Templeton Emerging Scholars Fellowship in Diverse Intelligences

Application Period: January 14 - March 5, 2025

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Templeton Emerging Scholars Fellowship in Diverse Intelligences is designed to empower assistant professors (or equivalent) in the foundational years of their academic journey.

We are interested in bold thinkers and ambitious researchers; those who are driven to push the boundaries of knowledge around diverse intelligences, are humble enough to seek mentorship, who are inspired to engage in interdisciplinary research, expand their professional networks, and develop their leadership capabilities.

The program will require a champion pair of senior researchers, with at least one related to the DI community, to pair up and nominate high potential junior colleagues for this fellowship and grant opportunity. Champions are expected to work together to identify ideal candidates. They are also expected to support their fellowship nominee, if selected, through the application and grant delivery process, and serve as a resource for them during their fellowship period.

For this round we are interested in tackling the question of what constitutes intelligence from across a wide spectrum of disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, cognition, AI, sociology, ethology, genetics, comparative studies, religion, and related fields. This fellowship seeks to position fellows as influential voices in advancing groundbreaking insights into the practical, moral, ethical, and spiritual implications of a growing appreciation for the diversity of intelligences, whether they be, human, non human, machine, or cosmic.

he selected finalists will be eligible for up to $350,000 USD direct costs. The fellow will have up to $200,000 in unrestricted grant funding to support their research. These funds may be applied toward operational research costs, course buy-outs and summer salary, trainee support, administrative support, conference travel, dissemination and other reasonable expenses.

The remaining up to $150,000 of the award is to be split across the other components of the fellowship which includes subawards, champion honoraria, support for fellow organized convenings, and travel to Diverse Intelligences events.

Successful fellows will join a thriving community of research that aims to foster interdisciplinary understanding and generate insights into the applications of research on intelligences for societal benefit, preparing them to address some of humanity’s most profound questions.

CONTEXT

Launched in 2016, the Diverse Intelligences Initiative has been the largest investment the Templeton World Charity Foundation has made in any single area of research with over 100 grants awarded worth about $40 million USD.

The goal of the Initiative is to explore and increase our knowledge of diverse intelligences in the world, by supporting scientific research and developing a new community of practice both inside and outside of the academy.

The acceptance of multiple schools of thought of what constitutes intelligence across disciplines has allowed for an environment where intellectual humility has thrived. This has encouraged and led to cross-disciplinary conversations and collaborations.

There were a number of themes identified to guide exploration of intelligences in the initiative. These make up the areas of interests below.

AREAS OF INTEREST

There are four themes that applicants for fellowships can focus on for their projects:

1 RECOGNIZING INTELLIGENCES

To focus on diverse intelligences in the natural world—their nature, structure, purpose, and evolutionary origins. To explore what biological organisms or systems appear "intelligent," and which attributes make them so. Work in this area could include exploring how to recognize intelligence in a radically different form, purpose, and content from our own. If projects in these areas are successful, then new opportunities could include exploring whether general principles exist behind the diversity of intelligences in the natural world, and what moral, ethical, or spiritual obligations follow from recognizing intelligence in other species and systems.

2 SHAPING HUMAN INTELLIGENCES

To investigate the foundations and distinct properties of human intelligence. This includes probing the role of different environments, cultures, collectives and technologies in scaffolding the full range of human intelligence. Success in this area may open up new opportunities that foster and protect 'underexplored' domains of human intelligence including social, moral, and spiritual intelligence. This may include fundamental research into character virtues, spiritual intelligence and capacities, and protecting individual freedom.

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AREAS OF INTEREST

3 INTELLIGENCE BEYOND BIOLOGY

Augmented and Artificial Intelligence.
To focus on the role of technology in augmenting human intelligence and shaping human nature, and other possibilities for artificial intelligences. Importantly, this includes investigating what machine intelligence, as narrowly implemented in computational systems, can teach us about human intelligence, and what fundamental differences exist between the two. Additional opportunities may exist to explore whether (and if so, how) technology can be used to enhance our capacity for character virtues. These projects may also explore what moral obligations arise with the accelerating development of technology and artificial intelligence.

