

# APEX Awards Scheme Notes

The following scheme notes set out the eligibility and application process for the APEX Awards. Please read through the entire document before proceeding with an application.

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# 1 Overview

## 1.1 Background

In partnership with the British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the Royal Society ('the Academies') and supported generously by the Leverhulme Trust, the APEX Awards (Academies Partnership in Supporting Excellence in Cross-disciplinary research) offer established independent researchers, with a strong track record in their respective area and proven ability to lead collaborative work, an exciting opportunity to pursue genuine interdisciplinary and blue skies, curiosity-driven research to benefit wider society. Successful applicants will be expected to work in collaboration with relevant researchers from other disciplines.

## 1.2 Aims of the Scheme

The objectives of this scheme are to:

- promote collaboration across disciplines, with a particular emphasis on the boundary between science, engineering, and the social sciences and humanities
- support outstanding interdisciplinary research which is unlikely to be supported through conventional funding programmes
- support researchers with an outstanding track record in developing their research in a new direction through collaboration with partners from other disciplines
- enable outstanding researchers to focus on advancing their innovative research through seed funding

For the purposes of this scheme interdisciplinary research is defined as:

"Interdisciplinary research (IDR) is a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice. Successful IDR plans and supports research practices and outputs greater than the sum of their constituent disciplinary parts."

## 1.3 Subjects Covered

The scheme aims to promote collaborations that push beyond traditional boundaries and integrate knowledge and approaches from different subject fields covered by the remit of more than one of the Academies.

**The British Academy Remit** – In any discipline within the social sciences and humanities - in some cases, creative and professional practice may play a significant role in shaping the methods and/or outcomes of research. In all proposals, whether practice-led or not, a clear scholarly rationale is required for the choice of research methods, processes, and outputs. For a full list, please see the British Academy's subject [sections page](#).

**The Royal Academy of Engineering Remit** – Applications are welcome from any engineering discipline. Engineering is defined in its broadest sense, encompassing a wide range of diverse fields,

including computer science and materials. Broad engineering categories can be found under the list of Panels on the [Royal Academy of Engineering's Fellowship page](#).

**The Royal Society Remit** - Natural sciences (including agriculture, mathematics, technology, computer science, materials, medical, environmental and engineering sciences, but excluding clinical medicine). For a full list, please see [our guidance page](#). Submissions from clinically qualified scientists may be considered. The Society does not support clinical or interventional research on humans at the individual or group level.

**For applications combining the remits of the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering, applicants must demonstrate a clear integration between science and engineering and should advance both fields. Applications which are within the remit of just one Academy will not be permitted. Applications that cover closely aligned disciplines, that meet more than one of the Academies remits, will require a strong justification of the interdisciplinary nature of the research**

If there is any doubt about the eligibility of a project, contact the Grants team via [apex@royalsociety.org](mailto:apex@royalsociety.org)

#### 1.4 **Duration and start of Award**

Approximate number of Awards offered: 6

Awards are expected to commence between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2027 and can be held for up to 24 months.

## 2 Timetable

Opening date	Tuesday, 23 June 2026
Closing Date	Tuesday, 08 September 2026, 15:00(UK Time)
Expected results	April 2027

## 3 Finance

### 3.1 **Total Funding Available**

Applicants can apply for up to £200,000. This represents the maximum award value which can be used to cover **staff costs** for the Lead applicant and the Co-applicant(s), **research costs** and **public engagement costs**. Please carefully review the detailed guidance below for eligibility and cost requirements.

#### **Staff costs must cover:**

- **Teaching replacement for the Lead applicant** – Cost of providing a teaching replacement for the Lead applicant. By relieving the Lead applicant from teaching/admin duties, these costs are a necessary requirement to ensure the development and delivery of the research project. Teaching/administrative replacements must represent at least 0.2FTE of the Lead applicant's time. Salary grade for the teaching replacement must be fully justified (Please only include

basic salary and on costs, as this scheme does not provide costs on a full economic costing basis).

In addition, **staff costs can** also cover:

- **Teaching replacement for the Co-applicant(s).**
- **Research assistance** – Contribution to salary costs for postdoctoral researcher/PDRA, technicians and other research staff, such as data scientists and research software engineers, who are closely involved in the delivery of the proposed research. Applications that request research assistance costs are still expected to have a substantial commitment of the Lead applicant's time towards the proposed research.
- **Studentships** – Support for undergraduate/master's students or contribution to an existing departmental PhD studentship (at home/UK fees rate only) only, to enable a student to take part in the delivery of the proposed research. Please note that funds will not be granted without a clarification of the feasibility of the project.

If costs are requested for a PhD student, we will require the applicant and the Head of Department to confirm:

- a) The host organisation will cover the remaining costs associated with the studentship to allow for the studentship to be completed
- b) The suitability of the project that will be carried out by the student and benefits to the career development of the student
- c) In the event the applicant and/or Co-applicant leaves the host organisation, the PhD student will be permitted to decide whether to remain at the host organisation or move with the supervisor (with advice from the supervisor and other academic staff as appropriate).
- d) The host organisation will provide a deputy supervisor who will become lead supervisor in the event the applicant and/or Co-applicant leaves the host organisation

**Research costs must** represent no more than 25% of the total award value excluding public engagement costs. Research costs can cover consumables, equipment, and collaborative travel.

**Public engagement costs:** applicants can request up to £10,000 to support public engagement activities relating to their APEX proposal. **Please note** that public engagement costs should not be included in the total award value when calculating the 25% limit for research costs.

