

Venice Fellowships Programme

Guidance Notes

Programme Partners 2026

**Open Call for applications from UK-based
Institutions and Organisations**

Published: 25th July 2025

Deadline for Applications: 5th September 2025

OPEN CALL FOR 2026 UK PROGRAMME PARTNERS

The British Council is looking for UK based organisations and institutions to join the 2026 Venice Fellowships Programme as Programme Partners. The Programme offers a unique opportunity for emerging creatives to spend a month in Venice invigilating and activating the British Pavilion, making new connections, networking and developing their creative practice.

The Programme Partners are central to supporting emerging creatives and future talents, and we welcome both returning and new partners each year. Partners recruit and identify the best candidates from their organisations to participate in a one-month residency during the 61st International Art Exhibition in Venice.

We are looking for applications from the following organisations:

- ❖ UK-based Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- ❖ UK-based Creative (Arts, Craft, Design, Architecture) Organisation, Cultural/Creative Hub, Social Enterprise, Charity, or CIC.

**We invite prospective Partners to apply for the
2026 Fellowships Programme via the online [Application Form](#).**

The deadline for applications is Friday 5th September 2025, AT 23:59 BST.

For queries or requests for further information, please contact Sophie Lucas, Venice Partnerships and Programme Manager, at venicefellowships@britishcouncil.org.

Information and Q&A Sessions

These sessions are open to prospective UK Institutions and Organisations that meet the Programme Partner requirements, as listed on page 8.

Group Partner Calls

Prospective Partners are encouraged to join an information session before submitting an application.

Option 1

Tuesday, 5th August 2025, 12pm-1pm BST
Register here: [Teams link](#)

Option 2

Thursday, 21st August 2025, 12pm-1pm BST
Register here: [Teams link](#)

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1. Introduction

The [British Council](#) is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

UK at the Venice Biennale

Since 1937, the British Council has managed the [British Pavilion](#) at the Venice Biennale: overseeing the selection process of artists and architects, and preserving the historic building itself.

La Biennale di Venezia

The Venice Biennale (*Italian: La Biennale di Venezia*) is an international cultural exhibition hosted annually in Venice, Italy by the Biennale Foundation. The Biennale has been operating since 1895, which makes it the oldest of its kind. The official Biennale exhibition is spread across two venues in the east of the city: the Arsenale and the Giardini. The Giardini, an area of parkland, houses the Central exhibition Pavilion and 29 national pavilions. Each of them, including the British Pavilion, presents its own showcase from a particular country or region.

61st International Art Exhibition

The [61st International Art Exhibition](#) – *In Minor Keys* by Koyo Kouoh – will run from Saturday 9th May to Sunday 22nd November 2026 (preview 6th, 7th, 8th May) at the Giardini and the Arsenale venues, and in various locations around Venice.

2026 British Pavilion Exhibition

The world-renowned British artist, Lubaina Himid RA, CBE (b. 1954, Zanzibar), will represent Great Britain and deliver a major solo exhibition of new work at the British Pavilion.

Known for a pioneering practice which addresses themes of race, history, feminism, cultural memory and identity, Lubaina Himid frequently employs storytelling and historical research to challenge dominant Eurocentric narratives and highlight the overlooked contributions of Black figures in Western history.

Himid lives and works in Preston, UK and is Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire. One of the pioneers of the Black British Art Movement, Himid curated several significant exhibitions in the 1980s and 1990s, such as *Five Black Women* (1983) at the Africa Centre, *London and The Thin Black Line* (1985) at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London, both of which showcased the work of Black female artists in response to their exclusion from mainstream galleries. In 2017, Himid was awarded the Turner Prize and in 2018 she received the honorary title of CBE for her contributions to the arts.

“Himid pushes the boundaries of painting practice through sound and sculptural installation, incorporating new materials, textures, narratives and formats in her work. Combining a radical optimism with social critique, she will transform the Pavilion with her vibrant, articulate and spatially dynamic artworks. Himid’s exhibitions take the visitor on an exploratory journey, which is why it’s so exciting to imagine how she will use the enfilade of six spaces in the British Pavilion. We are truly delighted to be working with Lubaina Himid on the British Council commission for 2026.”

Emma Dexter, Director Visual Arts and the British Council Collection and Commissioner of the British Pavilion

Venice Fellowships Programme

The [Venice Fellowships Programme](#) is a key part of the British Council’s presence in Venice, supporting the exhibition as well as being a platform for the development of emerging creative professionals and future leaders.

The Programme offers a unique opportunity for emerging creatives to spend a month in Venice during the world’s most important art and architecture exhibitions, broadening their perspective, making new connections, networking and developing their creative practice.

As Exhibition Ambassadors at the British Pavilion, the Fellows invigilate and activate the exhibition. They engage visiting members of the public and expand the impact of the show. Alongside this practical residency, Fellows have the opportunity to develop their own research or practical creative projects and use the Biennale as a platform for artistic and professional development. Through these contributions, Fellows elevate the British Pavilion to an important reference point for universities and creative organisations around the world.

“Liverpool School of Architecture have been pleased to continue to partner and support British Council in its Venice Fellowship programme. The Fellowship provides a fantastic opportunity to be immersed in and around critical conversation, environment and artistic endeavour of the highest quality as part of the international platform of the Venice Biennale. The impact of the residency experience has stayed with our LSA Fellows long beyond their time in Venice - opening doors, widening perspectives, developing skills and beginning friendships. It has been a total pleasure to be involved.”

Sandy Britton RIBA, Liverpool School of Architecture, University of Liverpool

“It was a huge pleasure for Venture Arts to be a Venice Fellowship Partner in 2024. The project has been overwhelmingly positive and transformative for our artists, staff and wider supported studio networks. Michael and Emelia had an incredible month in Venice. They developed personally, professionally and artistically, interacting with visitors, colleagues, artists and art workers from all over the world. Experimenting and creating artwork for an entire month has been enormously impactful on their individual practices.

