

## UKRI Artificial intelligence innovation to accelerate health research funding opportunity – Webinar Q&A

Funding opportunity website: <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/artificial-intelligence-innovation-to-accelerate-health-research/>

Eligibility criteria	
Can an organisation, hosted by NHS Trust be eligible for application?	Yes, they can please see: <a href="https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/">https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/</a>
Can I act as Co-I in more than one application?	Yes
Is this call suitable for early career researcher to lead, e.g. lecturer/senior lecturer?	Yes, the key assessment criteria is that your team has the required track record and expertise to deliver the project.
If you have an honorary contract with NHS, can you be lead applicant on behalf of NHS provider?	Yes, you can be a lead applicant if you meet the Investigator eligibility criteria, which can be found here: <a href="#">Check if you're eligible for funding – EPSRC – UKRI</a> .
Can we list NHS trusts (or health boards in Wales) as partners or should our contacts in the NHS be co-Is?	It depends on their role in the project. They can be listed as Co-Is if they will have an integral role in the project and will be part of the leadership team.
Can start up founders be PIs or Co-Is?	Start up founders/industry cannot be PIs or Co-Is unless they also hold employment at an eligible research organisation at an appropriate level
Could you specify what level of early career can be the PI if they have all the partners and team in place?	<p>Principal investigators should normally hold a permanent post, but fixed-term employees may be eligible provided that the EPSRC can be satisfied that the host research organisation is prepared to give the individual all the support normal for a permanent employee and that there is no conflict of interest between the investigator's obligations to the EPSRC and to any other organisation or employer.</p> <p>The term of employment of a fixed-term employee must extend beyond the duration of the proposed research project.</p> <p>If you are an early career researcher fellowship holder, you may be eligible to be named as PI. We will need to assess this on a case-by-case basis due to the different fellowship schemes across UKRI. Please get in touch with us with a copy of your CV.</p> <p>If you have a fellowship from another funder, please ensure the terms and conditions of your fellowship allows you to participate on a grant.</p> <p>Postdoctoral-level fellowships holders are not eligible to be named as PIs or Co-Is but can participate as researcher co-investigators</p>
What are the criteria for researcher co-investigators?.	<p>Post-doctoral (or equivalent) research assistants who are not eligible to apply for a grant in their own right, but who merit appropriate recognition for making a significant contribution to developing the grant proposal and/or whose input is essential to its successful outcome, may be identified as a researcher co-investigator.</p> <p>Research staff that may qualify as researcher co-investigators include postdoctoral research assistants and research technical professionals or equivalent roles. Therefore, this is not limited to postdoctoral research assistants.</p> <p>A researcher co-investigator must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a named researcher employed on the project and seek their salary as directly incurred costs up to 100% FTE</li> <li>▪ based at the research organisation (RO) of either the principal investigator or any of the co-investigators</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ given intellectual ownership (for example, through corresponding authorship) and grant management duties in relation to the ensuing research.</li> </ul>
<b>Application process</b>	
The Je-S account for full proposal submission - does it need to be made via the PI account, or could be by anyone under the registered organisation?	The Je-S account for full proposal submission must belong to the PI.
What is a latest start date possible, given the time recruitment will take (usually 4-6 months)? Is it possible to delay the starting date?	The latest start date is Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2023. It is not possible to delay the starting date due to funding constraints with this call.
If there are multiple academic institutions involved, should there be one PI from one of the institutions and the others listed as Co-Is?	Yes, there can only be one PI and the other investigators must be named co-investigators.
Can you please share the template for the Intent to submit - using the standard proposal template?	<p>The Intention to Submit is a SmartSurvey form, which can be filled out here: <a href="https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/1A3CV6/">https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/1A3CV6/</a>.</p> <p>You will be asked about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PI details</li> <li>• Co-I details</li> <li>• Is research office aware of your application?</li> <li>• Tentative Title</li> <li>• Non-academic Partners details</li> <li>• Up to 5 keywords</li> <li>• Approximate value (£)</li> <li>• Brief description of the project (up to 1000 characters)</li> </ul>
Is it possible to modify of the full application, partners, budget, scope from the original intention to submit?	Yes, but please let us know via e-mail
Are CVs required for international and industrial collaborators?	No
Are CVs required for the principal investigator and co-investigators?	No
Should we submit a single JeS (one for all) or one for institution (linked)?	Please submit a single Je-S form
Is there an additional advantage or not to have a consortium with multiple partners across academic institutes and industry.	No. Your team should be multi-disciplinary comprising of expertise required to deliver the project, but this does not need to be spread across different institutes.