**Ineligible costs:**

Please note that funds cannot be used for the following:

- to supplement costs for an existing project funded through another grant
- workshop costs in relation to public engagement activities
- access charges
- training costs
- overhead costs
- applicant or Co-applicant direct salary costs
- collaborators

## 4 Eligibility

### 4.1 Applicant Eligibility

#### **The Lead applicant must**

- be an exceptional, independent researcher with a strong track record and proven ability to lead collaborative work
- hold a permanent or fixed-term position covering the duration of the award
- have both teaching and admin duties from which they can be relieved from. Applicants that do not have teaching and administrative duties are not eligible to apply
- be based in a UK University or a UK not-for-profit research organisation

Lead applicants may include up to two Co-applicants. When choosing the Co-applicant(s), the Lead applicant must ensure that the proposed collaboration demonstrates genuine integration across disciplines, such as science, engineering and the social sciences and humanities — combining methods, concepts, or perspectives from different Academy remits.

#### **The Co-applicant must**

- be an exceptional, independent researcher with complementary expertise to the Lead applicant and covering a different Academy remit. For projects with two Co-applicants, the subject area of **at least one Co-applicant** must fall under a different Academy remit from that of the Lead applicant. This requirement ensures that the proposed research maintains its interdisciplinary and cross Academy nature
- hold a permanent or fixed-term position covering the duration of the award
- be based in a UK University or a UK not-for-profit research organisation

Lead and Co-applicants can only submit one application per round. Previous award holders may re-apply but any additional application should be a new project and not a follow on from the previous award. Any new projects should meet the aims of the scheme outlined above.

The Academies recognise that diversity is essential for delivering excellence across science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the social sciences and humanities. The Academies want to encourage applications from the widest range of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences to maximise innovation and creativity in STEM, social sciences and humanities for the benefit of humanity.

The Society appreciates that there are diverse research career paths and understands the challenges of managing a research career alongside other personal commitments. When reviewing applicants' eligibility and research experience, the Society will consider time spent outside the research environment (e.g. time away due to personal reasons such as maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoptive leave or other caring responsibilities; periods of no work due to ill-health or the COVID-19 pandemic or working in a non-research environment/role, such as industry).

The Society regularly reviews and revises processes to embed EDI principles in all aspects of the grant making process and ensure all talented applicants have an equitable chance to succeed as per assessment criteria. This includes ensuring all Committee members are briefed on unconscious bias in decision making as part of our assessment process.

See below for details of the adjustments we can provide for disabled applicants:

**Support for disabled applicants:** The Society welcomes applications from disabled researchers and provide support and adjustments to ensure that they can participate fully in the selection process. If you

require support or an adjustment when accessing the application form, attending interview, or for any other part of the application process, please contact the Grants team at [apex@royalsociety.org](mailto:apex@royalsociety.org) or call +44 20 7451 2666. All requests for adjustments are made in confidentiality. Any request for an adjustment will not normally be shared with Committee members unless it becomes relevant to the selection process itself. If we need to share your request with anyone (for example if Committee members are required to implement any adjustments during interviews), we will ask for your permission first.

Adjustments can include but are not limited to:

- Extension of the deadline
- Additional support to complete the application form
- Receiving the application form in a different format, such as on a Word document
- Support during interviews as required, including technical support for candidates requiring accessibility software or services
- Additional costs that candidates may incur on account of their particular disability to attend an interview

The Grants team will be pleased to answer questions about eligibility and/or points covered in this section.

#### **4.2 Host Organisation Eligibility**

Applicants must be based in either a UK University or a UK not-for-profit research organisation for the duration of the project.

All applications must be supported by the Lead applicant's and (each) Co-applicant's Head of Department, confirming that the researcher will have access to the institution's facilities during the period of the award and can be released/partially released from teaching duties.

## **5 Assessment Criteria and Review Process**

### **5.1 Assessment Criteria**

The Committee will select applications on the basis of research excellence, extent of the collaborative, interdisciplinary research and the novelty of the proposed research. The primary considerations in the **assessment process** will be:

- The applicant's strong scientific and/or engineering and/or social sciences and/or humanities track record, and proven track record in collaborative research
- The strength of the interdisciplinary research collaboration and team
- The quality, novelty, and potential of the proposed interdisciplinary research project
- The potential of the proposed project to enable the applicant to develop a new direction for their research and establish new tools, methodologies or applications derived by the synergy of diverse fields
- The feasibility of the proposal and whether the applicant recognises the inherent risk of failure associated with this type of research and their strategy for minimising these risks

## 5.2 Review Process

Applications will be peer-reviewed and assessed by a cross-disciplinary [Committee](#) with broad ranging expertise, drawn from the Fellowship of all three Academies. Additional experts may be co-opted on an *ad-hoc* basis to supplement the subject expertise of the APEX award Committee where required. The justification for public engagement costs will be assessed independently from the main APEX proposal by public engagement experts.

Please find a schematic for the Review Process below:

1	<b>APEX 2027 round open to applications</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> June – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2026, 15:00pm UK time</b>
	During this period, the application form should be completed and submitted on Flexi-Grant. Contributions by the Co-applicant(s), Head of Department, Nominated Referee and Research Office must also be completed before the closing of the round, as they are required for the successful submission of the application. Any queries regarding the scheme notes, application form, Flexi-Grant, etc, should be sent to the APEX team ( <a href="mailto:apex@royalsociety.org">apex@royalsociety.org</a> ) while the round is open.	
2	<b>Eligibility checks</b>	<b>September 2026</b>
	Applications are checked for eligibility.	
3	<b>Assessment: Committee Review 1 (Triage stage)</b>	<b>September - October 2026</b>
	<p>Eligible applications are assessed by three Committee members with the most relevant expertise. Members assess whether the proposals demonstrate genuine interdisciplinary research and align with the objectives of the scheme.</p> <p>At this stage, members review the application against the assessment criteria with a particular focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Strength of interdisciplinarity</b> The extent to which the research promotes collaboration across disciplines, with a particular emphasis on the boundary between science, engineering, and the social sciences and humanities</li> <li><b>2. Research quality and potential</b> The overall quality, novelty and ambition of the proposed interdisciplinary research project and whether the application should be progressed to the next stage</li> </ol> <p>Following this assessment, a longlist is drawn up for and submitted to the Chair and Deputy Chair for consideration.</p>	
4	<b>Longlisting</b>	<b>October 2026</b>
	<p>The Chair and Deputy Chair review the longlist and confirm the list of applications for independent peer review.</p> <p>Applicants will be notified by <b>November 2026</b>. Feedback will be provided upon request.</p>	
5	<b>Assessment: Independent Peer Review</b>	<b>November - December 2026</b>
	Applications are reviewed by at least two Independent Peer Reviewers.	
6	<b>Assessment: Committee Review 2</b>	<b>December 2026 – January 2027</b>

