Royal Academy of Engineering | Ingenious

© Technicians Make It Happen

Ingenious Public Engagement grant scheme

Applicant Guidance Notes
Deadline: 24 September 2025 4pm

Contents

Introduction

Ingenious is a grants scheme for projects that engage the public with engineers and engineering. *Ingenious* projects provide training and opportunities for engineers to take part in public engagement activities, gain skills in communication and bring engineering to the very centre of society.

The *Ingenious* scheme aims to:

- Support imaginative and creative engineering public engagement projects, raising awareness of the diversity, nature and impact of engineering.
- Broaden perceptions of engineering, targeting public audiences currently underrepresented in engineering.
- Build capacity in engineering public engagement by offering engineers training and opportunities in public engagement.

For the purposes of the *Ingenious* scheme, public engagement refers to any activities or events that engage the public (non-engineers) with engineers and engineering.

Ingenious projects should seek to engage with underrepresented audiences including deprived communities across the UK.

Ingenious is supported by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

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 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 in line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

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 see the grant application form, but can choose "prefer not to say" as responses.

Reasonable Adjustments
All applicants must submit an application form via the online grants management system, but applicants are able to submit a single video message in lieu of writing out long text responses. In the online application form, you can state 'see video for response'
for any questions you plan to answer via video.
Please see our document on video submission for further guidance.
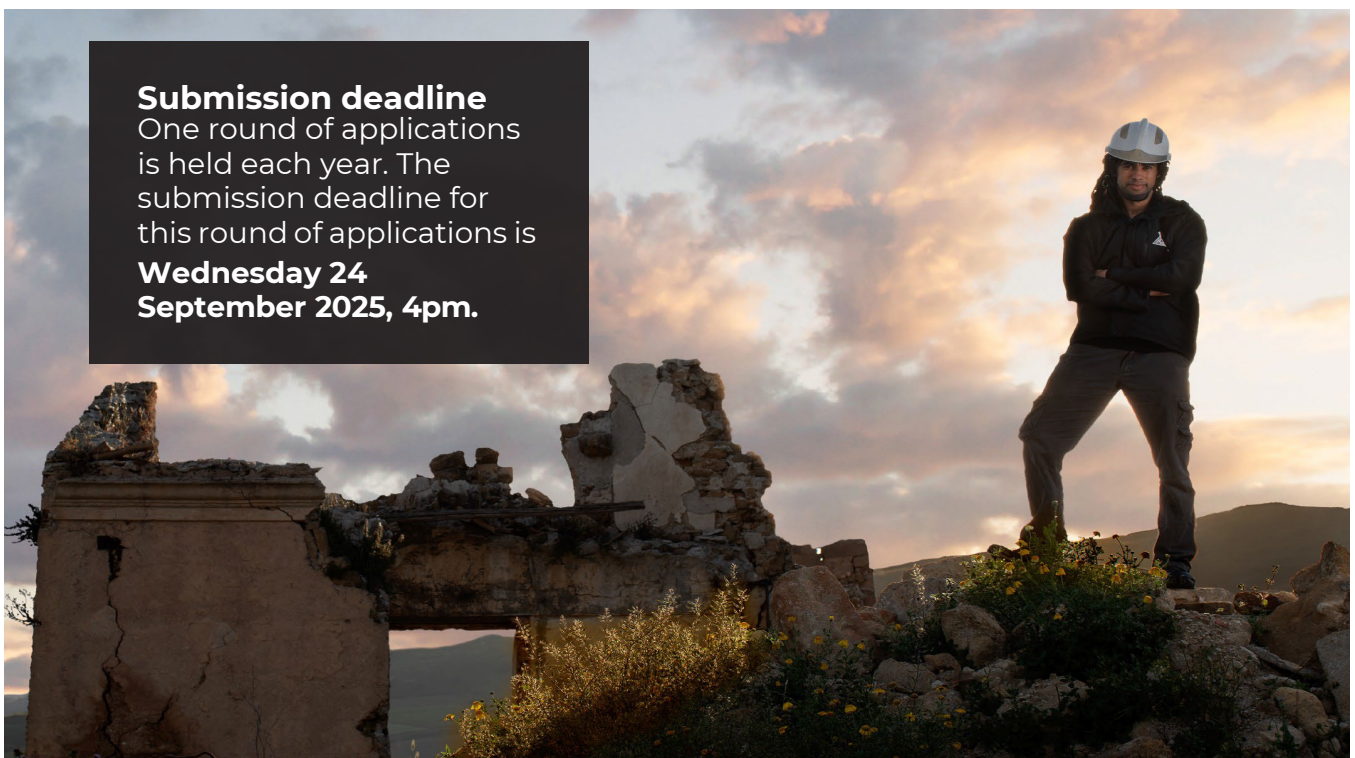
Applying for Ingenious

Eligibility criteria

· Applicants must be UK residents and be associated with the lead organisation.