Do you need ethics approval at the application stage?	This depends on what the applicant is proposing to do. It is up to the applicant to demonstrate that they have acquired the necessary ethics approval to deliver the proposed work. Approvals need to be in place when the project begins.
If intending to employ a post-doctoral research assistant to undertake a significant portion of the work. Can we submit their CV at a later date if not employed at time of submission?	If they are not named in the application, then you do not need to provide a CV at the time of submission or at a later date.
<b>Resource request</b>	
Does UKRI cover 80% of max £750K, i.e. £600K. Or is £750K is the 80% UKRI-provided figure (of a total budget of £937,500)?	UKRI will fund 80% of the full economic cost of the project. The maximum project size is £750k, therefore the maximum UKRI contribution is £600k.

<p>Is there flexibility around the 500-750k per project? Particularly if we want to include equipment?</p> <p>Given the short duration for funding, are you expecting applicants will request funds close to the max per project value, or scale it according to this time duration?</p>	<p>The upper limit of these project is £750k and is strictly non-negotiable. Any resource request for equipment should be within this limit.</p> <p>The advertised range of funding reflects the ambitions of this Programme and what it is considered the right amount of resources to achieve them. We will accept proposals below the lower limit, but it will be up to the Panel to evaluate if the proposal is within scope and if it addresses the aims/objectives of the call.</p> <p>Applicants should request the appropriate amount of funding required to deliver the proposed work, within the time frame of the award (18 months)</p>
<p>Do UKRI expect match fund from the host organisation to cover equipment costs?</p>	<p>Yes. Contributions of 20% of the full cost of the equipment will be expected. The full economic cost value in the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system should be the total, quoted cost of the equipment. The research council contribution should be the amount requested from EPSRC, that is, 80%.</p> <p><a href="https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/what-to-include-in-your-proposal/equipment/equipment-on-research-grants/">https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/what-to-include-in-your-proposal/equipment/equipment-on-research-grants/</a></p>
<p>Is compute time and services via Google, Amazon, etc. eligible costs?</p>	<p>Yes. It should be costed under the Directly Incurred heading.</p> <p>Applicants must carefully determine how much cloud compute time is needed. This is a cash-limited award and we will not be able to provide supplements if not enough time is costed in the grant.</p> <p>Applicants must also consider and justify if these services offer value for money as opposed to facilities provided by their research organisations.</p>
<p>You stated that you are looking for applications co-created with stakeholders - can you clarify how these can be included, acknowledged and reimbursed within this grant process? For example, what are the options for public co-applicants who have (and will) make significant contributions be included and acknowledged - as Col, RCol or is there only scope in the PPI budget?</p>	<p>A member of the public cannot be named as a PI or a Co-I, but you can request funds in your grant to pay PPIE contributors and also employ staff to manage PPIE as part of the project.</p> <p>Please speak to your host organisation for advice on appropriately costing PPIE work, then make a justification for these costs in your application.</p>
<p>Can items of enduring value be purchased? e.g. GPU clusters and so on.</p>	<p>You could request equipment (e.g. GPU) if justifiable for the project, and it represents a good 'value for money' option vs alternatives. Such costs should be project specific - we are not looking to fund general equipment</p>
<p>For co-Is from another university or NHS, will they get funding separately?</p>	<p>Funding will be awarded to one institution and this institution will be responsible for transferring any costs to other organisations</p>
<p>Can field level study by international collaborators be categorised as consumable?</p>	<p>Yes, you could request costs for fieldwork fees, subjects and informants. This would be submitted as an "other cost".</p>
<p>Can you request funding for things like advice and guidance related to pursuing clinical UKCA/CE/FDA marking of any technical outputs?</p>	<p>Yes, you can request funding for this kind of activity. For example you could consider requesting resources to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ undertake appropriate training to develop an understanding of the process</li> <li>▪ employ a regulatory expert on the project</li> <li>▪ resources to facilitate meetings with the regulators, such as travel or meeting costs.</li> </ul>
<p>Can we add cost for clinical time or say research nurse time that will be critical for co-development?</p>	<p>Yes, EPSRC will pay the research costs associated with the NHS component of a proposal. These are the costs of research and development itself and should be included under the appropriate fund heading – for example, staff under directly incurred or directly allocated staff (as appropriate).</p>
<p><b>Research team composition</b></p>	
<p>Are there any expectations for the profile of the PI? That is, is there any preference for technical or clinical backgrounds?</p>	<p>No, there are no requirements if the PI must have a technical or clinical background. However, the project team must complement the expertise and skills of the PI in order to deliver a multi-disciplinary project and this must be clearly described in the proposal.</p>

	<p>Projects are expected to comprise of cross-disciplinary teams with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• technical knowledge of AI, data science and health and wellbeing</li> <li>• those who understand how to develop projects that are trusted and responsible, particularly in respect of personal and protected data</li> <li>• inclusion of experts on industry adoption and diffusion of innovation taken into consideration</li> </ul>
Does the PI need to have a track record in AI?	Given the cross-council, multi-disciplinary focus of the call, the lead PI may not need to be an expert in AI methods (could be the social or health lead), as long as the research team has the strengths needed in this area.