	Committee members assess and score applications in light of the Independent Peer Review reports.	
7	<b>Shortlisting</b>	<b>February 2027</b>
	A shortlist is prepared and reviewed by the Chair and Deputy Chair review, who confirm the final list of applications to be discussed at the Committee meeting.  Applicants will be notified in <b>early March 2027</b> . Feedback can be provided upon request and will be shared at the end of the round.	
8	<b>Assessment: Public Engagement</b>	<b>February 2027</b>
	In parallel, the justifications for public engagement costs included in shortlisted applications will be reviewed by public engagement experts.	
9	<b>Assessment: Committee Meeting</b>	<b>March 2027</b>
	In this assessment stage, the Committee will discuss each application to finalise the following outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Successful</li> <li>2. Reserve (if applicable)</li> <li>3. Unsuccessful</li> </ol>	
9	<b>Notification outcome:</b> Applicants will be notified in <b>early April 2027</b>  Feedback can be provided upon request.	
10	<b>Offer letters sent to successful applicants</b>	<b>April 2027</b>

**Other Important information to note about the process:**

- The Royal Society will be administering the application process and the awards on behalf of the three Academies. Therefore, applications will be made using the Royal Society's [Flexi-Grant®](#) system. Applicants should be aware that this application form will be considered by the cross-disciplinary selection Committee and that independent reviews will be sought. The application will always be treated confidentially.
- Please read these scheme guidance notes to help you complete your application. If your research generates data of significant value to the research community, we ask you to provide additional information on your data management and sharing plan.

**The subject tags you select on your application play a vital role in matching your application with appropriate reviewers, so it is extremely important to select only the most relevant subject tags on your application.**

Please be assured that the Royal Society specifically requests anyone involved in reviewing applications to consider them in confidence. More information on the Review Process can be found in Appendix 1.

All applicants will be notified of outcomes via email.

## 6 References and Participants

To complete and submit the application form, the Lead applicant is required to provide supporting statements or references from four individuals. The following individuals must be included:

- Head of Department
- Co-applicant(s) Head of Department
- Nominated Reference 1

- Nominated Reference 2

The primary consideration for a referee is that they are able to comment independently and authoritatively on your application (i.e. someone in your field, who is as independent a researcher as possible from the applicant/Co-applicant). You do not need to know them personally, but you should make sure they are able to provide a reference before adding them to your application.

At least one nominated referee must be based in the UK.

Nominated referees **must not** be:

- from the same institution as the Lead applicant or Co-applicant
- a member on the assessment Committee for this scheme; or
- a member of the Royal Society's Council.

**If references are submitted by one of the above, it will make your application ineligible.**

References must be submitted in English. Please make sure your application reference is included in all correspondence. If a reference is not submitted in English, it will not be accepted and may render the application ineligible. No two references can be from the same person. If two references from the same person are submitted, it may make the application ineligible.

## **6.1 How to invite referees and participants to contribute to an application**

All references and supporting statements must be submitted through Flexi-Grant. To submit references please follow the steps below.

Step 1 | Ensure all participants have a Flexi-Grant account

- All referees and other participants must set up a Flexi-Grant account in order to contribute to an application.
- If a participant already has a Flexi-Grant account they should use that, if not then a new account should be set up.

Step 2 | Invite participants to contribute to an application

- Applicants should invite referees and other individuals to submit their supporting statements through the 'participants' tab.
- The participants tab can be found on the application form summary page and contains details of each participant required to contribute to the application.
- Applicants should select 'invite' and enter the Flexi-Grant registered e-mail address of the person they wish to invite to provide the relevant reference or statement and send the invitation.

Step 3 | Monitor participants' responses

- The recipient will need to accept your invitation before they can participate in the application.
- You can monitor the progress of your participants' activity through this section of the application form and issue reminders as required.
- Once the participant has accepted your invitation, their status will be displayed as 'active'.
- Once participants have completed all their sections of the application form, they should select '**Save & Submit**' on the application form page or select '**Submit your contribution**' on the summary page.

- Upon completion of their section of the application form their status will be displayed as 'complete'.

**Please note that you will not be able to submit your application form until the status of all participants shows 'complete'.**

Please note that once an applicant submits an application on Flexi-Grant®, it is then directed to the designated Approver for the employing organisation at which the applicant has applied to host an award (see Application Approvals in the 'Application Guidance Notes' Section). It is recommended that referring and supporting participants fulfil their requirements **at least 5 working days** before the submission deadline (Tuesday, 09 September 2025) to ensure there is sufficient time for organisational approval. The **UK Host** Organisation approver must approve the completed application by the submission deadline.

**It is the applicant's responsibility to liaise with nominated referees, the UK Host Organisation's Approver and the Head(s) of Department to ensure that the required tasks are completed by the deadline. Please contact the Grants team before the deadline if there is any issue. Alternatively, the UK Host Organisation's Approver, the Head(s) of Department and the nominated referees can contact us directly. The Royal Society will not be held responsible for emails that are not received due to address errors or spam filters, and no provision is made for non-receipt of emails sent by the Royal Society.**

#### **Re-opening the Application form to Participants**

On the occasion that an invited participant accidentally submits their section of the application form prematurely, the Lead applicant has the ability to re-open the application form for the participant. To do this, the Lead applicant should return to the Participant tab on the application form summary page. You will find a 're-open' button alongside the name of any participant who has completed their section of the form. Once you click this button, the form is reactivated and available for participants to amend.