We commend the British Council for opening up the fellowship programme and we worked closely with BC and Pavilion staff to make the process and experience more accessible. Michael and Emelia’s participation at Venice Biennale, in public facing work, representing UK artists and rich cultural perspectives, will have increased visibility of learning disabled people in important roles at such prestigious events. We hope that such representation by neurodivergent artists in the most significant art show globally will help to drive real change in the art world.

Venture Arts’ experience with Venice Fellowship will not only open up opportunities for learning disabled people to work and travel to residencies internationally but also contribute to learning and to building a robust infrastructure in significant organisations like British Council and Venice Biennale to meaningfully support more neurodivergent artists in the future.”

Sarah Boulter, Curator & Creative Producer, Venture Arts

2. Fellows

For 2026, British Council has a total of sixty (60) Fellowships places available. These Fellows will be selected and divided into Travel Groups.

Each Fellow will receive a Travel Grant of £3,300 (three thousand and three hundred British pounds).

The Fellowship has two major components:

1. **Exhibition Ambassador:** Fellows will participate in a one-month group residency inside the British Pavilion: invigilating the exhibition spaces, engaging with the public, leading tours and acting as the face of the British Council and its exhibition commission.

Skills developed: team-work and problem-solving; personal confidence, resilience and adaptability; public speaking; public engagement; exhibition interpretation; communication and foreign language; cultural awareness and understanding; time-management.

Key responsibilities:

- Invigilate the exhibition spaces, galleries, and external locations
- Arrive on time, well-prepared, and ready to be collaborative and welcoming Offer a warm and friendly welcoming approach to all visitors.
- Support visitors with access needs when required (e.g. directing to the lift)
- Lead public tours and talks
- Hand out guides and supporting visitors with exhibition information.
- Monitor and reporting the conditions of the exhibition space and installations
- Report issues and/or risks to the Pavilion Management team
- Capture visitors' feedback using a digital form and iPad
- Monitor visitor numbers
- Proactively undertake independent research to understand and interpret the exhibition

Requested time commitment is 23h per week (not including travel to/from the Pavilion) during the period of one month. The British Pavilion Rota system will be set out by a contracted Venice Delivery Partner and will vary from half to full day shifts throughout the week and weekend, as the Biennale is open to public from Tuesdays to Sundays, 10am-6pm or 11am-7pm.

2. **Research or creative project:** Fellows will undertake fieldwork in Venice to inform their creative practice, research and/or academic interests. This fieldwork should be connected to the themes of Venice, La Biennale, the 61st International Art Exhibition, the British Pavilion and/or the 2026 commissioned exhibition.

Skills developed: time-management and planning; personal confidence and resilience; flexibility and collaboration; research, mapping and testing ideas; creativity and problem-solving; communication; audience engagement; project management.

Previous Fellows' project examples can be found in the 2022, 2023 and 2024 [Yearbooks](#).

Eligibility and Requirements

We are seeking individuals that meet the following criteria:

Eligibility Criteria	
1.	Candidates must be over 18 years old and based in the UK.
2.	Candidates must be enrolled or connected to a selected 2026 Programme Partner.
3.	The British Council welcomes creative individuals from all backgrounds, areas of knowledge and/or academic departments, and we particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups in the creative sector, including those from the following: global ethnic majority, disabled, LGBTQIA+, and those facing social barriers to accessing the arts, the creative industries, and other economic opportunities.
4.	Candidates are required to be fluent in English. Fluency in other languages is not required.
APPLICATION	
5.	<p><i>Motivation and Vision:</i> Candidates must demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an interest in one or more of the following: Venice; La Biennale; the 61st International Art Exhibition; the British Pavilion; and/or the 2026 commissioned exhibition;• a passion for one of more of the following: visual art; architecture; design; craft; performance; curatorial practice; exhibition interpretation; education; audience engagement; and/or culture and its social value;• an interest in pursuing a career in the creative arts;• a desire to work in collaboration, build a community of practice, engage with peers, and bring a horizontal learning (<i>"I know something you don't know, and you know something I don't know"</i>), genuine camaraderie, active listening, an interest in innovative, creative, flexible, inclusive, and generous approaches.
6.	<p><i>Invigilation Role:</i> Candidates must demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• previous experience of a public facing role. Preferably this past role would be within an arts or cultural venue, however, applications from those who have worked in other public-facing settings are welcome. Candidates need to demonstrate experience in interacting with members of the public;• a willingness to experiment and step outside of their comfort zone (in the spirit of experimenting, trying, learning, and adapting);• an enthusiasm for instigating conversation with members of the public, making new connections and engaging with diverse audiences.

7.	<p><i>Research or Creative Project:</i> Candidates must outline an idea of a research or creative project that can be developed during the Venice residency month: this must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include the values of co-design and collaboration, genuine camaraderie and generosity, community-network building (Venice and/or UK), inclusion and interdisciplinarity practice; this could include connecting with other Fellows, creative practitioners working at La Biennale and participating pavilions, members of the public or individuals within their own community; • be connected to or reflects one or more of the following: Venice; La Biennale; the 61st International Art Exhibition; the British Pavilion and/or the 2026 commissioned exhibition; • be realistic within the scope of the Fellowships Programme, taking into account the 23hr weekly commitment of invigilation, additional time to experience Venice and connect with peers; • show a clear sense of what value the project could bring to its audience/community and how they would like to continue to develop and disseminate on their return to the UK with their community group in a mutual and collaborative approach.
	PREPARATION
8.	Candidates are asked to anticipate their individual access requirements (if relevant) when applying as a Fellow for the Programme, specifically taking into account travelling to Venice and living in the city for a full month. Candidates are requested to discuss any access needs with their Programme Partner.
9.	Candidates must be able to manage, handle and book all the requirements for their own trip to Venice (including travel, visas, and accommodation).
10.	Candidates are required to book and attend a 15-minute online introductory meeting with the Induction facilitator prior to 27 th February 2026.
11.	<p>Candidates must commit to and attend in full the online Induction series: 25th February, 4th March, 11th March, 18th March, 25th March and 1st April 2026, 6:30pm – 8:15pm UK time via Zoom/Teams.</p> <p>Candidates are asked to actively engage with the Induction series. The series is designed to prepare Fellows for the Venice residency month and build a community of practice together via talks, peer-led workshops, and networking breakout sessions.</p> <p>Candidates are required to participate in an evaluation of the Induction School.</p>
12.	Candidates requiring access support are required to complete an Access Support Application Form by 27 th February 2026 and discuss suitable arrangements with their Programme Partner, British Council and M+B Studio. Candidates may be asked for additional information and documentation.

