

## New Generation Thinkers 2025 – FAQs

### Completing your Application

1. What would the FTE % be (how many hours or days each week/month are New Generation Thinkers expected to work) on the project if successful?

This would depend on the amount of time it took you to complete the work for the BBC (including editing time), which would include 14 minutes on air. This would be recorded during a day spent at the BBC. The programme host teams are hoping to work with the successful NGTs to research and develop three ideas over the course of the year, so roughly one a term. We estimate that the scheme will be at minimum 10 days across the year.

2. How should references be formatted and will this count towards the word limit for the section on research activity?

Applications should be self-contained, and hyperlinks should only be used to provide links directly to reference information. To ensure the information's integrity is maintained, where possible, persistent identifiers such as digital object identifiers should be used. Assessors are not required to access links to carry out assessment or recommend a funding decision. Applicants should use their discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

3. The info says the review should be 250 words but also refers to it as an essay - can you clarify please?

We refer to the review as an "essay" to give you a sense of the kind of writing that is broadcast, but we are asking for 250 words which talk about something you have seen/heard/experienced and what was interesting to you about that/what did it make you question/think about.

4. Why do you want us to write a review that is on a topic and discipline separate from our research? Could you use an existing review that might have been published on a decent media platform?

We don't check whether a review has been published or not. We are looking to the review to display a quality of writing, to tell us something about you and your way of thinking about a topic - so it's your call as to whether a published review fulfils that.

5. Is a bibliography expected in the application?

No, a bibliography is not expected.

6. Should you mention a previous application to the scheme when you apply?

No, there is no need to mention a previous application.

7. Getting the balance between something too niche and too general for the topic may be difficult. Is there any advice you can give on this?

In previous years, some applicants struggled between getting the balance right between topics that were too niche for public interest or too broad to work for radio shows. This should be less of an issue this year with the series of five targeted programmes for applicants to choose from. Applicants are advised to consider material that might work in discussion format that would intrigue and be understandable to the audience; something unexpected can often be more interesting to listeners.

8. Can you clarify not 'making things fit' for the topic please?  
In previous years, applicants could pitch any idea that they felt could be made into a radio programme; this year, there are specific programme to target. Please ensure that your research fits one of the programmes as listed on the [Funding Finder](#). If your research interests fit one of these themes, then you are fine (these are listed under the 'What we're looking for' section). You may be able to find a suitable angle that compliments both the requested programme theme and your area of research, however.
9. Should your topic be something that you are currently working on or can it be something that you have previously written about/worked on in the past?  
Your proposed topic can be either your current or past research, as long as it fits with the programme you are applying for; we are interested in you as a researcher and how well you can pitch to the BBC and communicate your ideas to a radio audience.
10. Why are there just five finalists this year - instead of ten as before?  
In previous years, NGTs would appear on Free Thinking on Radio 3, which had multiple opportunities each week to offer to the researchers in residence. This year, the successful applicants will be on Radio 4 where there are fewer guaranteed spots and less airtime available – therefore the number of NGTs needed to be reduced to fit this new model.
11. What is the start date and duration of the residency?  
It will last 12 months and is expected to start in May 2025.
12. Are there any sample or previous applications that are available to help candidates?  
No, unfortunately there aren't any sample applications that we can provide to candidates.
13. Is there a preference on presenting more international or more UK-based research?  
There is no stated preference; the BBC recommends listening to the programmes you are interested in to understand the breadth of what they cover. Some programmes cover topics from around the world, whereas others are more UK focussed.
14. In the application, can you propose other researchers/speakers that you would like to involve if you are successful (e.g. if your work is interdisciplinary)?  
Yes, this this fine to do.

## **2025 Programmes**

1. Can you detail the five areas/programmes that you're looking for this year?  
The five programmes/thematic areas are listed on the [Funding Finder](#) page under “scope” and include links to each of the BBC programmes for further information.
2. If there are five successful NGTs and five areas/programmes, does that mean each is assigned to one programme? If so, do we need to identify a specific programme that we would like to work on?  
Yes, it does. In your application, we ask you to identify which programme you want to apply for. It would be helpful if you could put the title of the programme you are interested in in the title of your application so that we can pick it out more easily.
3. For the Inside Health or Health Check programme can I still apply if not based in Wales or South-West England?  
Yes, you can still apply, however candidates from Wales or the South-West are preferred due to the location of the office.

4. Can we pitch simultaneously to two different areas - for example an idea that would fit both for women's hour and front row?  
With the specificity of the individual programmes, it would be difficult to pitch the same idea to two programmes. We would therefore advise applying for the one with the best fit. If one of the programmes does not have enough applications, we might consider if other applications could be adapted to work with them.
5. How strict will Women's Hour be about being pre 20th century?  
This year they are looking for researchers who specialise in archaeology or history where the work sheds light on the lives of women before the twentieth century. Please submit a topic within the scope of the specialisms being sought this year (specialisms will vary in future years so if you don't fit this year you may have a better opportunity in future).
6. If you have already had the opportunity to speak on your chosen programme, should you pick a different topic for your application?  
It would be advisable to choose something different to avoid the judges feeling like they are being presented with something they have heard before.
7. Are the two discussion ideas meant to be for the same programme?  
Yes, this is correct.

