



Professional Fellowship Scheme

2024-2025

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1. Introduction

As part of their well-established collaborative relationship, The National Archives and Research Libraries UK (RLUK) have created a Professional Fellowship Scheme to enable staff from both organisations to gain experience and insight from one another, strengthen and diversify the relationship between them, and to overcome some of the collective challenges facing research and cultural organisations.

This scheme will support the corporate aims and ambitions of The National Archives, as outlined in [Archives for Everyone](#) and RLUK's strategy [The Library Transforming](#), whilst also enabling personal development opportunities for the individuals involved. The scheme also supports the Government's vision for the Archives Sector, [Archives Unlocked](#).

Professional Fellowships will be structured around a flexible, short-term residency at The National Archives, for Fellows from an RLUK member institution, and to an RLUK member institution, for Fellows from The National Archives, underpinned by a longer period of peer-to-peer mentoring and knowledge sharing. Professional Fellowships will address a professional-practice question, contribute to a wider piece of work, and facilitate shared learning between The National Archives and individual RLUK members. The most recent [Memorandum of Understanding \(2017-2020\)](#) between the two organisations outlines the areas of mutual interest. Each Fellowship will last for one year and the selection and recruitment of the fellows will be undertaken jointly between The National Archives and RLUK. A financial allocation will be made to support the work of Professional Fellows.

This document outlines the eligibility criteria and the application and assessment processes for the scheme. It should be read in conjunction with the associated



pieces of guidance contained within the appendix below (Section 9). This document also outlines what is expected of a Professional Fellow, what they can expect from the scheme, and how it relates to the wider relationship between The National Archives and RLUK.

Professional Fellowships are not secondments and will be held in addition to an applicant's substantive role within their sponsoring organisation. In their application, it is essential, therefore, that applicants consider how undertaking a Professional Fellowship could enhance their daily work and help place this within a wider professional or organisational context.

The Professional Fellowship Scheme is a partnership between Research Libraries UK and The National Archives:

1.1. Research Libraries UK (RLUK): represents 39 of the leading and most significant research libraries in the UK and Ireland. We aim to optimise the contribution that research libraries and collections make to the economic, technological and cultural success of the UK and Ireland. We are achieving this by working with our members, external institutions and our partners in the community, both nationally and internationally.

We are investing in and developing strategic projects, reports and innovations that are fomenting much greater engagement with, and services for, the research community we serve. These are exciting times for the research sector. We believe there is so much more that we can do together to shape collections and services in support of academic excellence.

For more information: www.rluk.ac.uk

1.2. The National Archives: is a non-ministerial department and the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, and for England and Wales. We are

expert advisers in information and records management and are a cultural, academic and heritage organisation. We fulfil a leadership role for the archives sector in England, working in partnership to encourage innovation and sustainability and secure the future of physical and digital records. As an Independent Research Organisation (IRO), we lead high quality research which seeks to innovate our practice, unlock the potential of our collections, and respond to opportunities and challenges in the academic and archive sectors.

In March 2019, The National Archives launched its new strategic plan for 2019-23. [Archives for Everyone](#) challenges the organisation to strive to become the 21st century national archive – inclusive, entrepreneurial and disruptive. It reaffirms engagement with the widest possible audience at the heart of our mission, and sets out the radical changes we need to make to our culture and practice, to realise our full potential. Our ambitious strategic vision for the archives sector, focuses on the needs and potential of archives across the country, and realises in practical and tangible terms their unique relevance in preserving the diversity of our nation's heritage, along with our [strategic priorities 2023-2025](#)

For more information: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

2.0 Structure of the scheme

Each Professional Fellowship will last for one-year (full-time). Requests for part-time Professional Fellowships will also be considered (up to 18months). They are not secondments and colleagues will be expected to continue in their substantive role within their sponsoring (home) organisation. Allowances should be made in terms of workload and performance objectives to take into account the commitment of the Professional Fellowship. We would estimate that up to 10% of an individual's working time should be spent on Fellowship activities during the period of their Fellowship (c. 5% for part-time Professional Fellowships). The responsibilities of the

sponsoring institution in supporting the Fellow are outlined in the 'Guidance for Participating Organisations'.

Each Professional Fellow will be 'paired' with a mentor in a corresponding organisation. This mentor will be chosen from a pool of mentors created for the purposes of the scheme. Mentors will be professionals from RLUK institutions and The National Archives with expertise in the themes listed in *Section 9.1*. The Mentor will be responsible for monitoring the fellow's progress, but also providing support and additional points of contact both between The National Archives and RLUK, and The National Archives and the individual RLUK member.

