Wings for Ideas

Guidelines for Applicants 2025

# Overview: What is the Wings for Ideas Fund?

ECRI is delighted offer the Wings for Ideas Fund again this year. ECRI understands that securing funding is crucial to researchers, and we want to give research staff the possibility of exploring new ideas. The Fund aims to provide postdocs and fellows with the resources to work on research that might lead into a new venture, a product, or a prototype.

We will fund up to £2,500 per project, **all funds must be spent by 31 July 2025.** This is a great opportunity to use your [10 development days](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/postdoc-fellows-development-centre/who-we-help/postdocs/your-10-development-days/). We strongly encourage you to discuss your participation in this call with your PI and/or line manager.

# Timeline and Application link

**Application deadline: 12.00 noon on Friday 8 November**.

Outcome: successful applicants will be notified by the first week of December.

Mid-year reports: 7 May 2025

Final reports: 26 September 2025

**All funds need to be spent and accounted for by 31 July 2025.**

To apply, please complete the **Template Wings for Ideas Fund Application 2025** and submit your application online.

[**Submit your Application Link**](https://forms.office.com/e/VvMgaDuGF2)

# Eligibility

To apply, you must be a **postdoc** or **fellow** at the time of submission and your contract needs to run at least until 30 September 2025. **You cannot apply if you have a permanent academic role.**

# Requirements

* All applications must be submitted via the link above using the Template.
* The aim of the fund is to promote the advancement of your career; therefore, you **need to indicate** **clearly** how your proposed **project** **is different** to what is currently being undertaken by **your** **PI**.
* You need to clearly indicate **your career intentions** (what what the next steps will be for your venture, product, or prototype) and how this Fund will support your plans.
* This is a great opportunity to use your [10 development days.](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/postdoc-fellows-development-centre/your-career/your-10-development-days/) Please ensure that the project is feasible in the time you have available.
* A list of collaborators can be included in the application, none of whom must be independently funded.
* If you are interested in discussing intellectual property implications and further support at Imperial please contact the appropriate [Industry Partnerships and Commercialisation team member (by Faculty).](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/enterprise/about/meet-the-enterprise-team/industry-partnerships-and-commercialisation/)
* All proposals should be pitched at a level as to be **understood by a non-specialist**.
* You can only submit one application. You cannot apply to both 5 for Success and Wings for Ideas Funds.

# Funding guidance:

* No project is to exceed £2,500.
* Equipment can be requested but will remain the property of the host department at the end of the project.
* Publication fees and conference attendance will **not** be covered.
* The fund **cannot** be used for salary.
* **All funds must be spent and accounted for by 31 July 2025.**

# Completing the Application Template

The research proposal must be written in **Arial 11 point** using the template provided. Do not change the font or layout. Applications **must not exceed three pages**, including references. Note that hyperlinks are discouraged as a) they do not always work in .pdf format and b) reviewers are under no obligation to open them. Any application longer than three pages, not submitted using the Template, or emailed instead of submitted via the form will not proceed to reviewers (desk reject). Please submit your completed form as a PDF with the filename **FamilyName\_Wings25.pdf**. For example, Sidney Smith’s application PDF would be Smith\_Wings25.pdf.

For advice on lay summaries, work packages, risks, impact, evidencing achievements, research vision and more, download our [Tipsheets](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/postdoc-fellows-development-centre/resources/tip-sheets/).

## Career history and track record

Summarise your career to date, your research interests, your national or international reputation and any awards and achievements. Please include up to five publications relating to this project where you are an author.

## Title and Proposal

The title should be clear and not exceed ten words. In the Proposal section you should justify the work you want to do, highlighting the problem you wish to solve. **It should be pitched at a non-specialist.** Please dedicate a paragraph to showing how your proposal is novel and different to what is currently being done at Imperial.

## Collaborators and contributions

In this section, please detail how each collaborator is going to contribute to the project and why your collaboration is best placed to solve the problem you have outlined in your proposal. If you don’t have any collaborators, please add N/A in this section.

## Risk mitigation

Please identify the three main **risks** in the proposed project and indicate how you will **mitigate** each risk. These could include timescales, access to equipment or data sets, or risks intrinsic to your research project.

## Expected Outcomes/Impact

Please indicate your expectations for the impact/outcomes of your project, both academic and social/economic, and how you will ensure that this information is disseminated. Regarding academic impact, please note that the College is a signatory to the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](http://www.ascb.org/dora/) ([DORA](https://sfdora.org/)).

## Career impact

In this section, please outline the impact this Fund will have to the development of your career and how it will make you more competitive for your next career step. This could include developing a prototype of your product, commercialising it, participating on one of Imperial’s accelerator programmes, or launching your own start-up – [see more details here](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/enterprise/staff/working-with-industry/what-to-do-if-you-have-a-discovery-with-commercial-potential/).

If you are interested in discussing intellectual property implications and further support at Imperial please contact the appropriate [Industry Partnerships and Commercialisation team member (by Faculty).](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/enterprise/about/meet-the-enterprise-team/industry-partnerships-and-commercialisation/)

## Justification of costs (not to exceed £2,500)

Please give an overview of the costs of the project, including a full cost breakdown (consumables, equipment, facility use) and justification of resources. Access to the [Advanced Hackspace](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/enterprise/staff/working-with-industry/prototyping-at-the-advanced-hackspace/) for approved research projects can be arranged and is via bookable appointments only at present. Access is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If you need more information about the Hackspace or indicative consumable costs, please contact advancedhackspace@imperial.ac.uk.

The fund cannot be used to cover any salary, conference fees/attendance or publication fees. All monies must be spent and accounted for by the 31July 2025.

# Post-award reports

Applicants will not receive detailed individual feedback should their application be unsuccessful. General feedback will be given according to the selection criteria outlined below.

By accepting the award, successful applicants agree to:

* Submit a half-page summary of work completed so far by 7 May 2025.
* Submit a one-page report describing the key achievements of the project no later than 26 September 2025 which may be included in the ECRI Newsletter and website.
* Present at an event later in 2025.

# Selection Criteria

The Assessment Panel will be composed of Dr Liz Elvidge, Chair, (ECRI Associate Director, Early Career Researcher Development), Dr Anna Seabourne (ECRI Consultant), a previous awardee of the Wings for ideas fund, an E-Lab member, a Hackspace Fellow, and a Postdoc and Fellows Champion.

Each application will be scored according to the criteria below:

* **The justification for the project (0-5)**. Is it viable? Written for a non-specialist? Are the idea and strategy clear? Are the collaborators appropriate?
* **Independence and career impact (0-5)**. Does it show how the work is different from the work that is carried out by your current PI? Have you made clear the career impact this Fund will have? Have you evidenced what the next steps for your venture, product, or prototype will be?
* **Risk mitigation (0-5)** Have they identified three risks? Would the mitigation proposed alleviate the risk that has been identified?
* **The expected outcomes (0-5)** Are they achievable and appropriate for the project?
* **The cost breakdown (0-5)** (no project to exceed £2,500) Are the costings realistic and do they offer value for money?
* **Should this project be funded?** (Yes/No)