



Turing Artificial Intelligence World-Leading Researcher Fellowships

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	UK Research and Innovation, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
Co-funders:	Office for Artificial Intelligence, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Funding type:	Fellowship
Total fund:	£18,000,000
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Closing date:	16 February 2021 16:00 UK time

Last updated: 19 January 2021

[Start application](#)

This is invitation only.

Full proposals are invited from those who were successful at the outline stage.

Fellows will be expected to:

- conduct research with a primary focus on tackling the methodological and theoretical challenges in artificial intelligence (AI)
- build strong relationships and cross-sector collaborations
- act as a leader in the community.

Up to £18 million is available to fund a small number of sizeable awards. We expect these to be in the region of £3 million to £5 million.

Awards will be for up to five years, starting by 1 October 2021.

EPSRC is delivering these fellowships on behalf of UKRI.

[Open all](#)

Who can apply

This call is only open to invited applicants who were successful at the outline stage of this call, all other proposals will be rejected prior to peer review.

Through this strategic investment we are seeking to support world-leading researchers who will undertake ambitious and novel research with a primary focus on tackling the methodological and theoretical challenges in AI, which may be driven by real world applications. This research should show significant novelty in the development of AI technologies and should go beyond applying established AI approaches within applications.

Alongside undertaking world-leading research, fellows will be expected to actively seek to develop their position of leadership in their host organisation, in the national and international research community, and engage with and influence the strategic direction of UK AI research. Fellows should initiate, grow, and maintain strong relationships and collaborations with stakeholders in the UK and internationally.

It is expected that fellows will have demonstrable international standing in their area, with the potential to add value to the UK AI leadership landscape and build new capability and capacity within the UK. Diverse career paths in AI mean that no standardised eligibility criteria will be set.

We are seeking to support a cohort of fellows which includes international recruits, but potentially also researchers currently based in the UK. For UK-based applicants the case should be made for how the fellowship will retain them in the UK, and how it will be used to build new capability and capacity.

Applications are encouraged from people currently employed in all sectors (for example academia, business, government, and the third sector) and are welcomed from both UK-based and international researchers. However, the time dedicated to the fellowship should be hosted by an eligible organisation within the UK (see below). Applications from those who have taken a non-standard career path after their primary degree are encouraged.

One of the objectives of the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships is to enable mixed positions and flexible movement across sectors, as such cross-sector

working is encouraged. However, fellows must be employed by the host organisation for the time committed to the fellowship. In addition, the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship should be the applicant's main identity (see page nine for minimum time commitment expectations).

If applicants are employed part-time then they can apply for the fellowship to be held part-time. However, these fellowships have a maximum duration of five years and cannot be extended pro-rata.

EPSRC is leading this call on behalf of UKRI, therefore the standard EPSRC eligibility of organisations applies. Businesses are not eligible to be host organisations but may be project partners on the application. For further information [see the EPSRC funding guide](#).

[Find out more about eligible organisations.](#)

The EPSRC restriction on the number of fellowship applications in a 12 month period does not apply to this UKRI call. Therefore if you submit to this call you will be permitted to submit a fellowship proposal to EPSRC in the following 12 months.

Conversely if you have previously applied for a fellowship (whether through EPSRC or any other funder) you would not be restricted to the 12 month wait to apply to this call. However, please note that you cannot apply in parallel to any UKRI fellowship scheme and any EPSRC fellowship schemes. As such, you would need to wait until the outcome of one application is known before submitting to the other scheme.

Please also note that if you apply to this call and are unsuccessful, this would be classed as a first submission under the [EPSRC resubmissions policy](#) and therefore you would not be able to subsequently submit that same fellowship proposal to the EPSRC Fellowship scheme. Similarly proposals previously submitted to other fellowship schemes will be counted as a resubmission and office rejected.

Submissions to this call will not count towards the [EPSRC repeatedly unsuccessful applicants policy](#).

What we're looking for

This Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship programme will invest in the strategic retention and international recruitment of a small number of world-leading AI researchers, with significant packages of support to enable the building of centres of excellence in key areas of AI research. It will enable international leaders in addressing the methodological and theoretical challenges of AI to move to, or remain in, the UK whilst maintaining the momentum of their research programmes.