The Professional Fellowship scheme will consist of five key components:

Professional-practice question: each Fellowship should identify a professional practice question at the outset which will form the focus of the Fellowship. Wherever possible, the Fellowship should focus on a tangible output which can serve as a measurement of success. Outputs might include developing training, producing best practice guidance or recommendations, or designing a new workflow. Professional Fellows will be requested to produce a version of their output that will be shared with the broader community. The question and outcome should be aligned with, and broadly contribute to, the wider strategic goals of the sponsoring and host organisations. Aligning a professional-practice question with one's role and responsibilities is also encouraged as a way of managing a Professional Fellowship alongside other duties.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD): Peer mentoring and knowledge sharing is at the centre of the Fellowship, forming the basis of a CPD plan developed by the Fellow as a part of their application. The Fellowship should enable colleagues to refine their skills and professional

practice, learn from the experience of others, and support them in their career development.

Short-term residencies: Fellows should be able to see and experience work and professional practices in another institution as a part of their Fellowship, enabling them to place their work within a wider disciplinary context and to complement the peer mentoring and knowledge exchange central to the scheme. Usually, a flexible, two-week residency will be undertaken by the Professional Fellow during the period of the Fellowship at their host organisation. Fellows should discuss this residency with their Mentor and may find it more beneficial to visit over a more extended period (for example, 1 day a week over several weeks) or follow a hybrid approach.

Dissemination: The Fellows will be expected to share and disseminate the outputs and findings of their Fellowships through a variety of outlets for the benefit of the wider sector and profession. This may include blogs, podcasts, publications, presentations or other forms of outreach activity. These should be outlined in the application and can be developed across the duration of the Fellowship. A shareable version of the final output of a Professional Fellowship will be published by RLUK and TNA.

Monitoring and Support: each Fellowship will be monitored throughout. It will be assessed on its professional practice question and intended outcome by a joint Board representing TNA and RLUK. The Board acts as a 'critical friend' throughout the Fellowship through providing feedback and helping Fellows stay on track.

A financial allocation of £1,500 will be made to each Professional Fellow to support Fellowship activity. This may be used to support travel and subsistence during a visit to the host organisation, for conference attendance, training, or to enable outreach

activity (for instance, providing access to a platform to run a webinar). Expenses should be agreed with the relevant scheme representative in advance. Any remaining allowance can be used by the Professional Fellow for dissemination and engagement purposes up to 3 months after the official end of the Fellowship. Any expenses in excess of this amount must be met by the Professional Fellow's sponsoring (home) organisation. For further information, see *Section 6.3. Financial allocation*.

3.0 Eligibility¹

Any TNA or RLUK member employee may apply for a Professional Fellowship if they:

- Are currently employed by The National Archives or an RLUK member on a permanent basis;

Or

- Are currently employed by The National Archives or RLUK member on a fixed-term contract, where the end date of the contract exceeds the proposed end date of the Professional Fellowship by at least three months;
- Have been employed by The National Archives or the RLUK member for a period of at least 12 months prior to the date on which the Professional Fellowship commences. This is to ensure that applicants have had the time to develop a sound understanding of institutional priorities and can place their practice within a broader organisational and professional environment;

¹ These eligibility criteria are the same as for The National Archives' Research Secondment Scheme, 2018.

- Have the formal approval of their line manager and Head of Department at the point of application.

We welcome applications from people of diverse ages, experience and backgrounds and especially from those who are currently under-represented in the library and archive sector.

4.0 Number of Fellowships

It is anticipated that The National Archives and Research Libraries UK will award up to a total of four, one-year, Professional Fellowships per year, divided equally between the two partners. The National Archives will therefore appoint up to two fellows per year, as will RLUK. This number is not fixed and the exact number of Professional Fellowships awarded may vary depending upon the quality of applications made and staff capacity to support and host fellowships.

5.0 Application process

The Professional Fellowship Scheme has a two-stage application process consisting of an Expression of Interest (Eoi) stage and a Full Application stage. Applicants should discuss their application with their line manager and agree the time to be committed to the Fellowship. Applicants from within The National Archives should also speak to members of Research and Academic Engagement Team regarding their application, and those applying from within an RLUK member, with a member of the RLUK Executive. Contact details for further information is included in *Section 8* below.

