Funding opportunity

Turing AI Pioneer Interdisciplinary Fellowships: outline applications

Opportunity status:	Closed
Funders:	**Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)**, **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)**, **Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)**, **Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)**, **Medical Research Council (MRC)**, **Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)**, **Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)**
Funding type:	Fellowship
Total fund:	£22,000,000
Award range:	£500,000 - £2,187,500
Publication date:	22 July 2025
Opening date:	22 July 2025 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	14 October 2025 4:00pm UK time

Last updated: 18 September 2025 - **see all updates**

This opportunity is for established researchers from across UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) remit, without a background in core artificial intelligence (AI) research, who want to build domain relevant AI capability and develop

advanced AI approaches to tackle a specific research challenge in their chosen field.

You must be hosted and supported by a UK research organisation eligible for UKRI funding.

The full economic cost (FEC) of your project can be up to £2,187,500. UKRI will fund 80% of the FEC. The funding is subject to final budget approvals.

Projects can be up to three years in duration and must start on 1 October 2026.

Who can apply

To lead a project, you must be hosted and supported by an eligible UK organisation. **Check if your organisation is eligible**.

Who is eligible to apply

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) is leading this funding opportunity on behalf of UKRI, therefore EPSRC standard eligibility rules apply. For full details, visit **EPSRC's eligibility page**. Applicants can apply from any research domain across UKRI's entire remit.

You can apply for a Turing AI pioneer interdisciplinary fellowship if:

- you are an established researcher without a background in core AI research
- 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.

Diverse career paths mean that no standardised eligibility criteria will be set. However, the time dedicated to the fellowship must be hosted by an **eligible organisation** within the UK for the duration of the fellowship.

The fellowship can be held by applicants with a joint position between an eligible organisation and another sector. However, the eligible organisation must function as host organisation for the fellowship and the Turing AI Pioneer Interdisciplinary Fellowships should be the applicant's main identity.

Applicants should ensure they are aware of and comply with any internal institutional deadlines that may be in place. We recommend you start your application early, liaising with your host organisation who may also be able to provide additional advice and guidance.

Research organisations (ROs)

ROs are permitted to submit a maximum of four outline applications to this funding opportunity as lead organisation, that is the organisation submitting the application through the UKRI Funding Service. This reflects the level of investment available and manages the impact on the community in assessing the large volume of proposals anticipated.

The RO should have a process in place to ensure that no more than four applications are submitted. However, this opportunity is expected to be highly competitive and as such research organisations should not feel obliged to fill their quota. ROs are encouraged to ensure the applicant(s) they support can demonstrate their ability to meet the expectations detailed in the 'What we are looking for' section.

ROs are asked to actively use an inclusive approach to selecting and maximising the diversity of the candidates they intend to support. UKRI expects that host organisations consider diversity broadly to include discipline, backgrounds, career paths, thought and approach as well as protected characteristics. See more information on **good selection processes**. Research organisations must submit a statement detailing the approach they have taken. Further information is available in the What we are looking for section.

Who is not eligible to apply

Those not eligible to apply are:

- researchers not hosted by an eligible research organisation
- 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

International researchers

International researchers can only apply as 'project co-lead (international)' as part of an application making use of the **UKRI-RCN Money Follows Cooperation agreement** or the **UKRI-IIASA agreement**.

You should include all other international collaborators, or UK partners not based at approved organisations, as project partners.

Resubmissions

We will not accept uninvited resubmissions of projects that have been submitted to UKRI or any other funder. For this opportunity, UKRI is applying EPSRC resubmission policy irrespective of whatever council applicants usually apply to.

Find out more about **EPSRC's resubmissions policy**.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.

The fellowship offers flexibility to support outstanding individuals who are:

- from diverse career backgrounds
- returning from a career break or returning to research or innovation following time in other roles
- wishing to work part-time or in job shares in order to combine the fellowship with personal responsibilities
- coming to the UK from abroad. Researchers and innovators are eligible for a **Global Talent visa** under the 'exceptional promise' category for future research leaders. They must have the support of their host organisation

For this funding opportunity, joint applications on a job-share basis are permitted. If your application is a proposed job-share, please state this where relevant in your application and set out your proposed arrangements in the 'Applicant capability to deliver' and 'Career development' sections.

Only one applicant for any joint applications should be listed as 'fellow' and the other as project co-lead in the Funding Service, as the Funding Service functionality does not support both applicants to be listed as 'fellow'. UKRI will recognise both applicants as 'fellow'. The team should choose one of the fellows' organisations to be responsible for submitting the grant application and administering the grant should the application be successful.

Find out more about **equality, diversity and inclusion at UKRI**.

UKRI can offer disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders during the application and assessment process.