#### **Research Support Role**

The Research Support role displayed under the participants tab is an optional role, which allows you to invite an individual from the relevant UK Host Organisation research support team to review and amend the application prior to submission. The primary purpose is to ensure that the requested finances have been recorded correctly for this specific grant programme. Applications cannot be submitted until all participant sections are marked as complete, so it is important that applicants ensure that their organisation's research support team complete this section.

As the Research Support Role is optional, applicants can revoke this participant request in order to submit their application if the section has not been completed. Please navigate to the participants tab and revoke the request for Research Support Role.

Additional system guidance can be found in the 'Systems Guidance Notes' Section.

## **7 Contact information**

Enquires about this scheme can be made using the contact details below. Before contacting us, please

check whether your question is answered by these scheme notes. If not, please email the Grants team via [apex@royalsociety.org](mailto:apex@royalsociety.org) or call +44 20 7451 2666 (lines open Mon-Thur, 10am to 4pm).

**Please quote your application reference number in all correspondence with the Grants team.**

## 8 Use of Data

All applicant data, including personal data, is governed by the [Royal Society's Privacy Policy](#). This Policy sets out how and why the Royal Society uses your personal data, and how we protect your privacy when doing so. Please refer to the section entitled "Grant Applicants and Holders" for details of how the Privacy Policy determines the use of applicant data.

In addition to the usage set out in the Royal Society's privacy policy, please note that information regarding your application for APEX Awards may be shared with the Leverhulme Trust, The British Academy and the Royal Academy of Engineering for data monitoring and scheme evaluation purposes. You may also be contacted by selected third parties such as independent evaluators, consultancy groups, and career development organisations. If successful, the Royal Society will contact you regarding the administration of your award throughout the course of your funding and after its completion. You may also be contacted by the Royal Society, the Leverhulme Trust, the British Academy and the Royal Academy of Engineering or an agent acting on their behalf, for reporting and evaluation purposes throughout the course of your funding and after its completion.

## 9 Use of generative AI

Generative AI tools offer potential benefits for research but also challenges and risks. The Royal Society has joined with other funders to set our expectations around the use of generative AI tools in funding applications. [Funders joint statement: use of generative AI tools in funding applications and assessment](#).

When developing funding proposals, researchers must ensure generative AI tools are used responsibly and in accordance with relevant legal and ethical standards where these exist or as they develop. Funding proposals for Royal Society grants should adhere to our existing commitments to policies on [Research Integrity and Trusted Research](#). Applicants are responsible for ensuring the originality, validity, reliability and integrity of any outputs created or modified by generative AI tools. Where generative AI tools are used in funding proposals their use should be acknowledged in the application by naming the AI source and specifying how the content was generated (for example by listing the prompt used).

## 10 System Guidance Notes

Please read these guidance notes carefully as you complete the application form.

### 10.1 **Using Flexi-Grant®**

Applications can only be submitted online using the Royal Society's Grants management system (Flexi-Grant®) via <https://grants.royalsociety.org>. Further information about the Grants management system can be found via <https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/flexi-grant/>. If you have not previously used Flexi-Grant®, please follow the registration process from the Flexi-Grant® homepage. ***Paper-based applications will not be accepted.***

Before completing the online form, all applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements and ensure all necessary information is presented in the application. These requirements are strictly adhered to and applications without all the necessary information, or evidence to show the assessment criteria are met, will be rejected.

**All applications must be approved by the UK Host Organisation and the applicant's departmental support must be completed before you can submit via Flexi-Grant®. Late applications will not be accepted.**

For instructions on inviting participants to contribute to an application (such as referees or departmental support), please see the 'References and participants' section.

## **10.2 ORCID Identifier**

All applicants should submit an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) identifier if they have one before their application is submitted. ORCID maintains a registry of unique researcher identifiers and a transparent method of linking research funding, research publications, research data and any other research outputs to these unique identifiers. This is a mandatory requirement at the application submission stage only. You can register for an ORCID identifier via <https://orcid.org/register>.

## **10.3 Completing the application form**

The application can be completed by using the navigation tabs on the application summary page, with each page categorised as follows:

- Summary**
- Understanding our Promotion**
- Eligibility Criteria**
- Contact Details**
- Applicant Career Summary**
- Co-applicant(s) Career Summary**
- Research Proposal**
- Use of Animals in Research**
- Use of Human Participants, Patients and Tissue**
- Financial Details**
- Applicant Declaration**
- Head of Department Support**
- Co-applicant's Head of Department Support**
- Nominated Reference Support**

A full list of question fields to be completed as part of the application can be found in the Question Guidance in the 'Application Guidance Notes' Section.

# 11 Application Guidance Notes

## 11.1 Application Approvals

**It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that approval of the application by the UK Host Organisation is completed before the closing date.**

The person responsible for approving your application will be the delegated authority at the UK Host Organisation where you are applying to hold your award. This may be someone within the research office, Faculty administration, Vice-Chancellor, or other administrative or management role.

The approver must be someone with the authority to confirm that the potential award can be hosted within their organisation, confirm that there is the capacity to deliver the proposed research and assure the proposed budget is appropriate and eligible for the scheme.

