UK Research and Innovation

Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships

Round Two

6th May 2022
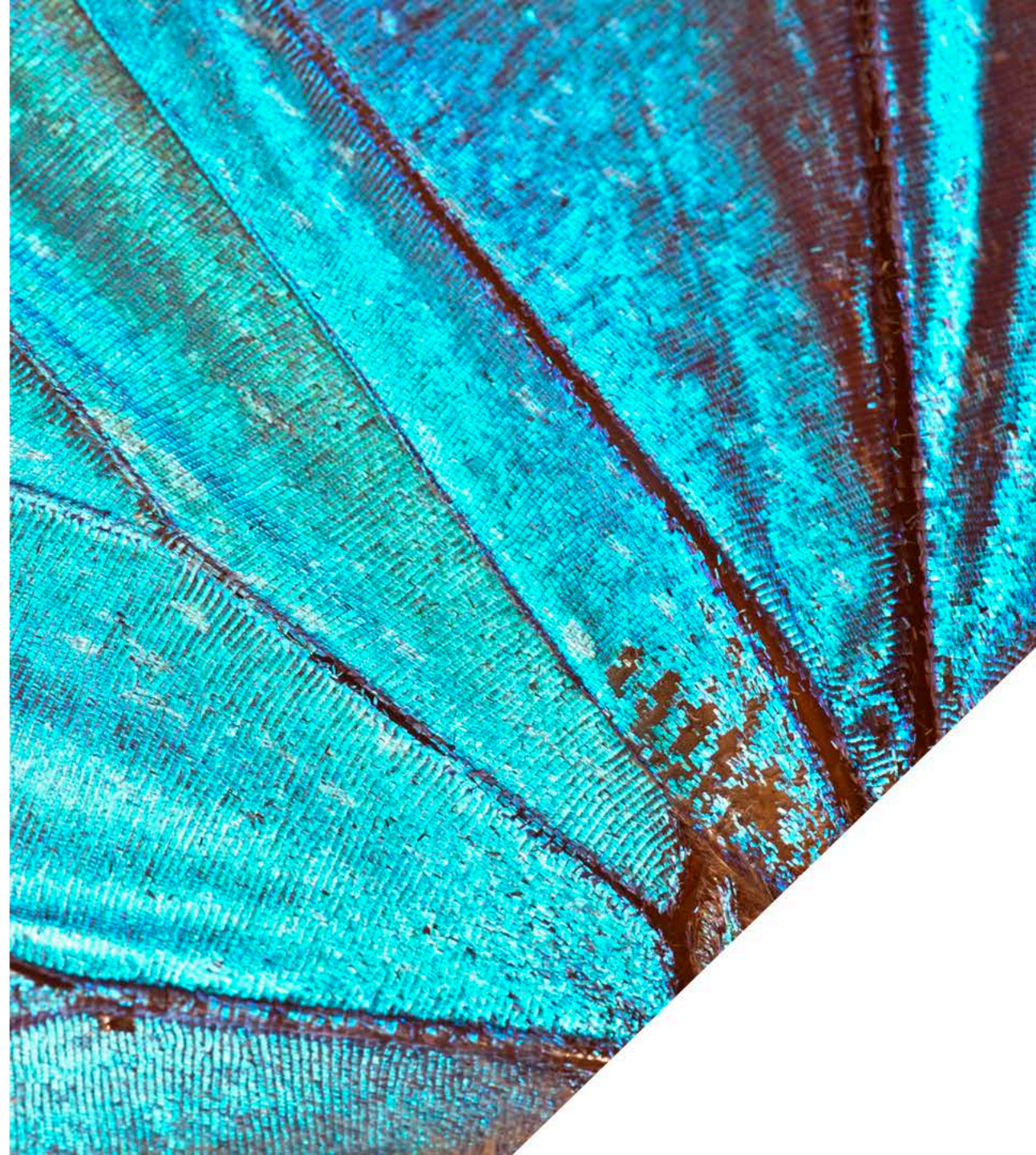
Before we start…

- Please ask questions by typing them into the **Q&A function.**

  - Some questions will be answered via text, others will be answered live during the Q&A at the end of the presentation.

- The slides presented today will be published on the associated page on the Funding Finder, under **'Related Content'.**

- The webinar will be recorded for internal use only.

Content

1. Background

2. Changes from previous round

3. Eligibility guidance

4. Guidance for Host Organisations

5. Additional information

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The Turing AI Fellowships Programme

- The **Turing AI Fellowships Programme** is a £46 million initiative created in 2018 following a government commissioned review of the AI sector.