4 WHENCE INTELLIGENCE

Genes and Development
To investigate how genetic and epigenetic factors shape cognition, intelligence, character, or moral development. By examining how genetics can give rise to cognition and intelligences, or the complex interplay between genetic predispositions and the environment, there is potential to understand how intelligence, character, and behavior emerge across species and kingdoms. Projects in this area could reveal genetic mechanisms by which intelligences emerge and develop over time and across generations.

FELLOWSHIP DESIGN & COMPONENTS

The fellowship opportunity integrates research support, networking, mentorship, and professional development in a holistic program aimed at empowering and cultivating academic leaders.

The program will provide the fellow with support for research as well as training in areas of research leadership that are highly desired such as: team leadership, science communication and advocacy, etc.

The selected finalists will be eligible to apply for grants up to $350,000 USD (plus up to 15% overhead) to conduct innovative research and support the required fellowship activities. There will be $200,000 in unrestricted grant funding and up to $150,000 of the award is to be split across subawards, mentor honoraria, support for workshops and travel to Diverse Intelligences events. Components include:

Fellowship Value

The selected finalists will be eligible for up to $350,000 USD direct costs.

Unrestricted Research Funding

The nominated fellow will have up to $200,000 in unrestricted grant funding to support their research.

Networking

The fellow will be required to organize one gathering of their choice and attend at least one Diverse Intelligences community gathering during the fellowship program.

Seed Funding

There will $100,000 provided to award seed funding (up to $25,000 per award) to support new collaborations related to the fellowship project proposed.

FELLOWSHIP DESIGN & COMPONENTS

Research Support

The nominated fellow will have up to $200,000 in unrestricted grant funding to support their research. These funds may be applied toward operational research costs, course buy-outs and summer salary, trainee support, administrative support, conference travel, dissemination and other reasonable expenses.

Workshop/Meetings for Networking

This fellowship will create opportunities for broadening networks and developing new ones.

The fellow will be required to attend at least one Diverse Intelligences community gathering during the fellowship program. They will also have to organize a convening related to their fellowship idea. This can be a small workshop, pre-conference, symposium, etc.

In particular, there is interest in finding intelligence in unconventional means, or disseminating a novel approach to studying intelligences. These activities aim to promote networking and interdisciplinary exchange.

Mentorship

By using a champion model this fellowship ensures mentorship from senior researchers with keen interest in seeing their junior colleagues succeed from the very beginning. The fellow will have access to their mentors who will help support their research and career development. They could also benefit from peer mentorship among their fellow cohort.

Subawards

There will also be opportunities to award seed funding (up to $25,000 per award) to support new collaborations related to the fellowship project proposed. At least half of these subawards must support interdisciplinary collaborations. The mechanism for granting the seed awards will be discussed and developed in conjunction with TWCF personnel during the grant development process.

FELLOWSHIP LENGTH & BUDGET BREAKDOWN

The Fellowship program will be roughly 36 months, and the research grant will be up to 30 months. Grant activities can start as early as Mid January of 2026.

Pre-grant activities will commence in May of 2025 and include:

1. An In-person orientation gathering
2. Grant development sessions
3. Other professional development opportunities to be determined.

TOTAL AWARD AMOUNT: $350,000 direct costs

- $200k of unrestricted grant research support
- $20k for mentor honoraria over 2 years (5k per mentor per year)
- $100k in subawards (at least 4 awards made)
- $25k for convening support (hosting a meeting; pre-conference; workshop, etc)
- $5k to attend a Diverse Intelligence gathering

ELIGIBILITY

CHAMPION PAIRS

Champion pairs are a team of two researchers that are committed to mentoring their nominee if selected.

