



SCHMIDT SCIENCE FELLOWS

2023 Nomination and Selection

Process and Guidance



Our Fellowship

Infectious disease. Climate change. Food insecurity. An aging population. Species extinction. The crises that face our planet and our society are broad, deep, and multi-faceted. They recognize none of the neat boundaries that are often and traditionally applied to science.

Our vision is a world where interdisciplinary science flourishes without limit, accelerating discoveries to benefit the world, and driving innovations that improves quality of life for all. Realizing this requires a network of individuals and organizations committed to advancing interdisciplinary science, together.

Our Fellowship seeks to deliver on this by identifying, developing, and amplifying the next generation of interdisciplinary science leaders, building a community of scientists and supporters of interdisciplinary science, and utilizing this network, our convening power, and our profile to drive sector-wide change, we help scientists solve bigger problems faster.

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.

Our Fellows receive a 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 accelerate discovery, advance solutions to the world's most pressing problems, and to become future leaders in science and society. Fellows are supported to pursue a postdoctoral placement at a world-leading laboratory anywhere in the world in a disciplinary pivot from their PhD and also participate in a varied and challenging Global Meeting Series that introduces new research ideas, techniques, and questions, in addition to a tailored training program. Our Fellows 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, 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 four cohorts of 84 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.

To learn more about Schmidt Science Fellows, the science, and motivations of some of our Fellows, please see our 'We Are Schmidt Science Fellows' features and film series:

<http://schmidtsciencefellows.org/news/we-are-schmidt-science-fellows/>

Our Admissions Process

Applications to Schmidt Science Fellows are by invitation only, following candidate nomination by their PhD awarding institution. For the 2023 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 2023 competition as outlined below.

We appreciate that each partner organization will have their own internal process to identify their most competitive candidates as nominees. However, we recommend that:

- The Fellowship is advertised across all relevant departments and that the process be open to all eligible members across your entire STEM graduate student community.
- There is a robust internal evaluation process in place to ensure potential nominees meet the candidate eligibility criteria and are well-aligned to the selection criteria.
- Where possible we also encourage nominating partners to provide additional support to their 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 and how to manage letters of recommendation.
- We also ask that you conduct relevant administrative checks for all nominees to be assured they are in good standing with your organization.¹

Once nominees have been assessed and selected, the partner organization issues each applicant with a unique authorization code (which we will provide) to enable them to access our online application portal.

The application portal will open on **13 May 2022**. Nominees will then have until **1 June 2022** to register their contact details and some brief information relating to their areas of research.

As soon as this basic information has been submitted, access will be granted to the full application and candidates then have until **18 July 2022** 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.

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 labs² in which they may carry out this research.

¹ 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 for further information.

² We require a flexible approach towards placements. It is possible to have already begun a postdoctoral position, but 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, or automatically denied, but will be subject to the same review and approval process as any new position. 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.

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. Their proposed research pivot 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 Fellowship at a laboratory of their choice, subject to program approval and assurance that the host organization meets the Fellows individual training and research needs. 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 would also like to 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.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for nomination to the Schmidt Science Fellows application process, candidates must meet the following requirements³:

- 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.
- Have completed, or expect to complete, all of the requirements for the conferral of their PhD in one of these fields between **1 June 2022** and **30 July 2023**.
- Be available for the entire period of the 2023 program, from July 2023 to September 2024 including attendance of the Global Meeting Series (whether virtual or in person, as conditions allow, and including additional virtual programming).
- Be nominated by a designated senior official at one of our nominating partner institutions.

³ Any questions about eligibility or accommodations for extraordinary circumstances should be directed to: 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 Fellows 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 video on ['What Makes a Schmidt Science Fellow?'](#)

2023 Admissions Timeline

February – 13 May 2022: Nomination – Institutions select candidates to nominate to the competition and issue them with an authorization code and link for the application portal.

13 May – 1 June 2022: Registration – Nominated candidates register their intent to apply and submit a short set of preliminary information (basic contact data and their disciplinary remit). Once this section is complete the full application is opened.

13 May – 18 July 2022: Application – Nominated candidates complete the remaining sections of the application form and submit their full applications by 18 July 2022.

August – October 2022: 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 2022: Cross-panel Review - Internal review committee considers Academic Reviewer recommendations and outcomes are communicated to candidates.

January - February 2023: Final Interviews – Senior figures from across science, business, and society review application materials and carry out video-interviews with Finalists.

March 2023: Final Decisions – Internal committee considers recommendations and reviews to determine the 2023 cohort of Schmidt Science Fellows.

March 2023 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.

April 2023: Formal public announcement – Selected Fellows attend an in-person announcement event.

July 2023 – October 2023: Fellowship placements begin – The 2023 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

For more specific enquiries please email: nominations@schmidtsciencefellows.org

Please note the Admissions team are based in the UK

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