What we're looking for

Aim

This opportunity aims to support the delivery of the UK government **AI Opportunities Action Plan** (AIOP) by investing in up to 12 Turing AI Pioneer Interdisciplinary Fellowships. Researchers without a background in core AI research will develop domain relevant AI capability, using it to advance progress against a challenge-driven research problem in their home domain. This opportunity will form part of a suite of investments supporting the government's AIOP ambitions.

Funding for this opportunity is subject to final budget approval.

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.

Funding opportunity objectives

The objectives of this opportunity are:

- to enable leading researchers from a diverse range of backgrounds outside of core AI research to build domain relevant AI capability and knowledge, and tackle a specific research challenge
- to drive transformative change and accelerate the adoption and utilisation of AI across multiple domains, the research base and wider economy, though community leadership
- to enable engagement and collaboration within or between academic and non-academic partners to deliver AI-enabled challenge-driven research
- to support the career development of leading researchers, contributing to a diverse research community with increased AI skills and knowledge

Scope

This opportunity is aimed at established researchers without a background in core AI research but a vision for how the use of advanced AI techniques could enable potentially transformative new avenues in their research and that of their broader community.

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.

Alongside the development of the fellow's own AI skills and capability, research leadership skills, and future career direction, the fellowship should also deliver high-quality domain-specific research that embeds AI approaches.

Fellows will be expected to undertake professional development and upskilling activities in technical AI and demonstrate how their enhanced AI capability will be applied to drive transformative change within their discipline. While fellows are not expected to be leading AI experts by the end of the fellowship, they should be equipped to lead a team that can effectively apply interdisciplinary AI techniques to deliver world-class AI-enabled research outcomes.

Applicants should be established in their field, with a demonstrated 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.

Alternative evidence of research leadership is welcome particularly for those with primarily industry-based experience. Applicants should demonstrate a clear understanding of how to lead a research project, including articulating relevant transferable skills such as strategic planning, team coordination, stakeholder engagement, and delivery of complex, research challenge-driven work.

Fellowship expectations

Fellows will be expected to:

- develop a high-quality programme of ambitious, novel and creative research challenge-driven activities, where the integration of AI enables potentially transformative new approaches to tackling a specific research challenge in their domain
- demonstrate the appropriateness and timeliness of the Turing AI Pioneer Interdisciplinary Fellowships to support their professional development and research ambitions
- co-create and collaboratively deliver the programme with academic and non-academic partners or stakeholders to ensure their research will benefit the wider society and economy
- demonstrate a clear vision of how AI will be embedded in their research within and beyond the fellowship, providing confidence that they have the right expertise and structures in place to deliver on this vision. For example, through their mentor(s), AI collaborator and appropriate access to compute and data
- 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
- take ownership of their learning journey, both in terms of developing technical AI skills and other softer skills. For example, leadership, collaboration, entrepreneurship, mentorship, communication), identifying and pursuing potential training opportunities which will enhance and accelerate their learning
- develop the skills and careers of their research team, mentoring and developing the independent researchers and innovators of the future
- enhance their position of leadership in the national and international research community, championing broader inclusive AI use across their research community
- be an active part of the Turing AI fellows' cohort as detailed in the following section
- embed the principles of responsible AI and responsible research and innovation (RRI) throughout their activities.
- embed considerations of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in their fellowship
- have a vision for their future research and how the fellowship will support it beyond the length of the funding

This funding opportunity is expected to be highly competitive and as such applicants are encouraged to ensure they demonstrate their ability to meet these expectations.

At the outline stage, applicants are expected to have an ambitious vision for their research which details the potential for impact in and beyond their domain as well as the transformative potential of embedding AI within the approach. 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. Further detail in Collaboration with an AI expert section. Flexibility should be built into the programme to adapt the planned approach to delivering the proposed outcomes, if appropriate, as the fellow's AI skills and understanding grow.

Research focus

Applicants are expected to frame their proposals 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.

The fellows proposed programme of research is expected to:

- demonstrate how AI can accelerate progress or unlock new capabilities in the applicant's domain which wouldn't be possible otherwise
- tackle problems that are recognised as urgent or high value by relevant academic or non-academic communities
- deliver solutions that could lead to new tools, services, or processes with significant impact

We recognise that AI will have a transformational impact in many domains, both on the way research is done and the pace of progress. We welcome applicants from all research domains across the breadth of UKRI's remit.

UKRI particularly welcome proposals which support government missions, such as the **Industrial Strategy**, or are addressing domain specific research challenges in the following areas, where significant opportunities to accelerate progress through embedding AI exist:

- engineering biology
- frontier physics
- materials science
- medical research
- quantum technology

This is not an exclusionary list and proposals from other areas across UKRI remit including non-STEM disciplines are also welcome.

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

See more information about UKRI's **portfolio** and **strategies**.

