

# Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships: round three

**Opportunity status:**

Closed

**Funders:**

[Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council \(EPSRC\)](#)

**Funding type:**

Fellowship

**Total fund:**

£12,000,000

**Award range:**

£3,000,000 - £5,000,000

**Publication date:**

26 January 2022

**Opening date:**

4 April 2023

**Closing date:**

7 September 2023 4:00pm UK time

Apply for funding to undertake world-leading research to advance the field of artificial intelligence (AI) in the UK.

This funding opportunity is aimed at established researchers. We welcome and encourage international applicants. However, you must be based in the UK at an organisation eligible for UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding to hold the fellowship.

We welcome those:

- conducting research into AI at a fundamental or theoretical level
- working at the interface between AI and another discipline

Funding is for up to five years. EPSRC will fund 80% of the full economic cost.

## Who can apply

We're looking to support talented researchers with a high international standing who work in AI, or at the interface between AI and other disciplines, and can advance and transform the field.

These fellowships therefore encourage applications from top international talent, either through recruitment from outside of the UK, or by retaining leaders currently located in the UK.

Applicants who seek to apply current AI methods to an application area will not be accepted.

## Eligibility

There are no standardised eligibility criteria for this fellowship due to the diversity of career paths in AI.

To be eligible for this award you don't need to be a UK resident, however fellows must be employed by [an eligible UK host organisation](#) for the time committed to the fellowship. These can be:

- UK higher education institutions
- research council institutes
- UKRI-approved independent research organisations
- eligible public sector research establishments
- NHS bodies with research capacity

These fellowships can be held as part of a joint position between an academic organisation and another sector, with the eligible organisation functioning as host organisation for the fellowship.

We therefore highly encourage applications from those who:

- are currently employed in a non-academic sector, including business, government or the third sector
- have taken a non-standard career path after completing a primary degree

If you would like to discuss applying to this fellowship funding opportunity from a non-academic position, please see the 'contact details' section.

## Duration

These fellowships have a maximum duration of five years and cannot be extended pro rata although it is certainly possible to apply for the fellowship to be held part-time.

You should explain how the fellowship will be used to build new AI capability and capacity beyond what would be possible without this fellowship. For UK-based applicants, you should be able to explain how the fellowship will help retain you within the UK.

### Application restrictions

The EPSRC restriction on the number of fellowship applications in a 12-month period does not apply to this funding opportunity.

Therefore, if you apply for this funding opportunity, you will be permitted to submit a fellowship proposal to EPSRC in the following 12 months. However, you can only apply to one fellowship scheme at a time. You must wait until the outcome of one application is known before submitting to another scheme.

### Resubmissions

EPSRC has a [no resubmission policy](#).

Full proposals submitted to this funding opportunity which are unsuccessful will be classed as a first submission under the EPSRC resubmissions policy. The proposal would therefore not be able to subsequently be submitted to other EPSRC schemes.

Similarly, full proposals previously submitted to other EPSRC schemes will be counted as a resubmission and office rejected.

Individuals who wish to apply, but have previously been unsuccessful in an EPSRC fellowship or Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship application can only do so if their proposal is substantially different. Exceptionally, this also applies to unsuccessful expression of interest proposals submitted to the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship programme.

[Find out about EPSRC's policy on resubmissions.](#)

Submissions to the expression of interest stage of this funding opportunity will not count towards the [EPSRC repeatedly unsuccessful applicants policy](#). Unsuccessful full proposals will count towards this policy.

If you are currently restricted under the repeatedly unsuccessful applicants policy, you may submit unlimited expressions of interest. However, you will only be able to submit one full proposal as principal investigator or co-investigator during the 12-month restricted period.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

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 to enable you to design a package that fits your research goals, career and personal circumstances. This includes:

- career breaks
- support for people with caring responsibilities
- flexible working
- 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.

## What we're looking for

We are looking to support individuals with a high international standing who can make an impact on the UK AI research and innovation landscape by recruiting top talent to the UK, or by retaining leaders currently located in the UK.

With these substantial awards, fellows will seek to build new AI capability and capacity in the UK.

Fellows will lead a highly skilled and potentially multidisciplinary team to deliver an ambitious, world-leading research programme which will advance the field of AI, and potentially other disciplines. This can be achieved, for example, by:

- developing novel AI methodologies by addressing the fundamental, theoretical or mathematical challenges in AI

- developing novel AI methodologies to address the challenges present in other and across disciplines or sectors

This funding opportunity therefore welcomes applications from individuals who conduct research into AI at a fundamental or theoretical level, or who work at the interface between AI and another discipline. The proposed work must develop AI beyond the current state of the art. We will not accept projects that seek to apply current AI methodologies to an application area.

