

# **Research Fellowships 2026/27**

## **Expression of Interest Applicant guidance notes**

**Deadline: 25 June 2026, 5pm BST**

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## Introduction to the Academy

The [Royal Academy of Engineering](https://raeng.org.uk/about-us/)<sup>1</sup> is a charity delivering public benefit, a National Academy providing progressive leadership, and a Fellowship bringing together an unrivalled community of leaders from every part of engineering and technology. Our Patron is His Majesty King Charles III.

The Academy's Strategy 2030, "[Engineering Better Lives](https://raeng.org.uk/about-us/our-strategy/)"<sup>2</sup>, sets out a vision to unite a community of outstanding experts and innovators in engineering to drive positive societal impact. The strategy is built around three core goals: a sustainable and innovative economy, technology improving lives, and an engineering community fit for the future. The Academy's grant programmes support these strategic goals by investing in people, partnerships, and projects that advance engineering excellence, foster inclusion and diversity, and deliver meaningful societal impact in alignment with the Academy's vision and values.

## Programme overview

### Research Fellowships

The Royal Academy of Engineering (the Academy) offers Research Fellowships each year to outstanding early-career researchers to support them to become future research leaders in engineering. The scheme's objectives are to:

- Support the best early-career researchers in establishing their independence and international reputation.
- Provide long-term support enabling the pursuit of an ambitious programme of engineering research and impact.
- Develop ambassadors for the Academy and advocates for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines.

The Academy welcomes applications from early-career researchers worldwide who have been awarded their PhD in the last four years. Applicants who have applied to this scheme before and were unsuccessful are eligible to reapply. These applications will be considered as new applications.

The scheme provides funding for five years. Each application is capped at a maximum contribution from the Academy of **£800,000 over the five-year period**, at 80% of the full economic costs (fEC).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/about-us/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/about-us/our-strategy/>

Research Fellowships must be held at a UK higher education institution/university or at a UK research organisation that is eligible to receive UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding. See the [UK Government's website](#) for further information.

Research Fellowships must begin between **1 August 2027** and **31 October 2027**. The duration of a Research Fellowship is five years full time, calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time awards. Requests for a shorter Research Fellowship are not accepted.

There are no nationality and age restrictions for applicants. The host institution is responsible for securing all necessary work permits and related costs for the Research Fellows.

The scheme provides funding for five years. Each application is capped at a maximum contribution from the Academy of **£800,000 over the five-year period**, at 80% of the full economic costs (fEC).

In addition to the direct financial support, the scheme benefits include:

- Mentoring support from an Academy Fellow to offer advice on research and career development.
- Reduction of teaching and administrative duties to dedicate time to research.
- Training and additional funding opportunities.
- Networking opportunities with other Research Fellows and Academy Fellows.
- An opportunity to establish a strong research track record which will improve the chances of securing additional funding and expanding research teams.
- Being part of the Academy Awardee Excellence Community. See the [RAENG Awardee Excellence Community Website](#)<sup>3</sup> for more information.

The former Engineering for Development Research Fellowship (EDRF) route has been integrated into the main Research Fellowships scheme. Applications addressing engineering for development challenges are welcomed and will be assessed alongside all other applications.

Additionally, **from the 2026/27 round onward, the Research Fellowship scheme will move to a two-stage application process**, replacing the current single-stage full application model. The first stage will require submission of an Expression of Interest (**deadline: 25 June 2026**), followed by a second stage where selected applicants will receive an invitation to submit a full proposal (deadline: 10 December 2026). Please see the [timeline](#) below.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/about-us/awardee-excellence-community>

The Academy is in discussions with UK-based medical charities to co-fund medical engineering research that improves the health and well-being of society. Our current co-founder is [Rosetrees](#)<sup>4</sup>. Applicants that are in the remit of these charities will be contacted at interview stage to confirm their interest in being co-funded. Please note that co-funded Research Fellows will be required to sign both Academy and medical charity terms and conditions.

**The scheme is funded by the [Department for Science, Innovation and Technology](#)<sup>5</sup> (DSIT).**

## Eligibility criteria

1. Research Fellowships must be held at one of the following eligible institutions that can show it is capable of fully supporting an engineering-focused research project and researcher:
  - a UK higher education institution/university or
  - a UK research organisation that is eligible to receive UKRI funding. A list of eligible research organisations is included on the [UK Government website](#).<sup>6</sup>
2. The host institution must agree to provide the Research Fellow all the support normal for a permanent employee.
3. The proposed research project must be in an engineering subject area. Engineering is defined in its broadest sense, encompassing a wide range of diverse fields (refer to [Appendix A](#) for more information).
4. Applicants must have a PhD, which was awarded (or the PhD has been unconditionally approved) no more than four years before the submission deadline of the Expression of Interest. This period includes applicants' work experience in academia and/or in industry in the UK and/or worldwide. For the 2026/27 round only, a margin of up to six months beyond the four-year limit is acceptable and does not require justification or explanation of extenuating circumstances (for those six months). Therefore, the final PhD award cut-off date is the **25 December 2021**.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://rosetrees.org.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-science-innovation-and-technology>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukri-endorsement-employing-or-hosting-institutions-global-talent-visa/ukri-list-of-approved-research-organisations>

Beyond the four years and six months limit, extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration, including maternity and paternity leave, extended sick leave, national service, caring responsibilities, and relocation due to fear of persecution or human rights violation. Please ensure the relevant dates and details are provided in the application form.

