The Alan Turing Institute

Public engagement funding call 2022

Call document

Contents

Summary

The Alan Turing Institute is the UK's national institute for data science and artificial intelligence (AI). The Institute's mission is to advance research in data science and AI to change the world for the better.

By convening the data science and AI community, the Institute currently has three goals:

− **Advance world-class research and apply it to real-world problems**: innovate and develop world-class research in data science and AI that supports next-generation theoretical developments and is applied to real-world problems, generating the creation of new businesses, services, and jobs.

− **Train the leaders of the future**: train new generations of data science and AI leaders with the necessary breadth and depth of technical and ethical skills to match the UK's growing industrial and societal needs.

− **Lead the public conversation**: through agenda-setting research, public engagement, and expert technical advice, drive new and innovative ideas which have a significant influence on industry, government, regulation or societal views, or which have an impact on how data science and AI research is undertaken.

There is huge potential for AI and data science to solve major global issues, such as the climate crisis and public health emergencies, but many of these solutions require public trust and support. We believe that the most effective and inclusive way to garner this is through engaging with the public on these issues, so that together, we can change the world for the better. As a step toward this we are piloting a *Public Engagement Funding Call*, with the aim of:

- Funding researcher-led public engagement projects using varied and creative methods
- Inspiring a diverse future generation of data scientists/STEM researchers and widening participation in the public discourse around AI and data science in society
- Increasing the publics' understanding of both the risks and benefits of AI technologies
- Creating equal and open dialogues with the public to understand needs, wants and priorities for future research, engagement and opportunities in AI and data science

Awards of up to £10,000 will be made to applicants that demonstrate innovation, impact and ambitions that are aligned with the [funding call objectives](#). Applications should be submitted on behalf of a university and the Award will be supported by an Award Lead ([further information below](#)).

Key dates

- Call opens for applications via Flexi-Grant portal on **20 April 2022**
- Application period remains open until **17:00 on 25 May 2022**
- Activity funded by this Award will begin from **20 June 2022**
- Activity funded by this Award will end on **30 November 2022**
- Impact evaluations will be required by **13 March 2023**

Background

Public engagement is a fundamental part of our remit as a national institute to 'lead the public conversation', and we have a key role to provide a neutral and balanced perspective on both the potential risks and benefits of AI and data science methods and technologies.

Currently, perceptions of AI and data science are quite polarised, between hype and dismay in response to negative news coverage and high-profile examples of poor implementation, leading to public distrust and uncertainty around new and innovative technologies which rely on AI and data science.

Such misunderstanding poses a societal risk to the implementation and delivery of these technologies in the UK, and as the national institute we have a major incentive and responsibility to make efforts to address this.

The newly formed Public Engagement Programme has been put in place to deliver activities for a broad and diverse range of stakeholders, using a variety of methods to interact and connect with the UK public in accessible and engaging ways.

This fund aims to empower and support researchers to bolster these efforts, as well as their own research, by leading on their own engagement activities.

Purpose of the Award

This funding opportunity can be used by researchers to:

- Undertake deliberative engagement in order to understand the needs and wants of specific groups their research is likely to affect
- Cocreate activities, tools and research with members of the public
- Increase public understanding around the risks and benefits of data science and AI technologies
- Encourage underrepresented groups to have a voice and participate in data science and AI

- Disseminate knowledge and improve data literacy using innovative and creative methods to non-specialist audiences
- Develop interactive demos or activities that encourage public interest and understanding

Upon completion of the projects as part of this call, further funding may be available to support activities which can be:

- Presented at national events and showcases
- Scaled up in the future
- Feed into other areas of work within the Programme

Scope

We are keen to hear a variety of innovative methods and approaches for delivering public engagement activities and the following activities will not be considered for this particular funding call:

- Lectures and seminars
- Academic workshops
- Sponsorships towards large conferences
- Blogs and articles

If you're not sure if your proposal fits into the scope of this call, please do not hesitate to contact us at publicengagement@turing.ac.uk.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

The Institute's mission is to make great leaps in AI and data science to change the world for the better, and we recognise that to make such great advancements we need to accurately reflect the world's diverse composition and build an inclusive community.

Projects developed using funding from this call should align with the Turing's EDI Strategy. An EDI impact assessment will be required as part of the application, to ensure that any work undertaken by or on behalf of the Institute upholds its values and commitment to achieving equality, diversity, and inclusion across all activities.

We are particularly interested to hear from applicants who consider themselves to be part of a group who are traditionally underrepresented in AI and data science.

Role of the Lead Applicant

Funding will be awarded to the employing university or institution, on behalf of the successful Lead Applicant. It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to obtain agreement in principle to the Award Terms and Conditions from their employer in advance of submitting their proposal. Please download the Award Terms and Conditions from the [application page of the website](#) and submit a letter of support as part of your application.