· All projects must engage with the public (i.e not people studying engineering or who are working/have worked as engineers).

· All projects must involve engineers, offering them training in relevant public engagement skills as well as public engagement opportunities to put these skills into practice.

· Lead Applicants must be over 18 years old. Due to the way the grant terms and conditions are managed, under 18s cannot submit an application for *Ingenious* as the lead applicant. We would encourage an adult from the organisation to apply as lead applicant who can agree to the terms and conditions of the award, and the young person can be listed as co-applicant in the Staff Involvement section of the application. In such cases you must reach out to the *Ingenious* team as soon as possible so we can guide you through the application process and ensure that the information belonging to any under 18 is managed appropriately.

· The engineers involved in the project must be based in the UK; be graduate level or equivalent. Engineers may also be apprentices and engineering technicians, but projects which only engage undergraduate engineers or only apprentices are ineligible for Ingenious.

· Activities must be offered free of charge. For projects wanting to work with centres, clubs or associations that usually charge for tickets or membership fees, ticket prices should be covered for your target audience or there should be schemes in place to make sure that those from lower-income households are able to participate. If you need further clarification please get in touch with the Public Engagement team.

Please note that this scheme is not intended to provide sponsorship to ongoing programmes.

Previous Ingenious awardees are welcome to submit applications for new projects, but recent awardees may also wish to consider the *Ingenious* Follow on Fund Scheme to continue recently completed projects. Please see our website for further information.

Submission deadline
One round of applications is held each year. The submission deadline for this round of applications is **Wednesday 24 September 2025, 4pm.**

© This is Engineering

Applying for Ingenious

£3,000 - £30,000 funding

How to apply

· All applications must be submitted via the online grant system, available here: https://grants.raeng.org.uk/

· All applicants must first register with the system and provide some basic login details to create a profile.

· The application should be submitted by the lead applicant who must be associated with the lead organisation, who are able to agree to the Terms and conditions of the award.

· All correspondence will be sent to the lead applicant.

· If successful, the lead applicant will be responsible for submitting reports. Changes to lead applicants will need to be approved by the Academy, and documentation updated to reflect any changes, so please consider who is best placed to apply as lead 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.

The application form has seven sections and should take approximately two hours and 30 minutes to complete, assuming you have answered the questions offline and merely need to enter the information, rather than compose it.

A summary of the guidance notes is embedded within the system, however, please read the guidance given below for further details on questions asked in the application form.

· If you have any questions concerning the application or the online grant system, please contact the public engagement team

6

Completing the application form

After logging in to the online grant system and selecting the *Ingenious* scheme, applicants are asked to complete a **Diversity Monitoring Form** to help the Academy monitor and assess its equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

You should then be presented with the 'Instructions' screen. Here you will see some general instructions on how to use the system as well as the list of the seven sections of the application form:

1. Marketing

2. Applicant and organisation details

3. Project details

4. Goals and objectives

5. Project Plan

6. Support requested

7. Declaration

The application form has been divided into sections to provide a structure for your proposal. Where possible, applicants should avoid duplication of the same information in different sections.

At any stage in the application process, you can save your work and return to it at a later time. You can answer the questions in any order you like, so you may skip sections and return to them later. It is, therefore, worth viewing the application early on for an indication of what is required, and how the system works. We recommend saving regularly to avoid system timeouts.

A copy of the application form can be printed at any time by using the 'Print form' button.

Our grants management system does not have word count restrictions in place, however, we have suggested an upper limit for the word count for each question which we would encourage applicants to stay within wherever possible.

© This is Engineering

Marketing and project details

1. Marketing.

This section is optional, but any information provided will help the Academy to understand which of our marketing materials and methods are most successful, enabling us to improve our future communications activities.

