

LEAP Digital Health

Solo and Twin Fellowships

Call Details and Guidance Notes

Background:

LEAP is elevating Digital Health capability in the South West of England and Wales through Leadership Engagement Acceleration & Partnership, cultivating a multidisciplinary, entrepreneurial, cross-sector Digital Health community across the region. The Hub programmes comprise a Skills and Knowledge Programme which will deliver a selection of training courses designed for professional learners across the Digital Health sector, a Fellowship Programme that will bring together leaders in Digital Health as well as develop future leaders, and a Research Programme which will fund opportunities identified by hub participants.

Call overview:

Following on the heels of our [Executive Fellowship call](#), we are excited to announce our first call for **funded Solo and Twin fellowships** in Digital Health, which consist of a Fellowship period until end September 2026 linked to a funded research project of between 3 and 12 months in duration. For administrative reasons the research project must have a **Host Academic** from one of the five LEAP [university partner institutions](#), but the prospective fellows themselves can be from academia, NHS or public sector, the digital health industry, or relevant third sector organisations. The aim of this scheme is to foster leadership, grow capacity and strengthen collaborations between digital health stakeholders to the benefit of healthcare delivery and wellbeing in the South West of England and Wales.

To apply, please submit your [funding application form](#) and accompanying documents to leap-dh-hub@bristol.ac.uk by midnight BST on 15th September 2024.

Key details

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|---------------------|--|
| Minimum award* | £15,000 for Solo, £20,000 for Twin Fellowships |
| Maximum award* | £60,000 for Solo, £80,000 for Twin Fellowships |
| Opening date | 31 st July 2024 |
| Closing date | 15 th September 2024 |
| Application process | Download application form |

* 100% fEC, awarded at 80%.

Remit of funding

Two types of Fellowship are offered:

- **Solo Fellowships** are for excellent individuals and future leaders with a specific research vision who already have collaborations with key university and industry/NHS stakeholders which could be enhanced through access to the wider hub network and its resources.

- **Twin Fellowships** are a novel collaborative fellowship for a multidisciplinary pair of fellows, creating breadth of capability for problem-solving, opportunities to learn from each other and developing transferable teamwork skills. Twin Fellowship applications could be based on existing collaborations or be forged through attendance of one of our [research sandpit events](#).

The Hub will fund fellowship projects within its 4 thematic areas (<https://leap-hub.ac.uk/research/>):

1. **Care outside of the hospital** - Digital technologies have huge potential to help prevent or reduce the time people need to spend in hospital. This supports wellbeing and is a priority for health services. This can be achieved through health and social care services that support people in their own homes and communities (such as virtual wards). Further, these technologies can help deliver new services in our region's relatively under-utilised town centres, including community pharmacies, community diagnostics centres and establishing pop-up clinical services in former retail locations.
2. **Service and resource planning** - Health and social care are resource-constrained activities – the NHS and social care workforce operates very close to capacity and is difficult to expand in response to short- or long-term demand. Resources such as staff, facilities, ward space and ambulances all need to be planned in a dynamic, responsive and joined-up manner.
3. **Frailty, fall prediction and fall prevention** - Falls are a leading cause of hospital admission in older adults and a major priority for the Hub's partner organisations. Predicting and thereby preventing injury such as hip fracture could help many older adults remain independent and well in their own homes.
4. **Smartphone and wearable technologies** - Consumer electronics including smartphone, wearable and video technologies put powerful computing and sensing capabilities in the hands of patients and health & social care professionals alike.

Fellows can also benefit from utilising the resources and support provided by our hub (e.g. [Skills and Knowledge programme](#), the Hub's team of Researchers in Residence – see 'Costing' section) and will be invited to hub events including Fellowship cohort-based peer networking sessions and training on acquiring follow-on-funding. We will also match each fellow to a mentor experienced in their chosen focus area. In return, we would be grateful for fellows to engage in hub initiatives, including considering invitations to present at Hub events. In addition, entrepreneurs or prospective entrepreneurs that are seeking time and knowhow to de-risk a research idea will also benefit from support to enable the accelerated translation of their digital technologies into the healthcare space, including reviews of their investment materials, pitch practice, investment campaign strategy and development of their negotiation skills.

All research project proposals are required to set out plans, within at least one (or more) of the above themes, to produce novel, publishable, insights within engineering and physical sciences and computer science - *in addition* to any health and care, social science publications or impacts. Please note that the field of computer science does encompass both qualitative and quantitative research, and publishable work in this space can include new mathematics, algorithms, devices, sensors through to user studies, HCI and design. See the [EPRSC remit](#) for further guidance.

Because the remit of the funding is to create publishable new knowledge, we note that market analysis, pure evaluation or late-stage product development do not fall within the remit of this call. Successful commercialisation can be a proposed objective of a Fellowship and its project, or a firm aim for future work, but should not be the primary goal. Results may be delayed for the protection of intellectual property, but should ultimately be published.