Requirements

- At least one champion must be connected to the existing Diverse Intelligences Initiative and community (to have a good grasp on the initiative, community and interest of the Foundation).
- Both need to be tenured researchers (If they have left academia they must have had tenure prior to leaving).
- Between the two champions, must represent or be active in at least two disciplines.
- Are motivated to mentor and support emerging scholars.
- The champions are not required to be at the same institution. The champion pair is not required to be at the same institution as the nominated scholar.
- Each champion is limited to two nominees.

NOMINEE

The nominee will be the focus of the activities and the awardee of the grant. It is expected that they will be leading the fellowship activities.

Requirements

- Should be an Assistant professor (or global equivalent) pre-tenure, or within the first (active) 6 years of their position.
- Cannot have been the PhD student of either champion.
- Cannot have been a postdoc or direct employee of either champion within the last 2 years (collaborators are acceptable).
- Should engage in research related to the themes of Diverse Intelligences discussed above.
- Display enthusiasm for connecting with researchers working in another research area or discipline to help expand their vision and perspective.
- Intend to remain at their institution for the fellowship grant period.

ELIGIBILITY

If Selected:

Requirements

Champions commit to mentoring their nominee throughout the fellowship period.

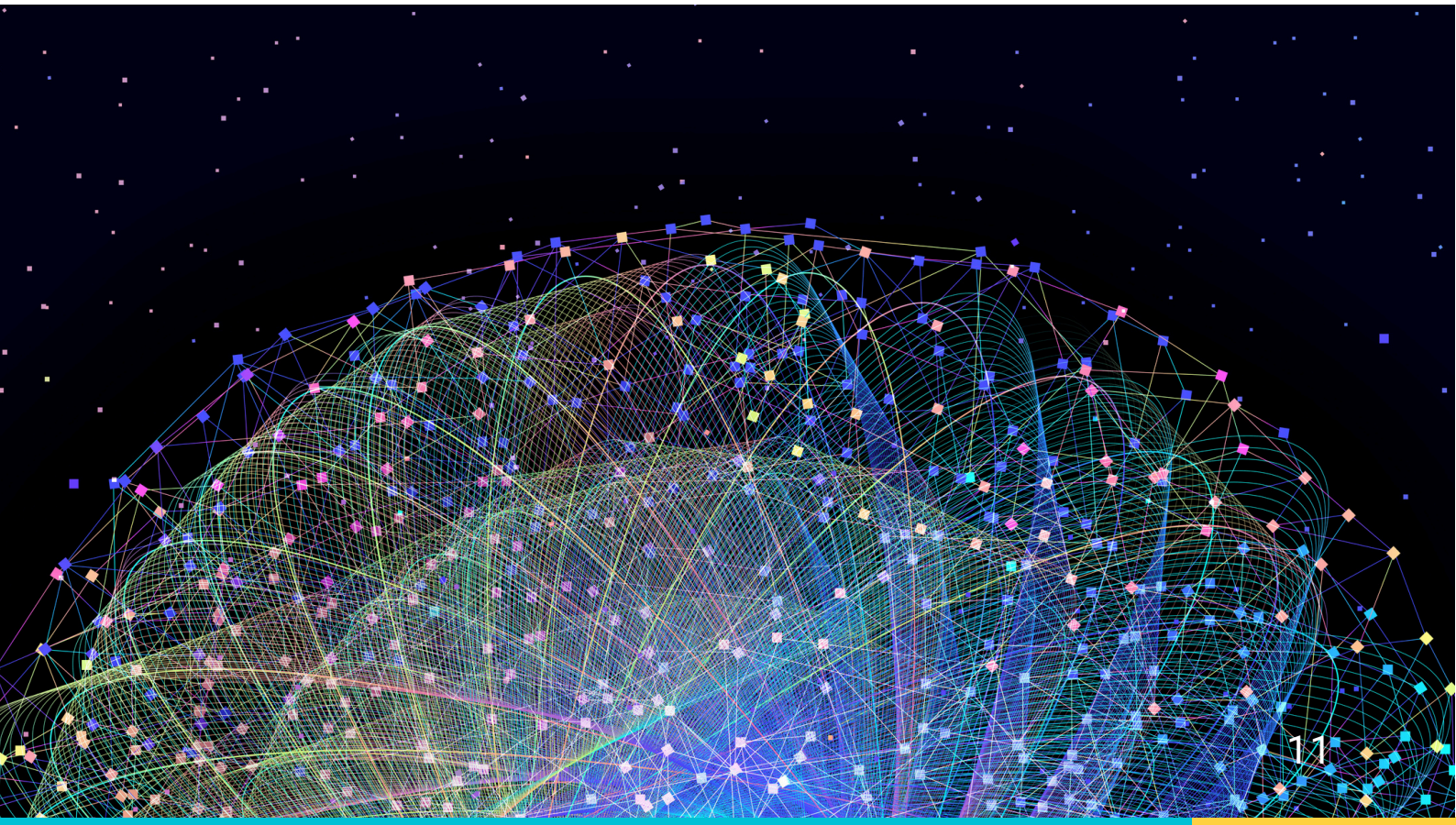
Fellows commit to the grant staying at their current institution for the duration of the fellowship grant period.

