

Schmidt Science Fellows 2025: Guidance for Prospective Candidates



Christine Norton

Director of Operations and
Acting Director of Selection



Dr. Fiona Hamey

Admissions Manager



Dr. Chloe Hutton

Admissions Manager

Overview

01 Our vision

02 What we offer

03 Who we are looking for

04 Selection criteria

05 Application process

06 Review process

07 How to apply

08 Preliminary information

09 Full application

10 Q&A



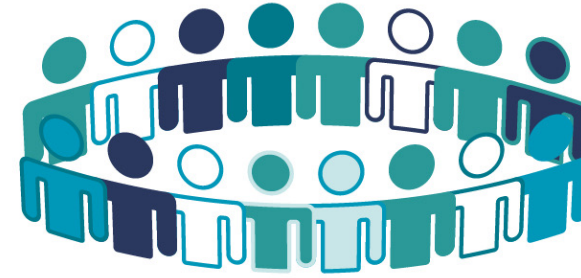
Our vision



A world where **interdisciplinary science** flourishes without limit, accelerating discoveries to benefit the world, and driving innovation **that improves quality of life for all.**



Our mission



We help scientists solve bigger problems faster by building a **community of the next generation of science leaders** and supporters of **interdisciplinary science.**

What do we offer you?



Freedom to take risks

Opportunity to study in a different area from your PhD in any country, including your home country.



Science Leadership Program

A bespoke professional development curriculum delivered across three week-long residential convenings and a rich set of virtual offerings.



US\$110,000 per year

Personal stipend for up to two years of postdoctoral study.



Personalized mentoring program

Delivered by experienced international interdisciplinary science leaders to help you develop as scientific and societal thought leaders.



Lifelong fellowship community

This stimulating and caring fellowship community is at the heart of the Schmidt Science Fellows Program and is a distinguishing factor among other postdoctoral funding opportunities.

Who are we looking for?

- **Curious and creative scientists** interested in making a genuine move to intensive study in a **discipline different to their PhD.**
- **Academically excellent, risk-positive,** early-career researchers who can demonstrate a commitment to **ambitious, high-impact science.**
- **Future leaders** with the potential and character to lead teams and **unlock transformative discoveries in the future.**
- **Talented individuals** from a wide range of scientific disciplines who are motivated to **increase interdisciplinary collaboration.**



Selection 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 a year or more 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



Global Ambition for Social Good

Desire to use one's personal talents to make a positive difference in society and the world.



Character and Leadership

Genuine and demonstrable potential for science leadership; displaying perseverance, resilience, a moral compass, and a galvanizing force of a personality.

The application and selection process

Nominating Partners are invited to nominate candidates
Feb – May, 2024

Review of applications
Aug – Dec, 2024

Fellows notified (anticipated)
Late Feb, 2025

Candidate submits application
May – Jul, 2024

Final Interviews (online)
Jan, 2025

Fellowship Research Placements start
Jul – Oct, 2025



How will your application be reviewed?

Academic Review

- Academic Reviewers with expertise in your PhD field will review your written application.
- This evaluation will focus on academic excellence and programmatic fit.

Final Selection

- If you are short-listed, you will be interviewed by senior figures in science, business, and society.
- The interviewers will not be discipline-specific and will assess all selection criteria.
- Interviews will be online.



How to apply

- Your institution will give you an authorization code.
- You can then apply through our online portal, which opens on **May 9, 2024**.
- Your written application will be based on your PhD highlights, future research plans, collaboration and personal statements, and academic history.
- **Please read the provided guidance document very carefully before starting your application - it contains essential instructions.**
- You can access the guidance document from the application.



Application: Preliminary Information

What we ask for:

- Contact information
- PhD discipline and dissertation title
- PhD expected completion date

- You must submit by **May 30, 2024.**
- Basic information.
- We use this data to **determine reviewer expertise** for Academic Review.
- You can access the full application form once **this section has been completed.**

Full Application

What we ask for:

- PhD description and highlights
- Future research plan
- Options for Placement
- Collaboration and personal statements
- Academic history
- Publications and CV
- Letters of Recommendation

- **Read** all the guidance before writing **any** of your application.
- You **must** submit by July 10, 2024, 17:00 (GMT+1).



- **Please do not wait to submit on the last day.**

This will allow no time to address technical issues, no time for corrections, no time to ensure letters of recommendation are in place, etc.