Although non-collaborative projects are eligible, proposals that demonstrate strong collaborations and a high potential for impact will likely perform well at peer review. We welcome applications which include academia, industry partners, partners from the NHS and partners from social care and charities involved in this space.

Eligibility

Prospective LEAP Fellows can be based in academia, NHS or public sector, the digital health industry (any part of the supply chain, from founders to established companies), or relevant third sector organisations.

- If you are in academia or an organisation that can directly receive EPSRC funding (including NHS, [see here](#)), LEAP Fellowships may be held by permanent or fixed-term researchers or employees. Your contract must either last beyond the project part of your Fellowship, or will be extended to the end date of the project part. You **must** either cost a minimum buy out of 5% FTE of your time for the project period or pledge this amount as in-kind contribution from your organisation. You **may** cost in a proportion of your time across some or all of the rest of the Fellowship period, but this is not a requirement.
- For other organisations and private companies: Salary would normally be funded by an in-kind contribution from your organisation, see below for further details. Exceptionally, a Fellow could second to a qualifying partner to have a proportion of their time costed within the grant; please ensure that a letter or email is supplied from the Fellow's organisation agreeing to the secondment and from the Host organisation agreeing to the hosting.

Fellows can access the [Hub's Training Programme](#) and can cost these in the proposal together with other appropriate training and professional development courses relevant to Fellowship goals. For each Fellow, an authorised representative of their organisation is required to submit a short, signed letter approving the candidate's proposal role for the fellowship period.

All proposals must have a Host Academic, who at the time of submitting the proposal is currently employed at least 20% FTE in an academic position at one of the five [Hub university partner institutions](#) (henceforth "Host Institution") with a period of employment that extends to at least 2 months after the end of the proposed project. The Host Academic can be a Fellow if they qualify. Academics can host more than one proposal to the Hub.

The Host Academic does **not** have to be the lead- or sole- decision maker in the project, nor do they need to be named as a Fellow; the project can propose whatever leadership structure it feels appropriate for decision-making, however the Host Academic and the Host Institution take contractual responsibility for the appropriate use of funds and compliance with normal contractual research terms, including the terms imposed by EPSRC, such as expenditure, reporting, ethical review and legal compliance. The Host Academic should be at least 2.5% FTE for the project period (either costed or as an in-kind contribution).

The Host Academic is required to submit a short, signed letter as part of the paperwork, stating that they have agreed to take on the role. An authorised representative of the Host Academic's Institution, as recipient of funds, is required to submit a letter or email confirming that the proposal has been costed at 80% FEC and that the proposal has been duly authorised by the institution. Partner organisations which are involved in delivery of the project should also submit a letter describing their contribution, including costing any cash or in-kind contribution, such as Fellow or staff time, use of facilities, access to data, secondment or hosting etc.

Proposals are encouraged to include non-academic organisations. Organisations not eligible to receive funding because of EPSRC's funding requirements will be able to claim small costs of participating in research (e.g. travel and subsistence). These costs should be explained in the proposal and will be paid at 80% FEC.

Due to EPSRC funding rules, companies and charities must:

- Declare themselves as a **project partner**, submitting a letter of support explicitly describing any in-kind (e.g. staff time for advisory or research participation, access to data or facilities) or cash contribution to the project. All such contributions must be itemised and approximately costed within the letter. Project partners cannot receive funds from Hub beyond expenses of participating in the research, such as travel to research meetings.

OR

- Declare themselves a **subcontractor**, in other words a third party individual who is not employed as staff on the grant, or a third party organisation, who is subcontracted by the host organisation to deliver a specific piece of work. As guidance, any such subcontract should be **less than 40%** of the value of the total funding requested. The subcontract will be subject to the procurement rules of the Host Institution, including compliance with any relevant Subsidy Control legislation, and so should be discussed with the host institution **before** submission. The reason for the subcontract should be clearly described and justified in the proposal so that it can be peer-reviewed. If the Subcontractor is contributing time or other in-kind support beyond the work in the subcontract, this should be described clearly in a letter to accompany the proposal, so that it can be peer-reviewed.

The Hub encourages appropriate involvement of industry in the projects through one of the models above – therefore the details of the proposed arrangements should be detailed in the application and will be assessed as part of peer review. For the avoidance of doubt, the contractual relationship with the industry partner is the responsibility of the Host Institution, including compliance with UK Subsidy Control rules and internal/external procurement rules.

Costing

In accordance with national agreements, EPSRC funds research at 80% FEC. Hub projects should therefore be costed by the Host Institution at 80% FEC according to the institution's normal methodology for an EPSRC/UKRI proposal. The maximum size of each Fellowship is £60,000 for Solo and £80,000 for Twin Fellowships (100% FEC), of which the Hub will fund 80%. Projects can include both Directly Allocated and Directly Incurred costs, which should be included within the overall budget. Please see [EPSRC's guidance on FEC costing](#).