Successful Lead Applicants will be responsible for the planning, delivery, and final assessment of the projects. They will be encouraged to bring together a small team to support them, however the lead will be ultimately accountable for delivering on project objectives.

As part of this funding opportunity, Lead Applicants are encouraged to sign up to a [Public Engagement Training Workshop](#) organised by the institute. Successful Award Leads will also be invited to take part in a **one-off, one-to-one training session** with a public engagement professional, to help steer their project for maximum impact.

Once projects are underway, Lead Applicants will be expected to maintain good communication with the Public Engagement Programme and provide a progress update after three months.

At the end of the Award period (30 November 2022) Lead Applicants will be asked to submit a project report, detailing the outputs of the project and whether the project met its objectives. Following the Award, an impact assessment will be required on 13 March 2023.

Eligibility

This Funding Call is open to any researchers from a UK university who is eligible for EPSRC funding and an active researcher within the fields of data science or AI.

As training is included in this award, applicants do not need to be highly accomplished in public engagement, however they should be able demonstrate some level of understanding in the activity/scientific field they are proposing and/or previous participation in a similar project.

Funding and resources

Awards will be granted up to a maximum of £10,000 to cover the cost of materials, reasonable expenses, and other resources necessary for successful completion of the project. Further information about what costs are within the scope of this award are included in the costings template and FAQs document which can be downloaded from the [application page of the website](#).

All costings need to be provided in the costings template, which is available on the [application page of the website](#). A completed template is a required upload as part of the application. Please get in touch before submitting the application if you have any uncertainty about the template or eligible costs, as there will be limited time to resolve costing issues after applications close.

Awards will be paid out in full, prior to the Award start date.

Reasonable adjustments and support

The Institute recognises there may be individual circumstances that colleagues at the Institute need to be aware of. The Institute aims to accommodate specific needs and personal circumstances, but are reliant on applicants sharing this information with the Institute. If there is information relevant to your application that the Institute may need to consider when facilitating the review of your application, please contact us to discuss. This should be done early in the process or updated when circumstances change.

If you are successful in your application but require additional support in order to participate, please let us know as early as possible. This may include support with caring responsibilities incurred as a result of the project, specific travel needs, interpreters (such as BSL), translators or another type of support which may require additional funding. Requests for additional funds will not be assessed as part of your application.

We will treat any information you disclose to the Institute as sensitive and will handle it in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. You can find out more information about how the Institute handles your personal data in our [privacy notice](#). Information will only be used to arrange reasonable adjustments or support funds and will not be used to assess your application. The Public Engagement team is happy to discuss personal circumstances with Lead Applicants in advance via publicengagement@turing.ac.uk.

Terms and conditions

Terms and conditions can be downloaded from the [application page of the website](#), as well as an example of the Award Letter you will be asked to sign if your application is successful. Please read the Award Letter before applying, as it cannot be amended for individual circumstances and failing to sign within 19 days of a notification of success may result in the project being terminated.

Application process and timeline

Timeline

	Process	Deadline
Stage 1 Application period	Applications open	20 April 2022
	Applications close	25 May 2022
Stage 2 Assessment period	Offers to successful applicants	1 June 2022
Stage 3 Award period	Award Letters signed	20 June 2022
	Projects commence	20 June 2022
	Official project end	30 November 2022
Stage 4 Evaluation period	Final impact evaluation report	13 March 2023

Process
Applicants should apply through the Institute's Flexi-Grant application portal – accessible on the [Public engagement funding call webpage](#). Prior to starting an application, applicants may be required to create a Flexi-Grant account if they do not have one already.

Applicants may wish to review the FAQs prior to starting their application. Applications must be submitted on Flexi-Grant by 17:00 GMT on 25 May 2022.

Applications must include a letter confirming institutional support from the Pro-vice chancellor (Research) or equivalent, a data science and/or AI institute/centre lead, or a suitable senior university representative.

Applicants will be asked to provide information about how their project meets each of the selection criteria listed below.

Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be reviewed by a selection panel consisting of members of the Institute's Public Engagement Working Group. Responses included as part of each application form will be assessed by the review panel against the criteria below, and these should be considered when writing an application. All criteria are essential. The review panel's decision is final and cannot be appealed but feedback will be given on request.

Criterion	Weighting
Robust proposal and realistic delivery plan	30%
Alignment to objectives	30%
Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and demonstration of how it will be embedded across all project activities	20%
Creativity and innovation	20%

Application checklist

Applications and supporting documents will be submitted via Flexi-grant. Materials and information required are:

- Project plan (main application)
- Impact plan (main application or supporting document)
- Costings template (supporting document, template provided)
- Letter of support from university or institution (supporting document)

Contact details

For any questions about the Award or completing the application on the Flexi-Grant system, please contact us at publicengagement@turing.ac.uk.