Access Mentoring Applicant Guidance RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowships 2025/2026

Contents

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Rationale

The Academy's overarching goal is to harness the power of engineering to build a sustainable society and an inclusive economy that works for everyone. As part of delivering this goal, the Academy will work to foster talent and diversity so that the UK has a world-leading and truly inclusive engineering workforce. This should be reflected in the awardees of the Academy's grant schemes.

Aim

To provide additional support to applicants from groups that are persistently underrepresented within UK engineering through the grant application process. This [positive action](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/159) (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/159) will contribute to improving diversity in the talent pipeline and widening the diversity of applicants and awardees within the Academy's research grant schemes.

The process will be run in the [2025/26 RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowships](https://raeng.org.uk/lrtf) (https://raeng.org.uk/lrtf) call.

- **Access Mentoring should not be used by universities as a mechanism to influence internal selection or shortlisting processes.**
- **Candidates who undertake Access Mentoring are expected to submit a full application to the RAEng/Leverhulme Research Fellowships scheme.**

The RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship summary

The RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship scheme allows early- to mid- career academics to concentrate full time on research. The Fellowship covers the salary costs of a replacement academic who will cover the Awardee's teaching and administrative duties for up to one year.

These Fellowships provide:

- early- to mid-career academics with an opportunity to enhance their current research interests and initiating new lines of research by relieving them of their teaching and administrative duties
- an available support fund of up to £2,500 for miscellaneous research costs incurred by the awardee, including conference attendance and public engagement activities.

These Fellowships are funded by The Leverhulme Trust.

The Leverhulme Trust

The Leverhulme Trust was established by the will of William Hesketh Lever, the founder of Lever Brothers. Since 1925 the Trust has supported grants and scholarships for research and education. Today, The Leverhulme Trust is one of the largest all- subject providers of research funding in the UK, distributing over £60 million a year.

The Trust provides funding across academic disciplines, supporting talented individuals in arts, sciences, engineering, and social sciences to realise their personal vision in research and professional training.

Common errors in RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship applications

The most common reasons applications are unsuccessful are given below:

Competitors	Not knowing and acknowledging competitors.
Workload	Need for relief from teaching and administrative duties not adequately demonstrated.
Vision	Vision and ambition not clearly explained.
Novelty	Proposal lacking novelty, or not articulating how the proposed work will address a novel research question.
Realism	Unrealistic in terms of potential impact, milestones, resources and the applicant's ability.
Communication	Poor communication skills. Inconsistent/unclear information provided in the application form.

Eligibility

Applicants will need to meet the following criteria to qualify for Access Mentoring:

1. Meet the eligibility criteria for a RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship (https://raeng.org.uk/programmes-and-prizes/programmes/uk-grants-and-prizes/support-for-research/leverhulme-trust-research-fellowships/how-to-apply).

2. To be from an underrepresented group in engineering, specifically:

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

All candidates, including those from the identified underrepresented groups, must meet the assessment criteria for the RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship scheme, detailed in the applicant guidance notes (https://raeng.org.uk/programmes-and-prizes/programmes/uk-grants-and-prizes/support-for-research/leverhulme-trust-research-fellowships).

Eligible applicants are not obligated to undertake Access Mentoring.

Mentors

Access Mentors will be Fellows of the Academy, RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship alumni or members of the Awardee Excellence Community.

Mentor/mentee pairing
- Mentees will be matched with a mentor on a first come, first-served basis.
- Mentees will be matched with a mentor at the Academy's discretion.
- Mentor and mentees will not be matched based on research discipline or any other criteria.
- Mentees will be matched with a mentor up to the capacity of the mentors.
- Mentors will be from a different institution to the applicant.
- A mentor may have multiple mentees.

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Mentor role

Access Mentors will provide the applicant with advice in producing a high-quality application aligned to expectations of the scheme. The applicant is not obligated to follow the Access Mentor's advice and should use their judgement and act accordingly in their best interest and that of their proposal. The mentor is not responsible for the outcome of the application. Mentors will not review their mentee's application in the scheme review period.

An Access Mentor does:

- Read the application and suggest areas of improvement
- Listen and give their time
- Support, encourage and challenge
- Provide a framework to look at options, to understand implications and to plan future action
- Share experiences where relevant
- Signpost, if asked, information and resources – including people/networks.

An Access Mentor does not:

- Collaborate on research
- Apply jointly for grant funding
- Get involved in matters relating to status, promotion, or payments
- Directly act on behalf of a mentee
- Judge the actions the mentee takes.

Format

Applicants will meet with their allocated mentor for a 1-2-1, one-hour meeting (approximately) at their mutual convenience. Mentors will receive a draft copy of the application in advance of the meeting. Applicants should ensure that proposal is at a sufficient level of maturity to maximise their time at their mentor meeting.

The RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship scheme deadline is Thursday 13 November 2025. The mentor meeting will take place no later than Thursday 6 November 2025 (one week before the scheme deadline).

Meetings will be held virtually. If both the mentor and mentee agree, meetings may be held physically. Any subsequent meetings are at the discretion of mentor and the mentee.

Once the Access Mentoring application has been submitted, the relationship officially ends.

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Once the application has been submitted the mentor will not provide any further advice or support on the application.

The Academy and mentor are not liable for the information that is disclosed by the mentee.

Application limit

There is no limit on the number of Access Mentoring applications from one institution that can be submitted for the RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship scheme. The candidates must meet the eligibility criteria and submit a full application to the grant scheme.

