

Alchemy Frontier Fund

Funding type	Grant
Total fund	£2,500,000
Max award (100% FEC)	£1,250,000
Opening date	9 th June 2025
Closing date	17:00, Friday 12 th September 2025
Interview date	Week commencing 8 th December 2025
Outcomes	Week commencing 15 th December 2025

Brief outline of funding call

The Alchemy Frontier Fund represents our commitment to supporting pioneering, collaborative research at the AI-Chemistry interface. This funding call will enable ambitious projects of between 1–2 years duration with funding to cover researcher time, travel, and consumables.

All applicants must be eligible to receive this funding as per [EPSRC criteria](#) and must be employed at a UK research organisation that is eligible to receive EPSRC funding. The full economic cost (100% FEC) of your project can be up to £1,250,000. Alchemy will fund 80% of the FEC (up to £1,000,000).

Who is eligible?

All members of the applicant team must be eligible to receive funding as per [EPSRC criteria](#) and must be employed at an eligible UK research organisation. ***Individual applicants can only be included in one application in this call*** and will be checked as part of the initial eligibility screening.

Industry involvement is not a requirement, but it is encouraged. There can be a maximum of 5 industry partners per application and matched funding, or in-kind contribution, is welcomed.

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all applicants and encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers. We will seek to support flexible ways of working where requested. We expect to see appropriate distributed scientific leadership across teams, and successful grants will be published with all applicant names included. However, for administrative purposes (*e.g.*, contracting, finance monitoring and reporting), we will require ***a designated lead contact per institution, one of whom must take overall responsibility for these administrative aspects***. These contacts must be selected from the applicants (*i.e.*, not university administrators) and can be noted via the team details section within the application form.

Funding available

The full economic cost (FEC) of your project can be up to £1,250,000. Alchemy will fund 80% of the FEC amount up to a maximum of £1,000,000. Alchemy has a total budget of £2,500,000 for this funding round and expects to fund around 2 – 4 projects.

What are we looking for?

The scope of work for the Alchemy Frontier Fund is broad, with the aim to foster new and ambitious ideas and collaborations that operate at the interface between AI and chemistry. Proposals should also demonstrate potential impact for the wider community.

It is essential that your application:

- Demonstrates scientific excellence
- Aligns with the mission of the [Alchemy Hub](#).
- Demonstrates the development or application of AI to a chemistry related problem.

What we will fund

Applications to the Alchemy Frontier Fund can come from academics at eligible institutions or a consortium of academics and industry partners. We anticipate funding the following types of activity within this call:

- Research staff costs for up to 2 years.
- Pro-rata travel and consumables budget of £5,500 per PDRA year (that is, an average of £5,500 per PDRA year). Additional travel and consumables budget can be requested, but will only be awarded at the discretion of the Alchemy Hub and value for money will be an assessment criterion.
- Software licences & small equipment (up to £10,000 inc. VAT) which must be costed from the assigned pro-rata travel and consumables budget.

If you are unsure about the eligibility of your project idea, please contact funding@alchemy.ac.uk or attend one of our funding drop-in sessions to discuss your ideas prior to submission.

Included below are some example PDRA costings (at 100% FEC) with pro-rata travel and consumables budget. Please contact your local research finance team(s) for accurate costings at your institution(s).

PDRAs	Duration	PDRA Funding	Travel & Consumables	Total
1	12 months	£148,000	£5,500	£153,500
1	24 months	£295,000	£11,000	£306,000
2	24 months	£589,000	£22,000	£611,000
3	24 months	£884,000	£33,000	£917,000
4	24 months	£1,179,000	£44,000	£1,223,000

What we will not fund

The following will **not** be funded through the Alchemy Frontier Fund:

- Contributions to directly allocated staff time for any applicants – we cannot cover these costs in this funding call, and it will be a requirement for the applicants to obtain appropriate approval from their institutions that these costs are waived for the whole applicant team.
- Contract extensions on existing projects.
- Equipment costing more than £10,000 (inc. VAT).
- Fees or stipends associated with postgraduate students.
- Open access publishing costs.
- Basic computer equipment for staff typically provided by the host organisation.
- Bids solely requesting equipment and/or travel and subsistence.

How to apply

Applications should be completed using the application form available via our [website](#). This should be emailed to funding@alchemy.ac.uk by 17:00, Friday 12th September 2025. This is a two-stage application process, with the highest ranked applications from stage one being taken forward to interview.

There will be a webinar to launch the Alchemy Frontier Fund on **Wednesday 18th June at 1pm** where further information will be provided. There will also be regular drop-in sessions with the Alchemy Hub team to provide further support and guidance as proposals are developed.