- The aims of the overall investment are to:

  - accelerate and support the careers of a diverse cadre of the **best and brightest AI** international researchers and **retaining** them, or **attracting** them, to UK academia

  - enable **enhanced connectivity** between **AI academia and industry across sectors**, and facilitate career mobility for leading AI researchers and thinkers between academia and industry or the third sector

  - enable leading researchers to undertake **world-leading creative and innovative** AI research in the UK

The Turing AI Fellowships Programme

- The **Turing AI Fellowships Programme** currently consists of:

  - An initial **5 Turing AI Fellowships** - delivered by The Alan Turing Institute (2019)

  - **15 Turing AI Acceleration Fellowships** - intended to accelerate the careers of high potential researchers towards a world-leading position – delivered by UKRI (2020)

  - **5 Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships** – designed to invest in the retention and international recruitment of a small number of world-leading AI researchers - delivered by UKRI (2021)

  - In October 2021, the Chancellor announced that UK government would *'double the number of Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships'*

Additional funding for
Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships

- This **further funding of up to £20 million** will be delivered through **two rounds:**

  - Up to **£8 million** is available for **this round** (round two)

    - This round is open as of 29 March 2022
    - Funding is for five years – EPSRC will fund 80% of the full economic cost
    - The **guide award range is £3-5 million**
    - Fellows will start by **October 2023**

  - Up to **£12 million** will be available in the next round, which will **open early 2023**.

- EPSRC are delivering this additional investment on behalf of UKRI

Aims of the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships

- The aims of the **Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships** within the overall Turing AI Fellowship programme are to:

  - Invest in the **retention and international recruitment** of a small number of world-leading AI researchers.

  - Contribute to the UK maintaining its position as a global leader in AI research and development by **building new capability and capacity**.

  - Enable enhanced engagement between academia, business and other sectors through flexible career paths that **encourage inter-sector mobility**.

Expectations of Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellows

Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellows are expected to:

- **undertake world-leading research**, leading a major programme that builds new capability and capacity in AI

- establish around them a **highly skilled and potentially multidisciplinary research team**

- act as a **leader in the AI community** and an ambassador and advocate for it, driving forward the UK and international AI research agenda

- engage with, influence and advocate for the **strategic direction of the UK's AI ecosystem**

- initiate, grow and maintain **strong relationships and collaborations** with academia, business, and broader stakeholders in the UK and internationally,

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Changes from the previous round

Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships: Round two

1. Remit

- The previous round had a strong emphasis that research programmes should address the theoretical challenges in AI.

- For this round, we have broadened the remit to allow us to support **world-leading researchers** who work in AI, or at the **interface** between AI and other disciplines.

- We will therefore accept world-leading research programmes that will **advance the field of AI**, and potentially other disciplines. This is a **cross-UKRI call.**

- This could be achieved, for example, by **developing novel AI methodologies** that address:
  - the fundamental, theoretical or mathematical challenges in AI
  - the challenges present in other disciplines or sectors.

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While we have broadened the remit, it remains that research programmes **must advance the field by developing novel AI.**

*Programmes that seek to apply current AI methodologies to an application area will **not be accepted.***

To help with questions of remit, please consider all points under the 'Quality' assessment criteria, for example:

- What is the degree of novelty within the programme to advance the field of AI?
- Will the proposed programme have a transformative effect on the research and innovation landscape of AI?

Expert peer review will be assessing against these criteria

Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships: Round two

While we have broadened the remit, it remains that research programmes **must advance the field by developing novel AI.**

*Programmes that seek to apply current AI methodologies to an application area will **not be accepted.***

To help with questions of remit, please also consider:

- Test your research ideas with other leading researchers – *'Will this research programme advance the field of AI?'*
- Will the outputs from your research programme be published in top AI journals or conferences?

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2. Co-Investigators

In this round, applicants can name co-investigators in their proposal, however:

- the expertise of co-investigators should **complement that of the applicant**; adding value to the applicant's research vision.
- co-investigators are not expected to lead any of the work packages. Their role should be to enable the delivery of the fellowship vision.
- the inclusion of co-investigators should be **clearly justified** in your proposal.

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3. Multidisciplinary teams

We are encouraging applicants to use this substantial award to build a **highly skilled, and potentially multidisciplinary team**.

- Multidisciplinary teams create the opportunity for diversity of thought and perspective to research challenges.

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Eligibility guidance

Eligibility

- These fellowships are aimed at **established, world-leading researchers**; either through recruitment from outside of the UK, or by retaining leaders currently located in the UK.

- You do not need to be a UK resident to apply. However, to be eligible for this award, you **must be employed by an eligible UK host organisation** for the entire fellowship.

- An objective of the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships is to **enable joint positions and flexible movement across sectors**, as such we encourage applications from people who:
  - are currently employed in a non-academic sector, including:
    - business
    - government
    - the third sector

Eligibility

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- An objective of the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships is to enable **joint positions and flexible movement across sectors**

  - In the previous round, a Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship was awarded to somebody holds this fellowship **jointly** while continuing to work at Google.

