

The British Academy People Strategy

2020–2022



Our role and purpose

The British Academy is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences. We mobilise these disciplines to understand the world and shape a brighter future.

From artificial intelligence to climate change, from building prosperity to improving well-being – today's complex challenges can only be resolved by deepening our insight into people, cultures and societies.

We invest in researchers and projects across the UK and overseas, engage the public with fresh thinking and debates, and bring together scholars, government, business and civil society to influence policy for the benefit of everyone.



Our vision and values

The Academy's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 sets out what the Academy aims to accomplish by 2022. Our vision is for the Academy to be at the heart of efforts to tackle the complex and interconnected challenges facing societies today. We are doing this by ensuring connections between our own and other disciplines, so that we can better understand and shape the great themes of our age. These include the future of work, peace, trust, justice and equity, global security, demographic and technological change, respect for diversity and difference.

We are maximising our global reach and engagement, and our support for the best ideas and insights will foster the next generation of researchers. We aspire to be part of a humanities and social sciences community that is genuinely diverse – representative of all corners of the UK and across disciplines. Through our funding schemes and in partnership with universities and others, we are examining the barriers that prevent people of particular backgrounds from progressing in their academic careers. The Academy's values underpin this vision:

Leadership

We count among our Fellowship the world's leading minds from the humanities and social sciences. We are committed to identifying and supporting the next generation of leaders. We invest in the most outstanding and exciting people and projects in our field, wherever they are found, to advance our disciplines.

Integrity

We act always on evidence and our academic independence is paramount and non-negotiable. Our long history of trustworthiness and impartiality provides the foundation for our enduring relevance.

Enlightenment

We believe in the value of knowledge both for personal enrichment and for the health of society. We are continually unlocking new insight and fresh perspectives. We engage with curious minds and promote a life of learning. We help to provide the very best insight into people, culture and societies.

Connectedness

We collaborate with partners across the globe, bringing people together to exchange knowledge and test reasoning. We demonstrate the relevance of our research to all people, societies and to the future of humanity. We are active internationally, funding research of global significance, and we use our convening power to bring together diverse communities. We share ideas to shape policy and enrich public debate.



The Academy exists to deepen understanding, enabling everyone to learn, progress and prosper

These sit alongside our employee values: Respect, Fairness, Trust, Transparency, Flexibility, *Training, Encouragement, Teamwork, Feedback, Fulfilment, Reward*. The values in italics signify “something of importance, of value”, rather than being “principles or standards of behaviour.”

There is also a set of SMT values, agreed in December 2018: Respect, Collaboration, Responsibility, Collegiality, Honesty, Evidence-based, United, Positive, Reflective, Innovative. The Academy Renewal *Culture and Values workstream* is currently developing a new set of organisational values. This will help to clarify and rationalise our values going forward.

Our strategic priorities

1. To speak up for the humanities and social sciences
2. To invest in the very best researchers and research
3. To inform and enrich debate around society's greatest questions
4. To ensure sustained international engagement and collaboration
5. To make the most of our assets to secure the Academy for the future

People are our most important asset

This People Strategy sets out the framework within which we will enable our people to deliver and achieve the Academy's priorities.

Structure and staffing

The Academy is a registered charity, based in a single central London location. We currently employ almost 100 people, in seven job levels, with some contracted-out services. Employee numbers have doubled in the last five years. Our current structure reflects this growth and the Academy's main functions: Development, Policy, Research and Communications, supported by Resources and the Secretariat,

Academy Renewal

Renewal was launched in Autumn 2019 as an organisational development programme, focusing on a *“healthy workplace culture, where staff have the opportunity to develop their skills and experience in a respectful, supportive and collegial environment”*. The programme workstreams are: Culture, including values & behaviours; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Enhanced HR functions; L&D Strategy; Staff Comms & engagement; Staff wellbeing and green agenda; Digital transformation. To ensure alignment, those workstreams which relate to key workforce areas will now be taken forward as part of our People Strategy.

There are also some other Renewal-related working groups (e.g. building and office transformation, GDPR). The roll-out of improved IT and the building project will support culture change and make a positive difference for staff and how they work.

Aims and objectives

Our aims and objectives are cross-cutting and reflect our overall aspiration. They will be achieved and enabled through the implementation of change in the workforce areas which follow below.

1. Attract and recruit talented people to work for us

- Employing and retaining people who have the skills and capability we need
- Recruiting the best from across all social and diverse backgrounds

2. Recognise and reward staff for their contribution

- Providing fair remuneration which reflects performance, competency and behaviours
- Offering a competitive but affordable benefits package

3. Develop and enable excellent leadership and management

- Setting clear expectations, encouraging accountability and responsibility
- Providing leaders and managers with the training they need

4. Foster a culture of inclusivity, wellbeing and resilience

- Taking action to improve our work environment and ways of working
- Encouraging collaboration and learning across functions

5. Maximise potential and support career aspirations

- Enabling all staff to learn and develop whilst working for the Academy
- Empowering staff involvement and engagement in change

Key workforce areas

The following workforce areas will be specific strands in the Strategy implementation plan. Implementation across these workforce areas achieves the aims and objectives above.

Recruitment and selection

- Review our approach to recruitment and current turnover
- Analyse attraction, retention and exit data
- Consider wider best practice, including diversity
- Ensure approach to selection is robust, fair and transparent

Pay and benefits

- Ensure our pay strategy and policy enable us to attract, recruit and retain
- Review balance between flexibility / rate for the job and equity
- Review pay structure and pay progression arrangements
- Review job evaluation framework
- Consider the link between performance and pay
- Review benefits package and clarify policies

Performance and development

- Improve performance management and appraisal policies
- Review competencies
- Agree Learning & Development Strategy and improve planning
- Assess baseline skills and capability gaps
- Prioritise leadership and management training
- Review approach to developing talent and potential

Diversity and inclusion

- Improve recording of equality and diversity data
- Agree aspiration for employee diversity
- Take action on bullying, harassment and discrimination
- Review complaints procedures and support framework

Wellbeing

- Clarify and update flexible and out-of-hours working framework
- Take forward wellbeing model for a thriving workforce
- Review current support for health and wellbeing

Academy Renewal

Staff engagement with workforce change is essential. There is an established Staff Engagement Forum and a Renewal *Staff Communications & Engagement workstream*. The Renewal workstreams have provided staff with additional opportunities to be involved. Re-positioning the *L&D Strategy, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion* (as appropriate) and *Staff Wellbeing* workstreams within the People Strategy will help to focus consultation and engagement on implementing change.

Staff satisfaction, as measured in the Staff Survey 2019, has reduced from 75.3% (2018) to 70.8% although scores in specific areas are relatively high. The survey provides a further opportunity to engage staff in making the Academy a great place to work.

Implementation

The Strategy will be accompanied by a comprehensive implementation plan, reflecting the five workforce areas, and setting out success measures (to be agreed). As part of this, we will explore external accreditation and benchmarking; for example, the Investors in People framework. Implementation challenge and review will be provided by the Academy's Senior Management Team.

Implementation will also be underpinned by HR excellence and planned improvements to HR processes; the visibility and accessibility of HR policies and procedures; HR data and management information; and HR communications. This work will subsume the Renewal *Enhanced HR functions workstream*.

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