The application stages for the Professional Fellowship scheme are as follows:

5.1. Stage one: Expressions of interest (Eoi)

A joint call will be made by RLUK and The National Archives for Expressions of Interest for Professional Fellowships. Due to the breadth of shared interests between both organisations, these will be based around four key themes or areas of professional practice. These are:

1. Sustainability
2. Equality, diversity, inclusion and cultural change
3. Impact, value and affect
4. Rethinking the record

Further information regarding these themes and areas of interest, including potential practice challenges, can be found in *Section 9.1* below. Applicants should propose a project relating to one of these areas, stating how it relates to their work, and what contribution it would make to their own professional development, their sponsoring (home) organisation, and the wider relationship between The National Archives and RLUK. Proposals outside these topics which can demonstrate the significance of the proposed professional-practice question for the sector may also be considered. The assessment panel may also consider exceptional proposals which suggest an alternative model or approach for conducting a Professional Fellowship. In making their initial application, colleagues are encouraged to familiarise themselves with work occurring across RLUK members and within The National Archives in their chosen field by contacting their scheme lead given in *Section 8*, below.

Assessment: The EoI applications will be assessed by a joint board made up of representatives of RLUK and The National Archives. Each EoI application will be judged on the following criteria:

- Availability of a host institution with an interest in supporting a Professional Fellowship in this area

- Benefit to applicant's professional development
- Strategic fit to sponsoring organisation
- Impact on diversity and inclusion
- Strategic fit to joint TNA-RLUK themes
- Benefit to TNA-RLUK relationship and the wider sector

During the EoI phase potential Fellows will be 'matched' to mentors interested in a similar professional field from another institution. This matching, in the first instance, will be made by the Board unless the applicant has specifically named a potential mentor within their EoI application. It is not compulsory to have identified a mentor or a host organisation (for The National Archive staff) before submitting an EoI application.

If successful, candidates will be invited to submit a full application and be put in contact with a mentor. If unsuccessful, the applicant will be provided with feedback and may be invited to apply to a future round.

Further information regarding the EoI application process can be found in *Section 9.2*, below.

5.2. Stage two: Full Application

The full application stage will enable colleagues to expand upon the points outlined within their expression of interest, taking on feedback from the panel, and providing a more detailed professional-practice question that the Fellowship will address and expected outputs from the Fellowship.

Applicants should also provide details of a:

CPD plan: Applicants should include a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) plan within their full application, demonstrating how the Professional Fellowship will contribute to their daily work, performance objectives and what skills it will help them develop. Candidates should consider whether any additional training or support might be required during the Fellowship and what tangible steps they will take to support their professional development. A good guide to creating a CPD plan, with examples, can be found here: <https://www.cipd.co.uk/learn/cpd/about>.

Proposed Mentor: The name of the mentor that has been identified in the EoI stage should be provided in the full application. Applicants should illustrate how working together with this mentor over the course of their Fellowship will be beneficial for their work. This should include details of areas of joint work, and what support, knowledge and expertise they may offer to the Fellow.

Assessment: Full applications will be assessed by a joint panel representing The National Archives and RLUK. Applications will be judged against similar criteria as in the EoI stage, with additional focus upon the proposed professional development activities (in the CDP plan), the feasibility of the project and the available support, as well as the potential benefit of the Fellowship's outcome to the wider library and archive sector.

Further information regarding the full application process can be found in *Section 9.3* below.

5.3. Successful Candidates

Successful candidates will begin their Professional Fellowship from February 2024. A flexible start date may be negotiated depending on the individual circumstances of the Fellow and their host organisation. Flexible start dates should be discussed with scheme representatives outlined in *Section 8*, below.

6.0. Post-Award

6.1. Outcomes and dissemination

Professional Fellowships should lead to tangible outcomes and deliverables that support the Fellow in their substantive role, enhance the operations of their sponsoring organisation, strengthen the relationship between The National Archives and RLUK, and are of benefit to the wider library and archive sector. They should also enable the sharing of best practice and underpin knowledge exchange.

Professional Fellows will be expected to disseminate and share their findings and experiences through blogs, podcasts, publications, presentations or other forms of outreach activity. A shareable version of the final output of a Professional Fellowship will be published by RLUK and TNA. The intended outcomes of a Fellowship should be outlined in the Full Application (Stage 2). There is additional guidance on the Full Application in *Section 9.3*.