Please note that in a number of previous rounds, applicants could not hold a permanent academic position. This eligibility criterion has been removed and is no longer applicable.

**We remind you also that:**

- Research Fellowships cannot be jointly hosted by multiple institutions.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to contact the host institution to gain their formal approval before applying.
- There is a limit on the number of applications each host institution can submit (see [Application limit](#)).
- Any applications that are incomplete or do not adhere to the guidance will be rejected.

## Diversity and inclusion

The Royal Academy of Engineering is committed to diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all underrepresented groups across engineering. It is the Academy's [policy](#)<sup>7</sup> to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged or receives less favourable treatment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Before you commence your application, you will be asked a few diversity monitoring questions to help the Academy monitor and assess our diversity and inclusion policy. It will only be used for statistical purposes with access restricted to staff involved in processing and monitoring the data. No information will be published or used in any way that identifies individuals. The Academy will retain personal information as per our [Data Retention Policy](#)<sup>8</sup> in line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/media/flqhp4gn/rae005-diversity-and-inclusion-policy-2024.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/media/duhjwap2/raeng-privacy-policy-grant-or-award.pdf>

The information will be treated as strictly confidential, nonattributable and will not be seen by anyone involved in any selection processes. You will need to complete the diversity monitoring section before you can submit the grant application form, but can choose “prefer not to say” as responses.

The Academy is committed to making reasonable adjustments to remove barriers that hinder applicants from applying. Please contact [research@raeng.org.uk](mailto:research@raeng.org.uk) to request reasonable adjustments.

## Access Mentoring support

The Academy aims to provide additional support to applicants from groups that are persistently underrepresented within UK engineering through the grant application process.

This [positive action](#)<sup>9</sup> will contribute to improving diversity in the talent pipeline and widening the diversity of applicants and awardees within the Academy’s research grant schemes.

To be eligible for Access Mentoring support, applicants need to be invited to participate in the **second stage of the application process** to submit a full proposal. They must meet the eligibility criteria for the Research Fellowships scheme and must be from one of the following groups:

- **Women**
- **Black people (including those with any mixed ethnicity with Black ethnic backgrounds)**
- **Disabled people**

The Academy accepts applicants’ self-declaration on the above identified underrepresented groups.

Access Mentoring is a resource-limited opportunity. Applicants will need to wait to be invited to the second stage of the application process, but do not need to wait until the invited application stage deadline (10 December 2026) to submit their application. Early submission is encouraged and mentors will be assigned on a first come first served basis as soon as the application is approved. For more information on Access Mentoring, please see [guidance and how to apply](#)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/158>

<sup>10</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/access-mentoring>

## Part-time and flexible working

The Academy wants to support applicants to achieve a balance between their personal and work demands and is happy to discuss individual requirements and consider part-time and other flexible working arrangements.

Previously, Research Fellowships could only be held part-time in exceptional circumstances (e.g. caring responsibilities), and Fellows were not permitted to undertake additional employment alongside a 0.5 FTE award. This restriction has since been removed.

Fellows may now hold a part-time fellowship at 0.5 % FTE or above (subject to the minimum requirement) and may undertake additional paid work alongside their fellowship, provided this is with an organisation external to their host institution (e.g. industry, government, or other relevant stakeholders). Part-time fellowships must be held at no less than 0.5% FTE.

The Research Fellow should be based at the host institution for at least 50% of the Research Fellowship. If the Research Fellow needs to work more than 50% of the Research Fellowship outside the host institution, justification must be provided in the application form (in the 'Choice of host institution' section).

Research Fellows are entitled to maternity, paternity and adoption leave under the host institution's normal conditions of employment. The Academy will extend the duration of the Research Fellowship pro-rata to take into account such periods of leave and any conversions to part-time working. Research Fellows with caring responsibilities should liaise directly with the host institution if they wish to apply for part-time or flexible working.

## Expression of Interest submission deadline

There is one round of applications each year. The online application system for the 2026/27 Expression of Interest stage will open in **May 2026** and the submission deadline will be **5pm BST, Thursday 25 June 2026**. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their Expression of Interest application in **October 2026**. Please see below [full details of the timelines](#) for the stage 1 (Expression of Interest) and stage 2 (Invited Application) process.

## Application limit

The application limit applies to the host institution where the Research Fellowship will be held. This may or may not be the applicant's current employer but must be a UK higher education institution/university or an eligible UK research organisation. If a host institution submits more than the permitted number of applications, they will be asked to withdraw any applications exceeding this limit. Due to the application limit, host institutions are likely to have an internal selection process, and it is the applicant's responsibility to find out about this.

The standard application limit for each host institution at Expression of Interest stage is two applications, but the host institution can **submit up to four applications** as part of our [positive action initiative](#)<sup>11</sup> with the following conditions:

- If the submission is four applications, at least two of the four applications must be submitted by candidates from the identified underrepresented groups.
- If the submission is three applications, at least one of the three applications must be submitted by a candidate from the identified underrepresented groups.
- If the submission is one or two applications, the application or applications do not need to be submitted by candidates from the identified underrepresented groups. However, the expectations of host institutions still apply.
- Current holders of Intelligence Community (IC) postdoctoral fellowships fall outside the Royal Academy of Engineering 2+2 quota. Universities may therefore submit applications for current holders of IC postdoctoral fellowships in addition to their allocated quota, and these will not count towards the limit. The application deadline for Expression of Interest submissions must occur before the end date of the additional candidate's IC postdoctoral fellowship to be considered a current holder. This provision applies to application numbers only and does not permit the simultaneous holding of an IC postdoctoral fellowship and a Royal Academy of Engineering Research Fellowship.