Collaboration with an AI expert

Applicants should collaborate with an established AI specialist or researcher. The collaborator will support the fellow's development and collaborate on the planned research throughout the life of the fellowship. Research organisations should support potential applicants in identifying suitable collaborators. Applicants are encouraged to explore the existing landscape of UKRI relevant AI research as detailed in the Additional information section to help identify potential collaborators.

Applicants are expected to have identified a collaborator at the outline application stage and worked with them to ensure the proposed vision is realistic in the AI landscape. If invited to submit a full application, the applicant is expected to co-create the planned programme with the AI collaborator.

The level of guidance or support needed may vary by fellow experience and will need to be fully justified and subject to expert review. The support should be sufficient to enable the delivery of the ambitious AI embedded research programme and support the development of the fellows AI skills and understanding.

Collaborators should not have a leadership role in the programme and would not be expected to have significant time costed to the grant. Their role may evolve as the fellowship progresses, and the fellow's AI skills and knowledge grow. However, the fellow and AI expert should build a mutually beneficial two-way relationship.

If UK-based, the AI collaborator should be included as project co-lead on the application. If based outside the UK, the AI collaborator should be included as a project partner on the application. Please note that project partners cannot receive funding from the grant except in specific circumstances. See **Project partners letter of support for further information**. The project co-lead would not be permitted to take over the operation of the fellowship if the fellow leaves the project.

End user partnerships and cross-sector collaborations

Fellows should build strong relationships and cross-sector collaborations with potential end users of their research to drive their research direction. This includes industry, policy makers, public bodies, charities and other groups.

It is expected that fellows will continue to engage stakeholders throughout the duration of the fellowship, for example by setting up an external advisory board to provide guidance and support, ensuring that the research is aligned with real-world needs and applications. Clear plans for engaging with new and existing collaborators over the duration of the fellowship should be detailed in the application on the UKRI Funding Service.

Mentorship

Fellows should have access to one or more mentors from their host organisation who can support the fellow's personal development, for example in leadership skills, team coordination, and project management.

Cohort engagement

Successful applicants will be expected to be an active part of the AI Turing fellows' cohort including those funded through this opportunity as well as previous and any future **Turing AI fellowship opportunities**. The cohort will maximise networks between different disciplines and institutions, enhance individual growth, create an environment for sharing research and learning, foster idea generation and most importantly influence and drive AI adoption across disciplines.

Funding will be awarded on the condition that fellows 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. Further details will be provided to applicants invited to submit a full proposal.

Upon completion of the fellowship, 'graduate' fellows will become part of an alumni of the programme, supporting the advocacy of AI adoption in non-AI domains and engage through UKRI's wider cohort structure.

Research outcomes and impacts

Fellows are encouraged to think about potential outcomes and impacts of their proposed programmes of work. This could include, but is not limited to, commercialisation, policy-impact, impact on other research domains, or supporting the work of public bodies such as the NHS. Fellows should consider how they may take advantage of UKRI's broad support mechanisms, such as Innovate UK's **ICURe** programme, UKRI's policy fellowship scheme, and other council-specific impact activities.

Fellows may have the opportunity to commercialise or expand the development of their research outcomes for potential commercialisation. As your programme matures, you will be linked with ICURe to assess the commercialisation and

impact creation potential (subject to funding). ICURe provide access to training and development for equipping researchers with essential commercialisation skills and receiving an early indication of whether their research project is best suited for a spin-out or licence agreement.

Monitoring and evaluation

Fellows will be required to provide key monitoring information as part of the award, including standard Researchfish reporting, annual project reporting focusing on progress and impact, and financial reporting. Additional information may be required from fellows during the award lifetime, for example, as part of a mid-term review or final evaluation. Further information on monitoring and evaluation expectations will be provided in the full funding opportunity documentation. UKRI reserve the right to request additional information as deemed necessary for monitoring purposes.

Time commitment

If you work part time, you can hold your Turing AI pioneer interdisciplinary fellowship part time as well, at a minimal level of 50% full time equivalent. In these circumstances, the duration of your fellowship can be extended proportionally to a maximum duration of six years.

If you do not work part time, you may hold our fellowship for between 50% and 100% of your time. However, the total fellowship duration will be fixed at three years. This must be clearly justified in your application as the fellowship should be the fellow's main research focus.

Whether part-time or full-time, 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.

Fellows should design an appropriate variable time commitment over the duration of the award to deliver their research vision. Additionally, fellows should plan their work packages to accommodate for any potential delays in recruiting postdoctoral researchers where necessary.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

EDI 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 AI algorithms impact people's lives and therefore risk exacerbating existing inequalities in society. By having a diverse AI community and workforce, the design and development of algorithms will be less likely to reflect the inherent biases of a majority group. Furthermore, investing in a diverse array of fellows of different genders, ethnicities, backgrounds and career paths will enable greater diversity of thought and approach in AI that is key to the development of creative new AI technologies and a sustainable UK AI ecosystem.

