



# SCHMIDT SCIENCE FELLOWS

## 2024 Guidance for Nominating Partners



Schmidt Science Fellows, in partnership with the Rhodes Trust  
[www.schmidtsciencefellows.org](http://www.schmidtsciencefellows.org)

## Our Fellowship

Our vision is a world where interdisciplinary science flourishes without limit, accelerating discoveries to benefit the world, and driving innovation that improves quality of life for all.

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

We believe the best scientists should draw insights from across numerous disciplines, be able to apply new techniques, and possess a broad worldview informed by the intersections between science and society. This is the space we work in. Schmidt Science Fellows are pioneers, trailblazers, and risk-takers. Our Fellows enjoy unparalleled intellectual and scientific freedom and membership of a supportive, lifelong community that provides a safe place to take scientific risks and push the boundaries of science.

Fellows receive a personal stipend of \$100,000 a year (for up to two years, a total of up to \$200,000 of support during their Fellowship) and are supported to develop the skills and perspectives needed to become future leaders in science and society. Fellows pursue a postdoctoral placement at a world-leading laboratory, anywhere in the world, working in a different discipline to that of their PhD. During the first year as a Fellow, they participate in a varied and challenging Global Meeting Series that introduces new research ideas, techniques, and questions, in addition to a tailored training program including communication, leadership and management skills. Our Fellows also benefit from a personalized mentoring program, providing professional development support from experienced and internationally accomplished scientists, and at the completion of the Fellowship Year, join our Senior Fellows community of alumni for ongoing support, collaboration, interaction, and programming opportunities.

Indeed, the Fellowship is the beginning of membership of a lifelong community of Schmidt Science Fellows, our partners and supporters; all of whom are committed to furthering interdisciplinary science to benefit the world.

Schmidt Science Fellows is an initiative of Schmidt Futures, delivered in partnership with the Rhodes Trust. Announced by Eric and Wendy Schmidt in 2017, our community now includes five cohorts of 113 current and Senior Fellows. Our Senior Fellows are already progressing to positions in academia, not-for-profit organizations, government labs, and start-up companies. Senior Fellows are actively engaged with our current Fellows, sharing their experience and expertise as interdisciplinary scientists.

We have a range of materials and content available that explains and explores the Schmidt Science Fellows mission and introduces the background, science, and motivations of some of 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?](#)

## Our Admissions Process

Applications to Schmidt Science Fellows are by invitation only, following candidate nomination by their PhD awarding institution. For the 2024 cohort, we will work in partnership with around 100 of the world's leading science, technology, and engineering institutions to identify the highest quality candidates.

Each partner organization is allocated a specific quota of applications and must confirm their intent to nominate candidates for the 2024 competition as outlined below.

We appreciate that each partner organization will have their own internal process to identify its most competitive candidates as nominees.

However, we request that:

1. The Fellowship is **advertised across all relevant departments** and the process be **open to all eligible students** across your entire Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) graduate community. *Candidates can be working in any STEM discipline, but please note if your nominees are working in very similar areas, they will likely be in direct competition with each other during our Academic Review.*
2. There is a **robust internal evaluation process** in place to ensure potential nominees meet the candidate eligibility criteria and are well-aligned with our selection criteria.
3. Where possible, you provide **additional support** to the candidates throughout the admissions cycle – *for example providing access to senior faculty and/ or student support associations for general guidance and mentoring on topics such as research proposal writing, construction of personal statements, managing letters of recommendation and preparing for interviews.*
4. You conduct relevant **administrative checks** for all nominees to be assured they are in good standing with your organization.<sup>1</sup>

We will provide nominating partner contacts with a set of unique authorization codes that should be issued to selected nominees. Each code allows one nominee to access our online application portal. Ahead of the portal opening we will offer a series of webinars that will be open to all nominees and nominating organizations to provide further guidance and context around the application process.

The application portal will open on **12 May 2023**. Nominees will then have until **1 June 2023** to register their contact details and provide some initial information relating to their areas of research.

Once this initial information has been submitted, candidates will gain access to the full application. Candidates then have until **17 July 2023** to complete their full application. Additional and updated guidance notes will be provided via the application portal to assist all candidates in preparing their applications – we recommend they pay close attention to these and do not assume the content requested will match applications from previous years.

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<sup>1</sup> Good standing is taken to mean that a candidate has no past or current sanctions on their record and is not subject to any current disciplinary investigations (relating to either their academic performance or conduct) which may bring the program into disrepute. Please contact [nominations@schmidtsciencefellows.org](mailto:nominations@schmidtsciencefellows.org) for further information.

Applications will consist of details of academic history, including transcripts, current CV with details of relevant publications, at least three (but no more than five) letters of recommendation, a personal statement outlining their motivations, a brief description of their PhD research, a proposal outlining their future research plans, and three short outlines of potential labs<sup>2</sup> in which they may carry out this research.

## Candidate Requirements

We are looking for the brightest minds in the natural sciences, mathematics, engineering, and computing who are interested in broadening their horizons, pivoting away from their PhD research area and pursuing a challenging and rewarding period of study in an alternative discipline with world-leading scientists.