### Identified underrepresented groups:

- Women
- Black people (including those with any mixed ethnicity with Black ethnic backgrounds)
- Disabled people

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/158>

**Host institutions are expected to:**

- Adopt appropriate mechanisms to ensure only the highest calibre of candidates are submitted to the scheme in line with the principle of [the Declaration on Research Assessment<sup>12</sup>](#) (DORA).
- Adopt a proactive approach in encouraging and supporting researchers from groups underrepresented within UK engineering research to apply and succeed in their applications.
- Evidence their commitment to equality and diversity if requested by the Academy. They must be able to demonstrate that their selection criteria do not unlawfully discriminate or disadvantage candidates because of their personal characteristics or background.

## Mentoring and monitoring

Awarded Research Fellows will work with the Academy to identify an Academy Fellow to be their mentor. The mentor will provide expert, independent advice and support for the duration of the Research Fellowship and will also formally monitor the Research Fellow's progress for the Academy.

Research Fellows must submit an annual progress report and expenditure statement to the Academy. At the annual review meeting the Research Fellow, mentor and Academy staff will discuss the report, progress made and future plans.

Research Fellows will also be asked to provide some key data on their annual performance (e.g. publications and additional research funding) for the purpose of auditing and reporting to the Academy's funders.

## How to apply

All applications must be submitted via the [Academy's online grants management system<sup>13</sup>](#) (GMS). Applicants must first register and provide some basic login details to create a profile.

The application should be submitted by the applicant. We recommend leaving plenty of time to complete the application form ahead of the deadline and thoroughly going through your application prior to submission. While the guidance notes are embedded within the system itself, we recommend you keep this document to hand when completing the application form. Please also read

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<sup>12</sup> <https://sfdora.org/read/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://grants.raeng.org.uk>

the Academy's [Grant Policies in Appendix B](#) and on our website<sup>14</sup> before starting your application.

Many of the questions have prescribed word limits, which are designed to keep answers focused and give applicants an indication of the level of detail required. In such cases the number of words used will be displayed beneath the question and updated in real time.

Applicants can download a PDF of their Expression of Interest application after submission, which is recommended for reference. Those meeting the eligibility criteria will enter the assessment stages.

## Application process

Applications will be assessed through a two-stage application process.

### **Stage one: Expression of Interest**

In the Expression of Interest, applicants will be required to provide a brief outline of their motivation, engineering vision and contribution, as well as the collaborations, beneficiaries and pathways to impact. Applicants will not be required to provide any details on project costs at this stage.

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**Deadline for submitting Expression of Interest applications:  
Thursday 25 June 2026, 5pm BST.**

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### **Stage two: Invited Application**

This part of the application process will require invited applicants to submit a more detailed application including a breakdown of the required costs.

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**Deadline for submitting Invited Applications:  
Thursday 10 December 2026, 5pm GMT**

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<sup>14</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/about-us/our-policies/grant-policies/>

Please see below a timeline for Stage 1 (Expression of Interest) and Stage 2 (Invited Application) processes. **Please note interview and notification dates are subject to confirmation.**



## Completing the Expression of Interest application form

The application form for the Expression of Interest has five sections and should take approximately four hours to compose in its entirety. You may wish to complete the questions offline and enter the information afterwards.

After logging into the online grants system and selecting 'Research Fellowships – Expression of Interest' in the 'Start Application' section, you should be presented with the 'Instructions' screen.

Here you will see some general instructions on how to use the system, as well as links to each of the sections of the Expression of Interest application form listed below.

1. Applicant and host institution details
2. Project details
3. Expression of interest
4. Responsible research
5. Declarations and marketing

You can save your work at any stage in the application process and return to it later. You can answer the questions in any order you like, so you can freely skip some sections and return to them later. **Please read the guidance provided in this document in detail as well as the [Grant Policies in Appendix B](#) before starting an application.** You should also ensure that you have all the necessary documentation to complete the application.

## Section 1: Applicant and host institution details

### 1.1 Applicant name and contact details

Please provide your name and preferred contact details.

#### **ORCID identifier**

Applicants are welcome to use data from their [ORCID](#)<sup>15</sup> (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) identifier in this application. Usage is optional and available to minimise your manual data entry. You may add your ORCID identifier on the Contact information page or by clicking on the Retrieve/Update link within a relevant question. A pop-up will appear allowing you to provide your ORCID details and authorise access. The existence and use of an ORCID identifier will **not** have an impact on how an application is assessed.

### 1.2 Please provide a full list of your employment appointments since your university graduation in reverse chronological order

Please provide full details of any periods of part-time working (noting what percentage part-time), career breaks, extended sick leave or maternity/paternity/adoptive leave as your eligibility may depend on the accuracy of this information.

The depth of information you provide is up to you. As this information will represent you in the eligibility and assessment process, it is worthwhile to include as much good evidence for your merit as possible.

You can retrieve your career history information from your ORCID profile to complete this section of the application form. If you do not have an ORCID identifier, please use the below format:

Organisation: City

Year Started | Year Ended | Role Title

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<sup>15</sup> <https://orcid.org/>

### **1.3 Please list all your qualifications in reverse chronological order**

The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence of your academic merit as possible and as appropriate for the funding for which you are applying.

