



Royal Academy
of Engineering

Ingenious

Ingenious Public Engagement grant scheme

Applicant Guidance Notes

Deadline: 23 September 2026 4pm



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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.

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

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

We welcome proposals from universities, colleges and schools, youth charities, science and engineering communicators and engagement professionals as well as those working in the arts and cultural sectors.

We also welcome applications from engineers from small and medium enterprises who are interested in public engagement. Large enterprises as classified under the UK Companies Act 2006 are not eligible to apply

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.

Applying for Ingenious

Eligibility criteria

- Applicants must be UK residents and be associated with the lead organisation. If the lead applicant is not employed by the host organisation, we ask to provide a letter of support from the host 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.

Applicants cannot hold more than 2 *Ingenious* grants at the same time and so current *Ingenious* projects should be finished before submitting a new proposal.

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 23
September 2026, 4pm.**



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**£3,000 -
£30,000
funding**

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Applying for Ingenious

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 [\(details on page 17\)](#)

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. Applicant and organisation details
2. Project details
3. Goals and objectives
4. Project Plan
5. Support requested
6. Marketing
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.



We have suggested word counts for each question in addition to the maximum word counts allowed on the grants management system. These suggested word counts are intended to give an idea of the level of depth we are looking for from each question and ensure focus to your responses, whilst allowing leeway where needed.

Responses that routinely far exceed the suggested counts, may make it harder for the reviewers to find the information they are looking for and so we would recommend keeping to the suggested word counts where possible.

Application details

1. Applicant and organisation details

- Please provide the name and contact details of the individuals and organisations who will be involved in this project.
- If you are a registered sole trader, please enter your own personal information under GMS organization.
- If you are not employed by the host organization (e.g. you are a freelancer/retired) then please provide a letter of support from the host organization.
- Please confirm that your projects meet each of the eligibility requirements for *Ingenious*.

2. Project details

Please state if this project idea has previously been submitted.

You are able to resubmit an *Ingenious* project idea once after being unsuccessful, taking into account any feedback from the reviewers. Please do not resubmit a project proposal after being unsuccessful twice as it will not be approved, however, you are welcome to propose a new project idea.

Please confirm that this project idea has not been submitted more than once.

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 2027, project end date by 31 July 2028 (schools) or 31 August 2028 (families or community groups)

Funds will be awarded to successful projects in April 2027 and project research may begin from this time. Project development and delivery can begin from the 1 May 2027. Projects working with school groups must be completed, including evaluation, by 31 July 2028 whilst projects working alternatively or additionally with family or community groups, must be completed by completed by 31 August 2028.

Project location(s)

Please list the counties your proposed activities will take place. If only delivering online activity please state 'online only'.

Key words (10 words)

Please list the engineering field(s) or topic(s) (e.g. mechanical engineering or robotics) your proposed activities will cover and any other words you consider key to your proposal. such as type of audience (e.g. teenagers, SEND students)

Summary (100 words)

The summary should be understandable to the non-specialist reader and may be used in media releases and media publications about your project if you are successful in your application. You should treat this summary as an elevator pitch. for your project.

Ingenious is a very competitive scheme so consider what it is that makes your project unique and differentiates it from other programmes.

Application details

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

3. 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)

Ingenious looks to fund creative and innovative engineering public engagement. *Ingenious* is a competitive scheme so do be sure to highlight what activities you can offer that differ from other STEM programmes.

Cross disciplinary projects are very welcome to apply, but as *Ingenious* is looking to promote engineering, please ensure you reference the specific engineering elements of your events and activities (not just general STEM).

The public audience (500 words)

It can be hard to reach your intended target audiences so we want to know that you are likely to achieve what you plan to achieve so please tell us what strategies you will use to reach your public audiences and if you have key contacts or prior relationships with the communities you are trying to reach. What experience does the project team have working with these groups? Have you allowed adequate time to recruit your intended audience and do you have any contingency plans in place if needed?

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.
- We receive many applications to run school workshops each year so consider what it is that makes your proposed project different and novel from other existing and proposed projects.

