THE SILK ROADS FELLOWSHIP AT KING'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE (STARTING 1 OCTOBER 2027)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Scope and fit of the project

1. **Does the research project need to relate to the annual theme of the Silk Roads Programme (i.e. Environment)?**

   No, the Fellowship Project proposed in the application does not need to follow a theme.

2. **Must the project be historical or cultural (as in the name of the Fellowship), or can it come from other disciplines?**

   We take historical and cultural to be very broad terms, and welcome applications from any discipline or interdisciplinary position.

3. **Which countries, regions and cities are considered relevant to the Silk Roads? Can a project focus on places outside the stated area if it connects to the Silk Roads?**

   The website states the area of relevance to be 'Western borders of China to the Mediterranean, plus relations with China and Europe' and we consider the Silk Roads to include overland and oversea connections.

4. **Does the proposed research have to concern a particular period, or can it address contemporary topics?**

   We are interested in research into the Silk Roads at any point.

5. **Are some disciplines or topics preferred, and how much does the Programme value disciplinary diversity?**

   We have no preference for one discipline over another and will choose the strongest candidate for the post.

6. **Is there interest in impact, outreach or public engagement projects connected to the research?**

   The Friday Seminars attract a very wide audience and participation in the public-facing research, and we will be expanding our online presence. But what really matters in your proposal is the scholarly contribution you will make to the relevant field(s) of Silk Roads research.

Eligibility

7. **Am I eligible if I have already held a postdoctoral post? How is the limit calculated?**

   The advertisement states: 'Candidates will usually have completed their PhD at the point of application but must not have undertaken more than 3 years of postdoctoral work or work outside academia by 1 October 2027 (i.e. your PhD cannot have been granted before 30 September 2024). We take career breaks for reasons such as parental leave, extensive caring responsibilities or health reasons into consideration when looking at eligibility dates.'

8. **Can I apply if I have submitted my thesis but not yet had my viva or received my degree when the application closes or the fellowship begins?**

   The advertisement says 'Candidates will usually have completed their PhD at the point of application,' This implies that you can apply before completing your PhD. But we do expect that you will have been examined, and preferably been awarded the degree, by the end of September 2027.

9. **Are career breaks taken into account in assessing eligibility?**

   Yes, (see question 7).

10. **Do applicants need to be based in or affiliated with a particular university or country?**

    No.

11. **Does the fellowship offer visa sponsorship, and who is responsible for the right to work in the UK?**

    The offer of the Fellowship is conditional on right to work; the College gives informal help in the application for visa to the UK.

The proposal and what reviewers look for

12. **What does "going beyond the PhD thesis" mean? May the project build on and extend the doctoral research?**

    It would be appropriate for the proposed research for the Fellowship to build upon the expertise gained in the PhD, but we expect the successful applicant to demonstrate a research trajectory which will sustain innovative work in the future.

13. **Can I apply if my previous work is related to, but not in the same period, region or discipline as, my proposed project?**

    Yes, you would be welcome to apply.

14. **What level of language skills, prior knowledge of the region and previous scholarship is expected for the proposed project?**

    You should have most of the requisite skills, linguistic and otherwise, to carry out your proposed research. If further skills are needed, please make clear how they will be achieved in the course of the Fellowship.

15. **Should the research statement include a detailed timeline and planned outputs for the four years?**

    The Research Statement should focus on the significance of the research already undertaken and proposed for the Fellowship. A sense of the expected research outputs might be relevant here, but it is more important to convey the importance of the research itself.

16. **What outputs (articles, book manuscript) are expected by the end of the fellowship?**

    These will vary from person to person, and from discipline to discipline; this will be a topic of discussion between the successful applicant and his or her mentor.

17. **What arrangements exist for fieldwork, particularly for projects on contemporary topics?**

    The Programme does not coordinate fieldwork for Fellows but expects each Fellow to develop his or her research methods, including fieldwork.

Application materials and references

18. **Do the two additional readers named by referees need to appear in the reference letters themselves?**

    No, there is a separate field on the application system for this. The advertisement says 'Each referee should be asked to provide the names of two further readers, not in the candidate's institution, to whom work might be sent if the candidate is long-listed.'