You can retrieve your education information from your ORCID profile to complete this section of the application form. If you do not have an ORCID identifier, please use the below format:

University: City

Year Started to Year Completed | Degree Type

### **1.4 Please provide details of authors, titles and references of your key preprints and publications in refereed journals, in reverse chronological order**

You should include those outputs most relevant to the application to support your case. Please note that publications will be reviewed on the basis of scientific content, rather than publication metrics or the identity of the journal.

Your list can be divided into three sections: (i) refereed papers in primary journals, (ii) contributions to symposia and compiled volumes (refereed only); and (iii) preprints.

For publications arising from large collaborative programmes clearly specify the exact role and contribution made towards large collaborative research programmes that have resulted in multi-authored publications.

If your field of research differs in any way from normal conventions, e.g. lead author, first author, and publications in journals being the main gauge of success, please provide a brief explanation at the top of your publication list.

If appropriate, give the publisher or where each publication may be obtained, providing a URL if available. Citations for preprints must state "Preprint", the repository name and the articles persistent identifier (e.g. DOI).

You can retrieve your published works from your ORCID profile to complete this section of the application form. If you do not have an ORCID identifier, please use the below format:

Publication Title

Publication

Year | Publication type

### 1.5 Please list your current and previous research and/or other investment funding in reverse chronological order

The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence of your merit as possible and as appropriate for the funding for which you are applying.

You can retrieve your funding information from your ORCID profile to complete this section of the application form. If you do not have an ORCID identifier, please use the below format:

Title

Funder

Amount

Year Started to Year Completed | Type of funding (grant, investment, etc)

### 1.6 Host institution details

Please provide the details of the host institution where the Research Fellowship will be held and confirm that this is the 'lead organisation'. If you are not currently employed by the host institution, you should also add your current employer.

### 1.7 What date was your PhD certificate awarded?

Applicants must have a PhD, which was awarded **no more than four years and 6 months** before the Expression of Interest submission deadline of 25 June 2026. Please enter the date your PhD certificate was awarded or the date your PhD was unconditionally approved by the university.

For the 2026/27 round **only**, a margin of up to six months beyond the four-year limit is acceptable and does not require justification. The PhD award cut-off date is therefore **25 December 2021**.

### 1.8 Extenuating circumstances (optional question, not visible to reviewers)

If your PhD certificate was awarded more than four years and six months before the submission deadline (25 June 2026), please provide details of extenuating circumstances. Please cover any periods of maternity/paternity leave, extended sick leave, national service, part-time employment for caring responsibilities or any other activity that you feel should be considered when assessing your eligibility for these Research Fellowships. The Academy's decision on eligibility is final.

**(200 words maximum)**

### 1.9 Host institution details

Please provide the details of the host institution where the Research Fellowship will be held and confirm that this is the 'lead organisation'. If you are not currently employed by the host institution, you should also add your current employer.

### 1.10 Host institution declaration letter

The host institution's declaration letter must be completed by an appropriate individual from the institution's research support office or equivalent. **The letter must be on headed paper and should carry the signatory's name, position, contact details, correct date/year, scheme title, applicant's name** and the institution's official stamp (if available).

The purpose is to check that the host institution is in principle willing to host a Research Fellow, subject to contract. The letter must confirm the application has been approved by the institution and **must contain the exact wording given in the box below**, as well as any further remarks the host institution wishes to make.

Please note that the wording provided in the box below is specific to the Research Fellowships scheme, and the wording is updated and may be different to previous rounds. **The submission deadline will not be extended due to an individual's unavailability.**

***On behalf of the host institution, I can confirm that I have read and accept the application guidance and other information regarding this award scheme, which is provided on the Royal Academy of Engineering's website. I also confirm that:***

- *The applicant will be employed by the institution for the duration of the award.*
- *If awarded, the applicant will be given full access to the facilities, equipment, personnel, and funding as required by the application.*
- *The applicant's teaching, administrative, and non-research duties will be restricted to enable them to dedicate their time to research.*
- *The applicant will be provided with all the support normal for a permanent employee.*
- *I am authorised to approve the submission of applications for funding and confirm this application has successfully met the eligibility criteria, including adherence to the application limit and all our internal approval procedures.*

***Please delete the following statement if not applicable:***

- *I agree that the Academy may share this application with UK-based medical charities for the purposes of assessing the suitability of the research project for co-funding.*

## Section 2: Project details

### 2.1 Please provide a title for your proposal

The essence of the research should be captured in the title and should be as informative as possible. Please ensure that it is understandable to a non-specialist reader and does not contain any confidential or sensitive information.

**(15 words maximum)**

### 2.2 Please provide a summary of your proposal

Please provide a summary of the proposed activity, including key goals and expected impact. Your summary should be understandable to the non-specialist reader. We may make this summary publicly available if successful, so please do not include any confidential or sensitive information.

**(250 words maximum)**

### 2.3 Please outline your engineering research vision

Further to the summary of your research goals and objectives provided above, please include short, accessible explanations on the following points:

- the challenge or opportunity your research addresses (in an engineering context)
- why it is important now (timeliness)
- how your approach differs from or advances existing work (novelty)
- the wider societal context
- what success would look like at the end of the Fellowship.

**(500 words maximum)**

### 2.4 What is the proposed start date?

Research Fellowships must begin between **1 August 2027** and **31 October 2027**. The duration of a Research Fellowship is five years full time, calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time awards. You must agree these timescales with the host institution. Requests for a shorter Research Fellowship are not accepted.

