

Call for Turing-sponsored Pilot Projects 2019

Overview

We are seeking applications for The Alan Turing Institute's Turing-sponsored Pilot Projects.

This is an opportunity for academics to develop new research ideas aligned with the Turing priorities. The expectation is that successful, novel Pilot Projects will pave the way to substantial, inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional programmes at the Turing.

Pilot Projects will be for twelve months and should not exceed £100k. We are looking to fund 5-10 Projects. PIs can apply for one Pilot Project only and may not be a Co-I on another. Successful PIs will be automatically named Turing Fellows. Turing Fellows are academics with a proven track record in scholarly research in fields that are in the remit of the Turing Institute and whose development would be significantly enhanced through stronger ties to the Turing network. It is expected that all Turing Fellows will initiate and contribute to local Turing-related activities at Southampton, for example, by speaking at the quarterly Turing meetup, or by taking part in workshops, datathons, and other events, in order to strengthen the local Data Science community and its interdisciplinary fabric.

Turing-sponsored Pilot Projects are offered a multitude of benefits:

- The opportunity to collaborate with researchers from several disciplines and join Turing's interest groups
- The opportunity to engage with industry, government and the third sector, leveraging Turing's position as a national institute
- Access to a team of University of Southampton and Turing software engineers and data scientists (there is a cost associated with this)
- Access to computer resources including cloud credits, GPU cluster, high-performance computing and local IT services
- Access to seed funding and workshop funding
- Support from the Institute's research facilitation team with bids for externally funded Turing collaborative projects
- A physical collaborative space in central London with no disciplinary boundaries

Note that this is not a scheme to fund large bodies of work that are in the remit of UKRI. Instead, the aim is to give applicants the means to develop Pilot Projects that will lead to proposals for external funding.

The Turing Programme Directors and the Turing University Leads (TULs) will work with successful applicants to identify synergies with programmes and projects at the Institute, potential areas for collaboration (including industry and public sector), and opportunities for external funding.

Current Turing-sponsored Pilot Projects at Southampton can be found [here](#).

Background

The University of Southampton became a University Partner of The Alan Turing Institute in 2018. Turing-related activities are coordinated by the [Web Science Institute \(WSI\)](#). Prof Elena Simperl and Prof Peter W. F. Smith are the Turing University Leads (TULs). Prof Dame Wendy Hall is the University

representative on the Turing University Partners' Board and Susan Davies is the University Liaison Manager (ULM). The Turing team visited Southampton on 15 June 2018 and the slides detailing our partnership are available [here](#) for internal use.

The [Alan Turing Institute](#) is the UK's national Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The Institute aims to continuously grow its research activities. To this end, it is inviting applications for Turing-sponsored Pilot Projects from partner Universities to further develop and expand on the Institute's scientific objectives.

The University submitted an [Expression of Interest](#) and a [Research Roadmap](#) to become a member of The Alan Turing Institute. Candidates are encouraged to use these documents as a starting point to develop their project proposals and describe how their ideas and plans fit with this vision. However, we are also open to novel projects that advance other areas not covered by these documents, as long as they are within the [remit of the Turing](#). We would welcome applications with a strong interdisciplinary focus.

Process and important dates

The Call will be circulated widely across the University. Associate Deans (Research) of all Faculties will be invited to put forward a ranked list of applications to a Panel, consisting of the TULs and the Turing University Partners' Board representative, who will convene to put together a University-wide shortlist, which will be forwarded to the Turing for the final decision. The criteria for shortlisting are described below. Details about the application process and the documents required are also provided below.

Important dates

- 14 June 2019: [Internal](#) deadline for applications
- 5 July 2019: Faculties submit ranked lists of Pilot Project candidates to ULM (Susan Davies)
- 12 July 2019: Panel produces shortlist and communicates internal decisions to Faculties and the Turing Institute
- 26 July 2019: [Deadline](#) for shortlisted candidates to submit applications to the Turing Institute
- 23 August 2019: Turing Institute informs Southampton Panel on final decisions
- 26 August 2019: TULs inform applicants
- 1 October 2019: Pilot Projects start

Eligibility

- PI (and, if applicable, Co-Is) must already hold contracts of employment with the University of Southampton, which covers the duration of their Pilot Project.
- If applying for a time 'buy-out', they must ensure that this is compliant with the conditions of their research grants.

Selection criteria

The following criteria will be considered in reviewing applications:

- Scholarly importance, originality and impact of proposed research
- Compatibility with the Institute's strategy and ability to help the Turing Institute fulfil its mission
- Past research record of the applicant(s) and promise of future scholarly contribution
- Clarity of justification for resources that describes the impact of the seed corn funding

- Future sustainability of the project via external funding from industry, research council and/or other third parties
- Interdisciplinarity; and the potential for collaboration across partner universities

Upon shortlisting at Southampton, applications will be reviewed at the Turing Institute by a Panel that includes the Turing Programme Directors. Awards will be determined by merit, considering the criteria listed above and ensuring a balance across member Universities.

Submitting your application:

Applicants should apply through The Alan Turing Institute's [Flexigrant](#) application portal. Prior to starting an application applicants will be required to register with the system. It is **important to note** that Project proposals should be discussed with your Deputy Head of School before starting an application.

Important: Applicants *should not submit their application to the Turing Institute* until they have been notified that they have been shortlisted. Instead, applicants should download their application and send this to Susan Davies (ULM) by the internal deadline of **Friday 14 June 2019**. Applicants are also asked to inform Susan Davies of their intention to apply for a Pilot Project as soon as possible after the Call has been circulated.

Project applications must include:

- PI's name, position, faculty, school/department
- Name(s) of Co-I(s) (if applicable), position, faculty, school/department
- Short CVs of the applicant(s) (max. 2 A4 pages each in PDF format)
- Title of the project
- Project proposal (no longer than 4 A4 pages in PDF format), including
 - scientific background and motivation, and fit to Turing's research challenge areas for research in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence
 - anticipated outputs and impact of this work as they relate to the University, the Turing, and the wider Data Science and AI research landscape
 - evidence of core expertise required to support the programme
 - intentions for collaborating with others outside of the University; for example, Turing researchers, industry partners, government, etc.
 - prospects for continuation of the project beyond initial funded period
- Justification of resources, including FEC costing for the entire duration of the Pilot Project. However, the funding cannot cover overheads. Funds can be used flexibly for the following:
 - PI and, if applicable, Co-I salary contribution
 - PDRA and Research Software Engineer salary
 - Travel and subsistence
 - Consumables
 - £3k should be included in the JoR to cover the cost of a promotional video for the Turing-Southampton website.

All applications must be costed by the University's Finance Research Hub, with the exception of the Faculty of Social Sciences. 10 working days are required to complete the costings.

Contacts: Finance Research Hub finrhub@soton.ac.uk; Tel: 25690; Faculty of Social Sciences:
Fssfin@soton.ac.uk

Further information

The [Alan Turing Institute at Southampton SharePoint site](#) has additional information and resources.

See the [Turing-Southampton website](#) for information on all activities at Southampton.

Contact Susan Davies (University Liaison Manager) sdd1@soton.ac.uk if you have any questions relating to your application.