
RIBA Research Fund 2025

Guidance notes and terms of grant for applicants

Background

The RIBA Research Fund is an annual scheme that supports independent architectural research. Applications are welcome from individuals or teams from architectural practices and academia at any stage of their research careers.

In 2025, we are welcoming applications for research grants up to the value of £12,000.

Eligibility

We welcome applications to support all research topics as long as the subject matter and final outputs are relevant to the advancement of architecture and associated disciplines and professions.

Grants are made to individuals and not to education institutions, architectural practices, or commercial companies. Funds are to be used towards costs associated with research and not in lieu of salaries or to pay fees or costs associated with academic research programmes such as Masters or MPhil/PhDs.

Applicants should be primarily based in the UK.

Assessment and selection

Applications are assessed by the RIBA Research Development Group (RDG), a working group that comprises members of the RIBA Council, the Education and Learning Committee, and other individuals co-opted for their expertise. The RDG oversees the RIBA's funding schemes that support postgraduate research conducted by individuals in academia or in practice.

The following criteria will be used to select the grant recipient(s):

- clear demonstration of the originality and importance of the research topic
- evidence that the proposal is generally feasible and well planned, with consideration of how to mitigate risks and address eventual challenges
- defined, measurable, and suitable outputs for the research proposal, e.g., a journal article, an exhibition, etc.
- well-thought through and detailed financial expenditure forecast

Consideration will also be given to how the project aligns with one or more of the four Mandatory Competences detailed in the [RIBA Education and Professional Development Framework](#): Health and Life Safety, Ethical Practice, Climate Literacy, and Research Literacy.

In the case of two equally good applications, preference will be given to applicants who are RIBA members.

Application Form Guidance Notes

Sections 1 & 2: Research proposal and details

- All subsections must be completed.
- The maximum word count for each subsection is 300 words.

Section 3: Financial information

- All sections must be completed; if a section is not relevant, please note 'n/a' in the corresponding box.
- The grant **may not** be used to cover a researcher's salary. It may be used to cover an hourly rate to undertake the project; however this will not apply to those already in full-time employment (i.e., it may be used to cover a self-employed person's hours, but not a salaried professional.) The exception to this would be if a salaried professional were to take unpaid leave, or reduce their working hours, in order to complete the project. Applicants may also allocate funding to cover the hourly rate for a research assistant.
- The RIBA requires the hourly rate to be at least the Living Wage, as defined by the [Living Wage Foundation](#) for anyone aged 18 or over in the UK: currently £13.85 in London and £12.60 outside London.
- 40% of the funding will always be held until receipt of final research outputs and a final project report deemed satisfactory by the RIBA, following assessment by the Research Development Group (see further details on this below under 'Terms of the grant')
- Payment of the grant will be made in instalments decided by the applicant; applicants should state in which proportions they would like the grant distributed.

Section 4: Personal details

- Lead/sole applicants should complete section 4.
- If applying as a group, the lead applicant will be the main contact for communication and payment purposes.
- Section 5: an appropriate supervisor should be identified and selected for their broad understanding and expertise in the research area. The supervisor must provide a brief progress report along with the researcher's interim project report (see 'Terms of the grant' section below). The role of the supervisor is to guide the applicant in carrying out the work to time, cost and quality, thus providing reassurance that the RIBA charitable funds are put to good use. The supervisor should be primarily based in the UK.
- The role of supervisor is voluntary, and applicants should not allocate a fee from their budget to cover their supervisor's time; it should be agreed in advance that this is an unpaid role.
- Research co-applicants should complete their details in sections 6.

Terms of the grant

Timeframe

Successful projects should be completed within two years of July 2025.

The lead/sole researcher will be required to submit a progress report approximately 6 months after receiving the grant (in January 2026) and then on an annual basis following this (the RIBA officers will provide the necessary guidance and template documents for this report).

The report must include, in addition to progress to date, the approximate date of completion. If, for any reason, it becomes clear that the research will take more than two years to complete, the sole/lead researcher should inform the RIBA immediately indicating a revised completion date.

Funding

To retain access to the final instalment of the award, the research must be completed within two years of the announcement of the winners in July 2025, unless the sole/lead researcher has advised the RIBA of a revised completion date and this has been accepted.

Should the research project not be completed and only the initial payment claimed, any unspent monies will revert to the restricted fund created by the RIBA for this award and used to fund subsequent application cycles. In such circumstances, the institution/employer affiliated to the recipient will be barred from submitting applications to this scheme for a period of two years.

Applicants may apply to, or be in receipt of, additional funding from other sources. In such cases, applicants are expected to reveal the sources of funding, their involvement in the research proposed, and if the planned research methodology, time frames, and outputs are expected to change as a consequence.

The final instalment (40% of the total grant) will only be released after a rigorous and critically reflective output has been produced and judged satisfactory by the Research Development Group. This should incorporate evidence of all outputs listed in the original application form.

