

Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851

Industrial Fellowships

2026 Terms and Conditions

Background

1. The aim of the scheme is to encourage profitable innovation and creativity in British Industry – to the mutual benefit of the Fellow and his or her sponsoring company. Projects in science, engineering or technology inspired by industrial benefit will be considered.
2. These prestigious Fellowships, including an ERA Foundation Fellowship for the electro-technology sector, are awarded to selected, exceptional graduates with the potential to make an outstanding contribution to Industry for a programme of doctoral level research.
3. The Royal Commission lays no claim on intellectual property rights or commercial-in-confidence material.

Eligibility

4. All Candidates

The applicant must have a good first degree in engineering, science, medicine or design. It is unlikely that those already having substantial post-graduate qualifications will be accepted.

5. There are two possible arrangements under which a Fellowship may be held:

a) Company Employed Candidates

At the time of application candidates must be employed by, or have an offer of employment from, a company in the UK. Company employed applicants must demonstrate a link between their employing company and appropriate staff at a UK University.

b) CDT/CASE Candidates

At the time of application candidates must be in the first or second year of a UK University based doctoral programme strongly coupled to industry, such as through a Centre for Doctoral Training, CASE programme or similar entity. CDT /CASE Candidates must demonstrate a clear tangible benefit to the company sponsoring their project as well as to the individual (note that as described in 11.a below no more than two candidates may apply from the same CDT).

6. All Candidates

The applicant must have identified a research and/or development topic potentially leading to a patent, product, process or service in conjunction with a higher academic award, usually a PhD or EngD.

Status and Benefits

7.

(a) Company Employed Candidates

Duration of up to three years, renewable annually on receipt of satisfactory reports.

- i. 50% of the Fellow's salary, including the employer's share of national insurance and superannuation paid, up to a limit of £30,000 p.a., reviewed annually.
- ii. University tuition fees paid up to normal levels for UK students.
- iii. University bench fees may be paid, where a compelling case is made.

Applications to hold the Fellowship and complete the PhD on a part-time basis are accepted. In such cases the Fellowship would run for up to five years, with the financial award and proportion of the Fellow's payroll costs covered both pro-rated and university fees reimbursed at the relevant part-time rates.

(b) CDT/CASE Candidates

Applying in first year: Duration of up to three years, renewable annually on receipt of satisfactory reports.

Applying in second year: Duration of up to two years, renewable annually on receipt of satisfactory reports.

- i. An enhancement to the existing stipend of £2,000 p.a.
- ii. Additional funding of up to £15,000 p.a. to support non-capital expenditure that will enhance the research project may be available, subject to an exceptional case being made. For these purposes, equipment costing less than £10,000 will be treated as non-capital. **This funding is not intended to cover routine laboratory consumables.**

8. All Candidates

An allowance of £3,500 p.a. is available to all Fellows to support travel (and related costs) relevant to the research project, including attendance at conferences and other events, visits to companies etc. Over the course of the Fellowship, a maximum of £1,500 from this allowance may alternatively be spent on a laptop and associated peripherals / software. Where the Fellowship is held on a part-time basis, the annual allowance will be pro-rated accordingly.

Applications

9. Applications are made by the prospective Fellow and are made via online submission at <https://1851awards.flexigrant.com> The supporting documentation described below should be uploaded as PDF documents and accompany the application.

10. All Candidates

All applications should include:

- a. A description by the candidate of the proposed programme of work including milestones and deliverables. This should show the balance of research and company activity.

- b. Letters of endorsement for the project expressing support for the candidate from the intended Industrial Supervisor and Academic Supervisor. Considerable weight is given to these.
- c. Company profile and information (maximum 4 sides).

11. CDT/CASE Candidates

Applications through Centres for Doctoral Training or CASE programmes must also include:

- a. A letter of nomination from the Centre Director or equivalent, together with confirmation that there are no more than two nominations from the CDT.
- b. Proposals for any additional funding under 7(b)(ii), with an explanation of how this will enhance the research project, endorsed by the Centre Director or equivalent
- c. A profile of the Centre for Doctoral Training (maximum 4 sides).
- d. A statement from the sponsoring company setting out the resources it will provide to support the research effort and the impact expected on its business.
- e. A statement from the candidate indicating plans for linking with and actively involving the sponsoring company in the proposed project.

12. Application Deadline

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application has been completed according to the regulations, as the Commission will be unable to accept partially completed applications.

Completed applications must be submitted by 10 February 2026 at 12 noon GMT.

13. Application Timeline

Interviews of shortlisted candidates will be held in March 2026 with decisions communicated soon after. Fellowships will commence in October 2026.

- 14.** 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 proposed industrial and academic supervisors and members of the academic department at which you wish to hold your Fellowship 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](#).

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