### 2.5 What is the proposed end date?

For example, if your project starts on 1 September 2027, it will need to finish five years later (on 31 August 2032).

### 2.6 Select one single broad engineering category that best aligns with your proposal

If your research proposal fits into several categories, please pick the category that is most applicable to your proposal. The category selected will be used to help identify reviewers and panel members.

Details of the engineering categories can be found in [Appendix A](#) at the end of this document and are also available under the '[List of Panels' on our website](#)<sup>16</sup>.

### **2.7 Please provide a maximum of 10 keywords that describe your proposal**

The keywords provided help the Academy identify suitable reviewers.

**(10 words maximum, separated by a comma)**

### **2.8 List all external organisations that you will collaborate with as part of the project**

Please list any collaborators from universities and industry in the UK or worldwide. This will help avoid any conflicts of interest during the assessment process. You should not explain the extent or nature of the collaboration here, as that is covered later.

Collaborations can take many forms, including financial contributions, access to facilities and equipment, provision of equipment/materials/supplies/services, access to data and results, provision of staff (e.g. a secondment), advice, mentoring, participation in a steering group, expertise, networking/introductions. This covers both internal and external collaborations.

**(50 words maximum)**

## **Section 3: Expression of interest**

This is the main part of your Expression of Interest application. Here you must demonstrate that your proposal contains an original and independent research project within the remit of the broad engineering categories described in [Appendix A](#). Proposals that are simply an extension of your PhD project or are closely aligned to the work of your PhD supervisor are unlikely to be viewed favourably.

### **3.1 Motivation, profile and fit**

- How do your research experiences, contributions and progression to date demonstrate your potential for research independence and leadership in engineering?
- What motivates you to apply for this Fellowship, and how does it align with your long-term aspirations and research interests?

Use this section to present the strongest evidence of your progression, independence and leadership potential, and to explain why a Research Fellowship is the right next step.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.raeng.org.uk/about-us/fellowship/election-to-the-fellowship>

You should highlight the aspects of your track record that indicate research independence and your potential to become a future research leader in your chosen field and explain how the Fellowship aligns with your long-term research direction and career goals.

**(500 words maximum)**

### 3.2 Engineering contribution

- What is the engineering contribution of your proposed research, and how does it advance engineering knowledge or practice?
- What contribution will your research make to the engineering capability or practice and how will this benefit the engineering profession or wider society?

Clearly state the core engineering advance your research will deliver and how this progresses the state-of-the-art in engineering knowledge, capability or practice.

You should make the novelty explicit and explain, in practical terms, who will benefit and how, including any relevance to the engineering profession and/or wider society.

**(200 words maximum)**

### 3.3 Choice of host institution

Explain your choice of host institution. You may wish to comment on the facilities and expertise that will be available to you.

You should also cover what experience you have had and/or plan to gain from other institutions and alternative working practices. For example, any time spent on secondment or on extended visits.

**(150 words maximum)**

### 3.4 Collaborations

Outline the collaborators you intend to work with during the Fellowship and the role they will play in supporting your research and impact.

Describe the collaborations that will enhance the quality of your research and/or strengthen the pathway to impact. You should explain who you will work with, why they are appropriate, and the specific contribution each collaborator will make.

Collaborations should be clearly justified and proportionate to the Fellowship; where letters of support are necessary to evidence a collaborator's commitment, these should be provided at the Invited Application stage.

**(200 words maximum)**

### 3.5 Beneficiaries and pathways to impact

- Who will benefit from your research, and how?
- How could the outcomes of your work be used, adopted, or translated beyond academia?
- How do you plan to communicate your research and engage audiences outside the academic community?

Identify the main beneficiary groups and describe how they could benefit from your research outcomes. You should outline credible routes through which outcomes could be used, adopted or translated beyond academia, and describe how you will communicate your work and engage with audiences outside the academic community.

**(300 words maximum)**

### 3.6 Diversity, inclusion and research culture

- What does diversity and inclusion mean to you, and how will you embed these principles in your research, collaborations, and team development?

Explain what diversity and inclusion mean to you in the context of your research and working practices. You should describe how you will embed these principles

in your research design and delivery, in your collaborations, and in any team development, and how this will contribute to a positive research culture in which people can thrive.

**(200 words maximum)**

## Section 4: Responsible research

These questions address responsible research practices in alignment with the Academy's policies:

- [Animals in Research, Innovation and Development Policy](#)<sup>17</sup>
- [Humans in Research, Innovation and Development Policy](#)<sup>18</sup>.

For further guidance, please refer to the linked policies.

Please note: applicable regulatory approval and licenses are not required to be in place at point of application, but all necessary approvals must be in place before the work begins and a clear plan to achieve this at application stage.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/media/ctelvlvi/animals-in-research-innovation-and-development-policy.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/media/4qmhhqf4/human-participants-in-research-development-and-innovation-policy.pdf>

### **Animals in research, development and innovation – policy statement**

The Academy acknowledges that, at present, the use of animals remains the only way for some areas of research to progress. Research involving animals is regulated by comprehensive and strict legislation in the UK and must be conducted with a high regard for animal welfare.

The Academy will fund work involving the use of animals in the UK which complies with our Animals in Research, Innovation and Development Policy (linked above).

If your proposal involves the use of animals and takes place outside of the UK, the Academy will generally not fund this work. Please contact the Academy before proceeding with your application.