13.	Candidates are encouraged to undertake their own independent research into La Biennale, the British Pavilion and the content of 2026 commission. British Council will support this by sharing information and opportunities for learning (reading lists, articles, public programming talks).
	IN VENICE
14.	<p>Candidates must be available to travel and live in Venice for a full month period (30 days) from May – September 2026.</p> <p>On the application form, candidates are required to indicate three separate Travel Groups in which they are available/prefer to travel. Candidates must be available to travel to Venice in the time windows indicated. Travel Groups will be confirmed in January 2026.</p>
15.	Candidates are responsible for liaising directly with the owner / organization managing the accommodation rental. In unusual cases where the Fellow needs support from the British Council and Programme Partner, it is the responsibility of the candidate to make contact directly to both the British Council and the Programme Partner about the situation in a clear and timely manner, particularly anticipating if there is a need to communicate outside UK working hours.
16.	Candidates are requested to keep their Programme Partner informed during their time in Venice. This may include providing quotations or receipts for agreed access support used whilst in Venice.
17.	Candidates are required to dedicate time to their research or creative project during their residency month in Venice.
18.	Candidates are encouraged to attend additional cultural events in Venice in their Travel Groups. British Council will support this by arranging tours of museums and national pavilions at La Biennale.
	INVIGILATION RESPONSIBILITIES
19.	<p>Candidates must commit to the duties of the invigilation role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invigilate the exhibition spaces, galleries, and external locations • Arrive on time, well-prepared, and ready to be collaborative and welcoming • Offer a warm and friendly welcoming approach to all visitors. • Support visitors with access needs when required (e.g. directing to the lift) • Lead public tours and talks • Hand out guides and supporting visitors with exhibition information. • Monitor and reporting the conditions of the exhibition space and installations • Report issues and/or risks to the Pavilion Management team • Capture visitors' feedback using a digital form and iPad • Monitor visitor numbers • Proactively undertake independent research to understand and interpret the exhibition

20.	<p>Candidates must commit to the full set of invigilation shifts (23hrs a week in total, not including travel to/from the British Pavilion). The Rota system will be set out by a contracted Pavilion Management company (M+B Studio) and will vary from half to full day shifts throughout the week and weekend. La Biennale is open to public from Tuesdays to Sundays, from 10am to 6pm or 11am to 7pm, with some extraordinary openings on Mondays.</p> <p><i>The British Council shall be entitled to terminate the Grant Agreement with written notice to the Recipient should there be persistent absence or late arrival at the Pavilion, if judged by British Council staff to warrant such action.</i></p>
21.	<p>Candidates are responsible for arranging swaps with other Fellows and communicating changes to the Venice Steward Coordinator via email. The Venice Steward Coordinator will review the proposal and will accept the request if there is a fair balance of shifts and each Fellow is fulfilling their commitment of 23hrs a week.</p>
22.	<p>Candidates must report and communicate to the British Council team in advance (minimum of 10 working days) if there are any changes to their initial plans on travel dates, health conditions and access needs in Venice. British Council staff will support and accommodate such requests whenever possible and if communicated in advance.</p>
23.	<p>Candidates are asked to comply with the behaviours and British Council's code of conduct as outlined in the Guidance Notes. Candidates assume full responsibility for their behaviour and actions throughout the Programme duration and in all locations and understand that misconduct and inappropriate behaviour may result in the termination of the contract as subject to the Grant Agreement.</p> <p><i>The British Council shall be entitled to terminate the Grant Agreement with immediate effect and with written notice to the Recipient should this behaviour be judged by British Council staff to warrant such action.</i></p>
RESEARCH OR CREATIVE PROJECT	
24.	<p>Candidates will undertake a project that informs their creative practice, research and/or academic interests. The proposed idea will be developed as a small-sized creative or research project during the one-month period in Venice and upon return to the UK and must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include the values of co-design and collaboration, genuine camaraderie and generosity, community-network building (Venice and/or UK), inclusion and interdisciplinarity practice; this could include connecting with other Fellows, creative practitioners working at La Biennale and participating pavilions, members of the public or individuals within their own community; • be connected to or reflects one or more of the following: Venice; La Biennale; the 61st International Art Exhibition; the British Pavilion and/or the 2026 commissioned exhibition;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be realistic within the scope of the Fellowships Programme, taking into account the 23hr weekly commitment of invigilation, additional time to experience Venice and connect with peers; • show a clear sense of what value the project could bring to its audience/community and how they would like to continue to develop and disseminate on their return to the UK with their community group in a mutual and collaborative approach. <p>Please note that British Council cannot provide studio space, materials or additional budget for the development of projects.</p>
25.	Candidates are required to submit a final project proposal one month before leaving for Venice. This proposal is to contain a summary, objectives, aims regarding social value, steps to be taken, peer connections and collaboration, and a plan for time schedule/management during the residency month in Venice.
26.	Candidates are encouraged to discuss potential showcasing and exchange opportunities with their Programme Partner. British Council will support these channels and opportunities where possible.
27.	Candidates are asked to give a 5-10 min overview of their creative project to the rest of their Travel Group as part of the Exchange Day on the final day of their Travel Month.
	AFTER VENICE
28.	Candidates are required to share and showcase their findings, learnings and project closing/continuation in the UK within twelve weeks of their return from Venice. This could be a written, audio, video, illustrations, animations, photos, blog/webpage, or any other creative format piece as agreed with British Council team or the Programme Partner.
29.	British Council together with the Programme Partner will seek opportunities to promote and present Fellows' involvement with the Programme, as well as showcase project outcomes, experience and/or learnings via digital or other formats.
30.	Candidates may be invited by the British Council to attend sharing sessions, talks or conferences to share their experience, learnings and recommendations, as well as project showcasing via online gatherings and/or face-to-face.
31.	Candidates are required to participate in an evaluation of the Venice experience in order to refine and inform future programming.

