



## Smart Data Research UK Fellowships

### Frequently Asked Questions

Please note that this is a 'living document' and will be updated periodically (see version information below).

#### Am I eligible to apply?

You must be based at an eligible research organisation to apply for the fellowship. Before applying for funding, check the standard [Eligibility of your organisation](#) and [Eligibility as an individual](#) documentation.

Researchers who are named Leads and Co-leads with more than 0.2 FTE on SDR UK's Data Services grants are not eligible to apply.

SDR UK Accelerator award holders with more than 6 months left on their award on 31 January 2026 are not eligible to apply.

Applicants from non-UK organisations are not eligible to apply for funding for this opportunity.

Project leads (international), project co-leads (international), and international fellows are not eligible to apply for funding for this funding opportunity.

#### What is the award amount for the Fellowship?

The maximum award amount for the Fellowship is £200,000. ESRC will provide 80% of the FEC (£160,000).

#### What is the duration of the award?

The duration of the award is 18 months and should commence on 1 February 2026.

A minimum time of 0.6 FTE should be allocated to the award. Applicants on part-time contracts should commit to an FTE at a proportional level.

#### How long is the assessment process and when will we receive the outcomes of our application?

We aim to complete the assessment process within 3 months of receiving your application. The outcomes will be communicated to applicants in December 2025.



### Can only smart data be used in this opportunity?

Smart data must be used in this opportunity. It may be used exclusively or in combination with other types of data (e.g. survey and administrative data).

### Must I have access to the data when I apply for this opportunity?

If you already have access to smart data, you need to provide the details of this access and the dataset(s) you will use.

If you are still negotiating access to smart data at the time of application, please provide a letter of support from a data controller or repository. The letter should indicate the access they will provide and the datasets that will be used. This will provide sufficient evidence of data access for the purposes of the application.

### What do I do with the data that gets acquired/used in my project?

Grant holders must deposit all data (or a data product) from the project in a [SDR UK Data Service](#) or the UK Data Service. If deposition is in a repository which is not the UK Data Service, applicants must still create a metadata record in UK Data Service ReShare and submit metadata relating to the grant and data collection through this service.

Applicants can include costs associated with data acquisitions in their applications. This must be costed in 'Exceptions'.

The data management plan should include an assessment of existing data.

### Is my project within remit of the opportunity?

This opportunity is open to applicants from any discipline but applicants must demonstrate how their projects will address a real-world challenge and how it is aligned to 1 of SDR UK's 4 thematic pillars:

- Productivity and prosperity for all
- Health and well-being
- Digital society
- Sustainability

See SDR UK's website for more information: <https://www.sdruk.ukri.org/our-work/research-themes/>

### What is meant by a 'real-world challenge'?

For the purposes of this opportunity, a 'real-world challenge' is understood as a prevailing, practical challenge affecting the lives of people, communities, organisations and systems in tangible ways. It may be social, economic, environmental, technological, or health/wellbeing in



nature. Solving this challenge will have benefits for society, with outcomes which positively impact the public good. The challenge must be relevant to the UK.

#### What outputs will I be expected to deliver?

In addition to standard academic outputs, awardees will be expected to work with Smart Data Research UK's Communications team to deliver more bespoke and impact-focused outputs and activities.

#### In what sections can I embed images?

You can embed images in the following sections:

- Vision
- Approach
- Applicant and team capability to deliver
- Career development
- Ethics and responsible research and innovation

#### What is the resubmission policy?

ESRC's resubmission policy applies to this opportunity. We will not accept uninvited resubmissions of projects that have been submitted to UKRI.

#### Does the opportunity allow for more than one application from one research organisation?

Yes. There are no institutional limits on the number of applicants from one research organisation.

#### Can applicants make multiple applications for this opportunity?

No. Applicants can only make 1 application for this opportunity.

#### How much time should I allocate to delivering the impact requirement for the Fellowship?

We expect that applicants allocate a minimum of 20% of their award time to impact focused activities. Impact activities should be pursued over the course of the award, and not just in its latter stages.

Please direct any further questions to [smartdataresearch@ukri.org](mailto:smartdataresearch@ukri.org)

Version	Date	Information
1.0	9 July 2025	Issued