It is expected that fellows will:

- establish a world leading centre of excellence, building new capability and capacity in a strategically important area of AI research
- lead a major programme of AI research, translation, and innovation
- build strong relationships and collaborations with academia, business, and broader stakeholders in the UK and internationally
- act as a leader in the community and as an ambassador, and advocate for it, driving forward the UK and international AI research agenda
- develop the skills and careers of their teams, developing the independent researchers and innovators of the future
- actively engage with the design of AI for use, seeking to address challenges in areas such as ethics, robustness, fairness, security, auditability, and resilience throughout their research in any context, building on the principles of responsible research and innovation (RRI) throughout their activities
- deliver research with a high likelihood of impact on UK society and the economy
- build a broader portfolio of funding and activities beyond the fellowship, moving towards a position of sustainability at the end of the fellowship.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Equality, diversity, and inclusion enriches diversity of thought, builds stronger perspectives and performance within organisations and communities, and fosters more innovative and creative approaches. This is particularly pertinent in AI as the quality of the output from algorithms depends on assurances that the inherent biases of those involved in their development do not transfer into their design.

AI is increasingly being used in ways that can directly impact lives, and it is commonly agreed that a diverse AI community and workforce is likely to reduce bias and positively impact the development of fair, ethical, and inclusive AI technologies. Furthermore, investing in a diverse array of fellows of different genders, ethnicities, backgrounds, and career paths will enable greater diversity of thought and of approach in AI. That is key to the development of a sustainable UK AI ecosystem, and the development of creative new AI technologies.

One of the primary aims of this programme is to invest in the most creative, innovative researchers, with the most diverse and exciting new approaches to AI. Host organisations are encouraged to actively use an inclusive approach to selecting and maximising the diversity of the candidates they intend to support.

Likewise, fellows will be expected to actively consider diversity and use an inclusive approach in the recruitment of their teams. UKRI expects that diversity is considered broadly to include backgrounds, career paths, thought, and approach as well as protected characteristics.

The long-term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent. EPSRC expects that equality and diversity is embedded at all levels and in all aspects of research practice and funding policy. We are committed to supporting the research community, offering a range of flexible options which allow applicants to design a package that fits their research goals, career and personal

circumstances. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working, and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcome applications from researchers who job share, have a part-time contract, or need flexible working arrangements.

Peer review is central to EPSRC funding decisions. We require expert advice and robust decision-making processes for all EPSRC funding initiatives. We are committed to ensuring that fairness is fully reflected in all our funding processes by advancing policy which supports equality, diversity, and inclusion.

[See our equality and diversity webpages](#) for further information.

Stakeholder collaboration

Due to the scale and prestige of these awards, significant collaboration and leverage (cash or in-kind) will be expected from project partners (for example business, public sector, third sector). This may include models such as endowing chairs or adding to academic salaries.

It is expected that collaborations will build a mutually beneficial two-way relationship based on expertise, secondments in both directions, products, and infrastructures. However, to ensure the awards are inclusive of a variety of approaches and research fields, no specific leverage expectations are being set for eligibility to this programme.

It is recognised that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may make it more challenging for project partners to be confirmed at the time the proposal is written. Clear plans for engaging with new and existing collaborators over the duration of the fellowship should be detailed in the case for support.

Responsible innovation

EPSRC is fully committed to develop and promote responsible innovation.

Research has the ability to not only produce understanding, knowledge and value, but also unintended consequences, questions, ethical dilemmas and, at times, unexpected social transformations. We recognise that we have a duty of care to promote approaches to responsible innovation that will initiate ongoing reflection about the potential ethical and societal implications of the research that we sponsor, and to encourage our research community to do likewise.

Responsible innovation creates spaces and processes to explore innovation and its consequences in an open, inclusive, and timely way, going beyond consideration of ethics, public engagement, risk, and regulation. Innovation is a collective responsibility, where funders, researchers, and interested and affected parties, including the public, all have an important role to play. Applicants are expected to work within the [EPSRC Framework for Responsible Innovation](#) given on the EPSRC website.

