

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

Changes to the Round

The timeline for the APEX Awards has changed and calls will now run earlier in the year than was previously the case. This change has been implemented to ensure greater flexibility in the administration of the scheme and provide adequate time for award holders and their host institutions to appoint replacement teaching staff prior to the commencement of the award.

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.

If there is any doubt about the eligibility of a project, contact the Grants team via apex@royalsociety.org

1.4 **Duration and start of Award**

Approximate number of Awards offered: 6

Awards are expected to commence between 1st October and 31st December 2026 and can be held for up to 24 months.

2 Timetable

Opening date	Tuesday, 24 June 2025
Closing Date	Tuesday, 09 September 2025, 15:00(UK Time)
Expected results	March 2026

3 Finance

3.1 **Total Funding Available**

Support: Up to £200,000 to fund **staff costs** for the lead applicant and the co-applicant and associated **research costs** representing no more than 25% of the total award value. These can include consumables, equipment, and collaborative travel.

Applicants will also have the option to request funds (up to £10,000) to support public engagement activities relating to their APEX proposal, inclusive of the maximum award value of £200,000. Please note that public engagement costs should not be included in the total award value when calculating the 25% limit for research costs.

Staff costs **must** cover:

- **Teaching replacement for the lead applicant** – Cost of providing a teaching replacement for the lead applicant. This is to enable the applicant to focus on their research project by relieving them of all, or a proportion of their teaching and administrative duties.

Salary grade for the teaching replacement must be fully justified (Please only include basic salary and on costs –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), 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

Ineligible costs:

Please note that funds cannot be used to appoint a new PhD student or to supplement an existing project funded through another grant. Workshop costs are also not permitted.

4 Eligibility

4.1 Applicant Eligibility

- Lead applicants and co-applicants must be exceptional researchers with a strong track record as established independent researchers (this can include engineering researchers, humanities and social sciences scholars and scientists).
- Lead applicants will be expected to collaborate with a research partner (co-applicant) from a different discipline (Academy remit) to their own, based at the same institution or a different university in the UK. When choosing the co-applicant(s), the lead applicant should consider how the proposed collaboration(s) will foster connections between different disciplines such as science, engineering, and the social sciences and humanities.
- Applications must be within the remit of more than one of the Academies. Please note that applications within the remit of the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering must demonstrate a clear integration between science and engineering. 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.
- Applicants that do not have teaching and administrative duties are not eligible to apply.

- Lead applicants can apply with no more than 2 co-applicants from different disciplines.
- All applications must be supported by the applicant's and co-applicant's Head of Department, who will be asked to provide assurance that the researcher will be permitted to use the institution's facilities during the period of the award and can be released/partially released from teaching duties.
- Applicants may only submit one application per round. Previous award holders may apply but any re-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 regularly reviews and revises processes to help ensure that all talented applicants have an equitable chance to succeed as per the assessment criteria. This includes ensuring all Committee members are briefed on unconscious bias in decision making as part of our assessment process.

Support for disabled applicants: The Academies welcome 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 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 not-for-profit research organisation for at least the duration of the project.

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. It is therefore of particular importance that applicants include a concise and understandable lay summary, free of jargon, in order to best convey their proposed research. In addition, applicants should ensure that they provide complete referencing of any grant funding or publications that might affect their application. The justification for public engagement costs will be assessed independently from the main APEX proposal by a member of the Public Engagement Panel.

Please find a schematic for the Review Process below:

1	APEX 2025 round open to applications	24th June – 9th September 2025, 3pm UK time
	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 (apex@royalsociety.org) while the round is open.	
2	Eligibility checks	September 2025
	Applications are checked for eligibility.	
3	Assessment: Committee Review 1	September - October 2025
	Eligible applications are assessed by two members of the Committee who have the most appropriate expertise to determine whether the proposals represent genuine interdisciplinary research. After this initial "triage" a longlist is drawn up for the consideration of the Chair and Deputy Chair.	
4	Longlisting	October 2025
	The Chair and Deputy Chair review the longlist and confirm the list of applications for independent peer review. Applicants will be notified by November 2025 .	
5	Assessment: Independent Peer Review	November - December 2025
	Applications are reviewed by at least two Independent Peer Reviewers.	
6	Assessment: Committee Review 2	December 2025 – January 2026

	Committee members assess applications in light of the Independent Peer Review reports.	
7	Shortlisting	February 2026
	The Chair and Deputy Chair draw up a shortlist of applications to be discussed at the Committee meeting.	
8	Assessment: Public Engagement	February 2026
	In this assessment stage, any applicants who request public engagement funding will have their justification of the costs reviewed by public engagement experts	
9	Assessment: Committee Meeting	March 2026
	In this assessment stage, the Committee decide on the outcomes of the applications: 1. Successful 2. Reserve (if applicable) 3. Unsuccessful	
9	Notification outcome: Applicants will be notified in late March 2026	
10	Offer letters sent to successful applicants	April 2026

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 the enclosed 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 Applicant or Co-applicant
- the Applicant's former/current supervisor (including PhD supervisor)
- a member on the assessment Committee for this scheme; or
- a member of the Royal Society's Council.

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 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 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.

Further guidance and support can be found through the [applicant and approver knowledge base](#).

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 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	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. 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. Note: you will only be able to submit your application for approval by the Host Organisation once all sections of the form have been completed.
Eligibility Criteria	

Eligibility Criteria *	Please provide confirmation that you meet the eligibility criteria. Details of the eligibility criteria can be found in the 'Eligibility' Section of these Scheme Notes.
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Contact Details	
Title, Names, address, organisation and country *	Review and complete your personal details accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application. Errors will not be corrected after submission. Under this section, you should edit the contact type of 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'. Organisation: 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.
Email address *	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®.