The nominee must be available for an interview slot during the interview period (April 9th-10th, 2025).

The fellow is able to attend an orientation workshop on June 25-26th, 2025.

The fellow agrees to attend at least one Diverse Intelligences gathering per year.

If you have any questions regarding your eligibility, please contact us at diverseintelligences@templetonworldcharity.org



APPLICATION PROCESS & COMPONENTS

The application process consists of two stages:

NOMINATION

This program incorporates a “Champion approach” which requires an interdisciplinary champion pair to nominate and commit to mentoring a junior faculty colleague. Finalists will be selected from the nominee pool.

GRANT DEVELOPMENT

The selected finalist fellows will develop a full research proposal based on the plan submitted with the support of their Champions and TWCF personnel.

Champions will complete the nomination through our online submission page. It will be divided into two sections.

Champions Nomination Section

This section provides information about the champion pair, their rationale for their nomination, and their mentorship plan.

1. Diverse Intelligences statement
    a. This should explain the connection to the Diverse Intelligences initiative and community and understanding of the Diverse Intelligences initiative and its aims.
2. Nomination statement
    a. Discuss why the scholar is being nominated. Discuss their potential regarding research excellence, productivity, creativity, interdisciplinary engagement, and future leadership in the field, relative to peers at a similar career stage.
    b. Discuss why this person is a good fit for DI?
3. Mentor statement
    a. Rationale for diad and capacity for success of champion pair
    b. Mentorship style and history
4. CVs of both Champions
5. Mentorship Agreement
    a. Submit a mentorship agreement that describes the expectations, commitments and responsibilities of the mentor team and fellow. We understand that mentorship can look very different based on the individuals and so we offer the fellow and mentors the flexibility to do what works best for them.

APPLICATION PROCESS & COMPONENTS

Nominee Section

This section provides information about the nominee and their research plan.

The following files will need to be provided by the nominee to the champions to be uploaded as a zip file or a single pdf:

1. Nominee CV
2. Nominee Statements Document
    a. Leadership statement
        i. This should be a statement of what experiences have shaped your academic journey thus far, have shaped you into a leader, and how you would like to continue to grow into an exceptional researcher and leader.
    b. Research statement
        i. Provide a statement of your research background and interests and how it aligns with the themes of this call. Describe how this agenda aligns with and advances the themes and objectives of the Diverse Intelligences Initiative and how you plan to advance your research by participating in this fellowship.
    c. Statement of Interest
        i. Explain why you are interested in this fellowship and what you hope to gain from it. What skills would you like to develop or strengthen and how do you see this opportunity beneficial to you as a researcher?
3. Peer Reference Letter
    a. This should be provided by a researcher at a similar academic career stage who can speak about you as an academic professional, researcher, and collaborator. Fellowship Project
4. Proposed research plan (no more than 2 pages)
    a. Project Title: This should be clear, concise, and easily understood by a non-specialist.
    b. Relation to Diverse Intelligences and selected theme: How does your proposed research relate to the aims and scope of this opportunity.
    c. Project Synopsis: What is the aim of the proposed research, and why is it important? Please describe the main activities that you will undertake. If applicable, provide specific questions that the project seeks to answer, and proposed methodologies to answer those questions. Describe areas of potential research that you might wish to pursue in collaboration with others that relate to your project.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Stage 1: Nomination Process