Funding available

Up to £18 million is available to fund a small number of sizable awards (£3 million to 5 million) for up to five years. Awards will be required to start by 1 October 2021.

Applicants are expected to request a significant package of resource, designed in partnership with their host organisation and collaborative partners to provide the best support for their research agenda. This might include relocation costs, attractive packages for staff, access to data and infrastructure and other standard research grant costs.

Fellows are expected to build interdisciplinary teams including post-doctoral research assistants, research software engineers, and data scientists. Resources may be used for research expenses including travel, equipment, research technical support including research software engineers, PDRA and fellow salaries, training, and other standard expenses. Relocation costs are also permitted. For international recruits up to £100,000 may be requested to set up their research activity in the UK. Resources may be used for activities to initiate, grow and maintain collaborations with stakeholders (for example academia, business, government, third sector) such as secondments, staff exchanges and regular travel.

Support for studentships is exceptionally permitted through this investment where this can be clearly justified, see below for further details. Student engagement may also be realised through institutional or stakeholder support, or collaboration with the UKRI AI CDTs.

[See further information on allowable costs.](#)

It is expected that resources will be used flexibly to deliver the outcomes of the programme. Detailed resourcing estimations will therefore only be required for the first two years of the investment, with a decision making methodology for subsequent planning.

Due to the scale and prestige of these awards, significant collaboration and leverage (cash or in-kind) will be expected from project partners (for example business, public sector, third sector). This may include models such as endowing chairs or adding to academic salaries to increase the attractiveness of the award. However, to ensure the awards are inclusive of a variety of approaches and research fields, no specific leverage expectations are being set for eligibility to this programme.

It is not expected that fellows will commit 100% of their contracted time (FTE) to this activity throughout its duration. However, on average a minimum 50% commitment is expected over the lifetime of the award as this fellowship should be the fellow's main identity. Fellows may start their award with less than 50% FTE but should ramp up their commitment to a minimum of 50% FTE within six months of the award start date.

By the final year of the award it is expected that fellows will have developed their portfolio beyond the fellowship and should therefore have a maximum of 50% FTE to enable broader portfolio development. With this in mind fellows should design an appropriate time commitment over the duration of the award to deliver their research vision.

Where appropriate, fellows may benefit from a range of opportunities and support from the Alan Turing Institute, for example access to the institute's university partner network or the Research Engineering Group (REG). Applicants should liaise with the institute (AlFellowships@turing.ac.uk) if they wish to request specific institute resource, for example REG time, events support and so on, as part of their application and to ensure appropriate costings are included.

The Alan Turing Institute is a delivery partner in the Turing AI Fellowships and therefore the institute's policy is to take a neutral stance towards all applicants as they intend to work openly and proactively with all successful Turing AI Fellows. This means they will not be offering specific support to individual candidates, for example acting as project partners on any Turing AI Fellowship application, and they will not offer letters of support to any candidates.

The fellowship must start by 1 October 2021 and no extensions will be given for delays in the appointment of staff. Therefore, when putting together the proposal, the recruitment time for staff required should be taken into consideration. In other words, if it is estimated that it will take six months to recruit a PDRA then only 54 months of PDRA time should be requested. Only if there is a PDRA or staff member ready by the grant start date should you apply for the full five years (60 months) of time.

Costs should be based on the 2020 to 2021 academic year with no account for inflation. UKRI will index the grant as appropriate to account for cost changes over the grant lifetime.

Please note: due to the nature of this funding, grant extensions will only be considered under exceptional circumstances (in line with the Equality Act 2010) and will require UKRI agreement on a case-by-case basis. The research organisation remains responsible for compliance with the terms of the Equality Act 2010, including any subsequent amendments introduced while work is in progress, and for ensuring that the expectations set out in the UKRI statement of expectations for equality and diversity are met.