6.2. Monitoring and Support

Professional Fellows will be monitored throughout their Fellowship to ensure that they receive support from their sponsoring and host organisations, undertake the activities in their CPD plan, and successfully deliver the outcomes of their Fellowship. The undertaking of a Professional Fellowship will not alter or affect an individual's line management, which will remain unchanged within their sponsoring (home) organisation. The Fellow will be monitored and supported throughout their Fellowship in three ways:

Line management: The Professional Fellow will continue to be line-managed in their sponsoring organisation. The Fellow will be expected to undertake their Fellowship

alongside the duties of their substantive post. The Fellow and their line manager should ensure that the Fellowship is recognised in the Fellow's performance objectives and supports them in their substantive role. They should also discuss whether undertaking the Fellowship should necessitate any changes to their responsibilities or workload. The line manager should ensure that the Fellow's workload is adjusted as necessary to give the Fellow sufficient capacity to carry out their agreed timetable. The responsibilities of the sponsoring organisation are outlined in the 'Guidance for Participating Organisations'.

Host organisation mentor: A mentor will be identified within the Professional Fellow's host organisation. They will act as the lead contact for that organisation and should have professional experience or expertise in the area of the Professional Fellowship. They will be responsible for organising and facilitating the Fellow's exchange to that organisation and to offer peer mentoring throughout the Fellowship within the CPD process. The responsibilities of the host organisation are outlined in the 'Guidance for Participating Organisations'.

Fellowship Board: The Fellow will also be monitored by the joint Fellowship Board, formed of members of The National Archives and Research Libraries UK and will be required to submit quarterly reports to the Board. The Board will act as a 'critical friend' through providing feedback and additional support, when required, throughout the Fellowship. It will also act as an arbitration panel should disagreements/difficulties be experienced by the Fellow during the time of their Fellowship that cannot be resolved within their host or sponsoring organisation. Fellows are encouraged to bring any difficulties to the Board via their organisation's scheme representative (in *Section 8*).

The Fellowship Board will provide support and guidance and approve the outcomes of the Fellowship, taking feedback from the Fellow, line manager, and host mentor. They will be responsible for awarding the Professional Fellowship Certificate of

Completion. At the time of writing this guidance (July 2023) the Fellowship Board consists of the following members:

For Research Libraries UK	For The National Archives
Liz Taylor-Roe Director of Academic Services and University Librarian Newcastle University	Rachel Smillie Head of Academic Partnerships
Joanne Fitton Deputy Director Libraries, Museums, Galleries University of Liverpool	David Morris Head of Regional and Networks Team
Christina Kamposiori Executive Programme Officer Research Libraries UK	Mollie Clarke Academic Engagement Officer

The success of the Fellowship will be formally judged based on its intended outputs and deliverables, as outlined in the Fellow’s full application.

6.3. Financial allocation

Following the success of their stage two, full application, Professional Fellows will be awarded a financial allocation of £1,500. These funds will not be held by the Fellow, but will be held centrally and administered by RLUK on behalf of the scheme.

This allocation is to support the fellow for the duration of the Fellowship and can be used for the following:

6.3.1. *Travel and Subsistence*: To support the Professional Fellow in their travel and subsistence when undertaking their residency at their host organisation. Travel and

subsistence bookings will be made on behalf of the Fellow by RLUK and requests must be made on the scheme booking form and in accordance with The National Archives' Travel and Subsistence Policy (for TNA staff) or in accordance with the policies and regulations of the RLUK member organisation (for staff of an RLUK member). Questions relating to travel and subsistence bookings can be made to: melanie.cheung@rluk.ac.uk, RLUK, Executive Assistant.

6.3.2. *Other Fellowship expenses*: To cover other expenses in support of the Professional Fellowship (e.g. to buy resources, attend a course or workshop, or to support the delivery of outreach activity). Such claims should be agreed with the sponsoring institution and the Professional Fellowship Scheme representative before payment is made.

The financial allocation should not be spent on any other activities without the permission of the Fellowship Board. If additional finance is required to support the Fellow's activities, applications should be made to their sponsoring (home) organisation through established channels.

7. Application, assessment, and fellowship timetable

The Professional Fellowship scheme operates on an annual cycle. The timeframes may change from year-to-year. In the 2024-2025 round, the timetable is as follows:

24th July 2023: Call made for expressions of interest.

25th September 2023: Stage one expression of interest (EoI) applications due.

Early October 2023: Assessment of stage one applications and full applications invited from successful applicants.

27th November 2023: Stage two full applications due.

18th December 2023: Assessment of full applications. Fellows appointed.

From February 2024: Professional Fellowships begin.

