Distinguished International Associates Programme Round 5

Applicant Guidance Notes

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Royal Academy
of Engineering

Introduction

The Royal Academy of Engineering is harnessing the power of engineering to build a sustainable society and an inclusive economy that works for everyone.

In collaboration with our Fellows and partners, we're growing talent and developing skills for the future, driving innovation and building global partnerships, and influencing policy and engaging the public.

Together we're working to tackle the greatest challenges of our age through the following streams:

TALENT & DIVERSITY

We're growing talent by training, supporting, mentoring and funding the most talented and creative researchers, innovators and leaders from across the engineering profession.

We're developing skills for the future by identifying the challenges of an ever-changing world and developing the skills and approaches we need to build a resilient and diverse engineering profession.

INNOVATION

We're driving innovation by investing in some of the country's most creative and exciting engineering ideas and businesses.

We're building global partnerships that bring the world's best engineers from industry, entrepreneurship and academia together to collaborate on creative innovations that address the greatest global challenges of our age.

POLICY & ENGAGEMENT

We're influencing policy through the National Engineering Policy Centre – providing independent expert support to policymakers on issues of importance.

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Programme Overview

Distinguished International Associates Programme

The Distinguished International Associates programme is aimed at supporting excellent international engineers working at the cutting edge of engineering research or innovation, and have existing connections to the UK that they would like to intensify.

Awardees will be offered a grant of **£10,000** to amplify the impact of their collaboration with the UK in an area that aligns with the Academy's strategic priority themes. The grant would enable awardees to develop and strengthen their research, innovation, and policy links to the UK and to improve and deepen links between the UK and their country of residence, through visits, workshops, communication and public engagement activities over a 12 month award period.

The programme aims to develop a broad international network of excellent diverse engineers across countries and disciplines, with research and innovation links to the UK, to work alongside the Academy to enhance progress towards achieving its twin strategic goals. All proposals will have to work towards one or both of:

1. Harnessing the power of engineering to build an inclusive economy that works for everyone

2. Harnessing the power of engineering to build a sustainable society that works for everyone

Participation

Successful applicants will:

- have a commitment to playing an active role as a Distinguished International Associate.

- be ambassadors seeking to inspire and engage peers in building inclusive economies and a sustainable societies, sparking collaboration and communicating the value of these partnerships.

- enhance existing international engineering research and innovation collaborations between the UK and other countries, delivering societal benefit from their research and innovation activities.

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Round 5 Details

Programme Objectives

The programme aims to:

- Establish and strengthen collaborations between the applicant home country, UK, and global partners.

- Build a peer support network of "International Associates" to facilitate international cooperation and support Academy activities within the Round 5 thematic focus: Artificial Intelligence

- Facilitate knowledge exchange to build capacity and talent base in the applicant home country and UK engineering communities.

Round 5 Theme – Artificial Intelligence

The Fifth round of the Distinguished International Associates programme will be open to researchers, academics and engineers working on technologies related to artificial intelligence.

The Academy works to create a sustainable society and inclusive economy that works for everyone. Designing, developing and deploying AI, machine learning, and autonomous systems for the future in service of a sustainable society and inclusive economy is a global endeavour. International partnerships provide valuable routes to gain insights and intelligence, exchange best practice and develop collaborations that address shared priorities.

DIA round 5 will facilitate partnerships between engineers and researchers in the UK and internationally whose work is focused on the development, application and ethics of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and/or autonomous systems.

Potential applicants who are unsure of their work's thematic eligibility will be encouraged to contact the Academy in the first instance.

Why should you apply?

- To become a part of a network of international experts who can contribute to the Royal Academy of Engineering's work, in the UK and internationally, around the safe and ethical development and deployment of artificial intelligence.

- To strengthen bilateral partnerships with exceptional UK-based researchers and engineers.

- To join the Academy's Awardee Excellence Community – an awardee and alumni network of excellent engineers working in all disciplines across the UK and globally.

