

FLIER programme: Application guidelines

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1. Introduction

The Academy of Medical Sciences launched the Future Leaders in Innovation, Enterprise and Research (FLIER) programme in 2019 to help **develop emerging leaders across sectors such as academia, industry, the charitable sector, the NHS, media and science communications, regulatory bodies and government** to drive innovation, harness new discoveries in science, technology and medicine, and help solve the biggest challenges in healthcare.

The 18-month FLIER programme will be delivered in partnership with [Living Potential](#), an innovative leadership development organisation. The programme brings together a learning community of emerging leaders from across the life sciences. They will be selected based on their willingness to contribute, learn from others, and to think differently. They will energise one another through shared ambition, not competition. The programme includes:

- An opportunity to come with an innovative idea that requires cross sector collaboration which you will develop throughout the programme. We are calling this Ambition into Practice.
- Four residential modules designed to challenge conventional thinking and stimulate learning and reflection about leadership, with a strong cross-sector focus broadening perspectives:
 - Module one: How can I amplify my leadership for life science innovation?
 - Module two: How do I move from innovator to entrepreneur?
 - Module three: How can I mobilise investment and engagement?
 - Module four: How can we sustain and grow our work into the future?

- Blended interactive learning through face-to-face and virtual workshops.
- Tailored professional coaching to support personal growth and lasting impact.
- Immersion experiences with national organisations across Government, NHS, Academia, Industry, Charity / NGO sector to increase sector awareness.

2. Who can apply

FLIER is aimed at individuals established within their own sector, with the seniority to **effect organisational, cultural and inclusive change** and **undertake a cross-sector project** currently or in the near future.

Participants will have an **emerging vision** of how cross-sector working and collaboration could help maximise opportunities and solve the future challenges of research and healthcare. They will be looking to explore, influence and shape their vision in dialogue with colleagues across sectors.

We are looking for key characteristics including **motivation, vision** and **potential** to make a difference and lead change across the sectors, **learning agility**, and **creative, innovative** and **radical** thinking.

Participants will actively contribute to the research endeavour of their organisation, regardless of whether they are directly conducting research themselves. Their involvement may take many forms—such as enabling, facilitating, or applying research—and outputs will vary depending on their specific context. While participants may have portfolio careers and not spend all their time on research-related activities, we expect research-related activities to be a key element of their role. Previous examples have included FLIERS managing research teams- but not conducting research themselves, heading up policy teams at research funding charities, or being a journal editor.

In line with our organisational values and [EDI Strategy 2023-26](#), the Academy is committed to working towards **equity, diversity and inclusion** and we welcome and encourage applications from under-represented backgrounds including ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. We will take steps during the shortlisting process to ensure disabled, LGBTQ+ and/or Black applicants are given an equitable opportunity for selection onto this programme in line with the recommendations in our [Diversity Report 2020-24](#). Members of this community are identified under the guidance of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. If you would like to know more about our equity, diversity and inclusion work you can view recent diversity reports and information on how this monitoring supports our work on our [diversity pages](#).



The cohort will be curated to include representatives across all main sectors and from across the UK. You can find out more about the participants who took part in FLIER [cohort 1](#), [cohort 2](#), and [cohort 3](#).

3. Commitment required

Participants are expected to fully engage in the core elements including attendance at all workshops, coaching sessions, and innovation groups. We would expect participants to try and attend at least three of the Immersion experiences outside their sector. Participation in webinars such as the Thought Leadership series is encouraged. **The core elements will require around 20 days out of the office each year.**

Participants will also be expected to contribute to the learning community, via an online platform where they are encouraged to take part in discussions and share learning materials. Participants will also be expected to complete feedback surveys after certain events to help with monitoring and improvement of the programme, as well as providing a chance for them to reflect on their own learnings.

Throughout the programme, participants will be able to apply the learning into real-life scenarios.

Applicants must be available for the first in person residential module to be held in March 2025. This first module will take place over three days – arriving on the afternoon of day one and departing after lunch on day three.

All workshops over the 18 months will be communicated to successful candidates when they are selected onto the programme.

4. Cost

Places on this programme will be subsidised for all participants by our generous funders, including the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.

Employers will be asked to provide a contribution of £5,000 +VAT towards the 18-month programme, to be paid before the first event.

A small number of bursaries are available for individuals whose employers cannot meet the contribution. Due to the limited number, we ask that discussions take place with employers first before a bursary is sought. Please contact the Academy office for further information via email on FLIER@acmedsci.ac.uk. If you would like to be considered for a bursary, please indicate this in the employer declaration section of the application form and write a short justification statement.

You will need to notify the Academy if you have moved organisation part way through the programme. If this is the case, no participant costs will be incurred on your new employer, but we expect that your new employer will support your participation on the programme by giving you the needed time out to engage on the programme.