The long-term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent. UKRI expects that EDI 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.

Expert review is central to UKRI funding decisions. We require expert advice and robust decision-making processes for all UKRI 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. For further information, please see our **EDI webpages**.

For more information on the background of this funding opportunity, go to the Additional information section.

Duration

The duration of this award is 36 months.

Projects must start on 1 October 2026.

Funding available

The FEC of your project can be up to £2,187,500.

UKRI will fund 80% of the FEC.

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. The fellowship will provide salary support.

Applicants should include their UK-based AI expert collaborator, if they have one, as project co-lead in the application. No other project co-leads will be permitted.

If based outside the UK, the AI collaborator should be included as a project partner on the application. Please note that project partners cannot receive funding from the grant unless in specific circumstances. See further information on **Project partners letter of support**.

Support for studentships through this investment will not be permitted, in line with other UKRI research grants. Student engagement should be realised through host organisation or stakeholder support, or collaboration with other training investments in the UK landscape such as the UKRI AI centres for doctoral training.

It is expected that resources will be used flexibly (in line with the UKRI grant terms and conditions) to deliver the vision and desired outcomes of the programme.

The fellowship must start on 1 October 2026, and no extensions will be given for delays in the appointment of staff. Therefore, when preparing the application, recruitment time should be taken into consideration. That is, if it is estimated that it will take six months to recruit a research and innovation associate (RIA)(was PDRA), then only 30 months of RIA time should be requested. Only if there is a RIA or staff member ready to start at the beginning of the fellowship, should you apply for the full three years (36 months) of time.

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.

See further information on **allowable costs**.

Compute, data and equipment

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) following the completion of the testing phase and full agreement on the allocation scheme once the test phase is concluded.

Fellows will also need to obtain access to datasets independently. Project planning should outline how access to data and permissions to utilise data for AI analysis and training will be secured, where necessary.

Equipment, between £25,000 to £400,000 per item, is allowed on the opportunity. Note that access to compute should primarily be through the AIRRs and existing infrastructure. We reserve the right to remove equipment where unaffordable.

Quotes for equipment do not need to be included in your application, but please retain quotes for equipment costing more than £138,000 as we may ask for these at post-panel stage before releasing funds. See **details of how to include equipment in your application**.

Smaller items of equipment, individually under £25,000, and consumables should be in the 'Directly Incurred – Other Costs' heading.

See more information about **EPSRC's approach to equipment funding**.

Guidance for research organisations

Candidate selection at outline stage

This opportunity is aimed at investing in established researchers without a background in core AI research, but with a vision for how the use of advanced AI techniques that could enable potentially transformative new avenues in their research and that of their broader community.

The research organisation is permitted to submit a maximum of four outline applications to this funding opportunity as lead organisation, that is the organisation submitting the application through the Funding Service. This reflects the level of investment available and manages the impact on the community in assessing the large volume of proposals anticipated. The research organisation should have a process in place to ensure that no more than four applications are submitted.

Research organisations are asked to actively use an inclusive approach to selecting and maximising the diversity of the candidates they intend to support. UKRI expects that host organisations consider diversity broadly to include backgrounds, career paths, thought and approach as well as protected characteristics. See UKRI's recently published **summary report on feedback about good practices for inclusive university selection processes**.

Host organisations are asked to provide a statement describing the inclusive process they have used to select their chosen candidates by completing the Microsoft forms before the submission of any outline proposals to Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The information submitted will be used to increase understanding of inclusive selection processes used by host organisations, inform future UKRI interventions, and feed into thinking on EDI in AI. It will not be part of the outline assessment of individual candidates.

The statement should describe the process used to identify potential candidates. It should not include personal details of potential candidates nor any details that may enable them to be identified.

Outline proposals submitted by host organisations that have not reported on this process will be office rejected and will not go forward to the outline sift panel stage.

The **Research organisation statement form** must be submitted by the host organisation by 4.00pm UK time 14 October 2025. Only one submission per research organisation is required regardless of the number of outline proposals they intend to submit. This should only be submitted by the research organisation and not the applicants. Applicants should ensure that their research organisation has submitted this statement prior to submitting their application.

As guidance, it is suggested that research organisations consider the following points in designing and describing their inclusive selection process:

- the processes used to identify potential and final candidates
- how these processes may enable diversity and inclusion in the selection of potential and final candidates
- the steps taken to mitigate unconscious bias in the selection process
- the alignment of the approach taken with the research organisations equality diversity and inclusion policies
- support for and consideration of flexible working including part-time working, career breaks and caring responsibilities
- the inclusion of candidates with different career paths

Support for fellows

The host organisation is expected to provide appropriate support to fellows in order to enable them to build their profile, research activity and career. The host organisation should actively enable flexible fellowship pathways including secondments and collaboration building with cross-sector stakeholders and invest in developing the career and leadership skills of the fellow (including through providing the fellow with a mentor). The research organisation is also expected to encourage and support the fellow in engaging with the wider cohort of pioneer fellows.