- As a Distinguished International Associate you will be regarded prestigiously and the award will act as an indicator of excellence which the programme will help to showcase.

Key dates

Open call for applications	Thursday 24 October 2024
Deadline for the submission of proposals	Thursday 12 December 2024, 16:00 GMT
Eligibility checks	December 2024
Review of eligible proposals	January – February 2025
Decision announcement and contracting	February – March 2025
Contract commencement	March 2025
End of contract	March 2026

Awards will begin in March 2025 and run for 12 months until March 2026.

An initial payment of 80% of the total grant will be disbursed upon receipt and acceptance of the initiation report. The final payment of 20% of the total grant will be disbursed at the end of award period, upon receipt and acceptance of the final report and full financial and expenditure report.

Lead applicants will be asked to complete a survey six months into their award which will provide a summary of their activities to be used by the Academy for communications about the programme.

At the end of the contract, a final report will be due two weeks after the project end date. The Academy will offer a template for final reporting and the lead applicant will need to provide a complete financial expenditure report. The Academy may request receipts for any expenses noted in expenditure reports at any time.

Funding

Award value: Successful awardees will receive funding of **£10,000**

Duration: Projects must be for 12 months and must start in March 2025

Number of awards: Up to 12 awards will be made

Eligibility criteria

- All lead applicants must be based outside of the UK.

- The programme is aimed at mid-late career researchers. We anticipate that applicants will already have established an international track record in their discipline, and be recognised as international leaders or emerging leaders in their field. We will make appropriate allowance for applicants who have had career breaks.

- Applicants must be working in an area related to artificial intelligence. This includes, but is not limited to the development, application, and ethics of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and autonomous systems. Please reach out to us if you are unsure if your area of work will be eligible.

- Applicants are expected to have an existing collaboration with the UK, which the award will deepen, in an area that contributes to at least one of the Academy's strategic goals - sustainable society or inclusive economy.

- The programme of activities must have the objective of strengthening collaboration between excellent researchers, innovators and practitioners who are working at the cutting edge of engineering research or innovation.

- Applicants should be affiliated with an organisation, institution or University that can help administer the funding (the Academy cannot send funding to individuals). Please note that, on award offer, non-UK applicants will be required to undertake due diligence checks before the award is confirmed.

- DIA alumni and current awardees will not be eligible to apply to the fifth round of the programme, but can act as collaborators of another lead applicant.

- The proposed activities and collaboration must highlight the value of the strengthened links for their home country's engineering community, in addition to them as individuals and the UK community. There is an expectation that Associates will engage with the Academy in actively promoting and communicating this value. However, applicants should consider how they will innovatively use technology to engage people in these activities.

We recognise that we may not have considered every set of circumstances. If you think you should be eligible but fall outside of this list, please contact us to discuss your particular case.

Cost and funding guidelines

Eligible costs under this scheme

Up to 100% directly incurred activities costs which adhere to the Academy's expenses policy. This will be shared upon award, and is [available on request](#).

- virtual events management and collaboration software subscription

- costs related to event logistics (venue hire, AV hire, catering etc.)

- travel costs and any basic accommodation necessary for activities participants to attend activities (in line with Academy expenses policy)

- dissemination and project specific consumables (printed materials, paper, etc.)

- costs related to training courses, webinars, conferences and similar activities

- professional services, such as translation or expert training services, but only if offered by registered companies or organisations and can be accounted for by providing receipts and copies of invoices.

- Website design and hosting, social media or advertising.

- Reasonable design costs for marketing materials.

- Internet allowance or connectivity equipment(s), where internet access may be a barrier to Associates engagement in virtual activities.

The following costs are NOT eligible:

- Indirect costs, including overheads, administrative or staff costs. For example, salaries or stipends for individual DIA awardees, or administrative interns are **NOT** eligible.

- Purchasing of equipment(s) with a total cost of more than £400.