Could this Funding call have joint PIs? One from Computing Science, and One from Healthcare?	No, only one person can be named as PI.
Is there additional advantage to having a consortium of multiple partners across academic organisations and industry?	There is no additional advantage but the assembled team must have the required expertise to deliver the project, regardless of the organisations that they are affiliated with.
<b>Scope and deliverables</b>	
What is within scope? Tackling specific health-related or clinical questions with AI?	<p>This is a pan-UKRI call and the definition of health is not limited to the remit of one particular council. This is very broad and covers areas such as (but not limited to clinical (MRC), public health (MRC/ESRC), healthcare technologies to support health and wellbeing (EPSRC), lifelong health and ageing (BBSRC).</p> <p>It is up to the applicants to make the case as to how their work addresses a particular challenge within a very broad space.</p> <p>Please see the following pages for the health-related priorities for some of UKRI's councils:  <a href="#">BBSRC</a>  <a href="#">EPSRC</a>  <a href="#">ESRC</a>  <a href="#">MRC</a></p> <p>Your project should aim to create outputs that will increase UK's capability in AI as well as increasing the translation and adoption of AI technologies to benefit UK economically and societally. Global health challenges are within scope if they represent an economic/societal opportunity for the UK (e.g. vaccine development).</p> <p>For specific queries if your project falls within the remit of this call, please contact <a href="mailto:aiforhealth@ukri.org">aiforhealth@ukri.org</a> so we can provide advice on a case-by-case basis.</p>
Can you help me understand how to "focus on a clear health challenge" (explained as a specific challenge as opposed to a generic problem), yet working "across the nexus of challenges spaces"?	<p>We recognise that a lot of health approaches will need very particular mechanisms to deliver them, rather than generic platform or infrastructural approaches, hence the focus on a clear health challenge.</p> <p>In addition to focusing on technology development to tackle a health challenge, the projects must also consider more hollistic aspects of AI technology development and how this will make it more usable and applicable. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of AI within important or underexplored (from the perspective of AI) areas of health research, or both</li> <li>• need for new or improved AI approaches and ways of applying AI in health research</li> <li>• understanding and tackling pertinent data issues needed to progress health AI research</li> <li>• ensuring AI is fit for use by addressing issues of responsibility, bias, end user needs, and similar areas by incorporating these approaches, or redesigning existing tools taking into account responsibility, bias, end user needs to ensure they are fit-for-purpose</li> </ul>
Can you comment on the overlap with other MRC calls such as	This is a UKRI call and has no formal overlap or connection with specific research council programmes.