**You will only be able to submit your application for approval by the UK Host Organisation's Approver once all sections of the application form have been marked as complete and all participants have marked their work as complete AND have submitted their section.** The Lead applicant must check the status of the Lead applicant, Co-applicant and Head of Department sections under the 'Participants' tab on the summary page of the application form. **Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.**

## 11.2 Question Guidance

**Please read the following guidance notes carefully as you complete the form. In the table below, each box represents a page of the application form; the left-hand column contains the questions within each of these pages as set out in the form; the right-hand column contains useful guidance on its completion.**

**Note that questions with \* are mandatory fields.**

Summary	
Summary page	<p>The summary page of the application form provides instructions for submission of your application for approval from the UK Host Organisation. In addition, you are provided with an overview for each section of your application form, including the approximate length of time it will take to complete each section.</p> <p>The summary page also allows applicants to manage and invite participants (e.g. Head of Department and Nominated Referees) who are required to contribute to the application form. Instructions for inviting participants can be found under the 'participants' tab on the application summary page.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> you will only be able to submit your application for approval by the Host Organisation once all sections of the form have been completed.</p>

<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	
Eligibility Criteria *	<p>Please provide confirmation that you meet the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Details of the eligibility criteria can be found in the 'Eligibility' Section of these Scheme Notes.</p>

<b>Contact Details</b>	
Title, Names, address, organisation and country *	<p>Review and complete your <b>personal details</b> accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application. Errors will not be corrected after submission.</p> <p>Under this section, you should edit the <b>contact type of</b> the participants who will partake in your application form. The system default contact type is set as 'collaborator'. To amend the contact type of your Head of Department, click 'edit', and under the contact type field, select the 'Head of Department'.</p> <p><b>Organisation:</b> this table will automatically display details of the intended Host Organisation (marked by a tick) which you selected previously and your current organisation, if different from the organisation where the award will be held and administered.</p>
Email address *	<p>This field defaults to the account in which the application has commenced and is where all correspondence pertaining to the application throughout the application process will be sent. The applicant must therefore commence the application using the login email address used to register a user account on Flexi-Grant®.</p>

<b>Applicant [and Co-applicant] Career Summary</b>	
Full name *	Please enter your full name, including title. <b>[Co-applicant only]</b>
Title of Current Position *	Please state the title of your current position.
Current Employer *	Please enter the official organisation name of your current employer (e.g. University of Bath).
Current Department *	Please enter details of your current department (e.g. Department of Astrophysics).
Country/Territory *	Please select the country/territory where your current employer (or last employer if currently unemployed or on leave) is based.
Current Position Start Date *	Please enter the date when your current position started.
Current Position End Date *	Please enter the date when your current position is expected to finish. If you are on an open-ended contract, please enter 31 December 2050.
Full-Time Equivalent*	Please state the full-time equivalent of your current contract.
Field of Specialisation *	<p>Enter details of your field(s) of specialisation. (Maximum 20 words)</p> <p>For applications involving two Co-applicants, the expertise of at least one Co-applicant must fall within a different Academy remit from the Lead applicant.</p>

	<p>The expertise of the Co-applicant(s) must be essential for the design and delivery of the research project.</p> <p>The expertise of the Co-applicant(s) must be complimentary to, and not overlap with, the expertise of the Lead applicant.</p>
Summary of Your Current Research *	Provide an outline summary of your current research. Please also include a brief comment on the strength of your organisation. (Maximum 200 words)
PhD Award Date *	Please enter the date that you were awarded your PhD. If you have not received your PhD, please enter your expected completion date.
PhD Institution *	State the name of the institution where you were awarded or are completing your PhD.
PhD Country/Territory *	State the country/territory in which you were awarded or will be awarded your PhD. (Lead applicant only)
Personal Statement *	<p>Please provide a personal statement about your research career to date including achievements and any research related contributions as well as any additional activities you have undertaken to demonstrate your contribution to the wider research environment (e.g. conferences, generation of new ideas, tools and methodologies workshops etc).</p> <p>Please use your personal statement to outline your career and research aspirations in the long term.</p> <p>Please ensure that the information about your achievements is included to make your research more accessible to non-specialist audiences.</p> <p><b>For the Co-applicant's personal statement:</b> clear information should be provided about your role and input into the proposed project.</p> <p><b>Plain text only 500 words.</b></p>
Applicant Career History *	<p>Please provide a full list of your appointments since your PhD in reverse chronological order stating if part-time (and percentage part-time) when necessary.</p> <p>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 for your academic merit as possible.</p> <p>Please specify for each appointment if the position is considered independent.</p> <p>Please provide details of any periods of part-time working, career breaks, extended sick leave or maternity/paternity/adoptive leave.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> You can retrieve your career history information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.</p>
Applicant Qualifications *	<p>Please list all your qualifications in reverse chronological order.</p> <p>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.</p>

	<p><b>Note:</b> You can retrieve your qualification information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.</p>
List your Key and/or Relevant Publications *	<p>Please provide details of authors, titles and references of up to 20 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Most significant publications - Please identify with asterisks (*) up to five publications which you consider to be most significant.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p><b>Do not</b> include publications or articles that are in draft, only submitted for publication or that have not been peer reviewed. The selection Committee have specifically requested that these should not be included.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> You can retrieve your publications to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.</p>
Applicant Research Funding *	<p>Please list your current and previous research funding in reverse chronological order.</p> <p>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 for your academic merit as possible and as appropriate for the funding for which you are applying.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> You can retrieve your information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.</p>

Research Proposal	
Project Title*	Please give the full title of your proposed project.

