

Turing AI Pioneer Interdisciplinary Fellowships FAQs

These FAQs are provided to support applicants. The Opportunity webpage ([Turing AI Pioneer Interdisciplinary Fellowships: outline applications – UKRI](#)) remains the definitive guidance which will be used by peer review in their assessment.

Q: Do standard EPSRC eligibility criteria for Project leads apply to this opportunity?

A: Applicants should normally hold a permanent post, lecturer or equivalent at a UKRI eligible organisation 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. The term of employment of a fixed-term employee must extend beyond the duration of the proposed research project. Further details on the UKRI eligibility criteria here: [Check if you're eligible for funding – EPSRC – UKRI](#)

Q: Who is an established researcher?

A: An established researcher should be able to demonstrate ability to lead a research-focused group and drive research directions and the capability to drive broader adoption of AI approaches across their domain. This could be demonstrated by, but not limited to, receipt of significant funding or leading significant research programmes or workstreams or managing your own independent group in or outside academia. In any case, applicants should demonstrate why they consider it appropriate to describe themselves as established in their domain.

Q: I would like to clarify who is eligible to apply, based on background?

A: This opportunity is targeted at applicants who will benefit from the flexibility and time the fellowship will provide to enable them to build domain relevant AI skills and capability.

In terms of eligibility, if you are not from a core AI research discipline and/or do not have extensive experience of developing frontier AI/ML algorithms you will be eligible.

You will need to demonstrate in your application how:

- you would benefit from the time and flexibility the fellowship will afford you to build domain relevant AI skills and capability
- you have a vision for how the development of advanced AI systems and approaches could enable potentially transformative new avenues in your research and that of your broader community

Q: Can you define "no AI background"? Does it mean no AI related publications/projects or no AI related degrees/certifications?

A: This opportunity is targeted at applicants who will benefit from the flexibility and time the fellowship will provide to enable them to build domain relevant AI skills and capability.

Only applicants with a background in core AI research, for example, a researcher from a core AI research discipline, or a researcher who has spent most of their career working on development of frontier AI models are ineligible.

Applicants from other disciplines with experience using AI in their work but not developing frontier AI models are eligible. However, they must demonstrate in their application how they will benefit from the flexibility and time the fellowship will provide to enable them to build domain relevant AI skills and capability.

Q: Can I have multiple AI experts on the application as long as one is the co-lead and the others are collaborators?

A: Yes, you can collaborate and engage with as many experts as is appropriate for your programme. However, only one AI collaborator can be listed as a project co-lead. Any additional collaborators should be named in the proposals or included as project partners.

Q: Can the AI expert collaborator be from industry or an academic from outside the UK?

A: Yes, the AI collaborator can be from industry or outside the UK. If they are from industry or outside the UK can be added as project partners and cannot directly receive funding from this opportunity. The name and affiliation of the AI expert collaborator should be clearly stated in the Vision and approach or Outline applicant and team capability to deliver section. If invited to the full stage, there will be an opportunity to provide more details.

Q: Does the AI expert collaborator need to be a published academic or can they have relevant experience?

A: Our expectation is that applicants should collaborate with an established AI specialist or researcher who will support the fellow's development and collaborate on the planned research throughout the life of the fellowship. However, AI expert collaborators will not have a leadership role in the programme and would not be expected to have significant time costed to the grant. The chosen AI collaborator should be appropriate and have the right expertise to support the vision of how AI will be embedded in their research within and beyond the fellowship. If UK-based and entered as Co-lead, the AI expert collaborator is expected to meet all the eligibility criteria for the Project lead except for the requirement to hold a contract that extends beyond the end date of the proposal. Co-lead eligibility information is provided here: [Check if you're eligible for funding – EPSRC – UKRI](#)

Q: Are applications in the research focus areas the only applications to be invited to the next stage?

