

SSI Fellowship Programme 2026:

Shortlisting Criteria

Conflict of Interest

Any of the following cases may represent a conflict of interest:

1. They are a friend or family member or a previous acquaintance.
2. They are a former or current colleague or collaborator.
3. They are a current or past supervisor or supervisee.
4. You have provided formal or informal application support.

If you have been assigned a candidate who falls into any of 1-4, please email us at fellows-management@software.ac.uk highlighting whether you feel that you can objectively assess them. When needed, you will be assigned another candidate.

Scoring of Candidates

During the shortlisting phase, candidates are being reviewed on Ambassadorship (30%) and their Fellowship Plans (70%), which will each be scored on a scale from NOT READY (1 point) to EXCELLENT (5 points). The scores and their associated points (including intermediate points) are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| • EXCELLENT | 5 |
| • VERY GOOD | 4 |
| • GOOD IN PARTS | 3 |
| • SUFFICIENT | 2 |
| • NOT READY (THIS TIME) | 1 |

Reviewers: We have provided examples for excellent and not ready grading points for each criterion below, please use your judgement when grading between these two levels. Also, please take into account that the candidate's personal context (for example, relating to native language, cultural differences, career stage, domain or area of work, neurodiversity, disability, gender, race, and other lived experiences) may be different to your own when assessing them.

Ambassadorship (30%)

Applicants will be marked on **Ambassadorship** during Shortlisting on a scale from NOT READY (1 point) to EXCELLENT (5 points) where:

- EXCELLENT (5 points) = they have demonstrated that they are an ambassador of good practice in their area of work, for example they:
 - Include a meaningful description of who they are, what they do, and have a clear link to research software or the research software community.
 - Have experience organising events, activities or workshops to improve research or computational practice in their area of work.
 - Required from [Phase 3-4 career stage](#) candidates (if they do not have experience organising these types of activities but have otherwise engaged in these types of activities, subtract 1 point).

- [Phase 1-2 career stage](#) candidates are not expected to have experience organising these types of activities, but should have previously participated in these types of activities.
- Have given presentations, conducted outreach or written blog posts advocating for good research or computational practice.
 - Required from [Phase 2-4 career stage](#) candidates.
 - Not expected from [Phase 1 career stage](#) candidates.
- NOT READY (1 point) = they have not demonstrated that they are an ambassador of good practice in their area of work, for example they:
 - Give an unclear or incomplete description of who they are and what they do.
 - Do not have a clear link to research software or the research software community.
 - Have not previously engaged with activities that aim to improve research or computational practice in their area of work.
 - Are a [Phase 2-4 career stage](#) candidate and have not previously advocated for good research or computational practice
 - They are not a clear and effective communicator, that is, you are not able to understand their descriptions of who they are, what they do, and their plans for the Fellowship.

Fellowship Plans (70%)

Applicants will be marked on their **Fellowship Plans** during Shortlisting on a scale from NOT READY (1 point) to EXCELLENT (5 points), where:

- EXCELLENT (5 points) = the proposed plans for the Fellowship are excellent, for example
 - The plans demonstrate an understanding of the bigger picture and vision for improving computational practice in their area of work. They articulate potential solutions as part of their plans for the Fellowship and how/why their methodology will have impact.
 - The plans are [SMART](#):
 - Specific: The plans include details around the goals of the Fellowship and the target domains/fields, communities or audiences for the proposed activities are specified.
 - Measurable: The plans include details around how the Fellowship will be leveraged to achieve their goals, such as specificity around activities the candidate will deliver and estimated costs, outputs and outcomes.
 - Achievable: The candidate has the experience or skills needed to carry out the proposed plans, or include plans to gain the skills needed to carry out the activities, or includes plans to collaborate with others in order to carry out the activities. For example, if the proposed activities include training, the candidate could include Instructor Training as part of their plans to gain the skills needed to deliver it.
 - Relevant: The plans for the Fellowship are aligned with the [goals](#) and [manifesto](#) of the Institute. For example, the plans are aligned with recognition of software as a research output, software skills and training, recognition of the role of Research Software Engineers in research, reproducible research, or a similar area for promoting good computational practice in research.

- Time-bound: The plans for the Fellowship can be achieved within the 15-month inaugural period, or include details for how the plans will continue beyond the inaugural period.

International applicants (applicants who are not based in the UK or who do not have a formal affiliation with a UK-based institution or office) must demonstrate how their plans foster international collaboration or how UK research culture benefits from their unique perspective and/or techniques.

The candidate should also demonstrate how they can successfully deliver on their plans if there are potential challenges related to time zones, language barriers or the cost of having to travel large distances. For example, it is ok to take the approach to minimise travel and plan more activities online if located at a large distance from the UK. Candidates should not be penalised based on location, but identifying these challenges will help us solve them.

- NOT READY (1 point) = the proposed plans for the Fellowship are not sufficiently developed, for example
 - The plans do not demonstrate an understanding of the bigger picture or vision for improving computational practice in their area of work. They do not articulate potential solutions as part of their plans for the Fellowship or how/why their methodology will have impact.
 - The plans are not SMART:
 - Specific: The goals for the Fellowship are vague or unclear. The target domains/fields, communities or audiences for the proposed activities have not been specified.
 - Measurable: The plans do not include details around how the Fellowship will help them achieve their goals. For example, they have not described the activities they will deliver and estimated costs, outputs or outcomes.
 - Achievable: The plans seem unrealistic and it is unclear if the candidate has the experience or skills needed to carry out the proposed plans. If mentioned, working with others seemed just like mentioning names of people or activities but not saying how they would interact/work with them.
 - Relevant: The plans for the Fellowship are not relevant to the [goals](#) and [impacts and themes](#) of the Institute or other initiatives for promoting good computational practice in research.
 - Time-bound: The plans for the Fellowship cannot be achieved within the 15-month inaugural period.
 - International applicants (applicants who are not based in the UK or who do not have a formal affiliation with a UK-based institution or office) have not demonstrated that their plans foster international collaboration or how UK research culture benefits from your unique perspective and/or techniques.