

## Oxford Martin School funding call - Expressions of Interest

The Oxford Martin School is requesting proposals from eligible applicants for a **solutions-focused research programme applying generative AI to global challenges or exploring its impact**. We are looking for a bold, adventurous, high-reward idea that could deliver a transformative real-world impact for current and future generations that would not be fundable through standard routes.

We welcome proposals that make interdisciplinary links across the University of Oxford. Initially, we are requesting a short Expression of Interest (Eoi) that clearly states the programme's aim, novelty and how, if successful, it will have real-world impact. The Eoi should also state why the Oxford Martin School should support the idea rather than traditional funders. An internal University of Oxford's AI expert panel and the School's Management Committee will then shortlist a limited number of Eois to go to full proposal. Only one programme, of a maximum of £1 million, will be funded; the length of the proposed programme should be between 2 to 3 years.

An Oxford Martin School research programme is not solely a funding arrangement but entails a partnership: we provide strong support for our researchers both in the unique challenges of interdisciplinary research and in disseminating the outcomes to effect real world change. We offer flexible, pragmatic funding and support in areas such as fundraising and communications.

### OpenAI

The funding for the successful Oxford Martin School programme will be equally provided by the Oxford Martin School and OpenAI. This is part of the University of Oxford-wide collaboration with OpenAI to advance research and education, supported by the NextGenAI initiative. In addition to the £1 million funding, the programme will have access to API credits for OpenAI's API and to compute funding to support research on AI models. The selection of the programme will be led entirely by the Oxford Martin School through its processes and criteria.

### How will we decide?

We will judge your expression of interest against the School's research funding criteria:

- **Scale:** does the project address a contemporary challenge of global significance?
- **Excellence:** does the project involve research of the highest international standard?
- **Impact:** will this research make a major positive difference in the world beyond academia, and how will this be achieved?
- **Additionality:** what is novel about the proposed research, and why should this research be funded by the Oxford Martin School and rather than by another funder?

Your Expression of Interest should therefore demonstrate, in a summary form, that you:

- Are addressing a key research question related to the application of generative AI to global challenges or to explore the impact of generative AI.
- Have a clear pathway to impact so that the results of the project, if successful, will be taken up by policymakers or practitioners.
- Are proposing an idea that would not be easily fundable through conventional research channels.
- Have the academic expertise and leadership in the relevant areas and are eligible to apply.

**Please send your Eoi by 5 pm on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026** to [kanwal.baluch@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:kanwal.baluch@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk). E-mail [jean-charles.buffet@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jean-charles.buffet@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk) if you have any queries.

## Eligibility

We view the combination and selection of an Oxford Martin School Programme's Directors as vital to the success of the programmes. All prospective applicants (PI/co-I) must be on a permanent contract or have a contract of employment with the University of Oxford that extends beyond the length of the proposed research. Each proposal should include applicants from more than one Department and successful proposals are very likely to pull together novel combinations of researchers from different fields. The Oxford Martin School aims to contribute to the University's diverse and rich research environment, so we are particularly interested in receiving expressions of interest from consortia that span different divisions and demonstrate diversity in the composition of the applicant's team. The Oxford Martin School does not support research external to the University of Oxford.

## The process

For the first stage of our selection process, we are seeking short Expressions of Interest from eligible applicants (**maximum of two pages**) that typically might comprise:

- A non-technical summary;
- The context and statement of the problem;
- A description of the proposed research, anticipated outputs and pathway to impact.
- How, if appropriate, the programme will use OpenAI's APIs credits and the compute funding.

At this stage, we are interested in the subject to be researched, approach to be taken, the suitability of the applicants and potential for impact. If our Management Committee decide to request a full proposal, we will then need more details of the research, the timetable and the team. We do *not* require costed proposals at this stage. For further information on selection criteria, costings and eligibility, please see our [frequently asked questions](#). Our Management Committee will pay attention to the diversity of the teams at all stages of our selection process. The Expressions of Interest will be considered by an internal University of Oxford AI expert panel and our Management Committee. All information will be treated in strict confidence. Requests for full proposals will be issued mid-February 2026; the deadline for full proposals will be at the end of April 2026, and it is hoped that final decisions will be made end of June 2026. It is envisaged that the research teams would be able to start work in Michaelmas 2026.

## Oxford Martin School

For twenty years, the Oxford Martin School has striven to promote world-leading and pioneering research that addresses global challenges, supporting more than 100 pioneering programmes since its creation. The School aims to help find solutions to the most pressing challenges of our time, in particular issues that cannot be understood by work in any one academic field alone. Underpinning all our research is the need to demonstrate a feasible pathway to impact and implementation at scale, from innovations in science, medicine and technology, through to expert advice and policy recommendations.

## University of Oxford and OpenAI partnership

The partnership with OpenAI is part of the NextGenAI initiative, launched by OpenAI in March 2025. NextGenAI is a first-of-its kind consortium with 15 research institutions from across the globe dedicated to using AI to accelerate research breakthrough and transform education. As part of NextGenAI, OpenAI is committing \$50m in research grants, compute funding, and API access to support students, educator, and researchers advancing the frontiers of knowledge.