Access

We encourage applications from D/deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent individuals.

We also recognize that applicants may need to put in place unusual/atypical childcare arrangements (beyond those used routinely).

It is the responsibility of Partners to anticipate and discuss the individual access requirements of Fellows at the application stage for Fellows, specifically taking into account travelling to Venice and living in the city for a full month.

We invite candidates to submit their application in a format that is most accessible for them (written/audio/video), using support workers as necessary, to ensure it is submitted in written or spoken English.

Access Support

During the application process, Fellows must indicate on the Application Form whether they require / may require access support and a brief description of the nature of access support that may be required. If shortlisted, we ask Partners to discuss any reasonable adjustments or support that may be needed with the Fellow.

If shortlisted, The British Council will provide an Access Support Application Form, to be completed by the Fellow in discussion with the Programme Partner, providing details of the support needed and any additional reasonable costs required to enable the Fellow to fully participate in the Programme. The British Council will determine, after assessing the Application, if the declared access needs **can be met with reasonable adjustments and/or support** from the Programme Partner and British Council,

Access funding will be allocated once all Access Support Application Forms have been submitted, assessed and approved by the British Council and Programme Partner.

British Council will work collaboratively with the Programme Partner to respond to individual access requirements and provide adjustments and support, including any reasonable additional costs required to enable the Fellow to fully participate in the Programme.

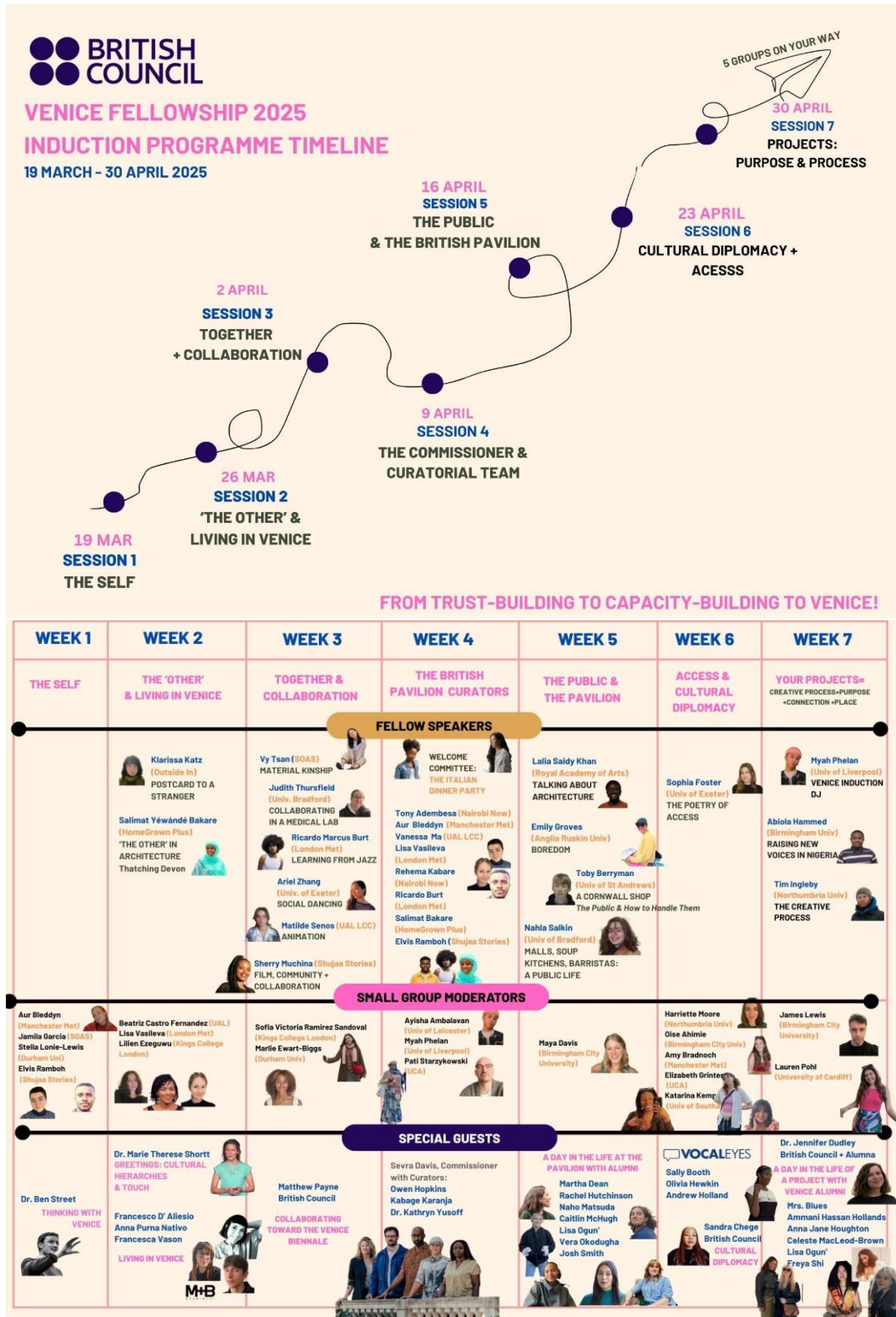
British Council will liaise with the Pavilion Management company (M+B Studio) to make necessary arrangements to support these needs. It is then the responsibility of the Fellow to keep British Council and the Programme Partner updated during their residency month in Venice. This may include providing quotations or receipts for any agreed services used while in Venice.