The research organisation statements at both stages of this funding opportunity should draw on the discussions between the applicant and head of department. The research organisation and the applicant should engage to co-create a work plan and discuss and outline the support that will be required to enable them to realise the objectives of the AI pioneer fellowships. This should include plans to realise their research vision, develop their leadership, develop AI skills and knowledge, and progress their career during as well as beyond the end of this fellowship. Research organisations should develop a plan to monitor and adapt this plan of support as needed to allow a flexible fellowship pathway.

At the end of this three-year investment, it is expected that fellows and their wider teams and partners will be in a sustainable position to continue their research beyond the end date of the award. The research organisation must demonstrate how they will ensure sustainability of the fellow's research and activity to embed AI approaches into their research domain.

Supporting skills and talent

We encourage you to follow the principles of the **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers** and the **Technician Commitment**.

Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)

UKRI is committed in ensuring that effective international collaboration in research and innovation takes place with integrity and within strong ethical frameworks. Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I) is a UKRI work programme designed to help protect all those working in our thriving and

collaborative international sector by enabling partnerships to be as open as possible, and as secure as necessary. Our **TR&I Principles** set out UKRI's expectations of organisations funded by UKRI in relation to due diligence for international collaboration.

As such, applicants for UKRI funding may be asked to demonstrate how their proposed projects will comply with our approach and expectation towards TR&I, identifying potential risks and the relevant controls you will put in place to help proportionately reduce these risks.

See further guidance and information about TR&I, including where you can find additional support.

How to apply

We are running this funding opportunity on the new UKRI Funding Service so please ensure that your organisation is registered. You cannot apply on the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system.

The lead applicant is responsible for completing the application process on the Funding Service, but we expect all team members and project partners to contribute to the application.

Only the lead research organisation can submit an application to UKRI.

To apply

Select 'Start application' near the beginning of this Funding finder page.

1. Confirm you are the fellow.
2. Sign in or create a Funding Service account. To create an account, select your organisation, verify your email address, and set a password. If your organisation is not listed, email **support@funding-service.ukri.org** Allow at least 10 working days for your organisation to be added to the Funding Service. We strongly suggest that if you are asking UKRI to add your organisation to the Funding Service to enable you to apply to this funding opportunity, that you also create an organisation Administration Account. This will be needed to allow the acceptance and management of any grant that might be offered to you.
3. Answer questions directly in the text boxes. You can save your answers and come back to complete them or work offline and return to copy and paste your answers. If we need you to upload a document, follow the upload instructions in the Funding Service. All questions and assessment criteria are listed in the How to apply section on this Funding finder page.
4. Allow enough time to check your application in 'read-only' view before sending to your research office.

5. Send the completed application to your research office for checking. They will return it to you if it needs editing.
6. Your research office will submit the completed and checked application to UKRI.

Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant.

When including images, you must:

- provide a descriptive caption or legend for each image immediately underneath it (this must be outside the image and counts towards your word limit)
- insert each new image onto a new line
- use files smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Images should only be used to convey important visual information that cannot easily be put into words. The following are not permitted, and your application may be rejected if you include:

- sentences or paragraphs of text
- tables
- excessive quantities of images

A few words are permitted where the image would lack clarity without the contextual words, such as a diagram, where text labels are required for an axis or graph column.

For more guidance on the Funding Service, see:

- **how applicants use the Funding Service**
- **how research offices use the Funding Service**
- **how reviewers use the Funding Service**

References

References should be included within the word count of the appropriate question section. You should use your discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

Hyperlinks can be used in reference information. When including references, you should consider how your references will be viewed and used by the assessors, ensuring that:

- references are easily identifiable by the assessors
- references are formatted as appropriate to your research
- persistent identifiers are used where possible

General use of hyperlinks

Applications should be self-contained. You should only use hyperlinks to link directly to reference information. You must not include links to web resources to extend your application. Assessors are not required to access links to conduct assessment or recommend a funding decision.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Use of generative AI tools to prepare funding applications is permitted, however, caution should be applied.

For more information see our policy on the **use of generative AI in application and assessment**.

Match funding

There is no requirement for match funding from the organisations hosting the project lead, project co-lead or other staff employed on the grant. UKRI advises reviewers and panel members not to consider the level of matched university funding as a factor on which to base funding decisions. Project partners are expected to contribute to the project, either with cash or in-kind contributions.

Deadline

UKRI must receive your outline application by 14 October 2025 at 4:00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply after this time.