- Research costs.

- Purchasing of alcohol.

- Any expenditure that only benefits the project team or a single individual.

You will need to provide the rationale and justification for all requested costs in your application form. If you have any affiliation with the providers of any services you are requesting you must detail this in your application.

Beyond the funding

Promotion and support materials

Distinguished Associates will have the opportunity to input into the Associates Network, and may share updates and request space to share upcoming activities or events.

When Associates have exciting news to share, related to their project activities, it can be shared through the Associates Network and the Academy's social media channels to support building their profile.

The Academy will provide toolkits and resources where possible to support Associates in implementing their projects.

If there are other ways we can support our network of associates, we will remain open to suggestions!

Networks and connections

Successful applicants will automatically be enrolled in the [Awardee Excellence Community](#) that brings together awardees from all career stages and disciplines to share their expertise, to collaborate and to contribute new perspectives to the Academy's work. The community will give you the opportunity to meet, learn from and support other awardees beyond your immediate cohort, as well as a broader cross section of Academy Fellows through a programme of events, and opportunities to connect in person and online

Being awarded as part of the fifth round will additionally allow you to collaborate with a cohort of Associates working in the same thematic area, in addition to the wider DIA alumni and awardee network containing excellent international engineers from across disciplines and countries.

Academy staff will also be available to make introductions to individuals and organisations who are part of the Academy's extensive UK and global networks, including our Fellows, that you may be interested in connecting to.

Your commitment

As a lead applicant, you will act as the point of contact for the Academy in relation to all activities included in your grant application.

Updates and coordination: you will provide regular updates and share any challenges at regular engagement calls, arranged by Academy staff. Attending engagement calls (a minimum of two across the award period) is mandatory, in order to provide both an update on project progress, and an opportunity for you to highlight ways that the Academy can support you and your project.

Reporting: You will submit an initiation report at the start of your project, one interim progress report, and a final report on both the finances and achievements at the end of your grant. Your final expenditure report must adhere to the Academy's expenses policy. This will be shared upon award, and is [available on request](#).

Associates will commit to running at least one event, online or in person. The award can be used to support activities such as visits, workshops, communication and public engagement activities hosted in-country that broaden research, innovation and policy links to the UK.

How to apply

All applications must be submitted via the Academy's online Grants Management System (GMS), available here: https://grants.raeng.org.uk/.

All applicants must first register through the system before they can apply. If you have applied to an Academy programme through GMS before, you may already have a GMS account. Please use your existing GMS account if possible or follow the instructions on the Login Page if you cannot remember your username or password from previous application cycles.

Before beginning your application, please ensure approval and support for your proposal from your UK Collaborator. We advise consulting them as soon as possible about a potential application.

We recommend leaving plenty of time to complete the application form ahead of the deadline and thoroughly going through your application prior to submission. While the guidance notes are embedded within the system itself, we recommend you keep this document to hand when completing the application form. Many of the questions have prescribed word limits which are designed to keep your answers focused and indicate the level of detail we require, although there is no requirement to use all of the word limit for every question – please only provide as much detail as you see as relevant.

The application form has five sections and will take approximately 2-3 hours to complete on GMS. More time may be required to gather relevant supporting documentation and prepare answers offline.

After logging into GMS, please select **Distinguished International Associates – Round 5**. This will take you to the 'Instructions' screen.

1. On the Instructions screen, you will see some general instructions on how to use the system, as well as the five sections of the application form: Applicant and organization contact details and documents

2. Applicant background, experience, and excellence

3. Collaborators

4. Programme of activities and budget

5. Lead applicant declaration

If you have any questions concerning the application or the GMS, please contact us.

> **Don't forget to save your work!**
>
> At any stage in the process you can save your work and return to it later. The system will automatically save your work when you change pages, but we recommend that you also save your work manually to avoid loss of data.

You can answer the questions in any order, so you may skip sections and return to them later if you wish. You may prefer to compose your answers offline and copy and paste them into the form.