If the declared access needs **cannot be met with reasonable adjustments and/or support** the British Council and Programme Partner will provide a justification for why the needs cannot be met, and Fellows will have the opportunity to modify their participation or withdraw from the Programme.

Online Induction

Fellows are required to attend a six-week Online Induction series from February to April 2026. This series of participatory talks and workshops is designed to prepare for the Venice residency month and build a community of practice with the full Fellows cohort.

Illustrative Induction Programme Outline (from 2025 Fellowship Programme)



“It was magical to see how we came together in such a short period - I did not think this could be possible in an online environment. I was nervous but the small group discussions and the warmth in the room put me at ease. Meeting Becky (Facilitator, British Council) before the Induction was very helpful because she listened to my story and ideas, and talked about how I could be comfortable in an online space with so many people that I did not know. Now I feel I know them all and we are connected even if different.”

Past Fellow

Additional Opportunities

There are additional opportunities for Fellows to attend cultural events and network with creative individuals during their month in Venice. Subject to availability, these events may include:

- Private tours of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, led by the 2026 Guggenheim Interns
- Art Night Venezia, organized by Ca' Foscari University and the City of Venice
- Feast of the Redentore
- Private Exhibition Tour at Ocean Space
- Events at National Pavilions within the Biennale

3. Programme Partners

Target Partners

- ❖ UK-based Higher Education Institution (HEI).
- ❖ UK-based Creative (Arts, Craft, Design, Architecture) Organisation, Cultural/Creative Hub, Social Enterprise, Charity, or CIC.

Eligibility and Requirements

Potential organisations must fulfil the following criteria in order to be eligible to participate in the Programme:

	Eligibility Criteria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.	Are either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a UK-based (England, Wales, Scotland, NI) and registered Higher Education Institution <i>or</i>• a UK-based Creative (Arts, Craft, Design, Architecture) Organisation, Cultural/Creative Hub, Social Enterprise, Charity, or CIC.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Have a demonstrated commitment to eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, and fostering positive relations between people from different groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Commit to the social values and impact of the Fellowships Programme and encourage Fellows from your organisation to consider how best to apply those values when planning their residency month and project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Provide financial support of £2,300 (two thousand and three hundred British pounds) per Fellow. Please note that this total amount goes entirely to your Fellow's Travel Grant and is matched by £1,000 from the British Council.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Advertise the opportunity internally for no less than 48 days from September to November 2025. Promote the Fellowship opportunity to your networks in September 2025 to ensure that a wide number of applicants can hear about and apply for the Programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Measure and assess candidates in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This includes ensuring that potential Fellows are declaring and discussing any access needs with your organization prior to the submission of their application.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Shortlist 2-5 eligible candidates per Fellowship place. Partners must shortlist at least 2 candidates. The candidates must meet the Programme criteria and timeline provided by the British Council.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Screen the shortlisted candidates before sending the final shortlist to British Council. Partners are asked to hold an informal screening interview with each candidate to confirm the following:	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm candidate's rationale for applying and level of interest. • Confirm that the candidate understands the commitment of the role. • Confirm that the candidate demonstrates the required level of fluency in English for the role. • Discuss potential access requirements with the candidate. 	
9.	Be the main point of contact in the UK for the Fellow and the British Council.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Ensure each Fellow fully commits to the Programme, including attending the Online Induction series	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Ensure each Fellow completes the necessary arrangements for travel to Venice, including visa application if required.	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Provide practical guidance to each Fellow pre-Venice trip to support language barriers, living abroad, making connections and how to make the most of their Fellowship.	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Work collaboratively with the British Council to respond to any individual access requirements and, where possible, meet additional reasonable costs required to enable the Fellow to fully participate in the Programme. We expect Partners to contribute 50% of any such agreed costs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Commit to a minimum of 8 hours' time-commitment per Fellow from your Institution/Organisation to support and mentor them in the planning and development of their project/research before, during, and after their Venice residency. This will also require co-developing a clear vision and plan with them about how they will bring back their project/research findings to their peers and UK community groups in a mutual and collaborative approach.	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Proactively seek showcasing opportunities for each individual Fellow to promote and present their Venice residency and project/research outcomes – we encourage partners to look for ways Fellows can bring back their learnings/findings to their peers and local community groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	Work in partnership with the British Council to support the Programme through creative development opportunities in the UK and Venice.	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	OPTIONAL – where possible, Partners are asked to contribute towards travel expenses to enable Fellows to attend events linked to the exhibition or Fellowships Programme. This may include a networking event at the British Council's office in Stratford, London.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Role of British Council