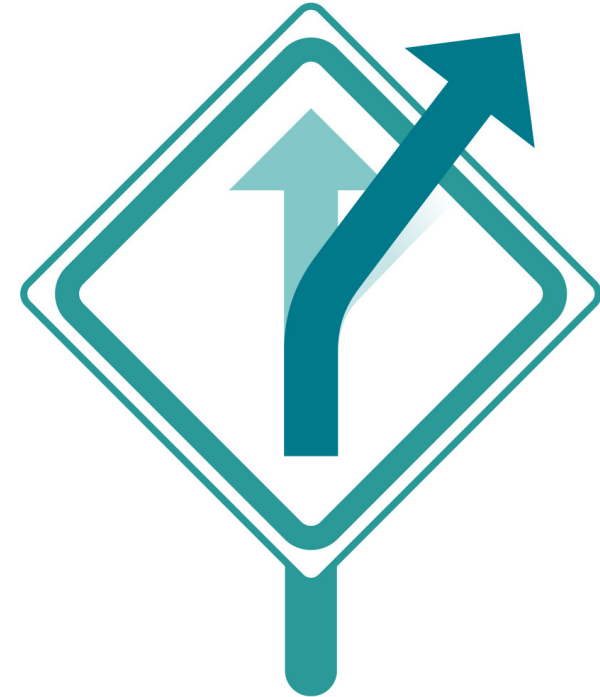
Full Application: PhD Description

- Provide a **brief overview** of your PhD studies.
- Summarize the **main aims and outcomes**.
- Make **your individual contributions** clear – tell us what **you** did.
- Emphasize the aspects of your PhD work that are particularly **exciting** and **innovative**.
- Highlight any outputs that you believe may have significant **impact** or that **you take great pride in**.

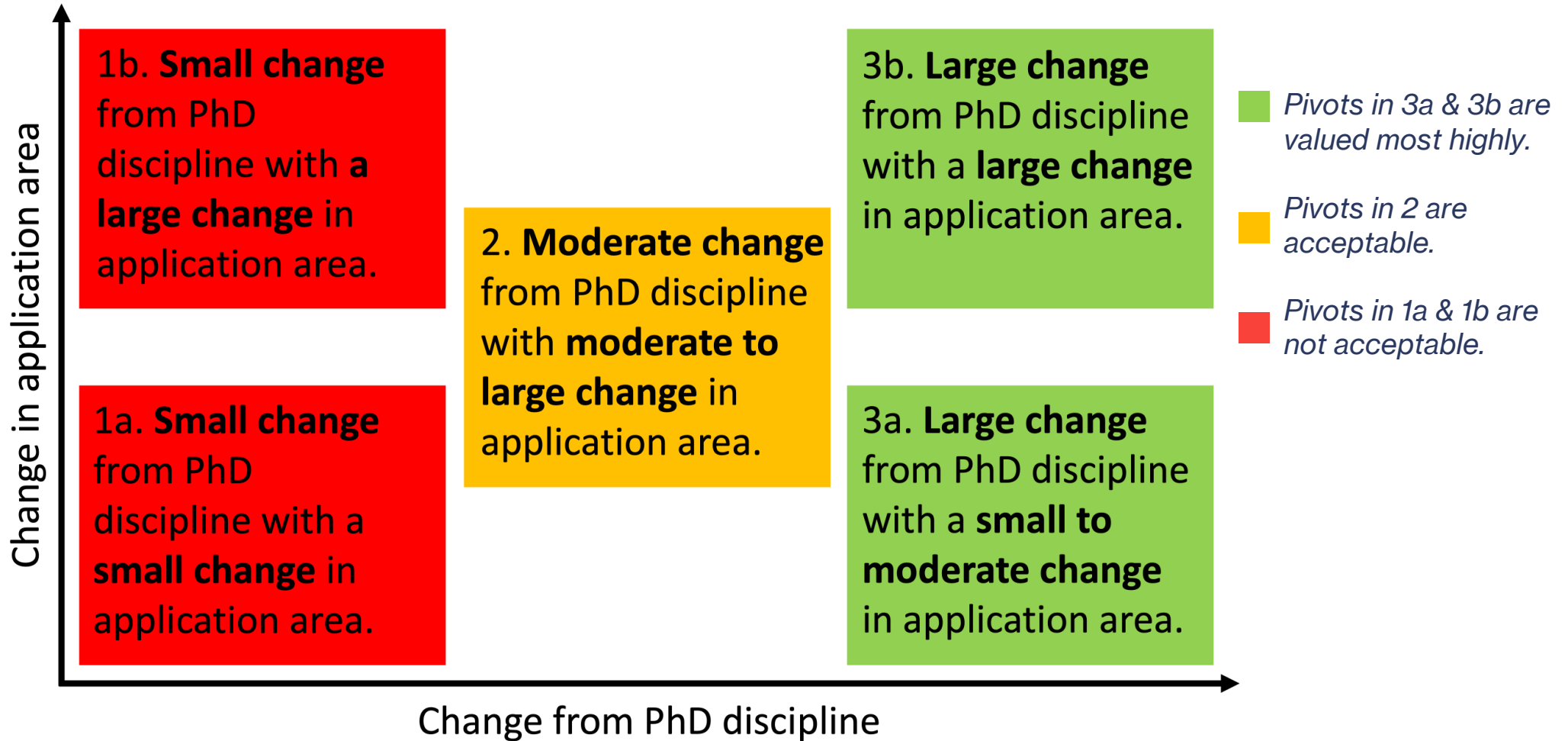


Full Application: Your Research Proposal (The Pivot)