19. Do I need to identify a mentor or link up with someone in the programme beforehand?

No. You will have a mentor in King's, but who it is can be decided through discussion when you arrive.

20. When must the work samples be submitted, and how many words are allowed?

The advertisement says, applications should include 'samples of written work, up to 20,000 words (either published papers or chapters of a doctoral thesis).' This must be uploaded to the application system by the closing time and date 23.59pm (UK time) on 8th November.

21. Is the application in English only, and is any language training or support offered?

The advertisement states 'Please note that all application materials must be in the English language.' You need excellent English to work as a fellow.

Selection process

22. How many fellowships are available?

One.

23. What will the interview involve, and what is the panel looking for?

Short-listed candidates will be interviewed in person in Cambridge on 18 January 2027. The panel will ask about the content and significance of your research project, and about what you would bring to the Programme and to King's.

Terms, funding and career

25. What are the stipend and allowances, and is the stipend tax free?

As stated in the advertisement: Stipend: £34,800 (to be revised), living-out allowance up to £4,180, research expenses up to £2,000 a year. Stipends and probably living-out allowances are taxable, research expenses are not.

26. What are the Fellow's responsibilities within the programme?

We expect the Fellows to take active roles in developing the programme and organising academic activities, including regular seminars and research events.

27. Does the Fellowship lead to extension or a permanent post?

No. The advertisement states that the Fellowship will run for four years, 1 October 2027 to 30 September 2031. No extension is possible, but after your first year you can apply for intermission to enable you to pursue a relatively short (e.g. one-year) opportunity that would be helpful for your scholarly career.

Other questions

28. Must Fellows live in Cambridge for the full four years, or can some of the time be spent on fieldwork or at other institutions?

Fellows are required to live in Cambridge or close by in term time, allowances will be made for field work. In terms of visiting other institutions, as noted above, after your first year you can apply for intermission to enable you to pursue a relatively short (e.g. one-year) opportunity that would be helpful for your scholarly career.

29. Is there any flexibility on the start date, or can the fellowship be deferred?

No.

30. Can a Fellow hold other funding, such as a Leverhulme or British Academy grant, or take on paid work alongside the fellowship?

No. Fellows cannot hold simultaneous full-time research posts. Fellows can apply to the college for permission to undertake small amounts of paid work alongside the fellowship, provided it pertains to the advancement of their research.

31. How much teaching is expected or permitted, and how is it paid?

There is a possibility for a small amount of teaching, paid at university or college rates.

32. Can a Fellow take an intermission to hold a position elsewhere?

Fellows may request to take up a fixed-term intermission in order to hold fixed-term roles elsewhere after their first year. These requests are considered by the Research Committee on a case by case basis.

33. What accommodation is available, and does it suit families or partners?

The College has a range of accommodation both for individuals and for families.

34. Are travel costs for the interview covered? Can candidates interview remotely?

Accommodation for the interview will be paid by the College and travel costs will be reimbursed after attendance. In exceptional circumstances remote interviews might be arranged.

35. What adjustments are available for applicants with disabilities or caring responsibilities, and what parental leave exists during the fellowship?

Parental leave is available under University and UK rules. Adjustments for applicants with disabilities or caring responsibilities are best enquired about in specific terms when you received an invitation for interview.

36. Who is the right referee, and can referees come from the candidate's own institution or be the PhD supervisor?

Applicants should seek references from people who know their research very well and can speak to past and future research.

37. Can I apply for more than one King's fellowship competition in the same year?

Yes.

38. What does it mean in practice to be a member of the Governing Body, and what time does college life take?

The College is a self-governing institution which means that Fellows contribute to its running and decision-making. This requires collaborative work on committees and involvement of all members. Governing Body normally meets twice a term, and many committees meet only once a term.

39. What access will Fellows have to Cambridge libraries, archives, faculties and funding for workshops or conferences?

Members of College are also members of the University, and therefore have access to University libraries and archives, and may have affiliation with relevant faculties upon arrangement.

40. How will the Silk Roads Programme's lectures, invited visitors, and other Fellows interact with the successful candidate?

The Fellow is expected to take part in the organization and successful running of the regular lectures and academic events.