



SCHMIDT SCIENCE FELLOWS

2026 Guidance for Nominating Partners



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Our Fellowship

Our vision is a world where interdisciplinary science flourishes without limit, driving innovation and accelerating discoveries to benefit the world.

Our Mission

Our mission is to change how science is done. Working with the scientific community, we want to help break down barriers to interdisciplinary science and accelerate positive impacts for global society.

To help scientists solve bigger problems faster we are identifying, developing, and amplifying the next generation of science leaders. Through our Fellowship, we are building a community of scientists and supporters of interdisciplinary science and leveraging this network to drive sector-wide change.

Schmidt Science Fellows is an initiative of [Schmidt Sciences](#), delivered in partnership with the [Rhodes Trust](#).

Why Interdisciplinary Science?

Global challenges cannot be addressed by one discipline alone. By bringing together different perspectives, ideas, and skills, interdisciplinary science broadens our view, enhancing our ability to innovate and solve complex problems facing science and society.

The Fellowship Experience

Our Fellowship enables the world's best-emerging scientists to pivot from their PhD discipline and pursue their goals through bold interdisciplinary research.

Placement: Fellows pursue a postdoctoral placement at a world-class research environment that provides optimal support to develop their interdisciplinary science.

Community: Fellows join the vibrant, lifelong community at the heart of Schmidt Science Fellows, where they find the resilience, support, collaboration, and constructive challenge essential for success.

Mentoring: Fellows benefit from one-to-one mentoring with the experienced and internationally accomplished senior interdisciplinary scientists who make up our Academic Council.

Leadership: Fellows accelerate their personal and professional development through our bespoke [Science Leadership Program](#). Fellows will build the skills, experience, and networks necessary to become interdisciplinary science leaders.

Our [Fellows](#) are trailblazers, harnessing the potential of interdisciplinary science to accelerate discovery. To learn more about our program and our Fellows, please see the following links:

[Science Needs to Change – the Schmidt Science Fellows Vision and Mission](#)
[Fellowship Research Placement](#)
[Who is a Schmidt Science Fellow?](#)

The Opportunity for Schmidt Science Fellows

Our Fellows:

- Receive a personal stipend of **US\$110,000 per year** for up to two years of postdoctoral study **in a different area from their PhD**, at any approved location worldwide.
- Build a global network through our [Science Leadership Program](#), a bespoke professional development curriculum delivered across three week-long residential convenings and a rich set of virtual offerings.
- Benefit from personalized mentoring delivered by **experienced international interdisciplinary science leaders** to develop as **scientific and societal thought leaders**.
- Join a **lifelong community of exemplary interdisciplinary scientists**.
- Receive unique **scientific freedom** to pursue **ambitious research goals, take risks, and have bold ideas**.

Who Are We Looking For?

- Brilliant minds in **natural sciences, math, engineering, and computing** with a commitment to **interdisciplinary science**.
- **Curious and creative scientists** who are interested in broadening their horizons by **pivoting away from their PhD research area** and pursuing a challenging and rewarding period of study in an alternative research discipline with world-leading scientists.
- **Academically excellent, risk-positive**, early-career researchers who can demonstrate a commitment to **ambitious, high-impact science**.
- **Future leaders** with the potential and character to lead teams and **unlock transformative discoveries in the future**.
- Talented individuals from a wide range of scientific disciplines who are motivated to **increase the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration**.