The champion pair will submit the nomination package to the foundation through the online submission page. The nomination will go through three decision points:

1. An initial eligibility, alignment and completeness check.

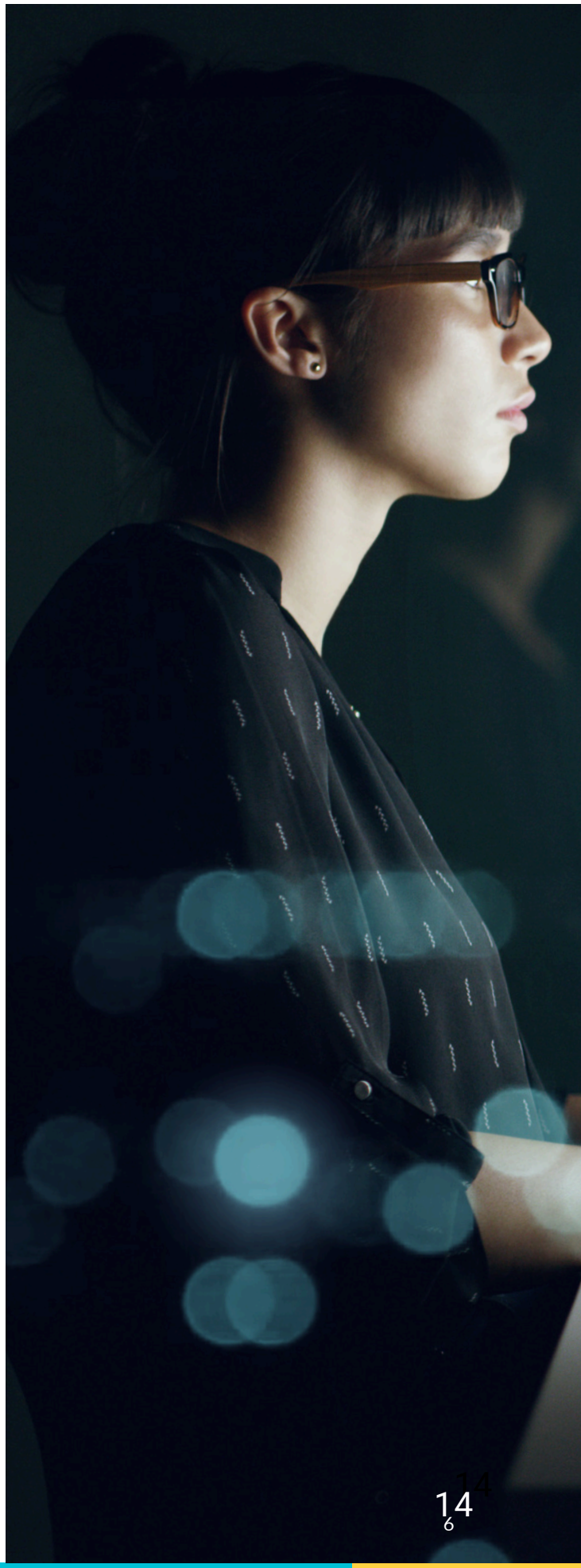
2. Down selection based on the research question (Relevance to DI themes; Creativity and innovation; Interdisciplinary potential) and the nominee's potential (Research acumen; Leadership potential; Motivation and interest alignment with program).

3. The down selected applicants will be interviewed by a panel that will make the final selections based on the overall potential of the nominee and their fit with the Foundation aims.

Stage 2: Grant Development Process

1. The TWCF Program team and champions will work closely with the fellow to develop a full proposal of their proposed research plan.