Two drop-in sessions where potential applicants can ask questions about the Professional Fellowship Scheme, and the application and assessment processes will be organised in August and September.

The dates and times of the drop-in sessions are:

Monday 14th August, 14.00-15.00 ([Registration](#))

Thursday 14th September, 14.00-15.00 ([Registration](#))

Variations may be made to the start date of the Fellowship depending on the Fellow's personal circumstances or the requirements of either the sponsoring or host organisation.

8. Further Information

For further information, please see the application guidance material in the Appendix below or the scheme FAQ document. If you are considering an application and would like to discuss this further, you may also contact your scheme representative:

For colleagues at a Research Libraries UK member:

Dr Christina Kamposiori, Executive Programme Officer, Research Libraries UK
christina.kamposiori@rluk.ac.uk

For colleagues at The National Archives:

Mollie Clarke, Academic Engagement Officer, The National Archives
Mollie.clarke@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Or



Dr Rachel Smillie, Head of Academic Partnerships, The National Archives:

rachel.smillie@nationalarchives.gov.uk

9.0 Appendix

In this section are documents and guidance that applicants will find useful in their application to undertake a Professional Fellowship.

9.1. Themes and areas of professional practice

Sustainability

Area Outline:

This area is concerned with issues around the sustainability of archive and research collections. This might include challenges surrounding funding, data or software management or other issues around the digital and physical challenges that affect the longevity of archive and research library collections, such as the risks posed to archives by climate change, and the effect on climate change of the increasing use of technology in and by archives. The continued demand for increased access to institutional collections to meet the needs of different audience groups has posed new challenges for archives and research libraries. In the current landscape, facilitating access involves greater investment in digital infrastructure and staff members with advanced skill sets to manage, preserve and present material in a range of formats, such as print, digitised, born digital and as datasets. At the same time, archives and research libraries collections face new or increased risks to the longevity of their collections; for instance, the impact of a rise in global temperatures on sensitive paper records.

In the context of this theme we seek proposals that focus on the skills required for identifying opportunities and responding to related challenges. Proposals might examine practices for strategy development or seek to explore challenges to the digital and physical longevity of

archive and research library collections. Applications might explore the following areas in the context of sustainability:

Potential Professional Practice Topics:

Strategy design

Models of collaboration and funding

Developing resilient collections and services

Campus and institutional sustainability

Access

Skills for sustainability and resilient workflows

Strategies for software and data management

Risk modelling practices, particularly surrounding environmental change

Developing research and innovation infrastructures

Keywords:

Funding, collections, collaboration, sustainability, resilience, access, infrastructure, strategies, skills, software management, data management, risk

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Change

Area Outline:

Cultural institutions play an important role in the dialogue around equality, diversity and inclusivity and seek to champion professional practices that make a positive impact on society. Both institutional collections and organisational cultures are tied to questions of equality, diversity and inclusivity – whether around the way collections are catalogued, how they reflect diverse voices and engage new audiences, or strive towards a sector that is more representative of the population. Thus, this theme explores how archives and research libraries can respond to these questions and how both organisational culture and collections are adapting to meet this need.

Institutions are also reviewing their collection development practices, and the way they provide access to and represent information. This includes reviewing the metadata associated with resources, the discoverability of records, and professional practice. In institutional collections and the work of the institutions themselves, practices must respond to concerns surrounding transparency, equality, diversity and inclusivity. These are important characteristics of the organisational cultural change underway in many archives and research libraries. Proposals submitted in this area may seek to understand how archives and research libraries are evolving through changes in working practices and values, explore strategies that promote equality, diversity and inclusion and address existing opportunities and challenges. Applications might explore the following areas in the context of equality, diversity, inclusion and cultural change:

Potential Professional Practice Topics:

Agile working and transparent working practices

Working with underserved or hard to reach communities

Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in organisational strategy, and/or developing strategies to promote equality, diversity and inclusion

Developing inclusive and diverse collections and infrastructures

Professional standards and values for modern libraries and archives



Culture change and professional development

Developing skills to support inclusivity

Managing risk and uncertainty around culture change in organisations

Keywords:

Agile working, transparency, culture change, skills, equality, diversity, inclusivity, equity, inclusive leadership, strategies, infrastructure

Impact, Value and Affect

Area outline:

Archives and special collections have a meaning and value that go beyond content; they also enrich society and contribute to our cultural heritage. Their collections form a vital part of our national collective memory. In the context of economic pressures, the need to demonstrate the value of archives, research libraries, and of culture more generally, has never been more acute. Impact is a major facet of the research landscape, with a focus on the many ways research can lead to a positive change in the world, from influencing policy and professional practice to cultural enrichment and preservation.