Doctoral studentships

Funds for doctoral students may exceptionally be applied for as part of this call. This exception recognises that studentships supported through UKRI's main routes may have been committed before the fellowships are awarded, and that these fellowships represent an exciting opportunity for these students to train and acquire skills through working with eminent researchers they wouldn't have otherwise had access to. The students will also benefit from the drawing together of vibrant, balanced teams which combine doctoral and post-doctoral research and build leadership for the future in key areas of AI.

The inclusion of doctoral studentships must add value to the proposed research, and to the student compared to UKRI's existing training grant routes. Students must be provided with a clear opportunity for a distinct and independent course of enquiry from the fellowship objectives and receive training that is not available through existing programmes. The fellowship must be viable without the studentship with distinctive

objectives that are not reliant upon the studentship(s). Applicants should clearly explain the benefit to the student(s) of being part of the research team.

The host organisation should have a track record of training engineering and physical sciences (EPS) doctoral students and it is expected that there are EPS doctoral students training concurrently with students supported by the fellowship. The fellow is expected to have completed any supervisor training required to be familiar with supervising within a UK HEI, before students start their studies. Where the fellow has been recruited from abroad the student should be assigned a co-supervisor with experience of training UK-based EPS doctoral students.

Doctoral students supported through the fellowship must be provided with the opportunity to develop their substantive research skills as well as with broader professional development opportunities. Evidence of an appropriate training environment that meets the [UKRI expectations for doctoral training](#) should be provided.

UKRI also expects that other doctoral students aligned with the fellowship research programme, but funded from other sources, would have the same training conditions and opportunities as those students funded by fellowship.

Studentships should be four years in duration and must start in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Careful consideration should be given to the overall staff resource on the fellowship and the balance between the different types of staff resource available. In order to ensure that postdoctoral researchers have sufficient time to support and train students alongside their research funding should be requested for a minimum of 2.0 FTE PDRAs per studentship. Fellows should ensure that they have sufficient time to supervise students but this time should not be charged to the grant.

In recognition that EPSRC is delivering these fellowships on behalf of UKRI EPSRC rules on international students will apply. International students recruited as part of the fellowship will count towards the 30% of new EPSRC studentships in any one year with open eligibility.

For more information see the guidance on [flexibility to support the very best students](#).

Studentship costings

As a minimum, the UKRI stipend and indicative fees must be met; enhanced stipends are permitted where this has been justified in the application. Student fees and stipends and research training support costs related directly to the training of the student may be funded by UKRI. Research training support costs specifically relate to the research project of the student, and related additional technical training needs above those covered by the tuition fee. Such costs include travel and subsistence, conference costs and consumables. Indirect and estate costs are not applicable to studentships and supervisor costs are ineligible.

For further details on funding for studentships see appendix one of the call document and the guidance on how to [find studentships and doctoral training](#).

Funding associated with studentships will be issued to the fellow as a separate training grant with training grant terms and conditions. See the guidance on [meeting UKRI terms and conditions for funding](#).

Equipment

Individual items of equipment between £10,000 and £400,000 can be included on proposals for individual research projects if the equipment is essential to the proposed research and if no appropriate alternative provision can be accessed. However, a 50% contribution to the cost of the equipment from other sources is required.

Additional justification of the requirement for individual items of equipment between £10,000 and £400,000, and details of the proposed contribution to the cost of the equipment, must be provided in the Justification of Resources (JoR). For any items or combined assets with a value above £138,000 (including value added tax [VAT]) a two-page Equipment Business Case must also be included in the proposal documentation.

Any items of equipment with a value in excess of £138,000 (including value added tax [VAT]) that are funded on research will need to be reported on annually as part of the university's equipment portfolio annual reports. This will be communicated via an additional grant condition on the research grant. Smaller items of equipment (individually under £10,000) and consumables should be in the Directly Incurred – Other Costs heading.

[Further details on equipment funding](#).

Post award expectations

A key feature of this strategic investment will be the management of the cohort of fellows as a group, in collaboration with other Turing AI Fellows. Cohort activities will be led by UKRI in partnership with the Office for AI and the Alan Turing Institute. Fellows will be expected to engage with cohort activities.

Fellows and host organisations will be expected to periodically report against host organisation and project partner leverage, engagement and other support committed to in the full proposal. EPSRC will take appropriate action where this has not been realised.