### Fellowship expectations

Alongside undertaking world-leading research, fellows will be expected to develop their position of leadership in the national and international research community, as well as their host organisation.

Through their leadership, fellows will be expected to engage with, influence, and advocate for the strategic direction of the UK's AI ecosystem.

Fellows should also initiate, grow, and maintain strong relationships and collaborations with stakeholders in the UK and internationally. Through these, fellows should look to facilitate a positive impact on the wider research landscape.

It is expected that fellows will:

- use the significant support package to establish around them a highly skilled and potentially multidisciplinary research team, and lead a major programme which builds new capability and capacity in AI
- act as a leader in the AI community and an ambassador and advocate for it; driving forward the UK and international AI research agenda. Applicants who work at the interface between AI and another discipline will be expected to make leadership and ambassadorial contributions to all relevant fields
- build strong relationships and collaborations between academia, business, and broader stakeholders in the UK and internationally
- develop the skills and careers of their teams, growing the independent researchers and innovators of the future
- actively engage with researchers, developers and users to enable AI for use in the real world to ensure that AI is designed, developed and deployed robustly and transparently

- embed the principles of [responsible innovation](#) and [trusted research](#) 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

You should explain how your fellowship vision complements and delivers against [UKRI's statement of opportunities on AI \(PDF, 5.6MB\)](#) and the [UK's National AI Strategy](#).

### Funding available

Up to £12 million is available to fund a small number of sizable awards (£3 million to £5 million) for up to five years. Awards must start by 1 October 2024. UKRI will fund 80% of the full economic cost.

You are expected to request a significant package of resource, designed in partnership with your host organisation and collaborative partners, to provide the best support for your research vision. This might include:

- relocation costs
- attractive packages for staff
- access to data and infrastructure
- other standard research grant costs

Fellows are expected to build highly skilled interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary teams where appropriate. Resources may be used for:

- research expenses including:
  - travel
  - equipment
- research technical support including:
  - research software engineers
  - postdoctoral research assistants (PDRA)
  - fellow salaries
- data scientists
- training
- other standard expenses

Relocation costs are also permitted for international applicants, and up to £100,000 may be requested to set up your research activity in the UK.

Resources may be used for activities which 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. Student engagement may also be realised through institutional or stakeholder support, or collaboration with the [UKRI AI Centres for Doctoral Training](#).

### [Find out about cost you can apply for.](#)

Flexibility will be given to aid in delivering the outcomes of the fellowship programme. As such, detailed resourcing estimations will therefore only be required for the first two years of the investment, with a decision-making methodology for subsequent planning.

### Time dedicated to the fellowship

It is not expected that fellows will commit 100% of their contracted time, full-time equivalent (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 increase 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.

For applicants who have a joint academic appointment with other sectors, the minimum time commitment to the fellowship is 40% average over the lifetime of the award. This is to enable the fellow to establish leadership within the host organisation outside of the time committed to the fellowship. The time commitment should be suitably justified against the assessment criteria and aims of the programme.

The fellowship must start by 1 October 2024 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 2024 to 2025 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.

### **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.

You should detail clear plans for engaging with new and existing collaborators over the duration of the fellowship in the case for support.

### **Involvement of The Alan Turing Institute**

The Alan Turing Institute, the UK's national institute for AI and data science, is a delivery partner in the Turing AI Fellowships.

They will 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 will not offer letters of support to candidates.

Successful candidates will be invited to join The Alan Turing Institute's community of researchers and can discuss opportunities for them, and any postdoctoral researchers or students recruited to the fellowships, to engage with the Institute.

Find out more about [The Alan Turing Institute](#).

### Doctoral studentships

Funds for doctoral students may exceptionally be applied for as part of this funding opportunity.

This exception recognises that:

- studentships supported through UKRI's main routes may have been committed before the fellowships are awarded
- 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 postdoctoral 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 or studentships. You should clearly explain the benefit to the student or students being part of the research team.

The host organisation should have a track record of training doctoral students and it is expected that there are UKRI 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 higher education institution, 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 UKRI 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 2024 to 2025 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.

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 PDRA's per studentship. For example, one studentship with a duration of four years would require eight years of PDRA time over the same period that the fellowship will run.

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.

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](#).

### **Fees and stipends**

UKRI publish their national minimum doctoral stipend and indicative fee level on an annual basis. [Find out about getting a studentship to fund your doctorate](#).