	Role
1.	Provide £1,000 (one thousand British pounds) per Fellow for their individual Travel Grant.
2.	Review the 2-5 shortlisted candidates from the Partner organization, appoint the final Fellows (1-3 per Partner organisation) and allocate Travel Groups.
3.	Develop and deliver all Programme logistics and administration, including issuing grant agreements and Travel Grant payments to Fellows. Each Fellow will receive a Travel Grant of £3,300 (three thousand and three hundred British pounds)
4.	Co-ordinate Travel Groups and provide briefing materials to prepare Fellows for their residency month in Venice.
5.	Facilitate a six-week online Induction series for Fellows to build a collaborative community and prepare them for their time in Venice.
6.	Offer monthly drop-in Q&A sessions for Fellows in the time before their departure to Venice.
7.	Deliver on-site briefings and exchange sessions at the British Pavilion for each Travel Group.
8.	Supervise and manage the Pavilion Management Team in Venice to ensure that Fellows are supported in their invigilation role at the Pavilion.
9.	Address, with the support of the Pavilion Management Team, any inappropriate behaviour and actions, persistent absence or late arrival at the Pavilion, including terminating the Grant Agreement, with written notice, if judged by British Council staff to warrant such action.
10.	Support the showcase of the Fellows' projects in digital and/or physical formats accordingly.
11.	Work collaboratively with each Partner to respond to any individual access requirements and, where possible, meet additional reasonable costs required to enable the Fellow to fully participate in the Programme. We expect Partners to contribute 50% of any such agreed costs.
12.	Whenever possible, broker connections/introductions between Fellows and UK/ Italian organisations/individuals on a case-by-case basis and accordingly to each individual Fellow's need. <i>Please note that this will not always be guaranteed due to British Council staff capacity and availability.</i>



Vernissage

The British Council extends an invitation to Programme Partners to join launch events at the Pavilion during Vernissage (Pre-Opening week).

Marketing, Press & Social Media

Programme Partners and Fellows are encouraged to share the news of their involvement in the Programme.

British Council will provide assets to use for promotion. Partners are also welcome to design their own tailored assets and campaigns.

Fellows may be invited to participate in social media campaigns as part of the British Council's digital channels: Instagram [@britisharts](#) and LinkedIn [@BritishCouncil](#)

All Fellows will be showcased in a final showcasing Yearbook. This will follow a similar format to the 2022, 2023 and 2024 [Yearbooks](#).

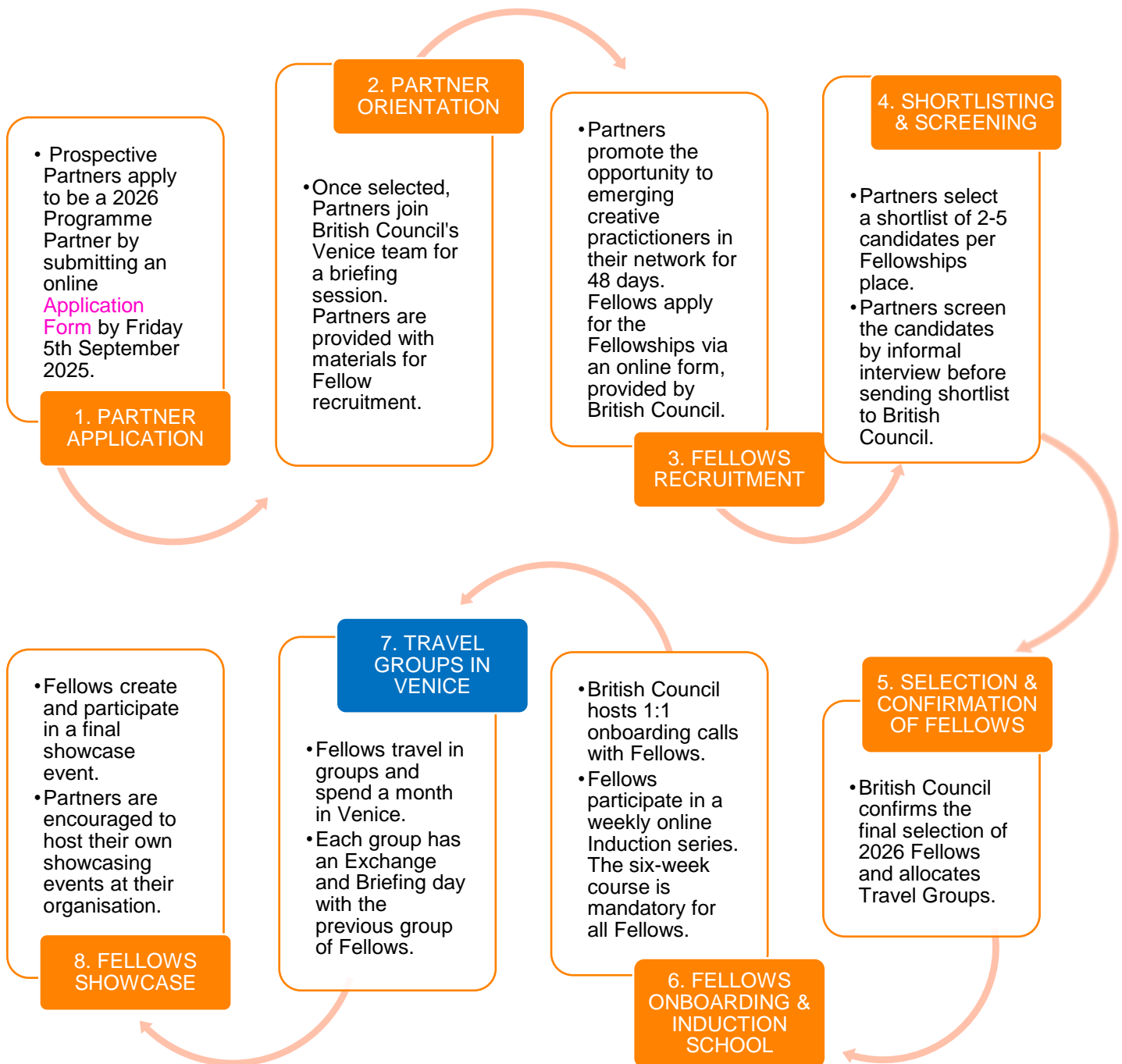
The British Council has specific spokespeople designated and trained to speak to the media and there are protocols in place to manage press overall. We ask Fellows to direct journalists to the British Council press contact.