2. The proposal will undergo expert review and revision, then presented to the Board of Trustees for final decisioning in October 2025.



KEY DATES

What's the date?	What's happening?
January 14th, 2025	Application Cycle Opens
January 22nd, 2025	Informational Webinar
March 5th 2025	Nomination deadline
April 9th-10th, 2025	Interview period for downselected candidates
Mid-April 2025	Finalists are notified
Late June/Early July	In person orientation meeting
Mid-October 2025	Fellowship Research Project Approved
January 1st, 2026	Earliest start date of research activities

CONTACT, FORMS & INSTRUCTIONS

If you have any questions during the nomination process, please contact us at diverseintelligences@templetonworldcharity.org

Please find the online submission page here. If you are new to TWCF's grant management system, you will need to set up an account. If you are returning, please use your original account email address and password.

This section provides comprehensive access to all required uploads and detailed instructions essential for the nomination:

- Nomination Statement Instructions
- Proposed Research Plan Template
- Mentorship Agreement
- Nominee Statements Document
- Peer Reference Letter Instructions
- Application Checklist

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What disciplines are accepted?

- We are welcoming of the study of intelligences from a diverse range of disciplines. The following (and related disciplines) represent the current breadth of the initiative, but is not exhaustive. Philosophy; Cognitive Science; Comparative Science; Human Development; Psychology; Economics; Computer Science; Neuroscience; Genetics; Anthropology; Computer Science; Genomics; Mathematics; Astronomy; Religious studies; Cultural studies; Evolution; Synthetic Biology. If you are unsure please feel free to send us an email at diverseintelligences@templetonworldcharity.org

What qualifications do fellows need to have?

- Fellows must be pre-tenured assistant professors (or the global equivalent) and cannot have been a PhD student of either champion, or a postdoc or direct employee of either champion within the last two years. They must engage in research related to the themes of Diverse Intelligences described, and demonstrate enthusiasm for interdisciplinary collaboration.

I am an assistant professor. Can I form my champion team?

- We put no restrictions on how the champion and nominee team is formed. If a junior researcher identifies champions that are willing to nominate them and commit to be mentors they can be nominated. However, the nomination must be submitted by a champion.

Can I nominate someone even if I cannot be their mentor?

- It is expected that champions take on a mentorship role. If you do know of a nominee with high potential you could recommend them to a colleague that may be interested in serving as a champion.

I am not part of the DI community. Can I submit a nomination?

- You can, but we require that your champion partner have a strong connection to the Diverse Intelligences initiative and community.

I'm an assistant professor and I'd like to be mentored. Can I apply?

- Assistant professors can only apply if nominated by champions, as the program does not accept self-nominations.

Can I nominate more than one scholar?

- Yes, but each champion is limited to nominating two scholars

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I be a part of multiple champion pairs?

- You can be involved in up to two champion pairs.

Who does the grant go to?

- The fellow will be the project director of the grant. There will be a small budget allocated to honoraria for the champions for their mentorship support.

Can mentors and fellows all be at the same institution? Is there priority given for being at the same or at different institutions?

- Champions and nominees can be at the same institution. No priority is given for being at the same or different institutions.

Who can subawards go to? Must they go to other junior people or can they go to senior people? Can the mentors get one?

- There is no restriction on the academic level of who can receive the subawards. Because mentors may help guide the subaward process they are excluded from eligibility.

Why is a peer reference letter required?

- Some of the most impactful academic relationships form horizontally. The purpose of the peer reference letter is to gather information from the applicant from the perspective of a colleague in a similar career stage who has been privy to the nominee's development thus far.

Champion pairs - does the different disciplines mean different home departments or different disciplines regardless of department?

