through website online submission
<https://1851awards.flexigrant.com/startapplication.aspx?id=17018>
17. Submissions, including a two-page outline of the proposed project, must be received by 5pm on 15 September 2026.
18. Final interviews will be held on either 17 or 24 November 2026.
19. No budgetary information is requested as part of the application process.

Data Protection

20. The 1851 Royal Commission is a data controller under the General Data Protection Regulation. The Commission is registered with the UK Information Commissioner's Office with registration number Z8305954. The Commission may collect and process personal data about you, your mentor(s), your proposed collaborators and members of any organisations with which you are affiliated as part of your Fellowship application. Full details of the types of data collected, the ways in which the data are processed and the legal basis for the processing are included in the Privacy Notice available on the application portal.

John Lavery
Secretary
Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851
Sherfield Building, Imperial College
London SW7 2AZ

+44 (0)20 7594 8790
royalcom1851@imperial.ac.uk
www.royalcommission1851.org
Registered charity number 206123