We are increasingly thinking about impact and value in relation to archives and research collections and articulating how they create impact on individual and collective levels. Exploring the experience of the archive – the ways in which people who create, keep or access archives and research collections encounter and respond to them – allows us to consider a range of issues including memory, trauma, identity and representation. Moreover, research libraries have been constantly increasing their reach through audience-focused strategies and activities that have a direct and transformative effect on research, teaching and the way public audiences engage with unique and distinctive collections.

The emerging study of 'affect' in archival science seeks to understand the psychological and physiological responses experienced by those who access collections, and how these responses might feed into an articulation of collections' impact and value. Doing research of this kind helps us to articulate the transformative potential that collections hold and their valuable contribution to individuals, communities and society as a whole. Applications might explore the following areas in the context of impact and value:

Potential Professional Practice Topics:

Demonstrating the value of archives and special collections

Expanding the reach of archives and special collections

The emotional and psychological impact of archives and special collections



Collection development practices
Corporate culture and organisational identity
National identity, memory, and culture
Assessing the impact of digital collections and initiatives
Libraries and archives as cultural infrastructure

Keywords:

Impact, value, measurement, metrics, cultural change, cultural infrastructure, identity, advocacy, audiences, public engagement, digital initiatives, strategic planning

Rethinking the Record

Area Outline:

As a community, we are fundamentally interested in the nature of records, both physical and digital, and how we can best carry out our responsibilities towards the records we hold and the communities and societies we serve. Archives and research libraries across the UK and beyond are radically reimagining their theory and practice to meet the evolving challenges of preserving born-digital and digitised records and providing access to them. As institutions with a number of audiences, we also seek to develop new interpretations of our records and the administrative contexts in which they have been produced. Thus, proposals in this area might explore how the management of our holdings, and the holdings themselves, contribute to the construction of scholarship, history, identity and memory on local and global scales.

Research interests around the record also extend into conservation and preservation science. Therefore, under this theme we seek proposals that look to develop novel techniques in collection care, shed new light on the origins and processes of records and other collection materials, or otherwise draw the knowledge of conservators, collections professionals and historians together in new ways to create enriched interpretations of our records. As we move from a consideration of physical records and collection items into digital records and data, we also seek to explore what materiality means in digital contexts. Applications might explore the following areas:

Potential Professional Practice Topics:

Exploring historical record series as data

Managing and presenting complex digital records at scale

New business models for archives and research libraries in a digital landscape

The changing roles and responsibilities of recordkeeping and collecting institutions

Building digital capacity and resilience

Creating and managing born-digital collections

Rethinking collection development

Strategies and risk assessment for digital preservation



Uncertainty and trust in the digital record

Keywords:

Digital preservation, datafication, conservation and materiality, technology, capacity and skills, strategies

9.2. Professional Fellowship: Application Guidance (Eol)

This document provides guidance to applicants when completing the 'Professional Fellowship Application: Stage one (Eol)' form. Applicants should read this guidance when completing their Eol application. If applicants have any further questions, in addition to those covered by this guidance and the scheme FAQs, please contact:

- For **Research Libraries UK** members: christina.kamposiori@rluk.ac.uk
- For **The National Archives** staff: research@nationalarchives.gov.uk

1. Applicant details

Please complete the necessary details in this section. Please note that 'Sponsoring organisation' refers to your normal place of work/home institution.

2. Line manager and Head of Department approval

In order to apply for a Professional Fellowship, you must have the support of your line manager or head of department. It will be important to discuss with them how the undertaking of a Professional Fellowship would contribute to your wider work or objectives, how it can support your professional development, and how it compares with other opportunities within your organisation. At this stage, you should agree with your line manager how much time will be committed to the fellowship. Please ensure that your line manager or head of department is aware of the responsibilities of the sponsoring organisation as outlined in the 'Guidance for Participating Organisations'.

3 Please state how you meet the eligibility criteria for the Professional Fellowship scheme, as outlined in the 'Professional Fellowship Scheme Guidance, 2024-25'

Please provide a few details regarding how you meet the eligibility criteria contained within the scheme guidance.

4. Please outline your current role and identify the areas of professional practice that you have focused on in current or previous roles. (200 words maximum)

Please provide details of your professional role and responsibilities as well as of any past roles and practice that may be relevant to this application.