Future fee and stipend levels are yet to be agreed, but for reference 2022 to 2023 details are as follows:

UKRI doctoral stipend levels and indicative fees for 2022 to 2023:

- national minimum doctoral stipend for 2022 to 2023 is £16,062
- UKRI indicative fee level for 2022 to 2023 is £4,596

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. You should justify the level of RTSG requested, however, as a guide the Medical Research Council (MRC) allocates a minimum £5,000 MRC-funded RTSG per year.

### **Co-investigators**

Fellowships are a personal award; however, fellows can name co-investigators on their application. It is expected that the expertise of the co-investigators should complement that of the fellow's, and should add value to the fellow's research vision.

The fellow should lead the research programme, and therefore it is not expected that the co-investigator will lead any of the work packages, rather their role should be in enabling the delivery of the fellow's vision. The inclusion of any co-investigators should be clearly justified.

## 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 contribution to the cost of the equipment from other sources is required. For these Turing AI Fellowships the required contribution is 50%.

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. 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 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.

For the expression of interest stage: equipment costs should be included in the 'exceptions' costing field in the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system. This should be the 50% contribution requested from EPSRC. This should also be noted in the justification of resources. For example, if the total cost of equipment on a proposal is £100,000 you should include £50,000 in the exceptions costs and note both the total equipment cost and the 50% EPSRC contribution requested in the justification of resources.

[Find out about EPSRC's approach to equipment funding.](#)

## Guidance for the host organisation

Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships are a strategic investment intended to build new AI capability and capacity in the UK. Host organisations should use their host organisation statement to clearly describe:

- their long-term strategy for AI
- how it complements the UK landscape
- how they anticipate the fellow will enable them to deliver their strategy

Due to the strategic nature of these awards, it is not anticipated that host organisations will submit more than two applications. Host organisations wishing to submit more than two applications should discuss this with EPSRC early in the candidate selection process.

Within their host organisation statement, the host organisation is expected to set out the strategic reasons for wanting to recruit or retain the world-leading individual in question, and 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.

### **Support for fellows**

The host organisation will play a key role in the retention and recruitment of global talent.

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 in other disciplines or sectors 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 at both stages of this funding opportunity is an important feature of this award. 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.

For further information see: [obligations of the research organisation](#)

### **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.

### **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. We encourage host organisations 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.

[Find out more about equality, diversity and inclusion.](#)

Responsible innovation and trusted research

UKRI 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.

Fellows will be required to embed principles of [responsible innovation](#) and those of [trusted research](#) throughout their activities. They will be expected to engage with the relevant regulatory bodies where concerns may arise under the [National Security and Investment Act](#). Aspects of bias, privacy, security and ethics should be considered where appropriate.

### International collaboration

Applicants planning to include international collaborators on their proposal should visit Trusted Research for [guidance on getting the most out of international collaboration while protecting intellectual property, sensitive research and personal information](#).

## How to apply

This funding opportunity has a two-stage application process:

- expression of interest
- full proposal

The full proposal stage is by invitation only. Applications that are successful at the expression of interest stage will be invited to submit a full proposal.

No other proposals will be accepted. Any unsolicited proposals will be rejected. Application details are described below.

### Stage one: submitting an expression of interest

You must apply using the [Joint Electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#).

We recommend you start your application early. You can save completed details in Je-S at any time and return to continue your application later.



You should ensure you are aware of and comply with any internal institutional deadlines that may be in place.

When applying, select 'new document' then:

- council: EPSRC
- document type: Outline proposal
- scheme: EPSRC fellowship outline
- call/type/mode: Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships round 2 outlines

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

You can find advice on completing your application in the [Je-S handbook](#).

Your host organisation will be able to provide advice and guidance on completing your application.

After completing the application, you must 'submit document,' which will send your application to your host organisation's administration.

Your host organisation's administration is required to complete the submission process. You should allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the funding opportunity closing date.

EPSRC must receive your expression of interest by 7 September 2023 at 4:00pm UK time.

### **Guidance on writing an outline proposal**

Je-S application

The 'what we're looking for' section outlines some of the information we expect to see in the Je-S application.

Equipment costs should be included in the 'exceptions' costing field in Je-S. This should be the 50% contribution requested from EPSRC. This should also be noted in the justification of resources. For example, if the total cost of equipment on a proposal is £100,000, you should include £50,000 in the exceptions costs and note both the total equipment cost and the 50% EPSRC contribution requested in the justification of resources.