#### **4.1 Does your proposal involve the use of animals or animal tissue as defined by the Animals (Scientific Procedure) Act 1986<sup>19</sup>?**

Academy-funded research involving international partners, or work undertaken outside of the UK, will generally not be allowed to engage in research involving animals as defined by the UK Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. We recommend that applicants proposing research involving animals to be undertaken outside of the UK should contact an Academy staff member before beginning their application to discuss whether their proposal would be considered.

- a. No
- b. Yes, and my work is taking place within the UK
- c. Yes, and my work is taking place outside of the UK

### **Human participants, materials and personal data in research, development and innovation – policy statement**

Research, development and innovation involving human participants, human material or personal data can contribute to a better understanding of human health and disease as well as the technological efficacy of new and evolving innovations.

The Academy will fund research, development and innovation involving the use of human participants, human material or personal data which complies with our Human Participants in Research, Innovation and Development Policy (linked above).

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consolidated-version-of-aspa-1986>

#### 4.2 Does your proposal involve human participants according to the WHO definition<sup>20</sup>?

- a. No
- b. Yes, and my work is taking place within the UK
- c. Yes, and my work is taking place outside of the UK

#### 4.3 Does your proposal involve the use of human tissue or other human materials?

- a. No
- b. Yes, and my work is taking place within the UK
- c. Yes, and my work is taking place outside of the UK

#### 4.4 Does your proposal involve the use of personal data?

- a. No
- b. Yes, and my work is taking place within the UK
- c. Yes, and my work is taking place outside of the UK

### Section 5: Declarations and marketing

#### 5.1 Have any generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools been used in the preparation of this application? (not visible to reviewers)

Applicants are fully responsible for all of the content presented in their grant application(s). While these tools may be used to assist in various aspects and the grant process does not penalise the use of generative AI tools, applications **must** reflect the applicant's own ideas, work and voice.

If selecting 'yes', please provide a clear acknowledgment on how generative AI tools were used in the preparation of your application in the question that follows. This includes disclosing the name of the tool or platform used and describing how it was utilised.

#### 5.2 Please provide details on how generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation of your application. Details should be provided on the following: (not visible to reviewers)

- **specify the generative AI tool or platform used**
- **describe how the tool(s) were used**
- **where possible include any prompts that were used and how the resulting outputs were incorporated into this application**

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<sup>20</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/media/4qmhhqf4/human-participants-in-research-development-and-innovation-policy.pdf>

Applicants must provide clear acknowledgement if they have used generative AI tools in the process of writing their grant application and a failure to declare use may result in your application being removed from the review process.

### **5.3 Applicant declaration**

Please tick the checkbox once you have read and understood the declaration included in the application form.

### **5.4 How did you hear about this scheme? (optional question, not visible to reviewers)**

This question is optional but help the Academy to understand which marketing materials are most successful at reaching the academic community to improve future communications work.

### **5.5 Future marketing consent (optional question)**

Please tick the checkbox if you are happy to receive emails from the Academy regarding funding opportunities.

A grey 'submit application' button will become available once the application form is completed. Please note that once submitted the application cannot be edited and updated, but you may view it from your GMS account.

## **Assessment of applications**

### **1. Expressions of Interest**

Each eligible Expression of Interest application will be assessed by two Academy Fellows who are part of the Academy Research Fellowships Steering Group in a general reviewer capacity. The application therefore should be written to help non-expert reviewers understand the research content.

Based on the reviewers' comments and scores, the sift panel (consisting of Academy Fellows - Research Fellowships Steering Group) will select the applications to proceed to the stage two of the application process (Invited Applications). Applicants will be informed of the stage one outcome (Expression of Interest) in October 2026.

### **2. Invited Applications**

Each Invited Application will be assessed by three expert reviewers. The expert reviewers will be asked to provide comments, score, and key technical questions (if any) that the applicant should clarify. Applicants will be given the opportunity to respond to the technical questions in late March 2027.

The shortlist panel will then moderate the expert reviewers' comments and scores along with the applicants' response to the technical questions to select strong candidates for interview. Applicants will be informed of the stage two outcome by early May 2027.

### **3. Interviews**

Interviews of shortlisted candidates will take place either online or at the Academy headquarters in London in **May 2027**. All shortlisted applicants must be available to attend, as alternative dates cannot be arranged. Please reserve these dates at the time of application.

Each interview will be conducted by a panel of four Academy Fellows and will last 30 minutes. This includes a five-minute presentation from the candidate.

The ranking of candidates at the preceding shortlist panel will have no bearing at the interview stage. All interview candidates are considered to have equal standing. Following the interviews, the panel will rank the applications and select the top-ranked candidates for awards.

## **Assessment criteria**

### **Stage 1: Expression of Interest (general review)**

Each reviewer will be asked to provide:

- Comments against the assessment criteria below
- An overall score on the quality of the application
- A recommendation on whether the application should proceed to the next assessment stage.

#### **1. Candidate quality**

- Quality of the applicant's research track record
- Potential of the applicant to become a future leader in their chosen field
- Potential of the applicant to act as an ambassador and advocate for engineering research

#### **2. Research vision**

- Quality of the applicant's research vision and their ability to articulate their near, mid, and long-term goals
- Applicant's potential to establish an independent research career for themselves, in their chosen field

### 3. Beneficiaries and impact

- The extent to which stakeholders and partners will benefit from the proposed research
- The candidate's planned pathways to translate their research outcomes into societal and economic impact.