2. Applicant and organisation details

- Please provide the name and contact details of the individuals and organisations who will be involved in this project
- Please confirm that the project and project team are based in the UK, the applicant is over 18 years of age, that the project engages public audiences, offers training and opportunities to engineers in public engagement, activities are free of charge and that the project has not previously been funded by Ingenious.
- Joint/partnership applications between engineers and organisations that specialise in communication/engagement with the public are welcomed.

3. Project details

Project title *(10 words)*
The essence of the project should be captured in the title and should be understandable to a non-specialist reader and as informative as possible.

Total grant amount sought
£3,000 to £30,000 inclusive of any applicable VAT.

Project dates
Project start date after 1 May 2026, project end date by 31 July 2027 (schools) or 31 August 2027 (families or community groups)

Funds will be awarded to successful projects in April 2026 and project research may begin from this time. Project development and delivery can begin from the 1 May 2026. Projects working with school groups must be completed, including evaluation, by 31 July 2027 whilst projects working alternatively or additionally with family or community groups, must be completed by 31 August 2027.

Project location(s)
Please list the counties your proposed activities will take place. If only delivering online activity please state 'online only'

Engineering field(s)/topic(s)
Please list the engineering field(s) or topic(s) (e.g. mechanical engineering or robotics) your proposed activities will cover.

Summary *(250 words)*
Please supply an executive summary of the project. The summary should be understandable to the non-specialist reader and will be used in media releases and media publications about your project if you are successful in your application. It should include an overview of:

- Project aims
- Target audiences
- Planned activities
- Anticipated outcomes
- What makes this project unique/differentiates it from other STEM programmes?

Application process

Please avoid repeating information that is included in other parts of the application.

4. Goals and objectives
Objectives *(250 words)*

Please list the project objectives, which should be in line with the aims of the scheme (see page 3):

Project objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-scaled).

Project activities *(750 words)*

Please provide information on the planned activities and how they demonstrate creativity and innovation. Please be explicit about the engineering content of the activities and provide detail for how they will be delivered and why this method was chosen with reference to accessibility and inclusivity for your target audience. Where relevant, please highlight any considerations regarding safety or safeguarding.

You may wish to refer to previous projects you have learnt from. If the exact plans have yet to be determined, please provide a detailed example of the type of activities that could take place.

The public audience *(500 words)*

Please provide details on the target public audiences, why you have chosen them and how they will be reached, particularly how the activities may reach audiences underrepresented in engineering. What is the intended impact on your target audience?

Top tips:

- Work in partnership with delivery partners (including schools) to develop projects at the concept stage.
- Work within the target community, finding spaces or venues that are accessible to and trusted by target audiences, and use local communication channels to promote activity.

- Projects proposing to work with schools should provide evidence as to why additional support for schools is needed and that there is not already adequate provision for STEM engagement in the area.

Previous related projects

Please state whether the project builds on a previous activity.

If yes, please detail how the project will build on previous activities. In particular, describe the new and novel aspects of the proposed project that will enhance the existing activities and describe the difference *Ingenious* funding will make.

Evaluation and dissemination *(300 words)*

Please summarise how you will evaluate the project, and how you will share and disseminate the learning gathered from this. You may find it helpful to consult the Academy's evaluation guidance.

Application process

The engineers *(500 words)*

Please provide details about how you will recruit your participating engineers, what contacts or networks will you use to ensure you recruit your target number of engineers. Tell us about the format and content of the training offered and the public engagement expertise of those delivering the training. Tell us about how engineers will be involved in the development and delivery of activities or events. What ongoing support or feedback will they receive and what is the intended impact on the engineers?

Top tips:
- Recruit diverse engineering role models (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, career pathway, engineering field) relevant for the audiences you wish to engage.
- Undergraduate students and apprentices can be used to supplement activities but engineers with working experience should be the priority for your project.

Project metrics

Please provide the following anticipated metrics for your project:

a) Number of activities, events and/or resources you aim to deliver. Please include type of activity, event or resource.
b) Target number and type of engineers participating in the project, for example five male and five female engineers, at least two who are in industry.
c) Target numbers and type of public audience you aim to target, for example gender, geographic location, age. Please note that the Academy requires funded projects to collect data about the socio-economic profile of the audiences they are trying to reach.