Make sure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines.

Following the submission of your application to the funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed, and applications will not be returned for amendment. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected. If an application is withdrawn prior to expert review or office rejected due to substantive errors in the application, it cannot be resubmitted to the opportunity.

Personal data

Processing personal data

UKRI will need to collect some personal information to manage your Funding Service account and the registration of your funding applications.

We will handle personal data in line with UK data protection legislation and manage it securely. For more information, including how to exercise your rights, read our **privacy notice**.

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), as part of UKRI, will need to share the application and any personal information that it contains with Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and any other partner organisations, so that they can participate in the assessment process. See more information on **how DSIT uses personal information**.

Sensitive information

If you or a core team member need to tell us something you wish to remain confidential, email **TFSchangeEPSRC@epsrc.ukri.org**

Include in the subject line: [the funding opportunity title; sensitive information; your Funding Service application number].

Typical examples of confidential information include:

- individual is unavailable until a certain date (for example due to parental leave)
- declaration of interest
- additional information about eligibility to apply that would not be appropriately shared in the 'Applicant and team capability' section
- conflict of interest for UKRI to consider in reviewer or panel participant selection
- the application is an invited resubmission

For information about how UKRI handles personal data, read **UKRI's privacy notice**.

Publication of outcomes

EPSRC, as part of UKRI, will publish the outcomes of this funding opportunity at **EPSRC Funding Applications Outcomes**.

If your application is successful, we will publish some personal information on the **UKRI Gateway to Research**.

Summary

Word limit: 550

In plain English, provide a summary we can use to identify the most suitable experts to assess your application.

We usually make this summary publicly available on external-facing websites, therefore do not include any confidential or sensitive information. Make it suitable for a variety of readers, for example:

- opinion-formers
- policymakers

- the public
- the wider research community

Guidance for writing a summary

Clearly describe your proposed work in terms of:

- context
- the challenge the project addresses
- aims and objectives
- potential applications and benefits

Core team

List the key members of your team and assign them roles from the following:

- fellow
- project co-lead (UK) (PcL)
- project co-lead (international) (PcL (I))
- specialist
- grant manager
- professional enabling staff
- research and innovation associate
- technician
- visiting researcher

Only list one individual as fellow.

Applicants should include their UK-based AI expert collaborator as project co-lead in the application. No other project co-leads will be permitted.

If based outside the UK, the AI collaborator should be included as a project partner on the application.

UKRI has introduced a new addition to the 'Specialist' role type. Public contributors such as people with lived experience can now be added to an application.

Find out more about **UKRI's core team roles in funding applications**.

Application questions

Outline Vision and Approach

Create a document that includes your responses to all criteria. The document should not be more than 3 sides of A4, single spaced in paper in 11-point Arial (or equivalent sans serif font) with margins of at least 2cm. You may include

images, graphs, tables. You can have an additional page for a diagrammatic workplan.

For the file name, use the unique Funding Service number the system gives you when you create an application, followed by the words 'Vision and Approach'.

Save this document as a single PDF file, no bigger than 8MB. Unless specifically requested, please do not include any sensitive personal data within the attachment.

If the attachment does not meet these requirements, the application will be rejected.

The Funding Service will provide document upload details when you apply.

What are you hoping to achieve with your proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how your proposed work:

- is of excellent quality and importance within or beyond the field(s) or area(s)
- has the potential to advance current understanding, generates new knowledge, thinking or discovery within or beyond the field or area
- is timely given current trends, context and needs
- impacts world-leading research, society, the economy, or the environment
- meets the strategic aims of the funding opportunity

References may be included within this section.

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Within the Vision section we also expect you to:

- demonstrate a clear vision of how AI will be embedded in your research within and beyond the fellowship and the benefits this will bring to your career as well as enhancing the broader adoption of AI in your research domain
- outline why the integration of AI enables potentially transformative new approaches to tackling your chosen research challenge
- identify the potential direct or indirect benefits and who the beneficiaries might be
- outline how you have or will co-create and collaboratively deliver the programme with non-academic partners or stakeholders to ensure your research will benefit the wider society and economy

For the Approach, explain how are you going to deliver your proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how you have designed your approach so that it:

- is effective and appropriate to achieve your objectives

Within the Approach section we also expect you to explain how you will:

- effectively initiate, develop, build and sustain relationships with your AI collaborator and partners across sectors to ensure you have the right expertise and structures in place to deliver on your vision
- undertake a clear plan for professional development, both in terms of developing technical AI skills and other softer skills (for example, leadership, collaboration, entrepreneurship, mentorship, communication), identifying and pursuing potential training opportunities which will enhance and accelerate your learning

References may be included within this section.