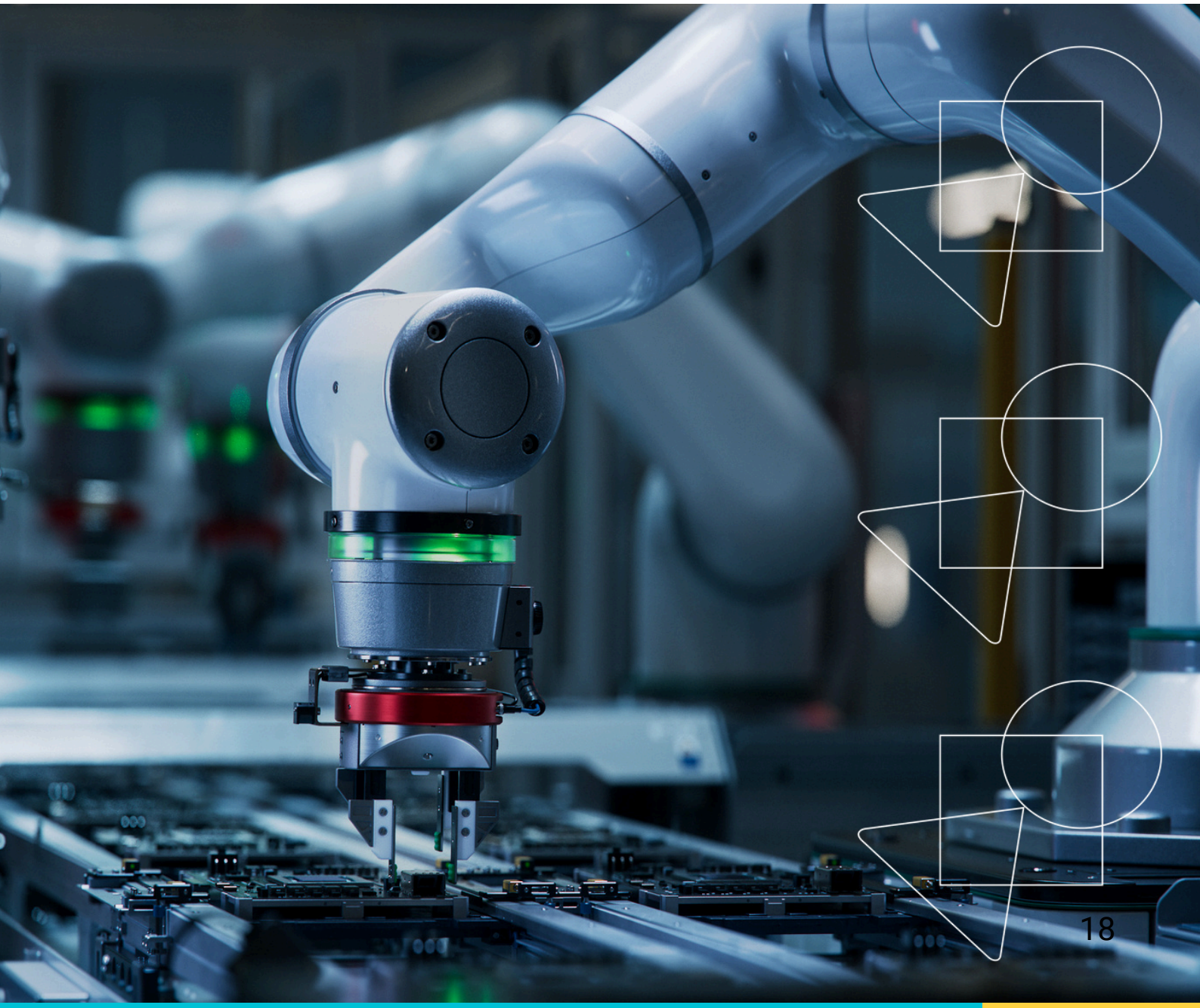
- Both disciplines can fall under the same home department.

I have left academia, but I am interested in being a champion. Is this possible?

- Yes, someone who has left academia can serve as a champion, however, they must have had tenure prior to leaving

What if my champion partner and I work in the same disciplines?

- This is acceptable if at least 2 disciplines are represented. For example, if one champion works actively in both philosophy and cognitive sciences, while the other works only in cognitive sciences we would consider two disciplines represented by the pair.

For any questions, contact us.

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