5. Have you identified a host organisation for your Professional Fellowship?

Please state if you have identified a host organisation for the fellowship. If yes, please provide the required details.

6. Have you identified a potential mentor in the host organisation?

Please state if you have identified a potential mentor in the host organisation. If yes, please provide the required details.

7. Summary of the project you would like to undertake if awarded a Professional Fellowship (750 words maximum)

Please provide a short summary of the proposed project to be undertaken during the Professional Fellowship. You should outline any practice questions that the Fellowship seeks to address, and its aims and objectives. Please outline the significance of this work and how it will contribute to the themes and areas of professional practice outlined in the scheme guidance. You should also outline how this topic would benefit from being explored in the context of a Professional Fellowship and through your engagement with others outside of your organisation.

If you propose an alternative model of conducting the Fellowship, please elaborate on the rationale of this approach.

Please briefly summarise the main outcomes from the project and how these might be communicated at the end of the Fellowship. At the end of the Fellowship, you will need to submit a shareable version of your final output(s) to be published by RLUK and TNA.

Please use clear and unambiguous language in describing the project, as this may be read and assessed by a non-expert audience.

Please state if this will be a 12-month or 18-month Professional Fellowship and how you plan to safeguard your Fellowship time.

8. How does your project relate to your sponsoring organisation's aims and objectives? (200 words maximum)

Please explain how this proposed project will contribute to your home organisation's aims and objectives.

9. How will this Professional Fellowship project benefit your professional development? (200 words maximum)?

Please state how undertaking a Professional Fellowship will support your own professional development. Please state how it would support your career progression, acquisition of new skills, and benefits to you as an individual.

10. What impact will your project have on diversity and inclusion? (200 words maximum)?

Please highlight how your project will support diversity and inclusion, such as through mitigating any ethical concerns or engaging with underrepresented communities as part of your methodology or dissemination plans. Consider the impact that your project may have in relevant discussions in your sponsoring organisation, host organisation or across the library and archive sector.

11. How does your Professional Fellowship project relate to one or more of the joint themes identified by The National Archives and Research Libraries UK? (250 words maximum)

Please explain how your project relates to one of the themes listed in *Section 9.1*. If your project falls outside the suggested topics, please explain why you think this is an important issue to explore for the library or archive community.

12. How do you see this Professional Fellowship project contributing to the wider relationship between The National Archives and Research Libraries UK? (200 words maximum)

Please state how a Professional Fellowship would support the wider relationship between The National Archives and Research Libraries UK. A copy of the most recent Memorandum of Understanding between both organisations can be found here:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/mou-the-national-archives-and-rluk.pdf>.

You can also include any outcomes that you think would be of wider sectoral benefit or libraries, archives, and special collections.

Assessment criteria

Criterion	Evidence
Availability of a host institution with an interest in supporting a Professional Fellowship in this area	Questions 5-6. The Professional Fellowship Board will seek confirmation from relevant institutions on applicants' behalf.
Benefit to applicant's professional development	Questions 4, 9
Strategic fit to sponsoring (home) organisation	Question 8
Impact on diversity and inclusion	Question 10
Strategic fit to joint TNA-RLUK themes	Question 11
Benefit to TNA-RLUK relationship and the wider sector	Question 12

9.3. Professional Fellowship Scheme: Application Guidance (Stage two – full application)

This document provides guidance to applicants when completing the ‘Professional Fellowship Application: Stage two (full application)’ form. Applicants should read this guidance when completing their full application form. If applicants have any further questions, in addition to those covered by this guidance and the scheme FAQs, please contact:

- For **Research Libraries UK** members: christina.kamposiori@rluk.ac.uk
- For **The National Archives** staff: research@nationalarchives.gov.uk

1. Applicant details

Please complete the necessary details in this section. Please note that ‘Sponsoring organisation’ refers to your normal place of work, or your home institution.

2. Line manager and Head of Department approval

In order to apply for a Professional Fellowship, you must have the support of your line manager and head of department. It will be important to discuss with them how the undertaking of a Professional Fellowship might contribute to your wider work or objectives, how it might support your professional development, and how it compares with other opportunities within your organisation. By supporting your application for a Professional Fellowship, your line manager and head of department are confirming that they approve, and will provide capacity, for you to make the necessary time commitments to the project in line with your timetable.

3. Line manager statement of support (300 words maximum)

Please include here your line manager’s statement of support.