File uploads (optional)

You may upload letters of support from potential engineering companies or community groups/schools to demonstrate support for your project (maximum of 2 sides of A4)

5. Project plan

Project management *(250 words)*

Please provide details on how the project will be managed, including research, development and delivery.
Are there any identifiable risks to the project and are there any contingency plans in place?

You may upload a GANTT chart letters of support if available, to the file uploads section (maximum of 1 side of A4).

Top tips:
- Managing the different stakeholders involved in *Ingenious* projects takes considerable time, so it is important to either be realistic about what you can deliver within the timescale, or factor in project management costs and resources that realistically reflect the time needed.

Project timeline *(250 words)*

Please detail the core activities to be undertaken, and their associated start and completion dates. If preferred, you may also wish to upload this information as a Gantt Chart or equivalent (maximum 4 sides of A4)

Top tips:
- Plan sufficient time to recruit and train engineers and go wider than you may think you need, as not all initial leads for recruitment will result in the number of engineers required.
- Likewise plan sufficient time to recruit your audience. It can be surprisingly difficult to recruit an audience, particularly school groups.

Staff involvement

Please include details on the individuals responsible for the development, delivery and evaluation of the project. Please also state who will be the project leader and project manager.

Application process

6. Support requested

Costs table

Please provide a breakdown of the funding requested to research, develop, deliver and evaluate the project. Please also provide a brief description of what the funds will be used for.

Please note, these grants are not calculated on the basis of full economic costing (FEC).

a. Allowable costs include those directly related to the development and delivery of the proposed project.

b. A breakdown of the specific costs (including any applicable VAT) must be provided, including a description for each item. Costs can include salary, consultancy, materials, travel and subsistence, evaluation. We recommend covering travel expenses for any volunteering engineers where costs are not already being covered by their employers.

c. Please specify the named individuals for any salary and consultancy costs.

d. Funding should not be used to subsidise organisational staffing costs, but if salary costs are needed to proceed with the project, the appropriate proportion of costs can be claimed.

e. Costs cannot include overheads, retrospective work or overseas travel (this list is not exhaustive).

Total project costs should correspond with the total grant amount sought.

Justification of costs *(300 words)*

Please provide an explanation of your proposed costs. We require evidence that you have researched and validated any costs that you are seeking support for. If funding for salaries is requested please state if it is for a new post, backfill or other and provide the name and position being claimed for.

Additional funding

Please provide details of any additional funding or in-kind costs that will be provided by third parties in support of the project. Please indicate whether partnership funds have been applied for or are already secured.

5. Associated activity

Please state whether this *Ingenious* project forms part of a larger public engagement activity. If yes, please detail how the wider project is funded, and how the *Ingenious* project is dependent on this, in particular if partnership funding is not secured or is withdrawn.

Previous applications

Please state whether you or your organisation have previously applied for the *Ingenious* award scheme.

If yes, please give the following details for each application:

a) Project name and lead applicant name
b) Year of application
c) Whether you were successful or not.

7. Declaration

This section seeks confirmation that the applicant has provided accurate information and will update the Academy of any material changes that may affect the grant.
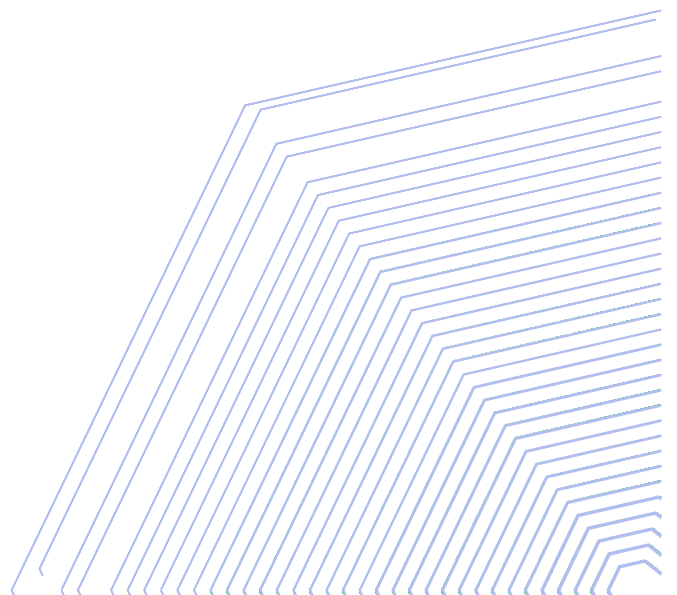
Policies

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.
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.