Applicant [and Co-Applciant] Career Summary	
Full name *	Please enter your full name, including title. [Co-applicant only]
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.
Field of Specialisation *	Enter details of your field(s) of specialisation. (Maximum 20 words)
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 *	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). Please use your personal statement to outline your career and research aspirations in the long term. Please ensure that the information about your achievements is included to make your research more accessible to non-specialist audiences. For the Co-applicant's personal statement: clear information should be provided about your role and input into the proposed project. Plain text only 500 words.
Applicant Career History *	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. 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. Please specify for each appointment if the position is considered independent. Please provide full details of any periods of part-time working, career breaks, extended sick leave or maternity/paternity/adoptive leave as your eligibility may depend on the accuracy of this information. Note: You can retrieve your career history information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.
Impact of Covid -19	The Society appreciates that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on researchers and their work will be varied. Please provide a summary of how the pandemic has affected your research activities. (Maximum 500 words) This can include but is not limited to: delays in publishing/submitting a key paper(s) (please note preprints can be included in your publications list), pause on experiments/research plans, reduced ability to work due to additional caring responsibilities.
Applicant Qualifications *	Please list all your qualifications in reverse chronological order. The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence of your academic merit as possible and as appropriate for the funding for which you are applying. Note: You can retrieve your qualification information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.
List your Key and/or Relevant Publications *	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. 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. Most significant publications - Please identify with asterisks (*) up to five publications which you consider to be most significant. For publications arising from large collaborative programmes clearly specify the exact role and contribution made towards large collaborative research programmes that have resulted in multi-authored publications. If your field of research differs in any way from normal conventions, e.g. lead author, first author, and publications in journals being the main gauge of success, please provide a brief explanation at the top of your publication list. If appropriate, give the publisher or where each publication may be obtained, providing a URL if available. Citations for preprints must state "Preprint", the repository name and the articles persistent identifier (e.g. DOI). Do not 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. Note: You can retrieve your publications to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.
Applicant Research Funding *	Please list your current and previous research funding in reverse chronological order. The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence for your academic merit as possible and as appropriate for the funding for which you are applying. Note: You can retrieve your information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.

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

	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.
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. Plain text only Maximum of 250 words
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. 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. The lay summary should be concise, free of jargon and understandable by a lay person. Acronyms should be defined when they are first introduced. Please bear in mind when writing your summary that your application will be reviewed by a cross-disciplinary generalist Committee and therefore place a lot of emphasis on the lay summary. Plain text only Maximum of 250 words
Research Proposal*	Please describe: 1. The nature of your proposed research including aims 2. How your proposal meets the objectives of the scheme. Please indicate the milestones/timescales for the various components 3. A clear description of the research methodologies you will be using for each, different subject area covered 4. Why your proposal is interdisciplinary. Please outline: • The interdisciplinary approach used in the proposal justifying the reason why this is essential for the delivery of your project • How your proposal will combine concepts, theories and methods from various disciplines • Consider how the integration between disciplines could move the research beyond the capabilities of a single-discipline approach • 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 5. How your proposal is innovative. • Potential impact– significance of key advances across the involved fields, potential impact on other research fields.

	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 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. PDF upload only, 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. 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.
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 01/10/2026 – 31/12/2026.
End Date*	Please complete the date in DD/MM/YYYY format. Note the maximum time permitted is 24 months.
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 dedicated to research and quantify how much additional time would be available for research should you be awarded. Please note, this information will need to be confirmed by your Head of Department in their accompanying statement of support. 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.

Data Management and Data Sharing

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.

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:

- What data outputs will be generated by the research that are of value to the public?
- Where and when will you make the data available?
- How will others be able to access the data?
- 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?
- 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.
- How will datasets be preserved to ensure they are of long-term benefit?

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)	Please upload documents related to the following (if applicable): 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. 2. Collection of specimens Any mandatory documents that show: • Specific permission has been obtained from the host country to collect and to export specimens and material • 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.

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.
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.

Financial Details	
General information	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. Applicants must consult with the appropriate financial administrators before completing these details. 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.
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	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. Costs may be requested for the co-applicant.

On costs	Please indicate the funding required for employers on costs e.g. employer's National Insurance contributions and employer's pension contributions. On costs refers to the cost to the university of relieving you of all, or a proportion of, your teaching and administration duties.
Other staff costs	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. Apprenticeship levy costs are not eligible.
Studentships	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. Please note that funding will not be granted without a justification of the feasibility of the project.
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' in the table(s) below.
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.
Justification* for staff and research costs	Please fully justify all requested costs by referring to each budget heading. Funding will not be awarded without justification. 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.

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

(OPTIONAL)

Public Engagement	You can request up to £10,000 for Public Engagement costs as part of the maximum award value of £200,000.
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Justification	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: • aims & objectives of the project and how it will relate to your main APEX proposal ○ <i>What will you do, and is it proportionate and appropriate to your APEX proposal?</i> • who are the public groups or groups you are seeking to reach or involve and why they are the most appropriate and how you intend to reach them ○ <i>Who will you work with? How will you tailor your project plans to their needs and expectations?</i> • how you intend to evaluate the success of the project ○ <i>Consider not only collecting data about size and scope, but also reflecting on if the project achieved its aims and how you might share learning with others.</i> ○ details of the project team and their Public Engagement experience. • a timeline of the project Proposals are particularly encouraged to: • create collaboration between science and arts • reach people that are currently underrepresented in the Society's Public Engagement work, including: • those without a science degree • those from geographically remote locations • those from low-income backgrounds • communities traditionally underrepresented in STEM/social sciences and humanities Text Field, this requires plain text only (Maximum 1000 words).
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.	

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, 09 September 2025.

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.

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 09 September 2025**. 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>

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

Application Submission Process Flow Diagram

