

BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR LIBYAN & NORTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES

Registered Charity no. 259262

www.bilnas.org

APPLICATIONS FOR NORTHERN AFRICA POSTDOCTORAL WRITING FELLOWSHIPS

Guidance Notes for Applicants

BILNAS is able to offer Northern Africa Postdoctoral Writing Fellowships that provide **up to £8,000 to support the writing-up of already completed research** on Northern Africa in the humanities and social sciences. The awards are explicitly intended to support early career scholars ordinarily resident in the UK (within eight years of completion of their PhD) who have not yet been appointed to a permanent academic post, and who frequently lack the time and resources they need to publish their work.

By providing funds for scholars to dedicate themselves to writing, BILNAS aims to encourage a new generation of scholars to publish works in the humanities and social sciences that will advance our understanding of the Northern African region. Disciplines include, but are not limited to: anthropology, archaeology, art history, education, geography, the natural and social sciences, literature, linguistics and political science. Applications are welcomed from those working in the broader Northern African region (Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Niger, Mali, Chad, Sudan) as well as those which explore connections between Northern Africa and the Mediterranean or sub-Saharan Africa.

The research/fieldwork that forms the basis of the writing project **is expected to be completed** at the time of application. Publication should be in the form of **a major journal article or a significant portion of a monograph**, or a combination of these.

The awards are non-renewable and provide **£8,000 of financial support for 4 months of continuous full-time writing (or longer if held part-time)**. Awardees must complete their fellowships by **31 March 2027**. The Fellowship may also be held part-time over a proportionately longer period by those who hold part-time fellowships, academic posts or other employment (0.6 FTE or less) or those who prefer to hold it part-time due to caring responsibilities, disability or health-related reasons. No research funds in addition to the basic stipend are available. Institutional overheads, FEC, or institutional support are not eligible under this scheme.

Fellows will receive mentorship from the BILNAS Director or a relevant academic on the BILNAS Council throughout the award. This will include meetings to discuss progress of their publication and to advise on preparation of applications for postdoctoral fellowships, research grants, academic and related jobs. BILNAS will also provide a year's free membership which among other benefits will allow the recipient to have borrowing rights at SOAS where the BILNAS library is housed.

Applicants can apply regardless of institutional affiliation or nationality but must be ordinarily resident in the UK.

Eligibility

Awards are open to early career scholars of any nationality who are ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and have not yet been appointed to a permanent academic post. To be '**ordinarily resident**' in the UK, you must show that you habitually and normally reside in the UK from choice and for a settled purpose, year after year. Applicants must hold a PhD or have completed their viva by the application deadline. Applicants should be **no more than 8 years beyond their PhD** at the time of application, with allowances made for periods of caregiving, illness or other exceptional circumstances. The Fellowship cannot be held alongside a full-time fellowship, academic position or other job. The Fellowship may be held part-time (0.5 FTE) over 8 months by those who hold part-time fellowships, academic posts or other employment (0.5 FTE or less) or those with caring responsibilities, disability or health-related reasons. Institutional or departmental affiliation is not a requirement. Anyone who has been awarded a BILNAS grant in the past, in any category, cannot reapply for any of the available grants for at least 1 year after the date of acceptance of the previous award. In order to ensure fairness, awards cannot be given to members of the BILNAS Council: should they wish to apply they must resign.

Criteria of Evaluation

The main criteria of evaluation are the quality of the project and its potential contribution to humanities and social science scholarship in the broader Northern African region. The proposed writing project should be based on well-defined research questions and be of demonstrable significance to important debates in the applicant's discipline(s). **It is important to have realistic goals in relation to the amount of writing** that you will be able to achieve within the 4 months of the award (or longer if taken part-time). Priority will be given to those applicants that have detailed writing plans (e.g., developed monograph or article outlines), have a book contract or publication agreement in hand or have been in contact with publishers, and show clear evidence of these in their application.

Referees

Applicants are required to supply the names and contact details of **ONE referee**, who should be asked to write directly to BILNAS with an assessment both of the value of the project and of the ability of the applicant to complete it successfully. The referee should normally be the external examiner or a senior colleague in the field from another university or, if not available, someone else who is as external to the applicant as possible. The applicant's PhD supervisor/s cannot act as referee. N.B. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that BILNAS receives the reference by the application deadline: no application will be considered in their absence.

Reporting and Terms

Awards must be requested, and should normally have commenced by **1 September 2026**. Payment will be made in two instalments; the first at the start of the fellowship; the second on receipt of a short report submitted at the end of the second month or mid-point of the fellowship. A final report (no more than 800 words) will be required at the end of the award. The report should summarize the academic content of the writing that has been accomplished and the stage of your work in the publication process. If your work has already been published, please include full bibliographic details. Awardees will also be asked to give a public lecture on their research either during the award period, or soon after (dates to be agreed with BILNAS in due course).

Application Formats

Applications should be submitted via email no later than the deadline indicated on the BILNAS website. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. Applications should include: **(1) the application form; (2) your full CV**, including list of publications if any; **(3) contact details of one referee**. Please send all these documents to:

Victoria Leitch, General Secretary, BILNAS
genssec@bilnas.org

NORTHERN AFRICA POSTDOCTORAL WRITING FELLOWSHIP

Title of writing project:	
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Abstract of writing project (max 150 words):	
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Surname of applicant:			
First name(s) of applicant:			
Postal address:			
Email address:			
Telephone contact no(s).:			
Date of birth:		Nationality:	
If you are not of British nationality, please confirm that you are normally resident in the UK:			
Present position or occupation:			

Outline of completed research that forms the basis of the writing project (max. 600 words). Clearly specify the research context, aims and objectives of your work, the methodology, and its scholarly relevance within the respective field.
Details of publication and writing-up programme (max. 400 words). Clearly specify the details of the envisaged publication (journal article or monograph), whether you have a publication contract or agreement with a publisher, the timescale and what your writing project intends to achieve.
Have you use AI to write or to review parts of this application? Yes or no

Names and contact details of ONE referee:	
If you have previously received an award from BILNAS (formerly the Society for Libyan Studies), please indicate the project name and date:	
Please state briefly how you heard about this award scheme:	(e.g., familiar with BILNAS website; web search; departmental contact; other)
Signature and date of application:	

