Scottish Parliament Academic Fellowship Scheme 2026-27

Guidance on applying for an Academic Fellowship

1. STREAM 1 - Online application form for projects proposed by us

Applicants for stream 1 have to:

1. **Complete our online application form; and**
2. **Send a copy of their CV and project details to academia@parliament.scot**

Application form - applicant details and funding
These sections of the form (questions 3-11) request information about the applicant including what stage of your academic career you are at (we use this information to understand what kinds of academics are applying; as explained in our FAQs document we welcome all applicants with a PhD who have relevant experience and who meet the eligibility criteria).

The form also seeks information about funding for the Fellowship (questions 14 and 15). The Parliament has a degree of funding available to support fellows who are unable to provide their own, (for details see our FAQs document). In this case, applicants should note that they require Scottish Parliament funding on the application form and indicate the amount of funding required.

Various funds are available from within the academic sector for impact-related activities. Applicants are encouraged to seek funding from such sources. If applicants secure funds, the source should be noted on the form.

Details of funding options will be discussed with applicants invited to an interview.

Application form - experience you have of presenting your work in a non-academic context
A crucial part of being a fellow is the ability to present your work orally and in writing to MSPs and staff who may potentially know very little about your field of study.

You should use this section of the application form (question 12) to outline your experience of your work in a non-academic context, for example work you have published in blogs and policy papers, presentations to a non-academic audience etc.

Application form - working arrangements

Preferred working arrangements should be proposed in your application (question 16).

Although we will agree working arrangements on a case-by-case basis, please note the general points made on “normal working arrangements” and the policy on flexible working in our FAQs document (see section (i) of that document for information on

flexible working and the number of days a week which a fellowship might involve).

Application form - support from your Head of Department
This section (question 18) requires you to confirm that you have sought approval from your Head of Department (or equivalent) at your institution.

Once you have completed and submitted the online form please e-mail a copy of your CV and your project details (see below) to academia@parliament.scot

Project Details

In addition to the application form and cv, applicants also need to email us a separate document outlining the details of their project.

Applicants should provide the following in their project details: aim and objectives, approach, timetable with milestones, risks, outputs, and communication of findings from the project. Please use no more than 2 pages for this section.

What happens after applications are submitted?

After the deadline for applications, the following activities will take place:

1. A panel will assess the applications (where necessary, involving an external expert)
2. Interviews will be held either online or in person
3. The outcome of interviews will be notified to applicants
4. Successful applicants must undergo security vetting. Fellowships cannot begin until security clearance has been obtained. This can take up to six weeks.
5. Individual fellowships will be based on our standard terms and conditions which include requirements in relation to matters such as confidentiality, intellectual property in the work carried out, as well as fellows' conduct. Fellows are appointed on the basis of these standard terms.
6. Fellows and universities will also be asked to sign a Fellowship Agreement which will include further details on the specific project such as working hours, funding, project outcomes etc. These details will be negotiated with the individual fellow and university.
7. We will provide an induction for successful applicants which will include practical training in the style of writing we expect when drafting briefings for SPICe.
8. Fellows will be assigned a supervisor within SPICe who will provide support and guidance during the fellowship.

Annex A: Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be used to assess applicants and projects:

The person
The applicant's experience will be assessed against the scheme's aims and evidence of the applicant's ability to carry out the proposed project. Applicants should:

- demonstrate in-depth and specialised knowledge of the proposed field
- be able to demonstrate delivery of previous research projects and ability to bring the proposed project to completion on time

- be able to demonstrate the ability to write short policy-style papers in straightforward language that lay people can understand
- have an understanding of how to present information using non-written means – e.g. using infographics etc.
- have excellent communication and interpersonal skills for multiple audiences
- show awareness of relevant research in other fields, and appreciation of the importance of working across disciplinary boundaries
- demonstrate an ability or potential to act as an ambassador for the Parliament.

The project
The project will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. The extent to which the project is relevant to parliamentary business and the scheme's aims
2. The extent to which the proposal meets the specific aims of the project to which you are applying
3. The extent to which other current research in this area has been considered
4. The appropriateness, effectiveness and feasibility of the proposed approach to the research
5. Whether a realistic timetable, incorporating milestones, is presented which will achieve the project's aims and objectives
6. The consideration, and mitigation, of risks associated with the project
7. The opportunities for the outputs and outcomes of the project to be used in Parliament, the research community and more widely
8. The communication plan for the project.

2. STREAM 2 – one page summary plus cv

The application process for the open call is designed to be more streamlined than for projects we propose (stream 1) on the basis that it is a more speculative process. We hope this makes it more straightforward for academics to propose potential research projects while still providing us with enough information to assess whether these could, in principle, be of interest.

Applicants for the open call need to e-mail us a one-page document outlining a proposed project, and also a cv. These documents should be e-mailed to academia@parliament.scot

The one-page document should include the following information:

- A short overview of what the project might entail and what its general aims and objectives are.
- Why the project is relevant to parliamentary business and the aims behind the fellowship scheme
- A general feel for the likely timetable of the research and possible outputs

Please also indicate in your separate email to us:

1. Whether you engaged have engaged with the Scottish Parliament before. For example, engaging with a Committee, SPICe, or with an individual MSP.

2. What stage in your academic career you are at (early-career, mid-career or senior/advanced). As outlined above in relation to stream 1, we use this information to monitor what kind of academics are applying to the programme.

We do not need a statement of support or equivalent from your Head of Department at this stage (although you may wish to consider how any work might fit within your existing commitments). We also do not need information on funding at this stage, although if you have information on this point please include it.

We will then consider whether the project proposed might be of interest to the Parliament and if the applicant has suitable experience.

If a project is of interest, we will contact applicants to discuss further. At this point we will need more information on the scope of the project, likely timing, funding, support from Head of Department etc. in line with the information required for stream 1. The assessment process will therefore follow that outlined above for stream 1 projects.