5. Selection process

Participants will be selected by a competitive process:

1. Completion of an online application form (details below).
2. Review of the application forms by the FLIER selection panel to shortlist for a virtual selection day.
3. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a selection day. The selection day will include an observed group discussions on a mini-enquiry and an interview (taking place virtually on the same day).
 - Ahead of the virtual selection day candidates will be asked to submit a short video on an innovative idea that requires cross-sector collaboration which you will develop throughout the programme, and you will be asked about at interview.
 - Ahead of the selection day, you will also be briefed in writing on the observed discussion. As part of this, you will be asked to seek input from colleagues at your workplace around the topic of innovation and then will be discussing this with a small group of other applicants from different sectors on the selection day.
 - The observed group discussion will be followed by an interview, which will be conducted by panel members, who are leaders from across the Life Sciences and include questions on what you hope to get out of the

programme and what you can contribute, your previous experience and why cross-sector collaboration is important to you.

Those who are unsuccessful at the selection day stage will be offered a FLIER Mentor, from our pool of FLIER alumni.

Please let us know if you have any accessibility requirements for any of the selection stages.

Selection days are to be held virtually between Wednesday 26 November and Wednesday 10 December 2025. Please indicate on the application form which dates you may be available for the selection day.

Notification of decisions regarding FLIER applications will be made by Friday 19 December 2025.

6. Key dates

Date	
Tuesday 2 September	Applications open.
Wednesday 15 October 2025	Applications close.
Monday 17 November 2025	Receive notification of application outcome. Shortlisted applicants invited to selection day and will be asked to prepare a video submission. At this stage we will also provide further information on the mini-enquiry in preparation for the observed group discussion.
Wednesday 26 November – Wednesday 10 December 2025	Selection days to be held in this period (ONLINE)
Friday 19 December 2025	Notification of outcome to interviewed candidates.
March 2026 exact dates tbc	In person Module one residential which marks the beginning of the programme.

7. Accommodation, travel and childcare

Accommodation will be organised for each residential workshop. Participants are expected to organise and fund their own travel.

Childcare support, when additional care is required above normal provision, will be available up to £50 per child per day during the workshops. Participants will be able to claim childcare support by completing a form and providing appropriate receipts to the Academy.

Please do discuss any other accessibility requirements with the Academy.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Feedback from participants will help us to assess the impact of the FLIER programme and inform future developments.

We expect participants to maintain contact with the Academy and Living Potential, to complete monitoring surveys after each workshop and other activities as appropriate.

Participants may also be approached to contribute to case studies by the Academy and any appointed external evaluators.

9. Governance

The programme is overseen by a Taskforce, co-chaired by Professor David Adams FMedSci, Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University of Birmingham, and Dr Pauline Williams CBE FMedSci, Consultant in Translational Medicine and Global Health R&D.

The role of the Taskforce is to advise the Academy on the development of the FLIER programme, oversee the application process, advise on further iterations and oversee the evaluation of the programme.

Further details of the Taskforce and their role in the programme development can be found on our [website](#).

10. Guidance notes for completing the application form

Please complete and submit your online application form by **17.00 on Wednesday 15 October 2025** through our Flexi-Grant portal: <https://acmedsci.flexigrant.com/>. If you have not used Flexi-Grant before, you will need to register and create a new user account.

This section guides you through completing the online application form for the FLIER programme. Some notes on completing the form are integrated into the form itself.

Invite 'Participants' for your employer to sign the form

Please use the 'Participants' tab on the summary page to invite a representative from your organisation, they need to sign the form confirming they are able to pay the employer contribution before you can submit the application. Further details about completing this section are below in section 6 titled 'Approvals and declarations'.

Please contact the FLIER team if you are having difficulties with this section and we will do our best to help.

Save and resume

Once you have started a section, you can click save at the bottom and log out of Flexi-Grant; your responses in that section will be saved. To return to your application log in to <https://acmedsci.flexigrant.com/>, click on 'My Account' in the top right corner, and select 'My Applications' to resume.

Submitting your application

When you have completed all sections of the application form, and your employer has completed theirs, a 'Submit application' button will become available at the bottom of the summary page which you will need to click to finalise the application.

Once your application has been submitted, you will be able to view your application and its current status, but you will not be able to modify it. You can also download your form as a PDF at any point to keep for your records.

Word limits

Please note that the answers for certain questions have a maximum word limit. If text exceeding this length is pasted into the space provided, the passage will be truncated accordingly.

Each applicant should provide the following:

Getting started – EDI Monitoring. These questions provide data to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion is embedded into all our work streams. Your answers help us monitor the diversity of our audiences and understand who we are reaching and who we are not. Any information you provide will be collected, stored and used under the terms detailed in our [privacy policy](#).

1. Personal information

Your name and contact details will be pulled through from your user account. Please check they are correct.