We ask Fellows to be aware that journalists may see the Fellows as a representative of the British Pavilion or the British Council which means there is a potential risk Fellows could be quoted/identified in the press. For their protection, we ask them to follow the process above.

The British Council recognizes that a personal social media presence is owned by an individual; while we respect an individual's right to express their own opinions, Fellows are reminded to be mindful that people may see the Fellows as a representative of the British Council/British Pavilion when participating in the Programme.

Fellows are kindly asked to behave responsibly and respectfully in posts and exchanges on social media, paying attention to tone of voice and use of language. Due to the prominence of La Biennale, social media posts can generate a lot of engagement and sometimes criticism. Fellows are requested not to share anything that could reasonably be perceived as harassing, threatening, defamatory, derogatory, intimidating, or discriminatory or which may create a legal liability for the British Council.

Overview of Process



2025/26 Timeline

Date	Activity
Friday 25 th July 2025	Open Call for 2026 Programme Partners opens.
Friday 5 th September 2025, at 23:59 BST	Open Call for 2026 Programme Partners closes.
Before or by Monday 15 th September 2025	British Council to confirm Partners and share the 2026 Fellows Application Criteria and Guidelines.
From September to end of November 2025 (a minimum of 48 days is required)	Partners to promote the opportunity to their networks ensuring the call reaches a wide network of potential applicants. <i>Please note that a minimum of 48 days (promotion and open to candidates to apply) from September to November 2025 is required.</i>
Friday 5 th December 2025	Deadline for partners to shortlist and screen 2-5 candidates (per Fellowship place) and submit to the British Council
Before or by Friday 30 th January 2026	British Council to communicate the final selected Fellow(s) to each Partner
February – April 2026 25 th February, 4 th March, 11 th March, 18 th March, 25 th March, 1 st April 6:30pm – 8:15pm UK time	British Council to host the Online Induction School for all Fellows. <i>As a condition of their grant, Fellows are required to attend every session, or the British Council has the right to revoke the Fellowship.</i> British Council to host optional monthly online drop-in sessions for all Fellows
61st International Art Exhibition Saturday 9th May to Sunday 22nd November 2026 (preview 6th, 7th, 8th May 2026)	
Sunday 3 rd May – Tuesday, 17 th November 2026	Travel Groups in Venice: 1: Sunday 3 rd May - Tuesday 2 nd June 2026 2: Sunday 31 st May - Tuesday 30 th June 2026 3: Sunday 28 th June - Tuesday 28 th July 2026 4: Sunday 26 th July - Tuesday 25 th August 2026 5: Sunday 23 rd August - Tuesday 22 nd September 2026 6: Sunday 20 th September - Tuesday 20 th October 2026 7: Sunday 18 th October - Tuesday 17 th November 2026
Autumn 2026	Final Showcasing event

External Sponsors

Programme Partners are welcome to work with external funders to support their Fellows.

- Programme Partner to follow the standard contracting process and documentation.
- Recruitment, selection, onboarding and management of Fellows to follow the standard process as outlined in the Programme Partner Guidance Notes and agreement.
- The Partner to formally register the potential involvement of the External Sponsor with British Council before confirming their involvement.
- British Council and Fellowships Programme marketing materials will not include references to the External Sponsor

Travel Grant, Access and Additional Funding

- The Travel Grant remains consistent for all Fellows (£3,300) and would be issued by British Council directly to the Fellow.
- Fellows can apply for additional access funding and support via the access process. Access funding is agreed between British Council (50%) and the Programme Partner (50%) and issued by British Council directly to the Fellow. If the Programme Partner wishes to increase this access funding, this is at their discretion.
- If the Programme Partner and / or External Sponsor wish to offer additional funding, this should be allocated towards opportunities that enhance the Fellow's participation (e.g. showcasing opportunities, studio space, materials, travel to other events and/or mentoring). This is at the Programme Partner's discretion.

Marketing, Naming Rights, Invitations

- The Programme Partner is welcome to list the External Sponsor as a supporter of the Fellowships Programme in their own marketing campaign and press releases. Within this campaign, the Programme Partner is permitted to include the External Sponsor in the naming of the individual Fellowships places – e.g. the *John Doe Venice Fellow*.
- The External Sponsor would not be listed as a Programme Partner of the Fellowships Programme, would not be included in British Council's marketing and promotional materials, and would not be credited on the signage within the British Pavilion.
- The External Sponsor is not permitted to use the British Council logo or the logo of *la Biennale di Venezia*.
- The External Sponsor is welcome to promote their support of the Fellowships Programme (minus use of the British Council logo) on their own platforms and via their own networks.
- The External Sponsor would be offered a two-day pass for the Opening Week of La Biennale in Venice (for one individual and guest).
- The External Sponsor would be offered an invitation to the Opening Ceremony and Evening Reception during the Opening Week of La Biennale in Venice (for one individual and guest).

Other

- The Fellows would not be given priority over other Fellows (e.g. allocation of place within certain Travel Groups or in marketing promotions).
- If External Sponsors wish to be credited in the Pavilion, they are welcome to join the British Council circle: <https://arts.britishcouncil.org/british-council-circle>

4. Programme Impact and Outcomes

The Fellowships Programme is a key part of the British Council's presence in Venice, supporting the exhibition programme as well as being a platform for the development of new creative careers and future leaders. The Fellowship offers a unique opportunity for emerging creatives to represent the UK on an international level whilst broadening their perspective, making connections and developing their creative practice.

'The programme offers a live space for fellows to learn and develop, be inspired through a groundbreaking opportunity where they get to invite dialogue with so many different cultures and walks of life and experience the power of creativity and the arts'

Skinder Hundal, Director Arts at British Council 2022-24

The Programme enables creative students and professionals to spend a month in Venice during the world's most important art and architecture biennials. As Exhibition Ambassadors at the British Pavilion, the Fellows enrich and activate the exhibition. They engage visiting members of the public and expand the impact of the show. Alongside this practical residency, Fellows have the opportunity to develop their own research or practical creative projects and use the Biennale as a platform for artistic and professional development. Through these contributions, Fellows elevate the Pavilion to an important reference point for universities and creative organisations around the world.