A: We welcome applications from all research domains across UKRI remit. However, you are expected to frame your proposal around clearly defined, domain-specific research challenges,

working closely with stakeholders across and beyond academia to develop a research programme with the potential for impactful outcomes through AI embedded approaches.

Applicants are encouraged to frame their proposals in terms of:

- the potential for AI to solve the identified challenge
- the potential for AI to have an outsized impact and deliver impact on the domain in the near term
- how the area builds on existing UK research strengths
- how advancements in these areas will drive progress across government missions and Industrial Strategy sectors

Q: What costs can I apply for and does this include training for the fellow?

A: Applicants can request funding to cover costs such as:

- a contribution to the salary of the fellow and co-lead
- support for other posts such as research, grant manager and technician etc
- research consumables
- travel and subsistence costs
- training for the fellow, including costs for career and professional development.
- data preservation, data sharing and dissemination costs
- estates and indirect costs
- equipment with value between £25,000 to £400,000 per item (including VAT) may be included in the 'Directly incurred – other costs' heading.
- access to compute should primarily be through the AI research resource (AIRR) and existing infrastructure

The fellow is expected to request a tailored package of resources, designed in partnership with their host organisation and partners, to enable them to achieve the objectives of their research agenda. More details on the costs you can apply for can be found here: [Costs you can apply for – EPSRC – UKRI](#). PhD studentships will not be permitted through this investment.

Q: How much cost can I allocate to the AI expert collaborator?

A: The level of guidance or support needed from the AI expert may vary depending on the fellow's experience and will need to be fully justified and subject to expert review. The support should be sufficient and appropriate to enable the delivery of the ambitious AI embedded research programme and support the development of the fellow's AI skills and understanding. The collaborator is not a co-fellow. They should not have a leadership role in the programme and would not be expected to have significant time costed to the grant. It is expected that applicants will further develop this vision and the approach to delivering it with input from their AI collaborator if invited to submit a full stage application.

Q: Can PDRA cost for the AI expert collaborator be included?

A: These fellowships are a prestigious individual award. The collaborator will support the fellow's development and collaborate on the planned research throughout the life of the

fellowship. They are not a co-fellow. They should not have a leadership role in the programme and would not be expected to have significant time costed to the grant.

If you chose to include a research and innovation associate aligned to the AI collaborator, you will need to provide a justification as to why their skills are needed and how their alignment with the collaborator and not the fellow or a combination of both is appropriate to the delivery of the proposed single research fellowship programme. The decision on the appropriateness will be made by peer review.

Q: How much of my time can I cost on the application?

A: You can cost for up to 100% of your time. It is expected that successful fellows focus primarily on their research, and on average, a minimum of 50% full time equivalent (FTE) commitment is expected over the lifetime of the award. Fellows may start their award with less than 50% FTE but should ramp up their commitment to a minimum of 50% FTE within six months of the award start date.

Q: Will there be further rounds of this funding opportunity?

A: At this time, we don't know if there will be any future rounds of this funding opportunity.

Q: Can letters of support be added at the outline stage?

A: No, it is not possible to upload letters of support on TFS for the outline stage.

Q: What does being a part of the Turing AI fellows cohort involve?

A: The Turing AI fellows' cohort includes those funded through this opportunity as well as previous and any future Turing AI fellowship opportunities. Fellows are expected to actively engage with the cohort and in particular any activities or events like coffee mornings, annual events, showcase events and so on organised by the cohort management team.

Q: Will AIRR compute time be provided for the fellows?

A: Access to compute is a key enabling factor for the fellowships. Fellows are expected to build plans for access to compute into their programme and allocate funding as appropriate. Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and UKRI will work together to explore options for fellows to receive priority access to AI research resource (AIRR). If this is possible further clarity will be provided to those invited to submit a full application. Further information on standard access to AIRR for any researcher who is eligible can be found here: [AIRR Gateway route \(UKRI guidance\) - GOV.UK](#)

AIRR is a finite resource, and applicants are encouraged to consider all options for accessing compute resources if needed to deliver their planned programme of research.