As well as the Je-S application form, you must also submit:

- an outline case for support
- a narrative CV
- a justification of resources
- a host organisation statement
- letters of support

A cover letter is optional.

#### Outline case for support

This should be no more than four sides of A4.

The case for support should complement the narrative CV where appropriate. You should use it to:

- tell us why you are the right person for a Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship:
  - explaining how you aim to further develop your role within global AI community
  - demonstrating your potential to build new AI capability and capacity in the UK
  - demonstrating your ability to act as a leader within AI, and any other relevant communities
- tell us how you and your research complement the UK AI landscape
- explain how the cross-sector or cross-disciplinary aspects of the fellowship will be used enhance your career mobility and how they will enable you and your team to initiate, grow and manage collaborative relationships with key stakeholders
- give a brief description of the current AI research environment at the host organisation, and how you will complement this

You should also give a brief explanation of the proposed research, including:

- your vision for the fellowship, clearly demonstrating the novelty and creativity of your research and outlining your original and ambitious plans and ideas
- how it will lead to the development of novel AI capabilities in the UK, beyond applying established AI approaches within applications
- its potential to impact the field of AI, other scientific disciplines, UK society and the economy

#### Narrative CV

This should be no more than four sides of A4.

In line with EPSRC's open fellowship scheme, we ask you to provide a narrative CV. This should include the following headings:

- personal details
- how have you contributed to the generation and flow of new ideas, hypotheses, tools or knowledge?
- how have you contributed to research teams and the development of others?
- how have you contributed to the wider research and innovation community?
- how have you exploited your research?
- additional information

Read our [guidance on preparing a narrative CV \(PDF, 49KB\)](#).

Justification of resources

This should be no more than two sides of A4.

You must ensure that all applicable costs requested on the Je-S form are justified in the justification of resources. This includes doctoral studentship costs if applicable and equipment costs.

If resources are requested for doctoral studentships, these should be clearly justified. Say why additional UKRI investment is needed on top of existing [UKRI studentship](#) funding, such as Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres for Doctoral Training. You should clearly explain why additional UKRI investment in AI students represents value for money in the context of the £100 million already invested in [UKRI AI Centres for Doctoral Training](#).

The Turing AI Fellowships are a strategic investment and are being delivered by EPSRC on behalf of UKRI, therefore EPSRC will contribute 50% of the final purchase price of equipment. This should also be noted in the justification of resources. For example, if the total cost of equipment on a proposal is £100,000, you should include £50,000 in the exceptions costs and note both the total equipment cost and the 50% EPSRC contribution requested in the justification of resources.

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.

You should follow the 'cost to the proposal' headings in the application form.

Read our guidance about [preparing a justification of resources](#).

Host organisation statement

This should be no more than three sides of A4.

Host organisation support is an important feature of this award and should explain:

- the host organisation's strategy for AI research
- how you and your research complements its strategy
- the strategic reasons for wanting to recruit or retain the world-leading individual in question
- why the host organisation is an appropriate place for the fellow and their team to conduct this research
- the anticipated tailored support that would be offered to the fellow and how this will aid them in realising the objectives of the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowship programme
- how you and the host organisation have engaged to develop a research work plan that will allow you to follow a flexible research, collaboration, and leadership pathway throughout the fellowship
- the training and development opportunities that are available to meet your aspirations and the aspirations of your team over the duration of the proposal
- the support that will be provided to familiarise and integrate you into the UK research ecosystem if you will be relocating from abroad, including the supervision of UK doctoral students

This statement should be on headed paper and dated within the last six months. If this is not included within the expression of interest, the proposal will be office rejected and will not go forward to the expression of interest panel.

Find out more about [what to include in the host organisation statement](#).

Letters of support

There is no page limit for letters of support.

Please upload letters of support under the attachment type 'proposal cover letter' and ensure that the file name makes it clear that it is a letter of support, for example 'Project Partner Letter of Support – CompanyName'. These will then be seen by peer review.

Letters of support must be provided by all project partners mentioned in the Je-S form.

Read our [project partner letter of support guide](#) for more information.

Cover letter

This is an optional attachment. There's no page limit.

It will only be seen by UKRI and will not be sent to peer review. The cover letter gives you the opportunity to provide any other information you feel is relevant to your application. You can use it to highlight anything relevant to the application that has been discussed with EPSRC or wider UKRI staff beforehand.

You should attach your documents as PDFs to avoid errors. They should be completed in single-spaced Arial 11 font or similar-sized sans serif typeface.