To submit your application, all sections and all required questions must be completed. Once you have completed all sections and required questions, a 'Submit Application' button will become available at the bottom of the summary page.

Troubleshooting

If you try logging in and the GMS displays the below message, please try clearing your cookies and browser history, closing the window, and opening the page again in a new window.
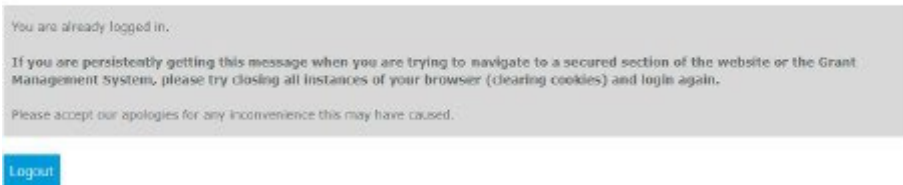
Alternatively, you can try using a different browser or opening your application in an incognito window.

If you are still having issues after trying the above steps to resolve the problem, please contact us.

Application form

Questions with an asterisk (*) next to them are required and must be completed by all applicants.

Applicant and organisation contact details and documents

Question 1 - Applicant details*

The lead applicant will be the main contact person for the Academy throughout the contract if the application is successful.

Question 2 - Organisation details*

Include the name and address of your institution or organisation. Please use the full legal name.

Question 3 - What is your country of work and residence?*

Applications are welcome from all countries outside the UK.

Question 4 – Area of work*

Please provide a short list of words and phrases associated with your area of work. This is to help us assign reviewers appropriately. (Max 20 words)

Applicant background, experience, and excellence

Question 1 – Applicant CV*

Please upload a copy of your CV in PDF or Word document format.

Question 2 – Please upload a letter of support or reference.*

This should be provided by a manager, head of team/department/organisation or other relevant parties (with no conflict of interest) who knows you well enough to provide suitable commentary on your experience and skills, and to endorse you as a Distinguished International Associate. The letter should be on headed paper, a maximum of three pages long and signed by the author.

We accept documents in the following formats: .doc, .pdf, .jpg, .png.

Question 3 – Why do you want to be a Distinguished International Associate?*

Why you are the right person for this programme? You may wish to discuss:

- The aspects of your expertise and experience that will make you a good Distinguished International Associate

- How you will contribute to meeting the programme objectives.

- How you hope to benefit from participation in the programme.

- How you hope to actively engage with the Royal Academy of Engineering through participation in the programme.

(300 words max)

Question 4 – Alignment with thematic focus: artificial intelligence.*

Tell us how your background and experience align with the thematic focus, artificial intelligence, and will be able to add value to the cohort and wider Academy activities in this area. (300 words max)

Question 5 – Have you previously been awarded or acted as a collaborator on any other Academy programmes?

Provide a list of any other grant funding from the Academy that you have directly received, or been a collaborator on. (250 words max)

Collaborators

Question 1 – Collaborator CV*

Please upload a copy of your lead UK collaborator CV in PDF or Word document format.

Question 2 – Lead collaborator expertise and role*

Please tell us about:

- The background, experience and expertise of your lead collaborator. How does their expertise align to the thematic focus and how will it add value to the proposed activities?

- In what ways might your lead collaborator's expertise, connections and networks contribute to achieving the Academy's strategic goals of sustainable society and inclusive economy?

- How will your lead collaborator benefit from the relationship and proposed activities?

(Max 300 words)

Question 3 – Collaborators and their roles

Please name up to six additional collaborators you expect to work on this project with you as part of the core project team and highlight what they will contribute to the project, their expertise, and their discipline. (Max 300 words)

Question 4 – Additional collaborators – Further details

Please provide any further details on how your additional collaborators will add value to the proposed activities. (300 words max)

Question 5 – Your networks and connections*

Please provide details of your networks and connections to organisations which may support and add value to your proposed activities. (Max 300 words)

Question 6 – Collaborations beyond the award period*

Please provide details of how you see your collaborations continuing beyond the award period and the impact they will have. (Max 300 words)

Programme of activities and budget

Question 1 – Objectives*

Please provide details of the three primary objectives you hope to achieve through your programme of activities.