Host Department*	Please provide the name of the proposed department at your Host Organisation where you will hold the award. Please enter the official name (e.g. School of Chemistry rather than Chemistry)
Start Date*	This must be between 01/10/2027 – 31/12/2027.
End Date*	Please complete the date in DD/MM/YYYY format. Note the maximum time permitted is 24 months.
Keywords*	Provide 5-10 keywords which could be used to identify your research. This will aid with identifying the most appropriate peer reviewers.
Subject Area*	Please select the Academies your proposed research falls within and the subjects that most closely reflect your areas of research.  This will enable us to allocate the application to the most appropriate assessment panel. <b>Please select between 1 to 4 tick box options, with 4 as the maximum.</b>  <b>The subject tags you select on your application play a vital role in matching your application with appropriate reviewers, so it is extremely important to select only the most relevant subject tags on your application.</b>
Rationale & Motivation*	Please state your research question and provide a brief statement explaining why the proposed interdisciplinary research question or hypothesis is significant and novel; and how your proposed research will address this and be potentially transformative.  If your application covers closely aligned disciplines, that meet more than one of the Academies' remits, please include a strong justification of the interdisciplinary nature of the research and why you have chosen to apply to the APEX scheme.  Plain text only. Maximum of <b>250 words</b>
Abstract*	Please provide a technical summary of your proposal. This should be a summary of the proposed research, briefly outlining the background and summarising the aims of your project. Plain text only. Maximum of <b>400 words</b>
Lay Summary*	Please provide a lay summary of your proposed research project including a description of the experimental methods and techniques you will be using. The lay summary should be concise, free of jargon and understandable by a lay person. You should explain why you have chosen to work in this subject area, why this project is suitable for the objectives of this scheme and what it is about your proposed research that you find particularly exciting, interesting or important. If relevant, please also explain the potential impact or wider benefits to society of your research and address any inherent risks in pursuing this project.  Please be aware the Committee is composed of a broad range of experts who will not all be specialists in your specific area and therefore the Committee members place particular importance on this part of the application. Please bear this in mind when writing your summary for a non-specialist audience.  The lay summary should be different from any technical abstract provided as part of the research proposal. Acronyms should be defined when they are first introduced.

	Plain text only. Maximum of 250 words
Research Proposal*	<p>Please describe:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The nature of your proposed research including aims</li> <li>2. How your proposal meets the objectives of the scheme. Please indicate the milestones/timescales for the various components</li> <li>3. A clear description of the research methodologies you will be using for each, different subject area covered</li> <li>4. Why your proposal is interdisciplinary. Please outline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interdisciplinary approach used in the proposal justifying the reason why this is essential for the delivery of your project</li> <li>• How your proposal will combine concepts, theories and methods from various disciplines</li> <li>• Consider how the integration between disciplines could move the research beyond the capabilities of a single-discipline approach</li> <li>• Your strategies for fostering effective interdisciplinary teamwork. Please describe the roles of each team member, highlighting how they will weave disciplinary expertise into the project</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. How your proposal is innovative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impact– significance of key advances across the involved fields, potential impact on other research fields</li> <li>• Potential outputs and benefits for the disciplines covered – further/additional research funding from other sources, future developments beyond the lifetime of the project and provision of training and career progression of research staff. Any potential benefits to society such as commercially exploitable results</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Any inherent risk of failure associated with this type of research and your strategy for minimising these risks. Consider any potential challenges that might arise when combining methodologies from different disciplines and describe your approach to ensure validity and reliability of findings</li> </ol> <p>PDF <b>upload only</b>, maximum of 4 sides of A4, Portrait orientation, with margins of at least 2cm. Please do not use a text size smaller than Arial 10 and make sure the document is titled.</p> <p>You should generate a PDF of your application (by choosing 'print' on the form) to check that the application appears as you want it to.</p> <p>If you wish to include references or images in your proposal, then these should be included within the 4-page limit of the PDF upload.</p>
Need for teaching relief*	Please give details of your current duties and why relief is required. Give precise details of your current administrative and teaching duties (e.g. contact hours and preparation hours) in an average week. Please state how much of your time you currently dedicate to research and quantify how much additional time would be available for research should you be awarded.

	<p>Please note, this information will need to be confirmed by your Head of Department in their accompanying statement of support.</p> <p>If requesting teaching relief for the Co-applicant please provide information here, for example details of their current duties and why relief is required. A supporting statement from the Co-applicant's Head of Department is required if requesting teaching relief for the Co-applicant.</p>
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<b>Data Management and Data Sharing</b>	
<p>The Royal Society supports science as an open enterprise and is committed to ensuring that data outputs from research supported by the Society are made publicly available in a managed and responsible manner, with as few restrictions as possible. Data outputs should be deposited in an appropriate, recognised, publicly available repository, so that others can verify and build upon the data, which is of public interest. To fully realise the benefits of publicly available data they should be made intelligently open by fulfilling the requirements of being discoverable, accessible, intelligible, assessable and reusable.</p> <p>The Royal Society does not dictate a set format for data management and sharing plans. Where they are required, applicants should structure their plan in a manner most appropriate to the proposed research. The information submitted in plans should focus specifically on how the data outputs will be managed and shared, detailing the repositories where data will be deposited. In considering your approach for data management and sharing, applicants should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What data outputs will be generated by the research that are of value to the public?</li> <li>• Where and when will you make the data available?</li> <li>• How will others be able to access the data?</li> <li>• If the data is of high public interest, how will it be made accessible not only for those in the same or linked field, but also to a wider public audience?</li> <li>• Specify whether any limits will be placed on the data to be shared, for example, for the purposes of safeguarding commercial interests, personal information, safety or security of the data.</li> <li>• How will datasets be preserved to ensure they are of long-term benefit?</li> </ul>	
Outline of data management and data sharing plan *	If the proposed research will generate data that is of significant value to the research community, then please provide details of your data management and sharing plan. (Maximum 200 words)
Fieldwork *	Will you be conducting fieldwork as part of your research? Yes/No *
Fieldwork	Please provide all details of any proposed fieldwork to be carried out. Please ensure you provide details of location, duration and justification for the fieldwork.
Fieldwork (Upload only)	<p>Please upload documents related to the following (if applicable):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permission Any mandatory documents that show local support has been assured by way of permission from the government concerned to travel to and work in the country.</li> <li>2. Collection of specimens Any mandatory documents that show:</li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific permission has been obtained from the host country to collect and to export specimens and material</li> <li>• The director of the museum or other decision makers where these specimens will be deposited has indicated his/her desire or willingness to have such specimens and material.</li> </ul>
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### Use of Animals in Research \*

The Royal Society is committed to supporting the development of alternative methods to reduce and/or replace the use of animals in research. Applicants proposing to use animals in their research must ensure that the use of animals falls within the regulations stipulated in the Animals (Scientific Procedures Act) 1986 and subsequent amendments. Additionally, applicants should continually be aware of developments in best practice and adopt the principles of the 3Rs when designing and conducting experiments on animals.