[Advice on writing proposals for EPSRC funding.](#)

Stage two: submitting a full proposal

Proposals successful at the expression of interest stage will be invited to submit a full proposal. No other proposals will be accepted. Any unsolicited proposals will be rejected.

You should ensure you are aware of, and comply with, any internal institutional deadlines that may be in place.

We anticipate that you will need to submit your full proposal to the Funding Service and more information will be provided in due course.

The full proposal stage will open on 30 October 2023 and close on 16 January 2024 at 4:00pm UK time.

**How we will assess your application**

## Assessment process

A three-stage assessment process will be used.

### **Stage one: expression of interest**

Expressions of interest will be considered by an external panel against the quality, applicant, resources and management, and research environment assessment criteria.

Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. In the event of this funding opportunity being substantially oversubscribed as to be unmanageable, EPSRC reserves the right to modify the assessment process.

### **Stage two: invited full proposals**

Full proposals will be sent out for postal peer review. Postal peer review will consider all assessment criteria.

Where the majority of reviews are unsupportive, the proposal will be 'review rejected' at the review stage. You will no longer qualify for the right to reply.

If your application has received enough support from reviewers, it will go forward to the interview panel. Prior to the interview panel, usable reviewer comments that were included in the decision process are sent to you. This gives you the opportunity to correct factual inaccuracies and respond to any queries raised by the reviewers in a principal investigator response document.

### **Stage three: interview panel**

At the interview stage, the panel questions will primarily focus on the applicant and quality assessment criterion. However, all criteria will be assessed in determining the final rank ordered list, taking into consideration:

- the peer review comments
- principal investigator response
- interview

Full details of the interview process will be sent to applicants who are successful at the expression of interest stage.

## Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria for all stages of the assessment process are provided. The weighting of each assessment criteria in relation to each stage of the process is also indicated.

The assessment criteria are as follows.

### **Quality (primary)**

This applies to all stages of the process.

We assess research excellence, making reference to:

- the fellowship vision, including the ambition and adventure of the proposed programme and the potential for its outcomes to have a transformative effect on the research and innovation landscape of AI
- the degree of novelty in the research programme to advance to the field of AI, the relationship to the broader context of the current AI research area internationally and timeliness and relevance to identified stakeholders
- the suitability of the proposed methodology and the appropriateness of the approach to achieving impacts across sectors and timescales
- the plans to embed the principles of responsible innovation and trusted research throughout your activities

### **National importance (secondary major)**

This applies to the full proposal and interview stages.

We assess how the research programme:

- meets national needs by establishing a unique world-leading activity in AI
- complements other UK research funded in the area, including any relationships or alignment to the UKRI portfolio, the UK's national AI strategy, or UKRI's statement of opportunities on AI
- contributes to addressing key UK societal challenges 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)**

This is considered at all assessment stages.

We make an assessment of your ability to deliver the proposed fellowship programme, making reference to:

- international recognition of scientific contribution to advancing the field of AI as evidenced by your track record
- your 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 both in the UK, and internationally
- your 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
- your ability to successfully build and manage collaborations across sectors

#### **Resources and management (secondary)**

This is considered at all assessment stages.

We assess 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 your planned programme
- the appropriateness of the risk mitigation strategy

#### **Portfolio balancing**

At this outline stage, the panels and EPSRC may take into account the portfolio, aims of the call, geographic and subject matter diversity of applications received when deciding which applicants to invite to submit full proposals.



You are reminded that your proposal should meet the objectives of this investment and we encourage you to pay particular attention to:

- industry: we welcome the possibility of future fellows holding joint industry-academia positions
- regional diversity: we encourage applications from across the UK
- international applicants: we also encourage applications from overseas, as long as you will be employed by an eligible UK organisation for the duration of the fellowship

### Funding opportunity-specific criteria

#### **Research environment (secondary)**

This is assessed at all stages.

We consider:

- the strategic intent and level of tailored and flexible support from the host organisation during and beyond the lifetime of the fellowship
- your justification of choice of host organisation and collaborators, and how they will aid you in realising your research vision and the aims of this funding opportunity
- the training environment for doctoral students where resources have been requested for studentships

### Feedback

Specific feedback will not be given at the expression of interest stage. Feedback on the full proposals will be in the form of reviewers' comments. Additional feedback may also be provided by the interview panel.

Unless rejected prior to the panel meeting, the rank order list information is published on [EPSRC's grants on the web](#). Information is published on grants on the web shortly after the panel meeting.