Please note that due to the nature of this funding, additional requirements on spending profile, reporting, monitoring and evaluation and extension will apply. This will be reflected in specific grant conditions and those funded will need to comply with them.

Expectations of the host organisation

Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships are a strategic investment intended to build capability and capacity in the UK in the development of novel AI technologies. Host organisations should be able to clearly describe their long term strategy for AI, how it complements the UK landscape, and how they anticipate the fellow will enable them to deliver their strategy.

The host organisation will play a key role in the retention and recruitment of global talent in AI. They should demonstrate clear support for the proposed fellow and articulate the fellow's anticipated role in delivering the organisation's AI strategy. It is expected that significant tangible support will be offered to the fellow, notably above and beyond that of a standard fellowship, and commensurate with the national strategic need to invest in that individual.

It is expected that career mobility between the fellow's team and collaborative partners will be explicitly enabled, including secondments in both directions.

Where fellows have been recruited from outside the UK the host organisation should provide support to integrate the fellow and their team into the UK research ecosystem and AI community. Additionally, host organisations will be expected to outline how they plan to facilitate interaction between Turing AI Fellows nationally.

At the end of this five year investment it is expected that each of the fellows supported and their wider groups and activities will be in a sustainable position. In part, this will be due to the support of their host organisation and a key expectation of the host organisational support will be that the organisation commits to longitudinal strategic support for the fellows, their group and activities beyond the term of the fellowship.

The host organisation statement is an important feature of this award which should draw on the discussions between the proposed fellow and head of department or other senior recruiting colleague. The host organisation and the applicant should co-create a work plan for the investment, outlining the institutional and partner support that will be required to ensure the anticipated outcomes of the fellowship are delivered, and the full potential of the UK investment in the individual is realised. This plan should be monitored and adapted as required to enable a flexible fellowship pathway.

How to apply

Only proposals that were successful at the outline stage of this call are eligible to apply. No other proposals will be accepted. Any unsolicited proposals will be rejected.

The full proposal should be prepared and submitted using the [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#).

When adding a new proposal select:

- create a new document

- council 'EPSRC'
- document type 'Fellowship Proposal'
- scheme 'EPSRC Fellowship'

On the Project Details page you should select the 'Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship Full Proposal' call.

The Project title should begin 'Turing AI Fellowship:...'.

The full proposal should be led by the proposed fellow (they should be input into the 'Fellow' section in Je-S).

Full proposals invited following a successful outline stage must have the 'Related Grant' field completed in Je-S. Please use the option 'Successful Outline'.

Note that clicking 'submit document' on the proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to the host organisation's administration, not to EPSRC. Please allow sufficient time for the organisation's submission process between submitting the proposal to them and the call closing date. EPSRC must receive the application by 21 January 2021 16:00.

[Guidance on the types of support](#) that may be sought and advice on the completion of the research proposal forms are given on the EPSRC website which should be consulted when preparing all proposals.

EPSRC will not fund a project if it believes that there are ethical concerns that have been overlooked or not appropriately accounted for. All relevant parts of the ethical information section must be completed. [Further guidance on completing the Je-S form](#). EPSRC guidance can be found under Additional Information.

As well as the Je-S application form, the following documents must be submitted:

- case for support
- workplan
- justification of resources
- CVs
- project partner letters of support
- equipment quotes
- equipment business case
- technical assessment
- host organisation letter of support
- proposal cover letter.

For more further guidance on applying and the documents you need, [read the full call details \(PDF, 197KB\)](#).

[Read our advice on writing proposals.](#)

How we will assess your application

This call involves a three-stage assessment process.

Stage one: outline proposals (completed)

Outline proposals led by the host organisation were considered by an external panel against the fit to call, quality of the proposed research, applicant (the proposed fellow), and research environment assessment criteria.

Successful applicants have been invited to submit a full proposal led by the fellow.

Stage two: invited full proposals

Full proposals will be sent out for postal peer review. Postal peer review will consider the assessment criteria detailed below.