Final report and outputs

If the main output of the research is not in a written format (i.e., an exhibition) then a written report should also be provided; this should detail how the original objectives and aims were achieved, the impact of the deliverables generated as a result, and a self-reflection on the impact of the research methodology and outputs on the personal and professional development of the researcher(s), and how they benefit the architectural community.

The final report should be presented to the RIBA in a written digital format (such as Word or PDF), ready for online publication and dissemination. Where the final output is mainly of an audio-visual nature (such as drawings, photographs, films, aural recordings, etc), the report may be submitted in suitable formats (such as PDF, MP3, or MP4) as long as a written report (as outlined above) is also attached (in Word or PDF). A hard copy should also be submitted to the RIBA.

The final report, and any subsequent publications based on the research work supported by the award must acknowledge the receipt of the RIBA Research Fund and the year of the award.¹

Responsibilities of the lead/sole researcher

The lead/sole researcher is accountable for the conduct of the project including the conduct of the research, the use of funds and the proper financial management of the grant, whether the project is carried out by themselves, project team members, or any other third party.

The lead/sole researcher must ensure that the funds are spent in a way that is consistent with the purpose set out in the application form and carry out appropriate due diligence on any team member or any third parties used to deliver any part of the project.

The lead/sole researcher is responsible for ensuring that ethical issues relating to the project are identified and brought to the attention of the RIBA. These include:

- declaring any potential conflicts of interest in research identified at the point of application
- undertaking a safety risk assessment in individual cases where health and safety may be an issue, and monitoring and auditing the actual arrangements made
- ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are considered and supported at all stages throughout the research
- being expected to have clear policies and processes in place consistent with good practice to prevent situations of bullying and harassment

The lead/sole researcher is accountable for funds dispersed and is responsible for the timely and accurate submission of a final expenditure statement within 2 weeks of the end of the grant period. The RIBA officers will provide the necessary guidance and template documents for this statement.

Once an expenditure statement has been received and the expenditure incurred has been reconciled against payments made, it will be considered as final. Recipients must keep receipts of payments to justify the approved expenditure. Any unspent funds must be returned to the RIBA to be reinvested into a subsequent application cycle for the award.

Once the research is deemed successfully completed, the recipient(s) may be offered the option to share their research findings at a suitable event at the RIBA. These events could range from small seminars to public lectures, and potentially contribute to the launch and/or promotion of a subsequent annual cycle of applications.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

The RIBA does not hold any claim to the intellectual property rights and publication rights of the project developed by the recipient(s) of the RIBA Research Fund save for RIBA's pre-existing intellectual property rights. The recipient(s) shall retain all rights, title and interest in their project including related intellectual property rights.

By submitting a final report with research findings made possible through the funding provided by the grant, the recipient(s) agree(s) to grant the RIBA a perpetual irrevocable licence to display and publish said report across all media including without limitation in

¹ Examples of acknowledgment are 'Part of the research conducted to write this presentation was made possible with a grant from the 2025 RIBA Research Fund' or 'The author(s) wish(es) to acknowledge that this article was made possible with a grant from the RIBA Research Fund, which they received in 2025'.

print and digital platforms for public use as part of its Collections and for all purposes in relation to the RIBA Research Fund and associated non-commercial purposes.

By submitting a final report for the RIBA Research Fund, the recipient(s) confirm(s) that the report and all information submitted and/or distributed in support of it will not infringe the intellectual property or any other rights anywhere in the world of any third party and the recipient(s) shall indemnify the RIBA for any losses, damages, costs and expenses incurred or awarded directly resulting arising out of any third-party claim. The recipient(s) recognise(s) that it is their sole responsibility to ensure that text or images submitted as part of their final report do not breach the intellectual property rights of any third party. The recipient(s) must have the permission of the copyright owner for text or images included in the report prior to submitting it. Where the recipient(s) is/are not the copyright owner(s) of text or images forming part of their final report, the recipient(s) must also ensure that they give due accreditation in the captions, endnotes or footnotes of the report.

Submitting your application

Applications are submitted online:

[Access the online application form](#)

You will need to follow the instructions to register for an account first, and then select the 'RIBA Research Fund' form to begin your application for this award. You will receive an automatic email notification upon submission of your application.

The deadline for applications is **3pm (BST) Friday 23 May 2025**. Applications will not be accepted after this time.

If you have any issues with the online application form, please email research.funding@riba.org.

Timeline

Applications to the 2025 RIBA Research Fund will be processed and then assessed over a period of 6 to 8 weeks, after which all applicants will be informed of the results.

All information provided in the application form will be treated in the strictest confidence, in line with the RIBA Privacy Policy: architecture.com/about/privacy-policy.

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact **Sophie Arp**, RIBA Education Projects Coordinator via email Sophie.Arp@riba.org or via telephone on +44 (0)20 7307 3678.