<p><a href="https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/establish-an-integrated-uk-rare-disease-research-platform-nodes/">https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/establish-an-integrated-uk-rare-disease-research-platform-nodes/</a>?</p>	<p>However, if you are considering applying for other calls as well as applying for this call in the same topic area, please make sure the proposed work is sufficiently different and is not duplicated between these calls.</p>
<p>is the call designed to fund research that is more "blue-sky" (more aligned with EPSRC), more applied (more aligned with say MRC), or 50:50.</p>	<p>This is a pan-UKRI call, which means it covers the remit areas of all the research councils. Your project does not need to be aligned to a specific council, but should focus on what is required to advance the usability of AI within the context of your "health challenge", and this may mean the remit of certain councils may be more pronounced in your application.</p>
<p>EPSRC has been funding research on AI for healthcare for many years now. What's the difference between this call and a standard research grant? What is they are specifically looking for in the applications?</p>	<p>A standard research grant would be specific to the remit of a single research council. This is a pan-UKRI call and aims to move application of the tool of AI forward within the health space. That health space can cross a number of research council remit boundaries.</p> <p>We are looking for development of the tool of AI but not necessarily technical development that pushes against the cutting edge of AI. For example, this development could be work that aims to make AI more responsible, cut down cross-disciplinary barriers, make a tool more applicable and usable by working with the public/clinicians/health professionals/health researchers.</p>
<p>Is there an expectation of access to existing health datasets?</p>	<p>Applicants should ensure that any data access requirements are taken into account when planning their project so that the proposed work can be delivered within the time frame of the award.</p>
<p>Are single centre studies to develop a tool within the remit, or does it have to be national/ multi-centre datasets?</p> <p>Will projects using data from a single site be viewed unfavourably (i.e. due to potentially limited generalisability)? Single site studies avoid common issues with data sharing across sites</p> <p>How much emphasis will you put on people demonstrating access to high quality dataset and will they need to be from multiple site (for generalisability)?</p>	<p>There are no specific expectations/restrictions around single-centre vs multi-centre studies.</p> <p>We expect the AI tools developed to be impactful, and it is up to the applicant to decide what is appropriate for the goals of their project and demonstrate accordingly in their proposal.</p>
<p>What are the expectations around pilot data? And can funding be used to collect new data, if the initial dataset available is quite small?</p> <p>Would you consider applications where part of the funding is used to help create multi-centre datasets (e.g. slide scanning)? Or must the budget be exclusively on the AI costs?</p> <p>Can the funding be used to generate new datasets for testing the generalisability of existing AI? My team has developed AI for biomedical imaging, but the development was mostly in older individuals of European ancestry. We'd like to test its accuracy in other groups but may need to fund a new study to acquire the images from those groups. Could costs be used to support this?</p>	<p>There are no expectations around having pilot data. There may be data available that the project can utilise, or existing applications/demonstrators that you can show.</p> <p>Funding can be used to collect new data, however, you must demonstrate that the data is not duplicative of data that already exists. In addition, data collection/access should not be the sole focus of the project and you must demonstrate that the data collection and research component of the project can be delivered within the award duration.</p>
<p>Should clinic evaluation be conducted in the project?</p> <p>If the project aims to develop a new AI tool, will you require for it to be validated within the</p>	<p>The time frame of this award may mean that it is difficult to include clinical evaluation or validation work. It is not necessary to include evaluation work as a part of the proposed work, however, we encourage applicants to keep in mind any evaluation considerations required in the future when developing their proposals.</p>

same project - which might be limited given the scope and resources available?	
In terms of research (idea) development stage, are you looking at TRL1-2, TRL3-4 or above?	With this particular call, we are looking at early stage research as long as a health challenge has been identified.
Would implementation of already developed AI innovation, but application to local NHS sector be in scope of the grant?	If it is already developed that would not be in scope, the grant still needs to have an early-stage research component
Does the scope of this call include accelerating existing digital tools (including simulations) using AI? Or does it only focus on building tools from scratch?	You can build on existing tools - we'd expect some focus on the AI/technical side in the project.