Any proposals without sufficiently supportive reviews will be rejected at this stage without PI response. Applicants that receive sufficiently supportive reviews will have the opportunity to reply to comments made by the reviewers in a PI response document.

Stage three: interview panel

Proposals with sufficiently supportive postal peer review will be invited to interview in order to select the final successful applicants.

All criteria detailed below will be assessed in determining the final rank ordered list taking into consideration the peer review comments, PI response and interview.

Standard assessment criteria

Quality (primary)

The research excellence, making reference to:

- degree of novelty in the development of methodological and theoretical AI, relationship to the broader context of the current AI research area internationally, timeliness and relevance to identified stakeholders
- the ambition and adventure of the proposed programme and the potential for its outcomes to have a transformative effect on the AI research and innovation landscape
- the suitability of the proposed methodology and the appropriateness of the approach to achieving impacts across sectors and timescales
- plans to embed the principles of responsible research and innovation.

National importance (secondary major)

How the research programme:

- meets national needs by establishing or maintaining a unique world leading activity in AI technologies
- complements other UK research funded in the area, including any relationship to the EPSRC portfolio
- contributes to addressing key UK societal challenges and/or contributes to future UK economic success and development of emerging industries
- engages with the ethical, equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations of AI research in relation to both the research programme outputs, and in the community
- engages with the public on the AI research agenda.

Applicant (primary)

The ability to deliver the proposed fellowship programme, making reference to:

- international recognition of scientific contribution to addressing global AI technology research challenges as evidenced by their track record
- ability to build and lead a world-leading research group, and develop the skills and careers of their team
- ability to successfully build and manage collaborations across sectors
- ability to act as a leader in the AI community, make a strategic contribution to the AI landscape, act as an ambassador and advocate for AI both in the UK and internationally.

Resources and management (secondary)

The effectiveness of the proposed planning and management and whether the requested resources are appropriate and have been fully justified, making reference to:

- any equipment requested, or the viability of the arrangements described to access equipment needed for this project, and particularly on any university or third-party contribution
- any resources requested for activities to either increase impact, for public engagement or to support responsible innovation
- management of any staff requested and a demonstration of the approach to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into recruitment
- any doctoral studentships requested, and the added value to them of being associated with the applicant's planned programme
- appropriateness of the risk mitigation strategy.

Call specific criteria

Research environment (secondary)

- strategic intent and level of tailored and flexible support from the host organisation during and beyond the lifetime of the fellowship

- justification of choice of host organisation and collaborators, and how they will aid the applicant in realising their research vision and the aims of this call
- training environment for doctoral students (where resources have been requested for studentships).

Feedback

Feedback will be provided in the form of the postal peer review comments. Further feedback will only be provided in exceptional cases if specifically requested by the interview panel.

Nominating reviewers

As part of the application process you will be invited to nominate up to three potential reviewers who you feel have the expertise to assess your proposal. Please consider nominating non-academic reviewers and those from abroad where appropriate. Please ensure that any nominations meet the EPSRC policy on conflicts of interest.

For more information about the reviewer selection process please see the related content links.

Guidance for reviewers

Reviewers should assess proposals within the context of the aims, objectives and the specific assessment criteria outlined in the call document (page 20). For postal peer review of these proposals the [standard calls reviewer](#) form will be used. The specific call criteria section of the reviewer form should be used to comment on the research environment.

Contact details

General enquiries should be sent to AI.Robotics@epsrc.ukri.org.

Specific enquiries should be sent to:

- primary: Vivienne Blackstone, Senior Portfolio Manager. Email vivienne.blackstone@epsrc.ukri.org or telephone 01793 44 4557
- secondary: Robert Hicks, Portfolio Manager. Email robert.hicks@epsrc.ukri.org or telephone 07547 655 680.

For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

Any queries regarding the submission of proposals through Je-S should be directed to the Je-S helpdesk (jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org or 01793 444164, Monday to Thursday

Additional info

Background

Due to the huge global opportunity AI presents, the UK government outlined 'AI and the Data Economy' as one of the Industrial Strategy [Grand Challenges](#) and set the aspiration that we will 'put the UK at the forefront of the AI and data revolution'. The UK is already in a world leading position in AI, with the building blocks to make significant advances to maximise the potential of AI.