Eligibility

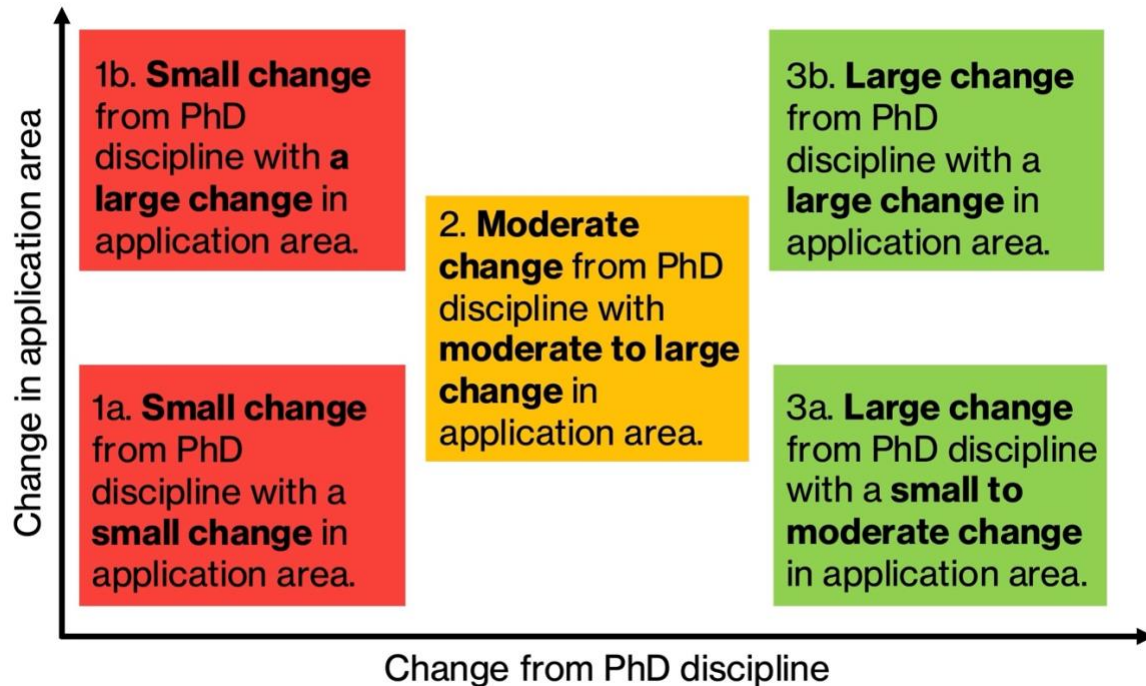
Your nominees must be:

- **Studying for a PhD** in natural sciences (Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences and Physics), Engineering, Mathematics, Computing – or any of the sub-disciplines, at one of our nominating partner institutions. Individuals on clinical track MD-PhD or Veterinary-PhD programs are not eligible.
- **Expected to complete all requirements for the conferral of their PhD between May 15, 2025, and June 30, 2026.**
- Able to start their Fellowship in **July 2026** or **October 2026**, available from **April 2026 to July 2027** to attend virtual onboarding activities, and from **October 2026** to attend in-person convenings.

The Interdisciplinary Pivot

- The shift in research focus or **interdisciplinary pivot** is central to our mission. It can be categorized by change - from the PhD discipline and in the research application area (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Categorizing the disciplinary pivot



- Proposals requiring candidates to **immerse themselves fully in a new discipline from their current expertise** and to **address different or broader questions than those posed during their PhD** are aligned most closely with our Program and will be **valued most highly** (Categories 3a & 3b).
- Proposals with less ambitious changes in discipline and application are valued less (Category 2).
- Proposals in sub-disciplines closely related to the PhD are not acceptable, even if there is a large change in the application area (Categories 1a and 1b).
- We do not allow proposals that represent an incremental or logical progression from your PhD or those which attempt to cover multiple disciplines where only a superficial understanding of each new area is likely to be gained.
- The pivot should enable a Fellow to achieve a scientific goal that is not possible while continuing their current course, allowing them to overcome a scientific challenge using different approaches or perspectives.
- Please watch our animation, [Your Interdisciplinary Pivot](#), explaining the pivot for additional guidance.
- Proposed pivots must be to the natural sciences (Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth Sciences), Engineering, Mathematics, or Computing or any sub-disciplines of these subjects.**
- Pivots to the social sciences are outside the scope of the Schmidt Science Fellowship.

Selection Criteria

Your nominees will be judged against the following criteria:

Intellect



Extraordinary Achievement

Clear record of academic achievement of the highest quality in the sciences and an extraordinary degree of intelligence.