All costs should be inclusive of VAT (where applicable) and/or any other applicable tax. The [terms and conditions for UKRI funding](#) apply. Applicants must demonstrate in the application form how the funding will be spent. The [sub-award document](#) detailing the terms and conditions of the grant is available on our website.

Proposals should be costed and approved by the Host Institution before submission. By authorising the submission of the proposal to the Hub, the Host Institution is confirming that the costing is correct and all necessary internal authorisations are in place.

Non-university partners are also invited to cost in-kind or cash contributions such as staff time into proposals, these should be detailed in a letter of support and in the finances section of the application form.

On top of the maximum costs (£60,000 for solo and £80,000 for twin), projects can additionally request up to 20% FTE of one of the Hub's Researchers in Residence (a team of experts in Data Science, Software Development, and Human-Computer Interaction). The Researchers in Residence will be available for consultation and/or secondment onto projects as part of the Hub's support. These are funded by the Hub's core budget and do not need to be included in the institutional costing. The Hub will endeavour to meet those requests but this resource should not be a critical part of the project delivery. For example, if the project depends upon some software development, the project costing should request sufficient resource to achieve the minimally-viable piece of software for the research, with the additional Hub resource being there to improve, enhance or extend that piece of work, including by providing advice on best practice in implementation.

Project management and reporting

In most cases, responsibility for ensuring projects are carried out within agreed timescales and budgets should lie with the Host Academic. Point of contact can be transferred to a fellow if they will be carrying out day-to-day management of the project.

Outputs/results of any project should be shared periodically with the LEAP Hub Management Team (comprising the Hub Management Board and Advisory Board) for inclusion in the LEAP project website and other promotional materials. Fellows will need to submit a short report on the activities and outcomes of the fellowships, along with their final expenditure statement, within a month of the end of the project. Fellows may also be called upon to present a summary of their work at Hub events and workshops.

Any publications or other outputs/dissemination resulting from work carried out under this grant must include acknowledgement of the Hub's funding by including the statement:

"This work has been supported by the LEAP Digital Health Hub, which has been funded by EPSRC under grant number EP/X031349/1".

Publications must adhere to [UKRI's Open Access requirements](#).

Review of applications

This is a single stage process. All applications to the Hub will be sent for peer review by non-conflicted referees. Plain English summaries of proposals will also be published in an anonymised form on our website and open to peer review from stakeholders including patients. This open review score will feed into the panel's deliberations.

On concluding the peer review process, proposals for each of the Hub's schemes will be ranked by score and considered by a panel comprising the Hub leadership team. This panel will also have access to comments and scores received through the open-peer review process, and will be asked to incorporate those in their deliberations.

Conflicted members of the leadership team will step out of the meeting during scoring of proposals in which they or their Universities are involved. Although quality will be the main criterion for funding, since the Hub has regional, multi-disciplinary, thematic, multi-sector ambitions, the panel reserves the right to make funding decisions which take into account as secondary factors the

geographical distribution of its funding, the mix of disciplines and partners. The panel would also encourage applications from those demonstrating future leader potential at early career stages and those with non-conventional career paths.

Assessment criteria

The criteria to be used in the assessment process will be as follows:

- Strength of argument of how a LEAP Fellowship can support career development and digital health leadership potential of the prospective Fellow(s).
- Potential of the project to address real, important health needs, and appropriate plans for future funding and future impact.
- Likelihood of producing innovation within engineering and physical sciences and computer science, in addition to any health and care, social science insights or impacts.
- The proposal provides a clear statement of the state of the art in this domain and how the project will advance it.
- Fit to at least one of the four [Hub Research Themes](#).
- Realistic and achievable timeline and milestones, including adequate thought given to data management and ethics approval processes, resources etc.
- Appropriate collaborations in place with appropriate in-kind or cash contributions from partners, preferably including partners in Wales and the South West.
- Appropriate consideration of the downstream impact of the project on health equalities and on specific minority groups.
- Appropriate involvement of end-users of the research in the creation of the proposal or in the project if funded.

Deadlines

Complete project paperwork comprising application form, Host Academic letter, institutional approval statement, and partner letters of support, needs to be received at leap-dh-hub@bristol.ac.uk by 15th September 2024. Late and incomplete applications will be automatically rejected without any review. Over-length applications or applications missing minor pieces of information will be returned for revision within 5 working days, and rejected if not rendered compliant within that timeframe. Please use the checklist provided in the application form to help ensure your application is complete.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the funding or application criteria, please contact Rachel Prior or Emma Brown at leap-dh-hub@bristol.ac.uk.

Key documents

- [Application form](#)
- [Sub-award terms template](#)
- [FAQ](#)