This investment is a direct response to the government commissioned review of the [AI sector](#), which recommended that an international fellowship programme for AI should be created. Following the government's [AI Sector Deal](#) in early 2018 'up to £50 million in new Turing AI Fellowships to bring the best global researchers in AI to the UK' was committed to in the 2018 Budget.

Turing AI Fellowships

The first Turing AI Fellowships call was led by the Alan Turing Institute in early 2019. This next, substantive phase is being led by UKRI, working in partnership with the Alan Turing Institute, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Office for Artificial Intelligence.

It consists of two separate programmes:

1. Turing AI Acceleration Fellowships intended to accelerate the careers of high potential researchers towards a world-leading position by the end of their fellowship.
2. Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships focused on building capacity and capability in the UK.

Further objectives of this overall investment in Turing AI Fellowships are:

- to support a diverse AI research community by developing capability and capacity thereby creating a sustainable AI research and innovation ecosystem
- to enable new models of collaboration and career paths across sectors in AI, encouraging mixed positions and flexible movement between them
- to integrate consideration of AI adoption into AI research activities, and embed Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in AI alongside consideration of how AI can be designed to be safe, ethical and usable.

Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships

This programme will invest in the retention and international recruitment of a small number of world-leading AI researchers to build new capability and capacity in the

UK, contributing to the development of a diverse and sustainable UK AI research ecosystem. Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships will enable enhanced engagement between academia, business and other sectors through flexible career paths that encourage inter-sector mobility.

Global Talent Visa

UKRI is an endorsed funder for UK [Global Talent Visas](#), successful applicants who require a visa to work in the UK should apply through this route subject to eligibility.

Grant additional conditions

Grants will be subject to the standard UKRI grant conditions however the following additional grant conditions will be added to this call.

GAC 1: start date of the grant

Notwithstanding RGC 5.2 Starting Procedures, this grant must start by 01 October 2021. No slippage of start date beyond 01 October 2021 will be permitted. Expenditure may be incurred prior to the start of the grant and be subsequently charged to the grant, provided that it does not precede the date of the offer letter.

GAC 2: grant extensions

No slippage or grant extensions (beyond exceptional circumstances in line with the Equality Act 2010) will be allowed. EPSRC will not be responsible for any cost overrun incurred during the course of this grant. The research organisation or organisations will be required to make up any shortfall from alternative sources.

GAC 3: equality, diversity and inclusion

In addition to RGC 3.4, the grant holder is expected to prepare a full equality diversity and inclusion plan for the duration of this grant to demonstrate best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the lifetime of this funding award. This must be received by the project officer within three months of the grant start date.

GAC 4: naming and branding

Fellowship titles must be prefixed with “Turing AI Fellowship:...”. In addition to RGC 12.4 Publication and Acknowledgement of Support, the Fellow must make reference to the “Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship” or “Turing AI Fellowship” title. Additionally, UKRI funding, the UKRI logo and relevant branding must be referenced on all online or printed materials (including press releases, posters, exhibition materials and other publications) related to activities funded by this grant.

GAC 5: engagement

In addition to the terms of RGC 19 and RGC 21 the grant holder may be required to attend meetings, events and other joint activities at the reasonable request of the

research council, where such activities are held across the cohort of individuals awarded fellowships funded under this scheme in order to share experiences, best practice, wider public engagement activities, research impacts and outputs etc.

GAC 6: governance

EPSRC will nominate a member of UKRI staff (the project officer) who will be the grant holder's primary point of contact. The project officer will ensure that the project is being run in accordance with the terms and conditions and in line with financial due diligence. As funding administrators, all UKRI staff have agreed to maintain the confidentiality required by all parties involved in EPSRC funded research.

GAC 7: monitoring and reporting

In addition to the requirements set out in the standard UKRI grant condition RGC 7.4.3, the grant holder is responsible for providing regular progress reports and monitoring data (financial and non-financial) when requested by UKRI. UKRI expects that the frequency of financial returns will be bi-annual but reserves the right to request returns more or less often as appropriate to respond to changes in business needs. A template and guidance to complete this will be provided by UKRI in due course.