As a funder of research, the Society takes its responsibilities towards the UK Animals (Scientific Procedures Act) 1986 seriously and requires applicants to consider the questions below when preparing grant applications that include the use of animals.

Does your proposal involve the use of animals or animal tissue? *	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you have selected 'Yes' it is mandatory to complete all the relevant questions on the Use of Animals in Research page.
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### Experimental Design Assistant

The Royal Society recommends that applicants use the Experimental Design Assistant (EDA), which is a free resource from the NC3Rs to support researchers in the planning of animal experiments. This will help to facilitate robust study design and reliable and reproducible findings.

The EDA helps applicants build a machine-readable diagram representing their experimental plan, following capture of their methodology, and allows the applicant to then generate a PDF report which provides a transparent description of the experimental design in a standardised format, which can be uploaded to the application form.

**Please note:** Applicants who choose to use the EDA and subsequently uploads the EDA report to the application form, are advised to enter **see report** or **n/a** into any question fields within this section of the application form that have already been captured in the EDA report, to avoid any duplication.

### Use of Human Participants, Patients and Tissue

Any application for a research proposal involving human participants, patients or tissue and therefore requiring local ethical committee approval will be considered only when accompanied by the necessary permission certificate or proof that ethical permission will be sought, which must be provided in English.

Does your proposal involve the use of human participants, patients or tissue? *	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you have selected 'Yes' it is mandatory to provide either a certificate or letter, as proof that ethical permission has been, or will be, obtained. Please upload the file as a PDF in portrait orientation.
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<b>Financial Details</b>	
General information	<p>The Academies will fund 100% of staff costs, research expenses and public engagement costs (subject to the restrictions outlined below). Please note directly allocated and indirect costs under the full economic costs model (FEC) are not covered on this award.</p> <p>Applicants must consult with the appropriate financial administrators before completing these details.</p> <p>Costs may be requested for the Co-applicant; however, the award will be awarded to the Lead applicant and administered by the Lead applicant's Host Organisation. If requesting costs for the Co-applicant, as well as the justification, a statement from their Head of Department is required.</p>
Directly incurred costs	These are costs that can be explicitly identifiable as arising from the award. The university must have an auditable record for these costs.
Basic salary	<p>Basic Salary refers to the cost to the university of relieving you of all, or a proportion of your teaching and administration duties. Please include a justification for the grade and salary point as per the host organisation salary structure. Teaching replacement costs for the Lead applicant are mandatory, in order to relieve them from teaching and administration duties to conduct the proposed research.</p> <p>Costs may be requested for the Co-applicant's teaching and administrative relief.</p>
On costs	<p>Please indicate the funding required for employers on costs e.g. employer's National Insurance contributions and employer's pension contributions.</p> <p>On costs refers to the cost to the university of relieving you of all, or a proportion of, your teaching and administration duties.</p>
Other staff costs	<p>Support for PDRA, research technicians and other staff, such as data scientists and research software engineers, who are closely involved in the conduct and delivery of the research to be included. Where research assistance costs are applied for, it is still expected to have a substantial commitment of the Lead applicant's time towards the proposed research.</p> <p>Apprenticeship levy costs are not eligible.</p>
Studentships	<p>Costs for undergraduate/master's students or contribution to an existing PhD departmental studentship. Please note that contribution towards a PhD studentship can be requested only in instances where funding is already in place to ensure the student can complete their studies.</p> <p>Please note that funding will not be granted without a justification of the feasibility of the project.</p>
Research expenses	No more than 25% of the total requested amount (excluding public engagement costs) may be used for associated research costs. These can include consumables, equipment and collaborative travel.
Consumables	Funding for essential consumables may be requested.
Other research expenses	Please describe and then justify any amounts entered under 'Other Expenses'.
Animal purchases	Funding for animal purchases may be requested but should be fully justified in section 6 of the application form.
Animal maintenance	Funding for animal maintenance may be requested but should be fully justified in section 6 of the application form.

Travel	Travel costs should be based on the most suitable and economical form of travel. Costs for attendance at conferences may be included, where attendance will be of direct benefit to the research and the collaboration.
Equipment	Funding may be requested for the purchase of specialised equipment.
<b>Justification* for staff and research costs</b>	<p>Please fully justify all requested costs by referring to each budget heading. Funding will not be awarded without justification.</p> <p>If you are requesting support for a studentship, please explain how the proposed project is suitable and outline any support that will be offered. In addition, please explain how many students are expected to be supported, as well as which year(s) of their course will receive a contribution from the proposed project. For further information on studentships, please see above in the scheme guidance notes.</p>

If you wish to request costs to support Public Engagement activities associated to your main research proposal, please complete the section below:

(OPTIONAL)