Question 2 – Timeline of activities*

Please populate the timeline of activities template document (downloadable from within the application form) and upload here.

Question 3 – Alignment to programme objectives*

Please detail how your proposed programme of activities meets the DIA programme objectives (see page 5 of these guidance notes). (Max 300 words)

Question 4 – Impact of activities*

Please outline the expected impact of your programme of activities. You may wish to address:

- Who the activities will benefit
- The impact of strengthened links between your home country's engineering community and the UK's engineering community
- How the activities will support the Academy's strategic goal of building inclusive economies and sustainable societies

Question 5 – Budget*

Please detail your proposed budget below, referring to the eligible costs contained in these guidance notes to ensure your costs are eligible. Detail here up to 8 areas of spend, any additional costs can be indicated in the next question. Your costs should total £10,000.

Question 6 – Budget additional comments

Please provide any further costs or comments on your proposed budget. (300 words max)

Declarations

Question 1 – Organisation declaration*

The purpose of the declaration is to confirm that the application is acceptable in principle to the organisation that will administer the funding on behalf of the Applicant, and that it has received all necessary internal authorisations.

These must be obtained in plenty of time, as failure to provide them at the time of submission will, unfortunately, disqualify an otherwise eligible application. **Extensions will not be granted in order to obtain the letters.**

The declaration terms must be printed on headed paper and be signed by an appropriate officer from the Research Grants Office or equivalent (i.e. the body which administers grant applications) of the applicant's institution/university/organisation. A scanned copy or PDF of the letter should be uploaded by the applicant. We do not require a hard copy, and digital signatures are allowed.

A summary of the terms that the declaration must contain is shown below – it is important that the **exact phrasing is used**. Please **copy this table directly** into the declaration:

- The applicant will have an appropriate relationship with the institution/university/organisation that will allow administration of the award for its duration.

- The applicant will be given full access to the facilities, equipment, personnel and funding as required by the application.

- The costs submitted in the application are correct and sufficient to complete the award as envisaged. Any shortfall in funding will be met by the institution/university/organisation.

Please upload as a single PDF.

Question 2 – Applicant declaration*

I confirm here and by submitting this application that:

- All information is accurate at the time of submission, and I will update the Academy of any material changes which may affect the project

- The ideas presented are my own and not plagiarised or containing IP that is not owned by myself, except for that IP that I have express permission to utilise in this way

- All contributions have been appropriately referenced or credited including the use of any online tools such as AI generative tools used in developing my application

- I understand that failure to cite and declare references or sources for material information will result in my application being removed from the process, or the uncorroborated information disregarded

- I understand that The Royal Academy of Engineering will disclose the information submitted in this application to reviewers for the purpose of assessing this application. Any external reviewer we ask to assist us has agreed to keep this information confidential.

- I have the express permission of any individuals whose contact details I have shared as part of this application process, to share these details with the Royal Academy of Engineering for the purposes of administering the application

- I have read and understood the Application Guidance

Question 3 – How did you hear about this scheme?

Please select an option from the list contained in the application form.

Diversity

We are committed to diversity and inclusion and we welcome 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, gender and sexual orientation.

Before you commence your application, you will be asked a few diversity monitoring questions. The answers will not be visible to the reviewers and will not impact your chances of having your application selected. 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.

Academy policies

A full list of Academy operating and grant policies can be found on our policies page.

- Academy's Privacy Notice

- Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- Awardee Expenses Policy is available on request

- Generative AI Policy:

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.

Contact

Please contact the DIA team with any questions at DIAssociates@raeng.org.uk

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