Turing AI Fellowships

Frequently Asked Questions

This document lists frequently asked questions regarding the Turing AI Acceleration Fellowships and Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships calls, in addition to questions that were asked during the webinar held on 27 November 2019. This document should be read in conjunction with the webinar slides and the call documents. Please note the call documents contain the definitive details of both calls. If there are any factual discrepancies or conflicts, the call documents override the slides and this FAQ document.

Content

General questions and answers

1. Is there a preference to support international researchers in this programme?

One of the objectives of the Turing AI Fellowships is to build new capability and capacity in strategically important areas of AI research. We are therefore seeking to attract, retain and develop the best and brightest researchers internationally in order to build new capability and capacity beyond that already existing within the UK. For UK-based applicants the case should be made for how the fellowship will retain them in the UK and how this will be used to build new capability and capacity.

2. How is 'world-leader' being defined and assessed?

Applicants and host organisations should consider what characteristics and achievements they would use to identify a world-leader in their research community. The Applicant assessment criterion includes consideration of whether the applicant has the potential to be, or is already, a world-leading AI researcher depending on the call.

3. Given that these calls are seeking to attract a diversity of career backgrounds (i.e. academia and industry). Will there be any

additional guidance on how these proposals will be peer reviewed, taking into account non-standard background applications?

Assessment criteria for each of the calls is available in their respective call documents. Applicants should include key research outputs as part of their track record in their CV and Case for Support, these may include but is not limited to datasets, software, patents, publications, other commercial activities. Reviewers and panel members will consider the value and impact of all research outputs. A publication record is not required for either call.

4. **Are fellows expected to be employed full-time by the host organisation and what amount of time are fellows expected to commit to the fellowship?**

All fellows must be employed by an eligible host organisation for the duration of their fellowship, these are usually universities. However, fellows do not need to be employed full time by the host organisation, for example they may hold joint positions at other organisations, such as a position in business.

5. **When developing fundamental ideas there is always a risk that it will not perform as expected. Are applicants required to prove out ideas prior to the application?**

Applicants do not have to prove out ideas prior to submitting their proposal. They should make the case that their proposed methodology is appropriate and describe their risk mitigation strategy in the Case for Support.

6. **How significant is impact?**

Impact will be assessed at full proposal and interview stages as a secondary criterion. The anticipated impacts, and pathways to enable them, should be appropriate for the nature of the proposed research programme.

7. **What are the expectations for public engagement?**

Applicants are encouraged to include public engagement activities within their proposals and to consider how these activities may help maximise the impact of their proposed research. Further information on pubic engagement is available at https://www.ukri.org/public-engagement/.

8. **The details in the call document on the Justification of Resources request a "decision-making methodology for subsequent planning." What does this mean?**

Applicants should request resources for the full 5 years of the fellowship. Detailed costs are not required for years 3-5, however the decision making

process for how the overall costs requested for those years have been arrived at should be described.

9. How many applications are expected for each of the fellowships?

We expect these to be highly competitive fellowships. The cap of four proposals submitted by an organisation to the Turing AI Acceleration Fellowship call has been set in order to manage demand. Likewise, it is not expected that a host organisation will submit more than two proposals to the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships call.

10. How are these calls different from the first phase of the Turing AI Fellowships?

The first phase of the Turing AI Fellowship investment was delivered by the Alan Turing Institute, this second phase is being delivered by EPSRC, on behalf of UKRI. The expectations of fellows and assessment criteria have changed.

Remit related questions and answers

11. My research is in area *x*. Is my research within the remit of the call?

The majority of the research proposed should focus on tackling methodological and theoretical challenges in AI. This should show significant novelty in the development of AI technologies and should go beyond applying established AI approaches within different application domains.

12. What is the right balance between work related to applications and fundamental work?

The proposed research should primarily focus on the development of novel AI technologies as described in question 11. However, these may be motivated by real-world challenges. Applicants should make the case for the balance of fundamental AI research and that related to applications in their proposal.

Stakeholder related questions and answers

13. How can businesses be involved?

Businesses and other stakeholders may be project partners on a fellowship proposal, providing cash or in-kind support. For example, this might involve access to facilities for the fellow and their teams, training or secondments. The Turing AI Fellowships are intended to be prestigious awards, supporting potential or current world-leading AI researchers, as such stakeholders could also consider contributing salary enhancements or endowing Chairs. The level and type of

contribution should be appropriate for the proposed applicant and their research programme.