Is there a minimum level of artificial intelligence intricacy required for this call eg. Alert tools vs automated ventilation management tools?	It is up to the applicant to decide what is the appropriate AI methodology required to deliver the project
What might be examples of deliverables within 18 months? Would conceptual goals and consortium building bids to answer specific research questions be accepted?	<p>We expect that the AI tool would have advanced in terms of its usability and application within the health research space. This could be, for example, through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstration of a proof of concept/principle/usage</li> <li>• making advancement in a space where it will be a platform for future development</li> <li>• building capacity and capability and breaking down barriers in a multi-disciplinary research space</li> </ul> <p>This is why it is important that applicants identify a specific health challenge so that they can demonstrate how they addressed a particular problem/barrier and made advancements on how the tool of AI can be applied in that space.</p>
What is considered high impact output from the project -- is the emphasis on publications vs prototype vs technology that can be transferred to industry vs breakthrough science?	<p>The objective of this funding opportunity is to fund research that will enable a particular AI tool to become more usable and applicable, and contributes to moving health research forwards.</p> <p>How this is disseminated is up to the applicant to decide. This can include, for example, publications, software, knowledge transfer, training opportunities etc</p>
<b>Assessment process</b>	
Will proposals be rejected at the "Intention to Submit" stage?	No, the Intent to Submit responses will not be assessed.
Will the data management plan be assessed?	Yes, the Panel will consider DMPs alongside the other information submitted by applicants.
Do applications go out for external review before the sift panel or before the expert panel or neither?	The applications will not be sent out for postal peer review but will be assessed by an Expert Panel assembled specifically for this funding opportunity.
Are public contributors involved in the assessment process?	No
Will you tell us who will sit on the panel?	We are currently assembling the Panel membership and will make this information available as soon as possible.
Will specific councils assess specific applications or how will assessment work across the councils?  Would you allocate panel members according to the nature of the proposal?	A single panel will perform the assessment. We are assembling the Panel member with suggestions from across UKRI and will endeavour to assign Panel members according to the nature of the proposal.
<b>Collaborations (e.g. industry, international)</b>	
Are commercial entities allowed to be funded partners and/or co-Is? What % of work can be subcontracted?	Industry partners cannot be named as co-investigators but they can participate as project partners or subcontractors.

	<p>There is no set percentage of work that can be sub-contracted but we do not expect a high percentage as this is funding for research projects. Cost requested has to be justified within the application (e.g. what benefits will this bring to the UK) as to why this work cannot be delivered by the research group.</p> <p>This also applies to international industry partners.</p>
How can I involve international partners?	<p>See above for international industry partners.</p> <p>For international academic collaborators, they cannot be named as co-investigators but you can request costs such UK research staff to visit a partner's laboratory overseas or for hosting visiting international researchers.</p>
Are there any networking opportunities whereby industry can find appropriate academic partners?	No we do not have networking events planned at the moment and applicants should seek out these connections on their own.
Can we have visiting researchers from outside the UK?	Yes
How can we reimburse third-sector/service providers partners and what for?	You are able to do this via subcontracting. Research organisations must ensure that expenditure on sub-contracts is subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety. All costs should be fully documented/invoiced and available to EPSRC if required.
Could Republic of Ireland partners apply for funding ? (under the EPSRC - SFI arrangements)?	Unfortunately the EPSRC-SFI arrangement is not available through this call and so ROI partners are not eligible to receive funding.
To focus on responsible AI will require members of the research team who aren't necessarily typical researchers, and are management staff e.g. Governance and Compliance specialists, however it looks that this is precluded from the co-applicant list. Can these members be included, or not, please?	Yes, you are able to cost their time on a grant. You can do this either as staff costs or consultancy fees.
<b>Intellectual Property</b>	
What is the expectation towards IP arise, potential ownership for patent and commercialisation, especially when international collaborators are involved?	<p>We delegate IP arrangements to the university to manage.</p> <p>We encourage applicants to consider IP implications when you are developing your ideas and that you have the appropriate discussions with your collaborators.</p>
<p>Who owns the IP from the project and can it be used commercially?</p> <p>Could you talk about how background vs foreground IP is treated?</p>	This will follow usual UKRI rules. Please contact your organisation's tech transfer office or equivalent for advice.
Tools developed are necessary to be free access or can hosting organisation and partners think about IP protection?	This is up to the applicant to address in their proposal and the applicant must have a clear strategy as to how to manage the outputs of the project e.g. the Panel will consider if the proposed route will maximise the impact of the outputs of the project to benefit the relevant stakeholders
<b>Other</b>	
Is this a one-off call?	<p>There are currently no plans for future rounds.</p> <p>However, there are a <a href="#">range of funding opportunities across the Councils</a> that may be suitable to support health-related AI research, including other upcoming cross-council opportunities such as the <a href="#">UKRI cross research council responsive mode pilot scheme</a></p>