Please add your current primary employment details. You can list here any other organisations with whom you may also hold a contract for work (optional).

If your organisation is not on the list, please contact us by calling 020 3141 3267 or emailing FLIER@acmedsci.ac.uk and we will add it.

Complete a short summary (250 words max.) of the main responsibilities in your current role (including any team, matrix or project leadership responsibilities, direct line management, reporting responsibilities, financial responsibilities).

Select one of the four options which best represents the sector you are primarily employed in. The options include:

- Non-clinical academic
- Clinical academic
- Healthcare (private)/ NHS
- Industry (including pharma, biotech, medtech and others related to life sciences)
- Government/public/policy organisations
- Media/science communications
- Charitable sector
- Regulatory body
- Other, please specify

The cohort will be selected to ensure representation across different sectors and a combination of clinical and non-clinical research backgrounds.

2. Relevant experience

To add here information for up to two previous roles. This can include a PhDs if relevant, although this is not a requirement for the programme.

To add information of up to three major relevant contributions and achievements.

3. Motivation to apply

Please outline why you are applying for the FLIER programme

- How do you envision the future of the Life Sciences sector, and what role do you see your career playing in shaping that future? (250 words max.)
- What would you hope to learn through taking part in the FLIER programme? (250 words max.)
- What do you consider to be some of the key challenges of working across different sectors, and in what ways do you hope the FLIER programme will support you in addressing them? (250 words max.)
- Joining FLIER is being part of a learning community. What do you think you would bring to the cohort (250 words max.)?
- Describe a situation in which you were involved in a collaboration or leading a team where there were some challenges. What did you learn about the nature of collaboration? What did you learn about yourself? (500 words max)

Please answer these questions as succinctly as possible. This is an opportunity for you to give us some more details on your motivation for applying, relevant experience and evidence of emerging leadership.

4. Selection

Please indicate any dates you would be available for selection days.

5. Approvals and declarations

Applicant declaration:

In order to submit your application, you need to tick the box to agree with the declaration statement, thereby confirming the validity of the application. Information that you have supplied within this application will be used to process your application

and for the purposes of any audit and/or evaluation. Please read the undertakings on this page carefully and ensure that you fully understand the obligations you are making before signing the declaration.

Marketing feedback:

On this page we request marketing information. Marketing information is requested to help us monitor the effectiveness of our marketing activities. This information is not used in the application review process.

Employer declaration:

Instructions for applicants

Please use the 'Participants' tab on the summary page to invite a representative from your organisation by email; the representative will need to complete the form outlining why they are supporting you to participate on the FLIER programme, and confirming they are able to pay the employer contribution. They can also apply for a bursary to cover the employer contribution in this section.

They will not be able to see your answers in the previous sections, and you will not be able to see their answers in this section. We strongly recommend you contact them yourself before inviting them through the system, to ensure they don't miss the email invitation. You will receive an email once they have completed this section, and you can then submit your application as described above.

Instructions for employers

Please follow the link in your invitation email, this will be sent by [no-reply@flexigrant.com](mailto:reply@flexigrant.com) with the title 'FLIER Round 4 – Request for Declaration'. If you are not able to sign off this application by the deadline date or are not the right person, please decline the request and the applicant will be able to assign someone else. If you have not used Flexi-Grant before, you will need to register and create a new user account.

The applicant will not be able to see your answers in this section, and you will not be able to see their answers in the previous sections. You can download your answers as a PDF to keep for your records.

In order to submit your application, you need to tick the box to agree with the declaration statement, thereby confirming the validity of the application. Information that you have supplied within this application will be used to process your application and for the purposes of any audit and/or evaluation. Please read the undertakings on this page carefully and ensure that you fully understand the obligations you are making before signing the declaration.

You will also need to complete outlining why they are supporting you to participate on the FLIER programme.

If you have any questions about the application, please contact the FLIER team via email at FLIER@acmedsci.ac.uk or call 020 3141 3267.

The Academy of Medical Sciences

The Academy of Medical Sciences is the independent body in the UK representing the diversity of medical science. Our elected Fellows are the UK's leading medical scientists from hospitals, academia, industry and the public service. The Academy's mission is to help create an open and progressive research sector to improve the health of people everywhere.

- We support researchers with innovative funding and career development opportunities
- We help create a more sustainable environment for delivering outstanding research
- We help researchers to work with academia, the public, policymakers and industry to make the greatest difference to health

Our strategy for 2022-2032 focusses on the following strategic priorities.

1. Influence policy and practice to improve the lives of patients, the public and communities
2. Support UK biomedical and health research to strengthen its global competitiveness and reputation
3. Support the next generation of researchers to reach their full potential
4. Work with our partners to increase the Academy's impact on global health
5. Build our resources to ensure our long-term independence and effectiveness

[You can read more about our strategy 2022-2032 here](#)

www.acmedsci.ac.uk