Safeguarding (150 words)

We are looking for an awareness and understanding of safeguarding. You may wish to seek external support from a training provider if adequate experience does not exist within the project team.

Projects will be expected to review safeguarding measures throughout their projects particularly when writing event risk assessments.

Previous related projects (300 words)

You may wish to reference previous work or a pilot project, that you may utilise or learn from for the purposes of your *Ingenious* project. However please note that *Ingenious* is not intended to provide continuation funding to ongoing programmes, therefore your proposal a significant step up or evolution of previous projects. .

Evaluation and dissemination (300 words)

We expect projects to perform proportional evaluation for their projects, considering both the audiences' and the recruited engineers' experience

Please outline initial plans for evaluation of the project. You may find it helpful to consult the Academy's [evaluation guidance](#).

Top tips:

- Larger grants may benefit from external evaluation if in-house expertise separate from the main delivery team is not available

Application details

The engineers (500 words)

Building capacity for engineering public engagement is one of the main aims of *Ingenious* and so this section is really important to show how you will successfully recruit engineers and help them to feel supported and confident to engage with your public audiences. We want engineers to enjoy themselves so that they are encouraged to continue public engagement activities.

It can be tricky to recruit engineers so you need to be realistic about how many you can recruit and what time you can expect them to give up.

Be specific about the training you plan to offer i.e. half hour virtual briefing vs 2 day in person workshop covering xyz.

Top tips:

- We want engineers to be able to share real world experience working in the profession, therefore undergraduate students and apprentices can be used to supplement activities but engineers with working experience should be the priority for your project.
- Recruit diverse engineering role models (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, career pathway, engineering field) relevant for the audiences you wish to engage.
- Try to recruit a mix of experience levels rather than relying on those who are already very experienced in public engagement (e.g. STEM Ambassadors) so that you are meeting the *Ingenious* aim for building capacity for engineering public engagement.
- Whilst the Academy has various networks of engineers, these should not be relied on for recruiting engineers as we are looking to build capacity for public engagement.

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 being recruited for 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.

4. Project plan

Project management (250 words)

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)

You may wish to provide this information as a GANTT Chart or equivalent which can be uploaded as a PDF document, (maximum 1 side 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. You may also need to prepare for dropouts.
- Likewise plan sufficient time to recruit your audience. It can be surprisingly difficult to recruit an audience, particularly school groups.

Application details

Staff involvement

Please outline the skills, knowledge and relevant experience that project core team members will bring to your project.

5. 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) Materials and equipment can be claimed for but we would expect the majority of costs to go towards the enabling of the public engagement rather than a large proportion of the costs paying for expensive equipment or software. (Equipment costs should not exceed £10k for a single piece of equipment/software)

d) We recommend covering travel expenses at a minimum for any volunteering engineers where costs are not already being covered by their employers. You should also consider what other costs should be covered for your engineers or your target audiences in order to remove barriers to participation e.g. coach hire for schools.

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

Recipients from HEIs or Small/Medium Companies cannot request costs to subsidise preexisting staff costs of those dedicated in full, or in part, to organisational public engagement activities. Recipients from Charities or Community Interest Companies can request costs for covering public engagement staff where those roles are dependent upon ongoing external grant funding.

For example, an eligible cost would be directly incurred costs of backfilling the position of an academic who needed to be released from teaching or other duties in order to lead the project, an ineligible cost would be contributing to the salaries of outreach or public engagement staff at universities or enterprises for whom running these kinds of projects would form part of their normal role.

For those working at charities or Community Interest Companies, where no dedicated roles of this nature exist or where such roles are reliant upon external grant funding, we consider the costs of covering additional staffing costs incurred to be eligible. We would pay to backfill a position of an academic who needed to be released from teaching or other duties in order to lead the project.

f) 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.

Application details

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

Additional funding is not required but can help demonstrate commitment from involved partners. We also want to know whether there is any risk to the *Ingenious* proposal if partnership funding is not secured or is withdrawn.