Scientific Curiosity

High degree of intellectual curiosity combined with energy and creativity; a record of continuous innovation and/or use of new technologies.

Programmatic Fit



Alignment with the Program

Commitment to pursuing a year or more of postdoctoral study in a field different from your PhD discipline. A belief that interdisciplinary science and taking appropriate scientific risks are important components of discovery.



Collaborative Spirit

Value the power of bringing people and perspectives together and have a track-record of effective collaboration with diverse team members.

Leadership



Character and Leadership

Genuine and demonstrable potential for science leadership; perseverance, a moral compass, and a galvanizing force of personality.



Global Ambition for Social Good

Driven by the need to use your talent to make a positive difference in society and the world.

To learn more about the kind of candidates we are looking for, please visit our website. We recommend you view our Fellow profiles at <https://schmidtsciencefellows.org/fellows/>

Timeline

Jan – May, 2025	Nominations: We invite institutions to select their candidates and submit their details by the nomination deadline of May 19, 2025 . <i>We will provide further instructions on how to register the names and email addresses of your selected candidates in early 2025.</i>
May 8 – May 29, 2025	Preliminary Information Open: Candidates must enter their preliminary information by the deadline of May 29, 2025 . Once the candidate has completed this section, they can access the application form.
May 8 – Jul 14, 2025	Application Open: Candidates must complete the application form and submit their full applications by the application deadline of July 14, 2025 .
Jul 14, 2025	Full Application Deadline: Candidates must submit their full applications by this date.
Aug – Oct, 2025	Academic Review: Expert reviewers (leading researchers from the broad scientific discipline in which the candidate will receive their PhD) assess submitted applications to identify exceptional candidates for progression.
Nov 2025	Shortlisting of Finalists: Candidates will be informed about the outcomes of Academic Review and the Final Selection interviews will be scheduled.
Jan 2026	Final Selection Interviews: Senior figures from across science, business, and society review applications and interview Finalists (online).
Mar 2026	Final Decisions: Schmidt Science Fellows Board meet to determine the 2026 cohort of Schmidt Science Fellows.
Apr 2026	Formal Announcement and Onboarding: The 2026 cohort of Schmidt Science Fellows are publicly announced. Fellows then work together with our Academic Council to determine the optimal host laboratory for their research placement.
July – Oct, 2026	Fellowship Placements Begin – The 2026 Schmidt Science Fellows start to engage with the Program team, Academic Council mentors and other members of their cohort, commence their research placements, and join their first Science Leadership Meeting.

Next Steps for Nominating Partners

Please can you:

- Confirm your organization's interest in nominating candidates to the 2026 competition and that administrative checks will be carried out to ensure the good standing of your candidates within your organization using [this link](#), which we also shared with you by email.
- Share the opportunity and open it to your entire Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduate student community. To assist with this, we are sharing a one-page document, **2026 Call for Applications**, for you to distribute.
- Ensure your nominees:
 - have a genuine desire to pivot from their PhD,
 - meet the eligibility criteria,
 - are well aligned with our selection criteria,
 - are in good standing with your organization,
 - are, wherever possible, from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and expertise.
- Highlight our commitment to equality of opportunity for all candidates.
- Support your candidates where possible, with general guidance and mentoring on writing research proposals and personal statements, managing letters of recommendation, and preparing for interviews.
- **We will provide further instructions on how to register the names and email addresses of your selected candidates in due course, but in the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.**

Contacts and Further Information

Schmidt Science Fellows Selection Team:

Dr. David McAllister - Director of Selection and Outreach

Dr. Abby Guillermo - Admissions Manager

Dr. Fiona Hamey - Admissions Manager

Dr. Chloe Hutton - Admissions Manager

For specific inquiries please email: nominations@schmidtsciencefellows.org

Please note the Selection Team is based in the UK.

For more information, see the links below:

Website: schmidtsciencefellows.org

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/-schmidt-science-fellows/>

Instagram: @schmidt_science_fellows

Facebook: @schmidtsciencefellows