Since initiating the Fellowships, the Programme has welcomed over 400+ UK-based participants, from which:

- **65% have gone on to work in the arts/creative/cultural sector.**
- **35% pursued/remained in the academic or researcher sectors.**

Through their training and experience in supporting the exhibition at the British Pavilion, Fellows learn techniques for enhancing a visitor's understanding and expanding their perspectives on the show. The stewarding experience provides them with valuable work experience and confidence in contributing to a gallery setting.

'The Venice Fellowship has allowed my creative world to expand. Collaborating with artists of many disciplines was an invaluable experience.'

Past Fellow

The programme also offers the opportunity for emerging artists, architects and creatives to develop their own practice and position their own work within an international context. There have been incredible exhibitions and presentations of work made on the Fellowships Programme. Connections are formed which continue to this day, with Fellows interacting on creative and academic projects for years to come. Fellows also benefit from the nurturing and development of vital skills, including increased personal confidence, intercultural fluency,

collaboration, resilience, new perspectives and more refined ambitions for their own career trajectories.

'The Fellowships Programme was hugely significant part of my personal and professional growth; creating a springboard into my career which I will always be thankful for. Being surrounded by the energy of the Venice Biennale inspired me to challenge myself by undertaking the opportunities that were presented during this period. Engaging with the British Council created a foundation to take a step forward and realise my potential in the art world. It is a truly a programme that allows you to get out what you put into it!'

Past Fellow

2022 Programme Evaluation Report key highlights:

- 92% of Fellows believe their employability is enhanced after participating in the Programme.
- 92% believe they are more likely to get work opportunities that would not have been open to them without the Fellowship.
- 71% believe that they can secure greater remuneration in the short term when applying for jobs.
- The Exhibition Ambassador residency at the British Pavilion resulted in an extensive skills development for the Fellows, but most strongly in improving: “cultural awareness & understanding”, “communicating with audiences & exhibition interpretation”, “personal confidence & resilience”, “foreign language skill”, “team-work & problem-solving”, “time-management & planning”.
- The Fellowship has resulted in 75% of Fellows better prepared for designing future research; 75% of Fellows better prepared for professional/academic international collaborations; 71% better prepared for future creative practice; and 67% better prepared for personal international collaboration.

The Fellowships Programme has helped Fellows build a wider, diverse network of contacts, which will be source of support, inspiration and opportunity in the future. Fellows reported that new lasting relationships have been forged particularly within residency groups and new contacts have been made with speakers from the Induction and with those in Venice from outside the Programme.

Yearbooks

Further information about the outcomes of our Fellowships Programme can be found in the 2022, 2023 and 2024 [Yearbooks](#).

2024 Case Study

As told to British Council by 2024 Fellow, Shaniece Martin (Programme Partner: Coventry University)

<Initially hesitant to apply to the Venice Fellowship Programme, Shaniece questioned whether she belonged in museums and artistic spaces. With a mixed Southeast Asian and British background, Shaniece grew up in a predominantly white village and didn't visit cultural institutions or venues as part of her upbringing.

But through creative writing, poetry, and Punjabi music, she began to reclaim her identity and connect with her heritage. Inspired by John Akomfrah's work and his reflections on representation and visibility, including after seeing his work on view at Tate, she found the courage to apply for the program. From her very first conversation, she felt genuinely seen and heard. Surrounded by a diverse cohort of Fellows from various backgrounds and experiences, the long-held insecurities—Am I good enough? Do I belong here?—began to dissolve. These doubts were replaced by a sense of deep listening, meaningful connection, and shared purpose within the group.

While in Venice, invigilating Akomfrah's exhibition became both an artistic and personal awakening for her. Initially overwhelmed by the sensory intensity of the dark, sound-filled space, she turned to writing—unapologetically capturing her thoughts in the dark, even when she couldn't read what she wrote. Her time spent in the exhibition became a precious gift: opportunities for intimate, one-on-one conversations with the public, reflections on identity, and a deeper understanding of her role in making art accessible and relevant. She left Venice with a renewed sense of confidence, creative clarity, and a strong commitment to using her voice and work to support others—especially fellow generational immigrants—in feeling truly seen, heard, and represented.

Following her Fellowship and on completion of her PhD, Shaniece felt confident to apply for the role of Archives Assistant at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum in Coventry. She is supporting the development and installation of new displays in the 'Stories That Made Us: Roots, Resilience, Representation' exhibition, which celebrates and preserves the rich heritage of South Asian and British South Asian communities in Coventry.>

'I don't think I would have applied to this job [as an Archives Assistant] at the Museum before. I pigeonholed myself in academia. But when this job advert came along, I thought, this is very me. I am a storyteller. I can be a museum. I felt like I was returning to a part of myself: now I can pick the stories to tell, and I can tell them authentically.'

Shaniece Martin, 2024 Fellow

Our Fellowships Partners are central to supporting emerging creatives and future talents.

We welcome new Programme Partners each year. If you are interested in joining the Venice Fellowships Programme as a Partner and wish to be added to the Partner database to receive further information, please contact **Sophie Lucas, Venice Partnerships and Programme Manager**, at venicefellowships@britishcouncil.org.

Programme Partner applications for the 2026 Venice Fellowships Programme can be submitted via the [Application Form](#). The deadline is Friday 5th September 2025, at 23:59 BST.

Thank you for your interest in the Venice Fellowships Programme.

Contact

Sophie Lucas

British Council

Venice Partnerships and Programme Manager (Venice Fellowships Programme Lead)

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