Evidencing Eligibility

- Though stated these fellowships are aimed at established, world-leading researchers, we have not put forward standardised eligibility criteria.

- Instead, applicants are expected to evidence their eligibility against the **'Applicant' assessment criteria**, for example making reference to:

  - **international recognition** of scientific contribution to advancing the field of AI
  - ability to act as a **leader in the AI community**, make a strategic contribution to the AI landscape, and act as an ambassador and advocate for AI
  - ability to **build and lead a world-leading research group**, and to develop the skills and careers of your team and develop a positive working culture

- Applicants have been asked to evidence their track record using a Narrative CV

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Guidance for Host Organisations

Guidance for Host Organisations

- The Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships are a prestigious, strategic investment. Host organisations are therefore expected to offer **significant, tailed support to the fellow.**

- 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.

- At the end of this five-year investment, it is expected that the fellows and their wider groups and activities will be in a sustainable position – this will be, in part, due to the support of the host organisation.

Guidance for Host Organisations

- The Host Organisation Statement is therefore an important feature of this award, and should clearly describe:

  - their long-term strategy for AI
  - how their AI strategy complements the UK landscape
  - how they anticipate the fellow will enable them to deliver their strategy
  - the strategic reasons for wanting to recruit or retain the world-leading individual in question
  - their intended approach to supporting the individual, their team, and their research activity to enable their full potential contribution to the UK to be realised.

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Further Information

Stakeholder engagement

- Due to the scale and prestige of these awards, **significant collaboration and leverage** (cash or in-kind) will be expected from project partners.

- Fellows and project partners are encouraged to explore models such as **endowing chairs or adding to academic salaries**.

- We expect collaborations to build a mutually beneficial two-way relationship based on:

  - expertise
  - secondments in both directions
  - products
  - infrastructures

Studentships

- Fellows may apply for funds for doctoral students as part of this funding opportunity.

  - This is an **exceptional allowance** within this call, and is not an indication of a change in EPSRC policy.

- The fellowship must be viable without the studentship, with distinctive objectives that are not reliant upon studentships.

- It should be **clearly justified** why additional funding is requested on top of existing UKRI studentship funding routes, i.e. Doctoral Training Partnerships, CDTs

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

- One of the primary aims of the overall Turing AI Fellowship 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.

- Successful fellows will be required to submit an EDI statement on how EDI will be considered throughout their fellowship programme.

How we will assess applications

- A three-stage assessment process will be used:

- Stage 1: Outline Proposals
  - Outline proposals will be considered by an external panel against the quality, applicant, resources and management, and research environment assessment criteria.

- Stage 2: Invited Full proposals
  - Full proposals will be sent out for postal peer review. Postal peer review will consider all assessment criteria.
  - If your application has received enough support from reviewers, it will go forward to the interview panel.

- Stage 3: Interview Panel

Timeline

- 29 March 2022 – Outline proposal opening date

- 14 July 2022 (16:00) – Outline proposal closing date

- w/c 12 September 2022 – Outline panel

- September 2022 – Full proposal opening date

- November 2022 – Full proposal closing date; proposals sent for peer review

- Spring 2023 – Interview panel

Exact dates for the latter stages of the application process will be confirmed on the funding finder closer to the time

Thank you

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Questions?

Further questions:

Robert.Hicks@epsrc.ukri.org or

Vivienne.Blackstone@epsrc.ukri.org

AI.Robotics@epsrc.ukri.org

FAQs

Following the live webinar, we have complied this FAQ based on some common questions received.

Q: Is there a limit on the number of applicants that can be supported by a Host Organisation?

A: Due to the strategic nature of these awards, we expect Host Organisations to be offering their candidates substantial, tailored support. Additionally, these are high-value awards of which EPSRC will fund at 80% full economic cost. We therefore don't expect a Host Organisation to submit more than two applications.

If a Host Organisation does wish to submit more than two, please discuss this with EPSRC early within the candidate selection.

FAQs

Q: Is there an expected amount of involvement from industry/industrial partners?

A: 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). Fellows and project partners are encouraged to explore models such as endowing chairs or adding to academic salaries.

Contributions can also include for example GPU/Cloud/Compute time.

FAQs

Q: Can budget vary between the outline and full proposal stage?

A: Yes, the budge can change however we don't usually expect this to change by more that 10% either way.

Additional project partners can also be added between the two stages.

FAQs

Q: Can any funding be used to support international partners?

A: Project partners cannot normally receive funding directly from the grant. The two exceptions to this are:

- where a project partner is providing services or equipment that will go through a formal procurement process audited by the host research organisation
- the project partner can receive small amounts of funding from the grant, such as for travel and subsistence to attend project meetings. These will need to be requested by the PI and will need to be fully justified.

Visiting researchers are permitted however, for more information see here: Directly incurred costs – UKRI