## Why applications are unsuccessful

The most common reasons applications are unsuccessful:

- Lack of novelty in research.
- Lack of independence in research.
- Poor communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Unrealistic research proposal (for example, overstating the potential for impact of the research and the applicant's reputation).
- Lack of ambition and vision that shows great potential to become future research leaders.
- Weak letters of support from the host institution or important collaborators.
- No industrial/clinical collaborations planned.
- Inconsistent information provided in the application form.

## Grant agreement

If you are successful, your funding will be awarded under the RD&I Terms and Conditions found on the [Academy's website](#)<sup>21</sup>.

This agreement has been developed to ensure funding aligns with our Academy values, is used for the purposes for which it was awarded and is managed in compliance with our own funders' agreements, UK legislation and funding best practice.

## Contact details

If you have any questions, please refer to our [Research Fellowships FAQs](#)<sup>22</sup> or contact the Royal Academy of Engineering's research programmes team at [research@raeng.org.uk](mailto:research@raeng.org.uk).

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<sup>21</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/grants-policies>

<sup>22</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/programmes-and-prizes/programmes/uk-grants-and-prizes/support-for-research/research-fellowships/faq>

## Appendix A: Engineering categories

As described under the ['List of Panels' on our website](#)<sup>23</sup>.

### 1) Civil, construction and environmental

Including aspects of civil and structural engineering; construction materials; earthquakes; wind & fire engineering; building engineering physics; construction management; numerical modelling; environmental engineering; water resources and flooding; offshore and coastal engineering; hydraulics; climate change and sustainability; waste management; geotechnical engineering; geomatics/surveying.

### 2) Materials and mining

Including metallurgy; metal forming; corrosion; failure analysis; structural integrity; non-destructive testing; inspection technologies; failure prevention; fabrication and repair technologies; welding and joining technologies; discovery & development of mineral resources; extraction & processing of minerals; mining engineering; materials performance; materials research; plastics and composites; structural materials (excluding materials specifically covered elsewhere).

### 3) Chemical and process

Including all aspects of chemical and process engineering; aspects of fuel technology; petrochemicals, oil, coal and gas technologies; petroleum engineering; carbon; carbon sequestration; clean technology; sustainability; catalysis; particulates; food processing; fermentation processes; pharmaceutical engineering; biotechnological processes.

### 4) Aerospace

Including all aspects of aeronautical engineering and aerospace manufacturing; turbomachinery and aerothermal engineering, avionics; radar systems; antennae; satellite systems; autonomous systems; aspects of systems engineering; airlines; materials for aerospace.

### 5) Transport and mechanical

Aspects of mechanical engineering including automotive; rail and marine engineering; transportation infrastructure; engines; combustion; turbomachinery; mechatronics; acoustics and vibrations; ultrasonics; heat & thermodynamics; fluid dynamics and CFD.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.raeng.org.uk/about-us/fellowship/election-to-the-fellowship>

## **6) Manufacturing and design**

Including manufacturing management and manufacturing process innovation; manufacturing business improvement and re-engineering; CAD/CAM; robotics for manufacturing; engineering design.

## **7) Electrical and electronic**

Including electrical, electronic and control engineering; design for electronics; aspects of nanotechnology and semiconductor engineering; lasers; optoelectronics; photonics; microwave engineering; instrumentation; display technology; solid state electronics.

## **8) Energy and power**

Including energy technologies; including electric power and energy systems engineering; nuclear and renewable energy generation; energy infrastructure; management of energy and energy resources for generation, storage and transmission; distribution and conversion of electric energy and power; electricity supply and energy conservation; hydrogen power; fuel cells.

## **9) Medical and bioengineering**

Including all aspects of medical and biomedical engineering; orthotics; prosthetics; ultrasound for medicine; medical scanning and imaging; drug delivery; biomedical materials; tissue engineering; medical devices; medical robotics and computer assisted surgery.

## **10) Computing and communications**

Including computational and software engineering; informatics; web and data science; artificial intelligence; machine learning; computer vision; robotics; telecommunications; mobile telephony; broadband; wireless spectrum; signal processing; television, film and broadcasting; computer and video games; special effects.

## **11) Emerging and multi-disciplinary**

New, emerging or multi-disciplinary areas of engineering.

## **12) Other**

Sectors of engineering not covered elsewhere.

## Appendix B: Grant policies

Please also refer to our [website](#)<sup>24</sup>.

### Academy's commitment to DORA (Declaration on Research Assessment) principles

The Academy's research programmes are aligned with the principles of the [Declaration on Research Assessment](#)<sup>25</sup> (DORA), which is a set of principles aiming to improve the ways in which the output of research is evaluated by funding agencies, academic institutions, and other parties.

The outputs from research are many and varied, and as a funder of engineering research the Academy needs to assess the quality and impact of these outputs to make awards. It is imperative that research output is measured accurately and evaluated wisely.

For applicants and reviewers, we would like to emphasise that all outputs are welcome and considered valuable to the Academy. Outputs can include open data sets, software, publications, commercial, entrepreneurial or industrial products, clinical practice developments, educational products, policy publications, evidence synthesis pieces and conference publications that you have generated.

With regard to research articles published in peer-reviewed journals, we ask applicants to use a range of article metrics and indicators on personal/supporting statements as evidence of the impact of individual published articles and other research outputs. The Journal Impact Factor in particular is unacceptable for inclusion in any part of an application, and applicants may be asked to resubmit if anything is found to contradict this as part of the eligibility checks.