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Outline Applicant and team capability to deliver

Word limit: 500

How will the application team deliver the proposed research programme?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Evidence of how you, and if relevant your team, have:

- relevant research experience and skills to develop and deliver the proposed research programme
- planned to identify and embed additional expertise where gaps in the team exist

Within the applicant and team capability section we also expect you to explain how you have:

- potential to meet the expectations of a Turing AI pioneer interdisciplinary fellow as stated in the 'What we are looking for' section
- potential to develop a position of leadership in the national and international research community, championing broader inclusive AI use in their research community

The core leadership team should consist of the fellow and the project co-leads identified on the outline proposal. There will be scope to expand this team and include new collaborators on the full application, and you will be able to add further detail.

Showcase the range of relevant skills you and, if relevant, your team (fellow and project co-leads, researchers, technicians, specialists, partners and so on) have and how this will help deliver the proposed work.

UKRI has introduced new role types for funding opportunities being run on the Funding Service.

[The roles in funding applications policy](#) has descriptions of the different project roles.

Outline costs

What are the expected costs of the proposed work?

Provide the approximate total values in GBP (£) for the expected directly incurred, directly allocated, indirect costs and exceptions. View the guidance on the costs you can apply for.

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

We will assess your application using the following process.

Outline application

All applications deemed to be within scope of the funding opportunity will be assessed based on the published assessment criteria. UKRI reserve the right to reject out of scope proposals without reference to expert review.

In the event of this funding opportunity being substantially oversubscribed as to be unmanageable, UKRI reserve the right to modify the assessment process.

Outline expert sift panel

We will convene a panel of experts from the community to assess and recommend the applications to be invited to submit full applications using the published assessment criteria in December 2025.

UKRI intends to fund a broad portfolio of fellowships across multiple areas. We do not intend to fund multiple fellows in the same area. The decision on which applicants to invite to submit a full application following the outline stage will be based on the panel's recommendations, but we will also take into account the balance of remit across UKRI's portfolio and relevant government strategic priorities including the Industrial Strategy and the AI Opportunities Action Plan. Final decisions will be ratified by the UKRI AI Fellows Programme Board which includes membership from across UKRI and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

Feedback will not be provided at outline unless specifically requested by the outline panel.

Full application

Applicants successful at the outline stage will be invited to submit a full application. No other applications will be accepted. Any unsolicited applications at the full application stage will be rejected without reference to expert review. Further detail on the documentation to be provided in a full application will be communicated to those invited to submit.

Expert review

We will invite experts to review your full application independently, against the specified criteria for this funding opportunity.

You will not be able to nominate reviewers for applications on the new UKRI Funding Service. UKRI will continue to select expert reviewers.

We are monitoring the requirement for applicant-nominated reviewers as we review policies and processes as part of the continued development of the new Funding Service.

Shortlisting

UKRI will review the comments and scores for each application. Any applications without sufficiently supportive reviews will be rejected at this stage without applicant response. Applicants that receive sufficiently supportive reviews will have the opportunity to reply to comments made by the reviewers in an applicant response document.

If your application is shortlisted, you will have 14 days to respond to reviewers' comments.

Shortlisted applications will be invited to an interview panel who will make a funding recommendation.

Interview

For shortlisted applications, an expert interview panel will conduct interviews with applicants, after which the panel will make a funding recommendation.

We expect interviews to be held in week commencing 8 June 2026.

Full details of the interview process will be sent to applicants successful at the outline stage.

In addition to the recommendations of the panel, we will consider the balance of proposals across UKRI's portfolio and relevant government strategic priorities when making the funding decision. While considering the balance, we may decide to fund an application ranked lower than another providing a quality

threshold is met. We do not intend to fund multiple fellows in the same area. Final decisions will be ratified by the UKRI AI Fellows Programme Board which includes membership from across UKRI and DSIT.

Timescale

We aim to complete the assessment process within 12 months of receiving your initial application.

Feedback

Full stage applications will receive feedback in the form of reviewer comments. If your application was assessed at an interview panel, we will give feedback with the outcome of your application.

Principles of assessment

We support the San Francisco **declaration on research assessment** and recognise the relationship between research assessment and research integrity.

Find out about **the UKRI principles of assessment and decision making**.

Using generative artificial intelligence (AI) in expert review

Reviewers and panellists are not permitted to use generative AI tools to develop their assessment. Using these tools can potentially compromise the confidentiality of the ideas that applicants have entrusted to UKRI to safeguard.

For more detail see our **policy on the use of generative AI**.

Sharing data with co-funders

We will need to share the application (including any personal information that it contains) with DSIT and any other partner organisations, so that they can participate in the assessment process.

For more information, see **how DSIT uses personal information**.