EPSRC reserves the right to suspend the grant and withhold further payments if the performance metrics requested are not provided by the stated deadlines or are determined to be of an unacceptable standard by the EPSRC.

GAC 8: programme and project review

In addition to the requirements set out in standard UKRI grant conditions RGC 7.4 Research Monitoring and Evaluation and 7.5 Disclosure and Inspection, EPSRC reserves the right to instigate a review of all or part of the grant at any stage during the lifetime of the award as well as after the grant has finished.

A mid-term review of the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships programme will be undertaken to assess progress against the objectives. A final review of the broader Turing AI Fellowships programme will be undertaken after the end of the grant. Grant holders will be required to submit documentation and engage with those conducting both of these reviews. EPSRC will give the grant holder due notice of the date of any review and will provide details of the Terms of Reference and documentation required.

The mid-term review will be conducted by an expert panel. This will include assessment of the performance of individual grants against the programme assessment criteria and objectives. An unsatisfactory outcome of the grant review may result in a reduction or termination of the grant funding.

GAC 9: expenditure

At the start of the grant the financial spend profile will be agreed by UKRI. In addition to any reporting requirements set out in GAC 7, the grant holder must immediately notify the UKRI project officer(s) in writing of any accumulation, slippage or variation in expenditure greater than 5% of the annual profiled funding. Any such changes must be approved in writing by UKRI; approval should not be assumed and will be dependent on spend across all associated grants. We reserve the right to re-profile the grant if required. Any deviation from the agreed allocation of funding and profiled costs must be negotiated and approved through written consent by UKRI. The approval of profile changes should not be assumed and will be dependent on spend across all associated grants. At the end of the grant period a breakdown of the expenditure should be submitted along with the final expenditure statement.

Studentship costs

Fees and stipends

Research councils publish their national minimum doctoral stipend and indicative fee level on an annual basis. [Details can be found on the UKRI website.](#)

Research Councils UK Doctoral Stipend Levels and Indicative Fees for 2020 to 2021:

- National Minimum Doctoral Stipend for 2020/21 is £15,285
- Research Councils UK Indicative Fee Level for 2020/21 is £4,407

An uplift to this minimum stipend may be requested if there is clear justification for doing so. A top up may be achieved through using business leverage rather than requesting further UKRI funding.

Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)

This is a contribution towards costs incurred in training research students, for example the provision of consumables, equipment, travel, etc. The RTSG is not intended to relieve a research organisation of any part of its normal expenditure. A typical value for a student in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is £4,000 per annum (this follows existing UKRI costings) but you should justify the level of RTSG requested.

How to apply on Je-S

Under “Studentship costs” there are two boxes:

- Stipends – enter stipend level as one figure
- Fees – enter both the fees amount and the Research Training Support Grant.

Justification of resources

The justification of resources section of the proposal should clearly outline the costs requested for studentships, with both a breakdown and justification of the appropriate costings.

Supporting documents

- [Call document \(PDF, 197KB\)](#)
 - [Equality impact assessment \(PDF, 195KB\)](#)
-

Timeline

- **14 November 2019**
Opening date
- **17 September 2020**
Outline proposals deadline
- **11 November 2020**
Outline panel
- **3 December 2020**
Full proposals open
- **16 February 2021**
Full proposals deadline
- **Early May 2021**
Interview panel
- **May 2021**
Funding decision
- **1 October 2021**
Latest start date

Related content

[Fellowships – obligations of the host organisation](#)

Statement of Expectations for Research Fellowships and Future Research Leaders

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Responsible research and innovation

Ethical considerations

Use of animals

Equipment

The statement of expectations for postgraduate training

Reviewer selection

Conflicts of interest

Resubmissions

Repeatedly unsuccessful applications

DORA

Global Talent Visa

UKRI terms and conditions for funding

NOTE This is the first phase of our new website – let us know if you have [feedback](#) or would like to [help us test new developments](#).