### Use of generative AI tools in funding applications and assessment

The Academy has aligned with other UK funders around the use of generative AI tools in funding applications through the Research Funders Policy Group [joint statement](#)<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/grants-policies>

<sup>25</sup> <https://sfdora.org/read/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://wellcome.org/about-us/positions-and-statements/joint-statement-generative-ai>

Regarding the use of AI, applicants are fully responsible for all the content presented in their grant applications. The grant process does not penalise the use of generative AI tools, but it is imperative to ensure that the application reflects the applicant's own voice and ideas. It is not acceptable to solely rely on generative AI tools to write the entire grant application from start to finish. While these tools may be used to assist in various aspects, the application must primarily represent the applicant's own work.

Applicants must provide clear acknowledgement if they have used generative AI tools in the process of writing their grant applications. This includes disclosing the name of the tool used and describing how it was utilized. The following style should be employed for referencing:

I acknowledge the use of [insert AI system(s), version number and link] to generate materials for background research, styling, proofreading, etc.

Or,

I acknowledge the use of [insert AI system(s), version number and link] to generate materials that were included within my final assessment in modified form.

## **National security**

The Academy is the UK's National Academy for engineering and technology and seeks to increase the potential positive benefit that innovations can have for society, whilst reducing the risks of harm. Hence, in all our activities, we seek to minimise the risk that technology developed as part of work that we support could be misused by a foreign state to build a capacity to target UK interests in a hostile fashion or to control or repress their population. There is a risk that for some grant activities, failure to protect IP and a lack of due diligence into collaborators could result in sensitive technology being transferred to and misused by a hostile or repressive foreign state. As such all applicants should ensure they are familiar with the Academy's [Policy on National Security-Related Risks](#)<sup>27</sup>.

## **Export control**

The UK Government's Export Control [Joint Unit](#)<sup>28</sup> (ECJU) administers the UK's system of [export controls and licensing](#)<sup>29</sup> for military and dual-use items. The Export Control Act 2002 and its related legislation establishes the strategic export controls of military and dual-use goods and technologies.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/policies>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/export-control-joint-unit>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-strategic-export-controls>

The Academy is required to consider [export controls](#)<sup>30</sup> when assessing and reviewing relevant applications and we therefore need to know whether the information contained within your application is subject to such laws.

As part of our review process, your submitted application will be sent out for review by independent reviewers and/or members of our review panel(s). Please be aware of this when considering the information you include within your application. We particularly want to flag considerations with respect to your/others Intellectual Property and research that is subject to [UK Strategic Export Control Laws](#)<sup>31</sup>. Should you flag that the content of your application is subject to Export Control we will manage the review of your application accordingly.

**Important Note:** If your application response includes a "don't know" answer regarding export control, please be aware that this may result in a delay in processing your application. This is because we will need to clarify your position and, if necessary, consult with the ECJU to confirm whether any export licensing requirements apply to your work.

We encourage you to take the necessary steps to confirm whether export controls are relevant to your application before submitting it, as this will help us process your application without unnecessary delays.

## Subsidy control

The UK subsidy control regime began on 4 January 2023. As part of this regime, the Academy is required to report to the UK Government on how award funding is being used when applications collaborating with commercial enterprises are awarded. The regime determines the lawfulness of monetary awards made using public sector resources when given to businesses and other organisations that are engaged in economic activity.

To assist with subsidy control compliance, applicants who are successful at Stage one: Expression of Interest and are invited to submit a full application will then need to confirm whether their research project is either a piece of non-economic scientific research (with or without commercial collaborators) in terms of the [Statutory Guidance on Subsidy Control](#)<sup>32</sup> clause 15.33 or an Industrial Research project with identified commercial collaborator(s).

Additional confirmations will be requested at the award stage.

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/export-controls-applying-to-academic-research>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-strategic-export-controls>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-subsidy-control-statutory-guidance>

## Research involving human participants or tissue

Research, development and innovation involving human participants, human material or personal data can contribute to a better understanding of human health and disease as well as the technological efficacy of new and evolving innovations. The Academy will fund research, development and innovation involving the use of human participants, human material or personal data which complies with our [Humans in RD&I Policy](#)<sup>33</sup>. If your proposal includes the use of human participants, human materials or personal data you will be asked to declare this at application stage and provide further details of your proposal if you are shortlisted.

Please note: applicable regulatory approval and licenses are not required to be in place at point of application, but all necessary approvals must be in place before the work begins.

## Animals in research

The Academy acknowledges that, at present, the use of animals remains the only way for some areas of research to progress. Research involving animals is regulated by comprehensive and strict legislation in the UK and must be conducted with a high regard for animal welfare. The Academy will fund research involving the use of animals in the UK which complies with our [Animals in RD&I Policy](#)<sup>34</sup>. If your proposal includes the use of animals you will be asked to declare this at application stage and provide further details of your proposal if you are shortlisted.

If your proposal involves the use of animals and takes place outside of the UK, the Academy will generally not fund this work. Please contact the Academy before proceeding with your application.

Please note: applicable regulatory approval and licenses are not required to be in place at point of application, but all necessary approvals must be in place before the work begins.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/media/4qmhqf4/human-participants-in-research-development-and-innovation-policy.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> <https://raeng.org.uk/media/ctelvlvi/animals-in-research-innovation-and-development-policy.pdf>