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.
This grant programme has been assessed and is not intended to be a subsidy scheme in relation to the Subsidy Control Act 2022. As such, the intended use of these funds by the Recipient is not to provide the recipient or any other enterprise with any form of economic advantage, nor is it intended for any purpose that could be considered capable of having an effect on competition and investment within the UK or trade and investment between the UK and another country or territory.
If, for any reason, you have concerns that your project may be at risk of being a subsidy because it is providing an economic advantage to an enterprise (i.e. a business offering goods or services on a market) or is capable of having an effect on competition or investment this must be declared to the Academy. Should you then be successful additional grant conditions may be applied at point of a grant offer to manage that risk.

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.

Assessment process

- Applications are initially sifted by the public engagement team to ensure applications are eligible for the scheme.

- Applicants whose applications that do not pass the eligibility check will be notified, and feedback provided.

- Applications are then reviewed by 2 external public engagement specialists who may make comments or ask questions about different aspects of the application.

- Comments from external reviewers are anonymised and passed back to the applicant.

- Applications scoring below average will not be put forward to the panel for review, but will be provided feedback and invited to reapply the following year.

- Applications that score average and above, will be invited to amend their application based on the reviewer feedback provided, before their application is passed to the panel for review.

- The reviewer comments are intended to help applicants to improve their project proposals so that we can fund the best public engagement projects. Please note that *Ingenious* is a very competitive scheme and positive comments do not guarantee funding.

- Amended applications are then reviewed by 2 members of the *Ingenious* panel ahead of the panel meeting where funding decisions are made.

- In cases where there is high discrepancy of opinion amongst the reviewers or panellists, comments from a third reviewer may be sought.

Key dates

Process stage	Timeline
Application submitted	24 September 2025
Eligibility checks	September 2025
External review	October 2025
Applicants invited to respond	November 2025
Funding panel review	January/February 2026
Applicants informed	February 2026
Kick off workshops	April 2026
Funding announced	May 2026
Project commences	From May 2026

Assessment Criteria

During the review and assessment of the application, the panel will reflect and comment on the project plan and how the proposal meets the *Ingenious* aims.

Aim: Support imaginative and creative public engagement, raising awareness of the diversity, nature and impact of engineering

- The novelty/creativity/uniqueness of the project
- Engineering content
- Depth of engagement (i.e. one off event versus sustained engagement)

Aim: Broaden perceptions of engineering, targeting public audiences currently underrepresented in engineering

- Suitability and appeal of activities and format for target audience
- Justification for why they have chosen their target audience
- Consideration of accessibility and inclusivity
- Evaluation plans

Aim: Build capacity for engineering public engagement by offering engineers training and opportunities in public engagement

- The strategy for recruitment of engineers
- Relevance and the depth of training offered to engineers
- Opportunities to put newly acquired skills into practice
- Potential to build capacity for public engagement (e.g. number of engineers new to public engagement vs those already actively involved)

Project planning

- Clarity of objectives/methodology and expected outcomes
- Staff expertise and experience
- Budget feasibility
- Value added by any partnerships or collaborations
- If relevant, contingency plans if proposed partnership funding is not secured

Priorities:

Applications will be scored and awarded first and foremost on quality and merit. However, the Panel also look to fund a balanced portfolio of projects with the aim of building UK capacity, and may prioritise projects taking into consideration:

- Geographical location
- Target audience
- New applicants
- Smaller community organisations embarking on public engagement projects
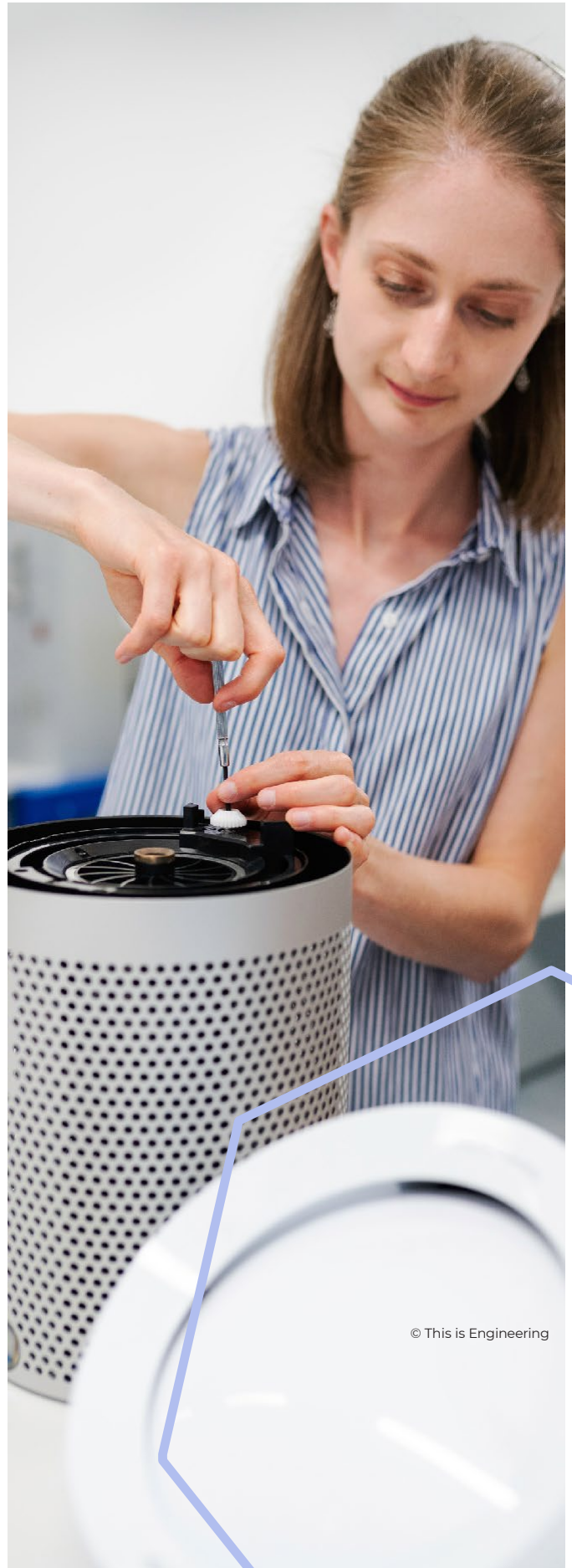

© This is Engineering

Further information

If you are successful, your funding will be awarded under the Basic Terms and Conditions found on the [Academy's website](#).

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.

Monitoring

- Successful applicants will be required to attend a kick-off workshop in April 2026. Attendees can choose to attend an in-person training day or attend online sessions remotely.

- Following the workshop, awardees must complete a planning template outlining the main objectives they plan to achieve and how these will be evaluated. Awardees will be supported by an external evaluation consultant to develop these plans.

- Awardees are encouraged to stay in regular contact with the Public Engagement team and update them on project progress on an informal basis.

- Each project can expect to be visited by a member of the Public Engagement team at least once.

- The Programme Manager must be informed of any changes to activities, timings or allocation of funds changes over the course of the project.

- Awardees are required to complete an interim and final project report with expenditure statements.

- An external evaluation consultant will carry out a long-term tracking study of the engineers who have taken part in projects, approximately 18 months after the project end. We expect the project lead to help facilitate this.

- Final reports serve as a measure of the success of the scheme and may be sent to the panel for review.

© This is Engineering

Further information

Contact
If you have any questions about your eligibility, the programme, or problems with your application, please contact the public engagement team.

engagement@raeng.org.uk

FAQs
Frequently Asked Questions can be found on our website.

© This is Engineering

About us

The Royal Academy of Engineering creates and leads a community of outstanding experts and innovators to engineer better lives.

As a charity and a Fellowship, we deliver public benefit from excellence in engineering and technology and convene leading businesspeople, entrepreneurs, innovators and academics across engineering and technology.

As a National Academy, we provide leadership for engineering and technology, and independent, expert advice to policymakers in the UK and beyond.

Our three goals for the next five years

Sustainable and Innovative Economy
Where sustainability drivers, innovative industries and resilient infrastructures are aligned to drive growth and productivity that will support better lives for all.

Technology Improving Lives
Where technology in all its forms is used to meet the most important human needs, avoid harm, support fairer societies and break down barriers to opportunity.

Engineering Community Fit for the Future
Where our community reflects society in its diversity, commits to creating inclusive cultures to help drive engineering excellence, and has the skills to meet future needs safely, securely and ethically, and to keep pace with innovation.