### Guidance for reviewers

Reviewers should assess proposals within the context of the aims, objectives and the specific assessment criteria outlined in this funding opportunity.

For postal peer review of these proposals, the standard reviewer form will be used. The 'specific call criteria' section of the reviewer form should be used to comment on the research environment

For more information, read:

- the [EPSRC peer review process and guidance for reviewers](#)
- the [standard call notes for reviewers](#)

## Contact details

Get help with developing your proposal

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.

Ask about this funding opportunity

**Cinzia Porcedda, Senior Portfolio Manager, AI and Robotics, EPSRC**

Email: [cinzia.porcedda@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:cinzia.porcedda@epsrc.ukri.org)

Include 'Turing AI fellowships funding opportunity' in the subject line.

**Mark Raynor, Portfolio Manager, AI and Robotics, EPSRC**

Email: [mark.raynor@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:mark.raynor@epsrc.ukri.org)

Include 'Turing AI fellowships funding opportunity' in the subject line.

**AI and robotics team mailbox**

Email: [ai.robotics@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:ai.robotics@epsrc.ukri.org)

Include 'Turing AI fellowships funding opportunity' in the subject line.

Get help with applying through Je-S

Any queries regarding the submission of proposals through Je-S should be directed to the Je-S helpdesk.

**Email**

[jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org)

**Telephone**

01793 444164

**Opening times**

## [Je-S helpdesk opening times](#)

# Additional info

## Webinar

We held a webinar on 6 May 2022 to provide more information about the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships.

View the [slides presented at the webinar on 6 May 2022 \(PDF, 754KB\)](#).

## Background

On 4 October 2021, the Chancellor announced that the UK government would 'double the number of Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships'.

This further investment of up to £20 million in Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships aligns with the [national AI strategy](#) and the [UKRI statement of opportunities in AI \(PDF, 5.6MB\)](#).

The funding will be delivered through two rounds; this is the final opportunity for funding in this scheme and fellows will start by 1 October 2024.

It will enable distinguished academics to make research breakthroughs in AI, contributing to the UK and maintaining its position as a global leader in AI research and development.

The initial investment in [Turing AI fellowships](#) was 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 objectives of the overall investment in Turing AI fellowships are to:

- accelerate and support the careers of a diverse cadre of the best and brightest AI international researchers, 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, accelerating the pathway to impact of AI technologies
- enable leading researchers to undertake world-leading creative and innovative AI research in the UK, with a broad range of potential impacts across sectors and timescales, and a key role in positioning the UK as a global leader in AI both now and in the future

Turing AI fellowships investment to date has been delivered through two phases:

- phase one, the pilot phase, delivered by The Alan Turing Institute in 2019
- phase two, the substantive phase, delivered by EPSRC on behalf of UKRI

Phase two consists of:

- Turing AI Acceleration Fellowships in 2020
- Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships in 2021

The Turing AI Fellowships are delivered by UKRI in partnership with:

- [The Alan Turing Institute](#)
- the [Department for Science, Innovation and Technology](#)
- the [Office for Artificial Intelligence](#)

Global talent visa

International researchers and specialists who are named, or have their position listed, on a successful grant may be eligible for the [global talent visa](#).

Responsible innovation

EPSRC is fully committed to developing and promoting 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.

## Additional grant conditions

Grants are awarded under the standard [UKRI grant terms and conditions](#). The following additional grant conditions will also apply.

### Start date of the grant

Notwithstanding 'starting procedures', this grant must start by 1 October 2023. No slippage of start date beyond 1 October 2023 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.

### 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.

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

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.

### Naming and branding

Fellowship titles must be prefixed with 'Turing AI Fellowship:...'. In addition to RGC 12.4 'publication and acknowledgement of support' in the [standard terms and conditions of grants](#), 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.

### Engagement

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

### **Governance**

EPSRC will nominate a member of UKRI staff ('the project officer') who will be your 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.

### **Monitoring and reporting**

In addition to the requirements set out RGC 7.4.3 in the [standard terms and conditions of grants](#), 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 twice a year 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.

### **Programme and project review**

In addition to the requirements set out in RGC 7.4 Research Monitoring and Evaluation and 7.5 Disclosure and Inspection in the [standard terms and conditions of grants](#), 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.

Grant holders will be required to submit documentation and engage with those conducting any 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. An unsatisfactory outcome of a grant review may result in a reduction or termination of the grant funding.

### **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 'monitoring and reporting', the grant holder must immediately notify the UKRI project officer or officers 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.

Supporting documents

[Equality impact assessment \(PDF, 165KB\)](#)