- The shift in research focus or **interdisciplinary pivot** is **central to our mission**.
- We encourage intellectual freedom and the **pursuit of bold ideas** – the freedom to pursue an ambitious project and be supported in taking this risk is extremely rare - especially at this career stage.
- Your pivot should enable you to **achieve a scientific goal that is not possible** while continuing your current course, allowing you to **overcome a scientific challenge** using different approaches or perspectives.



Full Application: Research Proposal (The Pivot)



Full Application: Research Proposal (The Pivot)

- Outline your **hypothesis and objectives**.
- Provide enough detail to **demonstrate an understanding** of the new research area.
- Explain what is **innovative** about your proposal.
- Try to **balance** “big-picture” thinking and long-term goals with **practicality** within a 12-24 month Fellowship.
- Describe the **new tools and skills** you need to learn.
- **Explain** to us how your proposal is a **change in discipline and/or application** – we need to understand how it is a **pivot!**
- Tell us about the **potential short- or long-term impact** of your proposal.



Full Application: Research Proposal (The Pivot)

- **Ask someone** to read your proposal (your supervisor or other experts) – does it **make sense** to them?
- **Keep the audience in mind** – your proposal will be read by people who are not experts in your PhD/pivot field.



Full Application: Options for Placement

- Outline your goals for your placement and **three potential labs** where you may do your placement and why.
- You **do not need to contact these labs** or secure a position. Your suggestions are **NOT** binding.
- We want to **understand your approach** and training needs, and to prompt you to **think early and globally** about **the best place** to undertake your research plan.
- Carefully consider how the host lab and principal investigator can **support your training and development** in the new area of research.
- Placements are approved only **AFTER** selection as a Fellow.



Full Application: Collaboration Statement

- **Describe** how **you have worked collaboratively**, in an academic or non-academic setting.
- Outline what you feel are the **key elements** that lead to **successful** collaborations.
- We **do not expect** you to have lead collaborative teams at this stage of your career.
- We are interested in **your approach** to collaboration and how **you see your role** as you develop and lead collaborative projects in the future.



Full Application: Personal Statement

DOs:



- ✓ Discuss **personal** motivations, ambitions and interests.



- ✓ Discuss **relevant activities and interests** outside of research and how these will have a **positive impact** on society.



- ✓ Make clear what **you hope the Fellowship will do for you** and what **you will bring** to the community.

DON'Ts:

- X Repeat the content of the Research Proposal.

- X Focus only on research.

- X Give an essay version of your CV.

Full Application: Lay Summaries and Impact Statement

- Summarize your PhD and your proposed research using **lay (non-technical) language** to provide an overview to a **general audience**.
- Describe how you hope you or your research can make a **positive impact on the world**.
- These sections will help provide an overview of your application for reviewers and will be used in communications if you are selected as a Fellow.



Full Application: Academic History

DOs:



✓ Postgraduate and undergraduate studies.



✓ Publications (published, in press, in preparation or submitted)

✓ Other outputs (e.g. patents)



✓ Current CV

DON'Ts:

X Upload publications or manuscripts unless no link is available.

X Upload full-text documents related to other outputs.

X Include personal information (other than your name), details of referees or a photo in your CV.

Full Application: Letters of Recommendation

- Provide details of **3 to 5 recommenders**. One must be your PhD supervisor.
- Complete the recommenders section of the application form **as soon as you can** to give them time to write their recommendation.
- Your recommenders must submit their letters by **July 10, 2024** (same deadline as you).
- We expect letters to be around **2 pages in length** and to focus on your future trajectory as well as describing your **achievements and contributions**.



July 10, 2024

Full Application: Letters of Recommendation

- Choose recommenders who **know you well enough** to describe **how you meet our selection criteria**.
- Choose people who are **experienced** enough to have the perspective to talk about **your future potential**.
- We recommend that **at least 3** are researchers who are familiar with your work.
- Your recommenders **do not all have to be academics!**
- Consider asking people who can describe how you meet the different selection criteria.
- **Speak to them:** make sure they know about your application and future plans.



Thanks for reading!

- For any outstanding questions please contact the Selection Team below.



Christine Norton, Dr. Fiona Hamey and Dr. Chloe Hutton, info@schmidtsciencefellows.org