Business and other non-academic organisations may also have employees who are suitable fellowship applicants. These fellowships are intended to support career mobility in the AI community, as such applications from those not currently in academia are encouraged. Turing AI Fellows are not required to be spend 100% of their time on the fellowship, therefore there are opportunities for jointly working on their fellowship research programme and work for a stakeholder organisation.

14. Can businesses host fellows?

Fellows must be employed by an eligible organisation, usually a university, for the time dedicated to their fellowship. However, fellowships may be held part time which offers opportunities for fellows to work in business in parallel to the fellowship. In addition to this project partner contributions may include the opportunity for secondments for the fellow and their team.

15. Do the relationships with stakeholders need to be already established or can they be planned?

Relationships with stakeholders are not required to be already established. Plans to build new collaborations should be describedin the proposal, and evidence of early engagement with potential partners should be provided where possible.

16. Are Project Partners expected to be in any particular discipline or sector?

The choice of project partners should be appropriate for the proposed research programme.

17. Can Project Partners be international or must they be UK based only?

Project partners may be from the UK or abroad.

18. Are Project Partner letters of support required at the outline stage?

Project partner letters of support are not required at the outline stage for either of the Turing AI Fellowship calls. Each call document details in full the necessary documents required to be submitted at each application stage.

Host Organisation related questions and answers

19.   Must the host organisation have an established AI capacity, or can these fellowships be used to build capacity?

The Turing AI Fellowships are a strategic investment, as such host organisations are expected to have an organisational strategy for AI and be able to demonstrate how this complements the UK landscape and aligns to the UK strategy for AI. Research environment is an assessment criterion for the outline and full proposal stages for both Turing AI Fellowship calls; a host organisation which does not currently have an established AI research capacity may find it more challenging to meet the expectations for this criterion.

20.   What is the expected level of host organisational support?

It is expected that significant tangible support will be offered to the proposed fellow, notably above and beyond that of a standard fellowship. The level of support should represent the strategic nature of these awards and the host organisation's desire to retain or recruit a potential, or current world-leading researcher in the high profile area of AI.

Please see the call documents for further details.

21.   How are host organisations expected to manage their fellows as a cohort?

Host organisations should engage with all of their chosen candidates to develop an approach to managing them as a cohort internally if multiple candidates are successful. Management of fellows may include networking, training, mentoring, advocacy and stakeholder engagement.

National cohort management will be led by UKRI in partnership with the Office for AI and the Alan Turing Institute.

Turing AI Acceleration Fellowships

22.   Are institutions expected to provide an equality impact assessment for their selection process?

Host organisations should submit a statement describing the inclusive process they have used to select their chosen candidates by completing a Smart Survey before the submission of any outline proposals to EPSRC. This is not an equality impact assessment. Further guidance on what should be included, in addition to the link to the Smart Survey can be found in the call document.

23.   Are these fellowships suitable for early career researchers?

The Turing AI Acceleration Fellowships are intended to accelerate the careers of high potential researchers to a world-leading position by the end of the fellowship. Applicants are therefore expected to have recognised leadership potential and significant research experience. Candidates must make their case that they have the necessary experience and potential to become a world leader within the 5 years of the fellowship. It is likely that most early career researchers do not have the experience necessary to achieve this goal and as such are not suitable for this fellowship.

24.   What is the upper end of the eligibility for this call? Would someone who is already a professor be eligible, for example?

Consideration of eligibility should be based on research experience rather than job title. Candidates must justify how a Turing AI Acceleration Fellowship would enable them in accelerating their career to a world-leading position within the five years of the award. Potential applicants who would already be considered world-leading within their research community are not suitable for the Turing AI Acceleration Fellowships.

25.   Are candidates still eligible for a New Investigator Award or other early-career awards after applying for the Turing AI Acceleration Fellowships?

The Turing AI Acceleration Fellowships are not suitable for early career researchers. As such candidates should not be considering applying for a New Investigator Award or other early-career awards.

Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships

26.   Is there a particular type of 'centre of excellence' that the fellow will be expected to establish?

The fellow and host organisation should make the case for the model of centre of excellence chosen, and why it is appropriate for the research programme proposed. Applicants and their host organisations should discuss how best to build upon the current AI research environment and establish a centre of excellence for AI research that aligns to the host organisation's and UK strategy and complements other activities they may have.

27.   Who would be suitable as a 'senior recruiting colleague' to submit the outline proposal?

Any member of staff in an appropriate senior recruiting position within the organisation may be named as Principal Investigator on the outline proposal. The individual chosen will be dependent upon the host organisation's structure.

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Vivienne Blackstone	06/12/2019	1	N/A