Associated activity

If this *Ingenious* proposal forms part of a larger project, please detail how the wider project is funded, and how the *Ingenious* project is dependent on this. As above, please state, in particular, if partnership funding is not secured or is withdrawn, how the *Ingenious* project may be impacted and how any risks to the project may be negated.

Previous applications

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

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

- a) Project name and lead applicant name
- b) Year of application

6. 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.

7. Declaration

You will be asked to declare whether you have used any AI tools in the preparation of your application and brief details of how and what system.

The final declaration seeks confirmation that the applicant has provided accurate information and will update the Academy of any material changes that may affect the grant.



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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.

Key dates

| Process stage | Timeline |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Application submitted | 23 September 2026 |
| Eligibility checks | September 2026 |
| External review | October 2026 |
| Applicants invited to respond | November 2026 |
| Funding panel review | January/February 2027 |
| Applicants informed | February 2027 |
| Kick off workshops | April 2027 |
| Funding announced | May 2027 |
| Project commences | From May 2027 |

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 safeguarding 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



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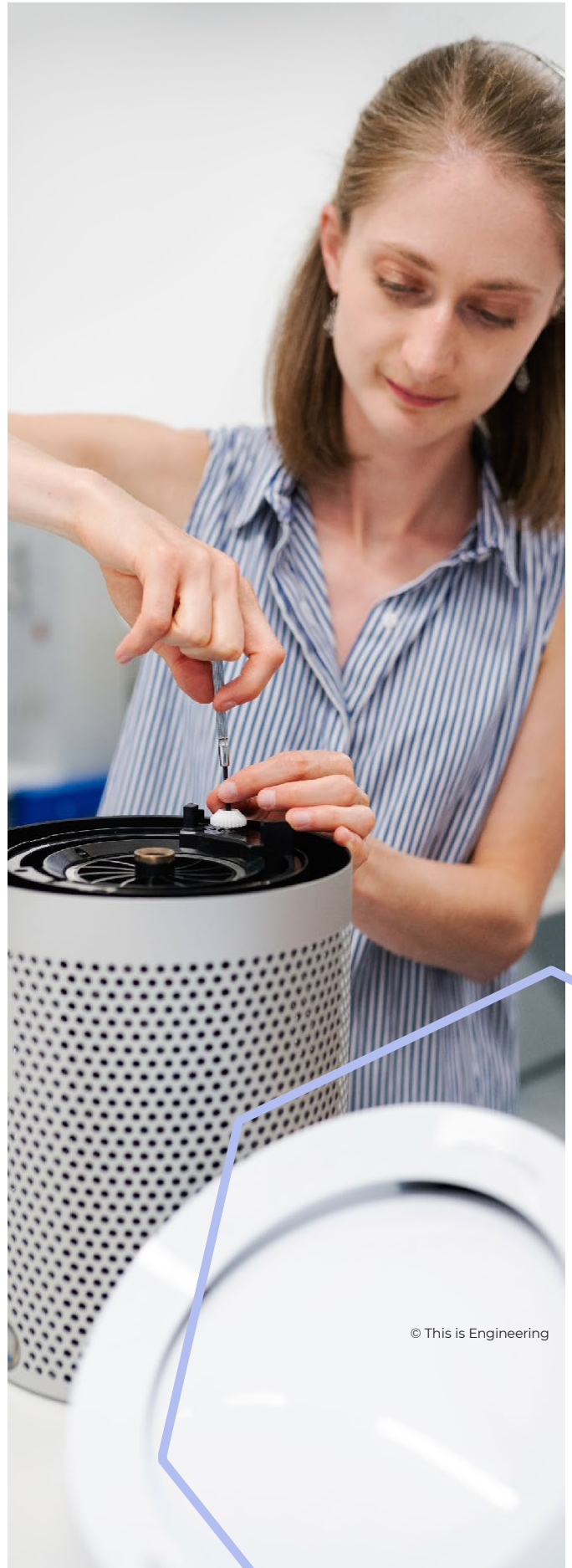
Further information

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 2027. 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.



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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](#).



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.