Drop-in sessions

Date	Registration link
Friday 20 th June, 11 am – 12 noon	Please register here to attend these sessions
Friday 27 th June, 11 am – 12 noon	
Friday 4 th July, 11 am – 12 noon	
Friday 11 th July, 11 am – 12 noon	
Friday 18 th July, 11 am – 12 noon	
Friday 25 th July, 11 am – 12 noon	
Friday 8 th August, 11am -12 noon	
Friday 22 nd August, 11am – 12 noon	
Friday 5 th September, 11am – 12 noon	

The application form has the following sections, and you should fill out the information within the template word document:

- Project title
- Project description
- Project alignment with the mission of the [Alchemy Hub](#)
- Costing information and justification
- Core team details
- Team track record
- Industry Letter(s) of Support (if applicable)
- EDI monitoring form (information not shared)

Completed application forms and any supporting documentation should be emailed to funding@alchemy.ac.uk by **17.00 on Friday 12th September**. All applicant team members should be cc'd in the email.

Following the submission deadline, your application cannot be changed. If your application does not follow the outlined guidance, it is likely to be rejected.

How we will assess your application

Initial eligibility screening will be conducted by the Alchemy Hub Team, focusing on basic criteria such as costing eligibility and identifying individual applicants named on multiple funding applications. The [Alchemy Leadership Team](#) will then ensure that all remaining proposals align with the Hub's overarching mission.

Following this internal screening stage, an external review panel will shortlist up to 10 projects for interview by the end of October 2025. Interviews will take place in early December 2025. Applicants selected for interview will be asked to provide additional information for their presentation. Interviews will be held online; the duration and specific requirements will be confirmed with the interview invitations.

The review criteria used for application shortlisting will be as follows:

1. **Quality and fit of the proposed research:** A well-defined research challenge; awareness of the current state-of-the-art and how this will be moved forward by the proposed project; fit with the mission of Alchemy to transform the AI-chemistry landscape.
2. **Potential for impact:** Research leading to advancements at the AI-chemistry interface, including but not limited to new applications of AI with the potential to transform chemistry research, new software or hardware development (noting the limited budget available for equipment), improved quality and access to data, new methods used in or transferred to industry. A clear route to impact beyond the funding duration.
3. **Interdisciplinarity:** Aligned with the Alchemy mission, research should look beyond a single discipline and be focused on the AI-chemistry interface.
4. **Ability to deliver:** Feasibility of the proposal within the resources and timeline requested, as well as technical expertise and knowledge within the applicant team.

In addition, data generated by projects funded through this call should adhere to the FAIR data principles and be made available openly as far as possible in accordance with [UKRI guidelines](#). A data management plan may be requested at the interview stage.

The external review panel will rank proposals upon completion of the interview stage, and their recommendations will be reviewed and approved by the Alchemy Leadership Team with an EPSRC delegate in observance. We have ensured that we have followed the [UKRI principles of assessment and decision making](#) when designing this assessment process.

The Alchemy Hub reserves the right to revise the assessment process and timeline should the need arise. Likewise, budgets are indicative and assume strong demand and high proposal quality.

Alchemy Frontier Fund Timeline

w/c 9 th June 2025	Call opens
12 th September 2025	Call closes at 17.00
w/c 15 th September 2025	Eligibility checks by Alchemy Hub Management Team
w/c 29 th September 2025	Review of application alignment with Alchemy Mission
w/c 27 th October 2025	Shortlisting of projects for Interview

w/c 3 rd November 2025	Interview invitations and additional questions disseminated
24 th November 2025	Responses to additional questions deadline
w/c 8 th December 2025	Online Interviews with External Panel
w/c 15 th December 2025	Panel meeting and final funding recommendations
w/c 15 th December 2025	Applicants contacted regarding funding outcomes
January 2026 – June 2026	Contract preparation and signing
1 st September 2026	Final start date for projects
31 st August 2028	Final completion date for projects
30 th September 2028	Final invoice claim submission

Publication of outcomes

Alchemy will contact all applicant team members with the outcome of their applications, as well as publishing all successful outcomes on our [website](#). For successful proposals, an agreed project summary and details of the project team will be published on our website, specific work package details will not be published.

Reporting Structure

Reporting will be required at two key stages: a mid-point report at the halfway stage of the project and a final report to be submitted no later than 3 months after project completion. The designated lead applicant (see above) will be responsible for adhering to this. In addition, quarterly financial updates must be provided, clearly outlining expenditure incurred; invoices can be submitted following this financial reporting. As part of the dissemination of outcomes, PDRAs and/or academic leads involved in the project will be expected to present their findings at Alchemy Hub meetings, where all funded projects will be showcased. A standard reporting template will be shared in due course to support the preparation of these submissions.

Personal Data

Alchemy will be required to collect personal information to manage application selection and for reporting to external funders, EPSRC. All personal data will be handled in line with EPSRC [data protection](#) and [privacy policies](#).