PLEASE NOTE: Access Mentoring is a resource limited opportunity. Applicants do not need to wait until the deadline to submit their application and can be matched with a mentor as soon as the application is approved. Early submission is encouraged.

PARTICIPATION IN ACCESS MENTORING DOES NOT GUARANTEE THE APPLICATION WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

ACCESS MENTORING IS CONFIDENTIAL. ALL CANDIDATES ARE TREATED EQUALLY. CANDIDATES WHO RECEIVE ACCESS MENTORING ARE NOT DISCLOSED TO THE REVIEW PANEL.

Application form

Access Mentoring applications are to be submitted via the Academy's grant management system (https://grants.raeng.org.uk/applications.aspx).

The Access Mentoring application process is separate to that of the RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship. Applicants should ensure they adhere to the RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship application guidance.

The Access Mentoring application **deadline is 4pm, Tuesday 14 October 2025**. This is subject to capacity of mentors being reached and may close sooner.

1. **Applicant details**

Q. Applicant name and contact details
  Please provide your name and preferred contact details. You should also provide the details of the host institution where the RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship will be held and confirm that this is the 'host organisation'.

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Q. RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship eligibility
Applicants will need to meet the eligibility criteria for the RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship.

Please confirm that you have understood and met the Research Fellowship eligibility criteria by stating your RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship application reference number. The application reference number will be in the format of **LTRF-2526-22-XXX**.

Q. Access Mentoring eligibility
To qualify for Access Mentoring, applicants will need to be from an underrepresented group in engineering, specifically:

- **Women**
- **Black people, including those with any mixed ethnicity with Black ethnic background(s)**
- **Disabled people**

Please confirm whether you meet one of these eligibility criteria by selecting 'Yes' or 'No' from the drop-down menu.

Q. Mentoring
What are the key attributes you would look for in a mentor and how do you think they would be able to help you? What specific areas would you like advice on?
100 words maximum.

2. Project details

Please Note: As the RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship application will be submitted separately to the Access Mentoring application, we understand that the project details provided in this section may not be the final version. However, they should enable the mentor to understand the proposed research project.

Q. Project title
The essence of the research should be captured in the title and should be as informative as possible. The project title should be a one-line description of the research project. Please use no more than 25 words and ensure that it is understandable to a non-specialist reader.
25 words maximum.

Q. Project summary

Describe the research in terms that can be understood by a non-specialist reader. The essence of the research should be captured in this section and should be as informative as possible.
250 words maximum.

Q. Engineering category

Select one single broad engineering category that best describes your research proposal. If your research proposal fits into several categories, please pick the category that is most applicable to your proposal. See Annex 1 for subject category descriptions.

Q. Keywords

Please provide keywords relating to the project. You may wish to include relevant words from the subject categories provided. Please use a comma to separate each keyword.
10 words maximum.

3. Declarations

Q. Applicant declaration

Please tick the checkbox once you have read and understand the declaration written in the application form. Once the entire application form is completed, a grey 'submit application' button will become available to the top right of the screen.

Q. Marketing

Where did you hear about Access Mentoring? This question is optional but helps the Academy to understand which marketing materials are most successful at reaching the academic community to improve future communications work.

Please note that once submitted the application cannot be edited, but you may view it from your GMS account.

Feedback
On completion of the Access Mentoring process, applicants will be asked for feedback via a survey on the Access Mentoring process so it can continue to be refined and tailored to be of most value.

Timeline

Milestone	Date
Access Mentoring call opens	5 August 2025
RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship call opens	5 August 2025
Access Mentoring application deadline. *This is subject to capacity of mentors being reached and may close sooner*	4pm, 14 October 2025
Mentor-mentee pairing	August - November 2025
1-2-1 meetings	Before 6 November 2025
RAEng/Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowships call deadline	4pm, 13 November 2025

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 (https://raeng.org.uk/media/flghp4gn/rae005-diversity-and-inclusion-policy-2024.pdf) 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 progress on diversity and inclusion in Academy programmes. 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 (https://raeng.org.uk/media/duhjwap2/raeng-privacy-policy-grant-or-award.pdf) 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 submit the grant application form, but can choose "prefer not to say" as responses.

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 utilised. The following style should be employed for referencing:

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

Or,

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

National security

The Academy is the UK's National Academy for engineering and technology and seeks to increase the potential positive benefit that innovations can have for society, whilst reducing the risks of harm. Hence, in all our activities, we seek to minimise the risk that technology developed as part of work that we support could be misused by a foreign state to build a capacity to target UK interests in a hostile fashion or to control or repress their population.

There is a risk that for some grant activities, failure to protect IP and a lack of due diligence into collaborators could result in sensitive technology being transferred to and misused by a hostile or repressive foreign state. As such all applicants should ensure they are familiar with the Academy's Policy on National Security-Related Risks (https://raeng.org.uk/policies).

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.

Contact

For all queries, please contact the Research Team at research@raeng.org.uk.

Annex 1 – Engineering categories

1) Civil, construction and environmental

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

2) Materials and mining

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

3) Chemical and process

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

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4) Aerospace

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

5) Transport and mechanical

Including all aspects of mechanical engineering; automotive; rail and marine engineering; transportation infrastructure; engines; turbomachinery; mechatronics; acoustics and vibrations; ultra-sonics; heat and thermodynamics; fluid dynamics.

6) Manufacturing and design

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

7) Electrical and electronic

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

8) Energy and power

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

9) Medical and bioengineering

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

10) Computing and communications

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