4. Details of host organisation, mentor and second mentor

Please provide details of the corresponding host institution for the Professional Fellowship (either The National Archives or an RLUK member). You should include the name of the lead contact within the host organisation (usually the applicant's mentor), their job title, department, and contact email address. Mentors should nominate a colleague at the host organisation who will serve as a 'critical friend' during the Fellowship and take over as mentor in the event that they are unable to fulfil this role.

5. Mentor statement of support (350 words maximum)

Please include here your mentor's statement of support. This should also include information on the role of the second mentor and how they will be kept updated during the Fellowship.

6. Title of proposed Professional Fellowship project

Please provide the title of the Professional Fellowship project. This may be the same as in the EoI application or may have changed following conversations with the applicant's host organisation or mentor.

7. Expanded summary of proposed Professional Fellowship project (1000 words maximum)

Please provide further details of the proposed project to be undertaken during the Professional Fellowship, including its key objectives, methodology and outcomes. Please explain if the scope and contents have changed since your EoI application. The project summary at this application stage should clearly reflect the feedback received by the Professional Scheme Board on your EoI application and your prospective mentor.

8. Your timetable for the Professional Fellowship, including an indication of how much time you intend to spend on the Fellowship over the course of the year (250 words maximum)

Please provide an outline of the proposed timetable with Professional Fellowship including project plan, significant milestones, and the timings of any visit(s) to the host organisation or any other Fellowship activities (e.g. workshops, dissemination etc.). Please provide the start date of the Fellowship and outline the timeline for key deliverables and milestones. Please also include an estimate of how much time your Fellowship activities will take over the course of the year (in days or hours), bearing in mind that, for a 12-month Fellowship, up to 10% of an individual's working time should be spent on Fellowship activities during the period of their Fellowship (c. 5% for 18-month Fellowships).

9. How will this Professional Fellowship project benefit your professional development? (300 words maximum)

Please state how undertaking a Professional Fellowship will support your own professional development. Please state how it would support your career progression, acquisition of new skills, and benefits to you as an individual. Also, please mention how working with your mentor will be beneficial for your work.

10. Please confirm that you have included an up-to-date CV (maximum 2 sides of A4) and CPD plan:

Please confirm that you have attached a CV and CPD plan to your Professional Fellowship application. A useful CDP template can be downloaded from here:

<http://www.managers.org.uk/~media/Angela-Media-Library/pdfs/B12%20-%201.doc>

11. How will your Professional Fellowship project benefit your host and sponsoring organisations? (350 words maximum)

Please state how a Professional Fellowship will contribute to the wider strategic aims of your organisation. Please make reference to any corporate strategies or objectives the Fellowship would support, and the practical benefit you think the Fellowship would bring to your organisation.

12. Are there any particular risks associated with undertaking this project? If so, how will you mitigate against these? (150 words maximum)

Risks might include the use of sensitive data, experimental research techniques, or the requirement of particular pieces of software not normally available. Risks can be also related to any ethical considerations related to your approach. If your project involves collaboration or partnerships, please explain how you will ensure that these are equitable. Practical risks may include lack of engagement with your project (e.g. when conducting interviews, focus groups etc.) or time management. You should also outline whether there is a need for additional training or mentoring to help mitigate these challenges.

13. How do you intend to disseminate the outcomes of your Professional Fellowship? (200 words maximum)

It is important that Fellows share their experiences and the outcomes of their Professional Fellowship project. Please provide details of how you intend to share your experiences as a Fellow and the outcomes of your Fellowship. This might be through blogs, podcasts, publications, presentations or other forms of outreach activity. Fellowship applications will be judged on their ability to share and disseminate knowledge between colleagues, the partnership between The National Archives and RLUK, and the wider professional community.

14. How do you see your proposed Professional Fellowship project benefiting the library and archive sectors in context of the relationship between The National Archives and Research Libraries UK? (200 words maximum)

Please state how a Professional Fellowship would support the library and archive sectors, making reference to the relationship between The National Archives and Research Libraries UK. A copy of the most recent Memorandum of Understanding between both organisations can be found here: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/mou-the-national-archives-and-rluk.pdf>

Please also include any outcomes that you think would be of wider sectoral benefit or for the benefit of libraries, archives, and special collections.

Assessment criteria

Criterion	Evidence
Benefit to applicant's professional development	Questions 9, 10
Benefit to host and sponsoring organisations	Questions 3, 5, 11
Feasibility of project	Questions 7, 8, 12
Archive and library sector benefit in context of TNA-RLUK relationship	Questions 13, 14