### **Scheme Eligibility**

1. How do you define ECR? Are the 8 years from PhD and 6 years in academic role mutually exclusive - i.e. if you've worked for over 6 years in an academic job but are still within 8 years of PhD are you eligible?  
You only need to fulfil one of the three research criteria in the "personal eligibility" section to be eligible to apply to this scheme.
2. If my fixed term university contract runs out and I am unattached during the application process, would I be no longer eligible?  
We measure eligibility for this scheme on the submission date of the application, so you're eligible to apply as long as you're attached to a university at the time of application.
3. I'm working at one eligible institution at the time of application, and subsequently will work at another eligible institution. Which institution should I submit through: my current one or the one I'll be at after application?  
You need to be working in an eligible institution at the time of application. Please submit from the institution you're currently at, as they will need to process the application for you.
4. Can I submit an application as an independent researcher?  
You need to be currently working or studying at a UK research organisation that is eligible to receive funding from UKRI to apply.
5. Are international applicants eligible?  
Your institution must be eligible for UKRI funding for you to apply. You can find out if your organisation is eligible [here](#).
6. If I apply as an eligible PhD student and have submitted by the time the scheme starts, would I no longer be eligible?  
Eligibility is measured on the date you submit your application, so don't worry if things change later on.

7. If we are unsuccessful this year, would we be eligible to apply next year?  
We have had repeat applicants in the past. However, please note that we do intend to vary the criteria/programmes each year, so people whose area of expertise is represented this year may find their work does not fit so well in subsequent years.
8. The call information says that “senior academics” are not eligible. Can you give more information on what you mean by “senior”?  
This scheme is intended for early career researchers (ECRs) as set out under “who is eligible to apply” on the [Funding Finder](#). If you meet these criteria, you are eligible for this scheme, even if you have the word “senior” in your current job title. We would additionally expect a senior academic to be involved in activities such as being a Principal Investigator/Project Lead on a grant, for example.
9. If we obtain a different UKRI grant to support our work, would we still be eligible to pursue this opportunity?  
Yes, as long as you had the time available to dedicate to both projects if both applications were successful.

### **Working in the Arts & Humanities**

1. Would I be eligible for this programme as a scientist? My subject area is not in the listed topic areas.  
As long as the primary focus of the application is the arts and humanities, and it fits in with one of this year’s programme specialisms, you can apply.
2. My research is in the humanities, but situated within a faculty of social sciences. Is this an issue?  
The primary focus of the work needs to be the arts and humanities; the name of the faculty you are based in does not impact your application.
3. On paper my PhD/current research would be considered social sciences, but I think that my theme would fit just as well in the arts and humanities bracket. Can I still apply?  
Yes, as long as the primary focus of the application is arts and humanities, and it fits with one of this year’s programme specialisms. Many social science and humanities subjects sit quite closely together, so it may be possible to find an appropriate humanities focus for your work.

### **Finance**

1. Do we get paid for appearances on radio? Do we get paid for any specialist research we carry out at the BBC's request?  
There is a rate for the writing that is carried out which is agreed with the Writers’ Union; all NGTs will be paid the same rate for this as they will be paid for the same amount of words. Different programmes have different fees, however. If you are asked to come into the studio rather than work remotely, the BBC will cover the transport (and hotel bill if you need to stay overnight due to show timing).
2. If we don't live near to one of the centres used by Front Row (e.g. London, Salford, Glasgow) do you pay expenses to get to events in order to review them?  
Yes, this is possible.

## Career Development

1. Would the five successful applicants be able to meet up as a cohort? Or would it be five independent opportunities?

Past NGTs have built networks amongst their group to share experiences. This year, with the group being smaller, we would like to build more of a cohort amongst the successful applicants. One thing we are looking into is building an alumni network and inviting all previous NGTs to join.

2. How much protection is given to the ideas we submit?

There is a good level of trust between the BBC and the researchers in residence. The BBC will not be plundering submitted ideas to use with other people in their broadcasts; it is not what these programmes are about.

3. On the subject of it being a development opportunity - how 'ready' would you expect the applicants to be? Would you expect the applicant to have all the knowledge and research that are ready to go, or if the idea is a right fit would there be room to grow?

The BBC are interested in finding out about research that has been/is being done by you - we are there to help guide you in sharing that with a wide audience on air. Realistically most opportunities are for less than 7 minutes, which means having just 3 things to say about your research into a particular topic and maybe 6 questions maximum.

4. Will there be opportunities for the successful NGTs to work with other areas of the BBC?

The residency does have the potential to open doors in the BBC for the NGTs, but this scheme doesn't have influence over what other parts of the BBC need or chose to broadcast. Opportunities may therefore be variable.