Schmidt Science Fellows are encouraged and supported to take an ambitious scientific risk when considering their postdoctoral placement. A candidate's proposed research pivot (change in area of research) should represent a genuine and innovative disciplinary departure from their PhD studies, with a clear goal towards gaining new skills in a new area and establishing field-leading interdisciplinary lines of research with potential for high reward and societal impact.

Research placements are not restricted to any group of institutions. Schmidt Science Fellows may choose to complete their Placement in a group of their choice, subject to Program approval and assurance that the host organization meets the Fellow's individual training and research needs. The Program provides advice and support to all selected Fellows in making their final choice of Placement location prior to an approval process. This is a unique opportunity to study in a world-class lab anywhere in the world and candidates are encouraged to consider the unique freedom, flexibility, and global outlook this opportunity provides.

Schmidt Science Fellows are expected to become science leaders and should demonstrate a keen interest in harnessing interdisciplinarity and interacting with wider society. Candidates must possess the drive to tackle some of the world's most pressing problems and the personality to lead, inspire, and galvanize cross-disciplinary collaborations to accelerate discovery leading to impactful solutions.

We ask that you consider gender balance amongst your nominees and highlight our commitment to equality of opportunity for **all** candidates. Applications from individuals are encouraged regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, parental status, marital or civil partner status, race, color, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion or belief.

Please note, the application and selection process as well as the delivery of the Schmidt Science Fellows program is only available in English and all engagement with the program must be in English.

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<sup>2</sup> We require a flexible approach towards placements and candidates will be expected to consider at least three options. All placements are subject to discussion and mentorship with our Academic Council, and approval by program leadership. Candidates should not assume that any pre-existing position will be automatically approved. We **do not** require candidates to have contacted any of these potential host labs (although they may choose to do so), and we **do not** require them to have secured a position, or offer of a position, in any of these labs.

## Eligibility

In order to be eligible for nomination to the Schmidt Science Fellows application process, candidates must meet the following requirements<sup>3</sup>:

- Have conducted their graduate degree in the natural sciences (Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth Sciences), Engineering, Mathematics, or Computing – and all sub-disciplines therein.
- Expect to complete all of the requirements for the conferral of their PhD in one of these fields between **15 May 2023** and **30 June 2024**.
- Be available for the entire period of the 2024 program, from April 2024 to November 2025 including onboarding activities, attendance of the Global Meeting Series and a Senior Fellows event.
- Be nominated by a designated senior official at one of our nominating partner institutions.

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<sup>3</sup> Any questions about eligibility or accommodations for extraordinary circumstances should be directed to: [nominations@schmidtsciencefellows.org](mailto:nominations@schmidtsciencefellows.org)

## Selection Criteria

Applications for the Schmidt Science Fellows program 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

Interest in pursuing 12-24 months of postdoctoral study in a field different from the applicant's PhD discipline and a belief that interdisciplinary science and the taking of appropriate scientific risks are important for the advancement of discovery.



#### Collaborative Spirit

History of effective collaboration with diverse team members.

### Leadership



#### Character and Leadership

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



#### Global Ambition for Social Good

Desire to use one's personal talents and science 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. In particular, we recommend you view our Fellow profiles at <https://schmidtsciencefellows.org/fellows/> and the feature videos: [Fellowship Research Placement](#) and [Who is a Schmidt Science Fellow?](#)

## 2024 Admissions Timeline

**February – 12 May 2023:** Nomination – Institutions select candidates to nominate to the competition and issue them with an authorization code and link for the application portal.

**12 May – 1 June 2023:** Registration – Nominated candidates register their intent to apply and provide a short set of preliminary information. Once this section is complete the full application is opened.

**12 May – 17 July 2023:** Application – Nominated candidates complete the remaining sections of the application form and submit their full applications by 17 July 2023.

**August – October 2023:** Academic Review – Expert reviewers (renowned researchers in their scientific discipline, broadly defined, from which the candidates received their PhD) assess submitted applications to identify exceptional candidates for progression.

**November - December 2023:** Cross-panel Review - Internal review committee considers Academic Reviewer recommendations and outcomes are communicated to candidates.

**January - February 2024:** Final Interviews – Senior figures from across science, business, and society review application materials and carry out video-interviews with Finalists.

**March 2024:** Internal Review – Internal review committee considers applications and recommendations across all panels.

**April 2024:** Final Decisions – SSF Board meet to determine the 2024 cohort of Schmidt Science Fellows.

**April 2024 onwards:** Onboarding – Successful candidates, selected as Schmidt Science Fellows, work together with our Academic Council to determine the optimal host laboratory for their research placement.

**May 2024:** Formal announcement – 2024 cohort of selected Fellows is publicly announced.

**July 2024 – October 2024:** Fellowship placements begin – The 2024 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 Global Meeting.



## Contacts

**We strongly recommend potential applicants contact their university coordinator in the first instance.**

For more information visit [www.schmidtsciencefellows.org](http://www.schmidtsciencefellows.org)

For more specific enquiries please email: [nominations@schmidtsciencefellows.org](mailto:nominations@schmidtsciencefellows.org)

Please note the Admissions team are based in the UK

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