<b>Public Engagement</b>	You can request up to £10,000 for Public Engagement costs as part of the maximum award value of £200,000.
<b>Justification</b>	<p>If you are requesting funding for Public Engagement costs, please provide a detailed justification for the use of the costs. This should include, but is not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe your project, what you plan to do and its links to your research (suggested word count: 200)</li> </ul> <p><i>Please consider addressing the following questions here:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What do you plan to do?</i></li> <li><i>What are the project outputs / deliverables?</i></li> <li><i>How does this relate to your APEX proposal?</i></li> <li><i>What is the project's link to science?</i></li> <li><i>What is the relevance to your target audience?</i></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims and outcomes of the project (suggested word count: 200) <i>Here we want to know why you are doing the project. What will be different when you've finished? What are the drivers or needs for the project, from your own perspective and that of the public? Try to be as specific as possible and distinguish between your aims (what you hope to change as a result) and objectives (the things you will do to realise those changes).</i></li> <li>Who is your target audience? (suggested word count: 200) <i>Please provide as much detail for this question as you can and be as specific as possible. High quality applications will have clearly articulated audiences that are relevant to the project aims. Consider how your audience might be defined. For example, by an age group, profession or shared interest. Your target audience is who you are primarily trying to engage and should be a public audience (non-scientific and outside of your institution), but we would also like to hear about other groups you might want to engage, such as partners, students and staff.</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How you intend to evaluate the aims and outcomes outlined above (suggested word count: 200) <i>Think about the aims and objectives you have set and how you will effectively measure them. How will you collect evidence from the public and your team? How will you use the evidence gathered to a) assess the impact of your project, and b) inform future work?</i></li> <li>• An itemised breakdown of the budget requested</li> <li>• An overview timeline of the project</li> </ul> <p>Proposals are particularly encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create collaboration between science and arts</li> <li>• reach people that are currently underrepresented in the Society's Public Engagement work, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• those without a science degree</li> <li>• those from geographically remote locations</li> <li>• those from low-income backgrounds</li> <li>• communities traditionally underrepresented in STEM/social sciences and humanities</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Text Field</b>, this requires plain text only (Maximum 1000 words).</p>
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**Applicant Declaration \***

**Please declare that:**

You have read the Terms and Conditions of Award under which Royal Society grants are awarded and, if a grant offer is made, you agree to abide by them. **The Terms and Conditions for Royal Society applications can be found at <https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/apex-awards/> .**

- You have access to the necessary facilities to enable you to deliver the research proposed and will continue to have access to the facilities for the duration of the project.
- You have agreed with your Head(s) of Department that you will be afforded sufficient time and resources to deliver the research project as described in this application.
- You consent to information regarding your application for a Royal Society grant being shared as set out in the 'Use of Application Data' section in the scheme notes.

### **Institutional and Departmental Support \***

You should invite the Head of Department at your Host Organisation to provide a statement of support by following the instructions under the participants tab on the application form summary page. Please check that they are able to supply their statement in advance of 15:00 UK time 08 September 2026. You will not be able to submit your application for approval by your institution until the references have been completed.

Please check which email address your Head of Department would like to use, as they may already be registered on Flexi-Grant® and any mistakes may lead to a delay in processing your application.

The Head of Department is expected to detail your suitability for the award and confirm your need for teaching relief. If requesting costs for a PhD student, the Head of Department should confirm that the host organisation will underwrite the remaining cost of the studentship. An appropriate alternative supervisor should also be provided in the event that the award holder leaves the host institution.

If you are the Head of Department, then an alternative referee is required to supply the reference, e.g. Deputy Head or Head of School.

If you are requesting costs for the Co-applicant, then a statement of support from the Co-applicant's Head of Department is required. If the Co-applicant is requesting costs for a PhD student, the Co-applicant's Head of Department should confirm that the host organisation will underwrite the remaining cost of the studentship. An appropriate alternative supervisor should also be provided in the event that the Co applicant leaves the institution.

Please note that it is a requirement that a collaboration agreement between the applicant and co applicant(s) is in place by the commencement of the Award in line with the Society's Conditions of Award <https://royalsociety.org/-/media/grants/standard-conditions-of-award.pdf>

### **Nominated Referee Support \***

You should invite two referees who can provide confidential references for your application, by following the instructions under the 'Participants' tab on the application form summary page. Please check with them that they are happy to provide the references and inform them that they will be contacted by email and asked to provide references via the Flexi-Grant® system by Tuesday, 08 September 2026.

You will not be able to submit your application for approval by your institution until the references have been completed.

Please ensure that you use the correct email address when inviting your nominated referees to provide a letter of support.

Before inviting a nominated personal referee to participate in completion of your application form, the Applicant is instructed to ensure that the nominated personal referee is willing and available to provide the support letter before the round closing date. If the support letters have not been received by the system before the deadline, the application cannot be submitted and will be deemed to be ineligible.

Please check which email address the nominated referee would like you to use as they may already be registered with a user account on Flexi-Grant®. It is important that you enter the correct email addresses when inviting the nominated referee to support your application, as an email will be sent automatically

from Flexi-Grant® to the nominated referee with instructions for viewing your application and providing their support. Any mistakes in the email addresses supplied will delay the progress of your application.

If the instruction email from the Royal Society has not been received please:

- a) double check the accuracy of the email address supplied on the application form
- b) advise the intended recipient to check their spam filters/junk folders
- c) contact the Royal Society with an alternative email address for the recipient

The Royal Society will not be held responsible for automated emails that are not received due to address errors or spam filters.

## Diversity Monitoring

### Diversity Monitoring

The Royal Society is committed to promoting diversity in UK science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by seeking to increase participation from under-represented groups. Please help us to monitor how effectively we are doing this by providing the requested information. All questions are mandatory. The information provided will form a confidential statistical record in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will not be used for any purpose other than analysis of the Society's activities.

This information will be kept separately from the rest of your application and will not be seen by those involved in the selection process, including referees etc.

You must either complete the form or tick the boxes stating that you 'prefer not to say'. If you do not select a box for each question, the system will regard your application as incomplete and will not allow you to submit it.

***Please note, that where an application contains applicant and Co-applicant(s) details, all applicants will be expected to complete the diversity monitoring form.***

***The Lead applicant and Co-applicant(s) are restricted to completing and viewing the diversity monitoring form that is relevant to them as individuals. You are not permitted to view the information provided by the other under this section of the application.***

## Appendix 1: Application Process Submission Process Flow Diagram