We reserve the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

Assessment areas

The assessment areas we will use for the outline stage is:

- vision
- approach
- applicant and team capability to deliver

The assessment areas we will use for the full applications stage are:

- vision
- approach
- applicant capability to deliver
- career development
- host organisation support
- resources and cost justification
- ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)
- advocacy and leadership
- responsible AI

Find details of assessment questions and criteria under the 'Application questions' heading in the 'How to apply' section.

Contact details

Get help with your application

If you have a question and the answers aren't provided on this page

The helpdesk is committed to helping users of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service as effectively and as quickly as possible. In order to manage cases at peak volume times, the helpdesk will triage and prioritise those queries with an imminent opportunity deadline or a technical issue. Enquiries raised where information is available on the Funding finder opportunity page and should be understood early in the application process (for example, regarding eligibility, content or remit of a funding opportunity) will not constitute a priority case and will be addressed as soon as possible.

Contact details

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.

For questions related to this specific funding opportunity please contact **ai.robotics@epsrc.ukri.org**

Any queries regarding the system or the submission of applications through the Funding Service should be directed to the helpdesk.

Email: **support@funding-service.ukri.org**

Phone: 01793 547490

Our phone lines are open:

- Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm
- Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm

To help us process queries quicker, we request that users highlight the council and opportunity name in the subject title of their email query, include the application reference number, and refrain from contacting more than one mailbox at a time.

For further information on submitting an application read **How applicants use the Funding Service**.

Additional info

Background

The **AI Opportunities Action Plan** clearly outlined the need to invest in developing people and talent within the UK. It also highlighted the opportunities AI presents in driving economic growth and the prosperity of the UK. The sustainability of the UK AI ecosystem is critical to maintaining and advancing the UK's world-leading position in AI.

As such, this investment will deliver against recommendation 22 of the AI Opportunities Action Plan, which stated that new AI pioneer fellowships should be created for specialists in other sectors who wish to develop deep technical skills in AI.

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) recognise that AI will have a transformational impact in many domains, both on the way research is done and the pace of progress. Following engagement with experts across the research ecosystem, DSIT have highlighted a number of priority areas for support. The current identified areas, not listed in order of preference, are:

- engineering biology
- frontier physics
- materials science
- medical research
- quantum technology

These areas are not the only ones to progress, or support will be targeted at but have been selected because:

- they contain a challenge which AI is particularly suited to solving
- significant progress can be made in the near-term future
- this progress could have outsized impact

- these areas correspond to existing UK strengths
- advancements in these areas will drive progress across government missions and Industrial Strategy sectors

As well as considering the highlighted areas, applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the broader government missions and Industrial Strategy. Applicants are encouraged to explore the existing landscape of UKRI relevant AI research such as the **AI hubs, AI CDT**, **Turing AI Fellowships**, **Hartree** and so on, to help identify potential collaborators.

DSIT and UKRI are working to enhance the support offered to successful fellows such as providing links to industry partners interested in supporting training. Further details will be provided to applicants successful at outline.

In further stages, when the potential domains have been narrowed, UKRI and DSIT may if appropriate explore access to unique datasets, but this cannot be guaranteed.

To support broader funding opportunities and collaboration, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and UKRI may share applications that successfully pass the first assessment stage with selected philanthropic organisations. This is intended to maximise the potential impact and reach of the fellowship programme. Applicants who do not wish for their application to be shared in this way should clearly indicate this preference within their submission. Your preference will not impact your final application score.

Research and innovation impact

Impact can be defined as the long-term intended or unintended effect research and innovation has on society, economy and the environment; to individuals, organisations, and the wider global population.

Webinar for potential applicants

We will hold a webinar on 11 September 2025 10:00am to 11:30am UK time. This will provide more information about the funding opportunity and a chance to ask questions.

Register for the webinar

Global Talent visa

Researchers and innovators are eligible for a **Global Talent visa** under the 'exceptional promise' category for future research leaders.

Research disruption due to COVID-19

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities. We are committed to ensuring that

individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career, such as:

- breaks and delays
- disruptive working patterns and conditions
- the loss of ongoing work
- role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic

Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the capability to deliver and career development of those individuals included in the application. They will be asked to consider the capability of the applicant and their wider team to deliver the research they are proposing.

Where disruptions have occurred, you can highlight this within your application if you wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.

Supporting documents

View the **Turing AI Pioneer Interdisciplinary Fellowships FAQs (PDF, 151KB)**

Updates

18 September 2025
Turing AI Pioneer Interdisciplinary Fellowships FAQs added to 'Supporting documents' under the 'Additional info' section.

8 August 2025
Webinar registration link added to 'Webinar for potential applicants' under the 'Additional info' section.

Timeline

○ **22 July 2025 9:00am**
Opening date

○ **11 September 2025 10:00am**
Webinar

○ 14 October 2025 4:00pm
Closing date

Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)

https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/turing-ai-pioneer-interdisciplinary-fellowships-outline-applications