Call for Proposals Faraday Institution PhD and EngD Studentships

(commencing October 2026)

Faraday Institution webinar – October 2025

THE FARADAY INSTITUTION

Format of Today's Webinar

1. **Housekeeping and welcome**
   ~ 5 minutes
2. **Overview of the PhD call (vision and mission)**
   ~ 5 minutes
3. **Summary of the call, expectations and process**
   ~ 10 minutes
4. **Moderated Q&A**
   ~ 20 minutes
5. **Summary of the distributed peer review process**
   ~ 5 minutes
6. **Moderated Q&A**
   ~ 15 minutes

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Chief Strategy Officer

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Housekeeping

Questions

- Please submit questions during the webinar in the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen
- Questions can also be submitted to training@faraday.ac.uk after the webinar

Recording

- The webinar is being recorded, so please do not share sensitive information in the Q&A
- The recording and slides will be made available via the Faraday Institution Call for Proposals webpage

Audience

- Potential applicants to the Faraday Institution PhD call programme

Subtitles

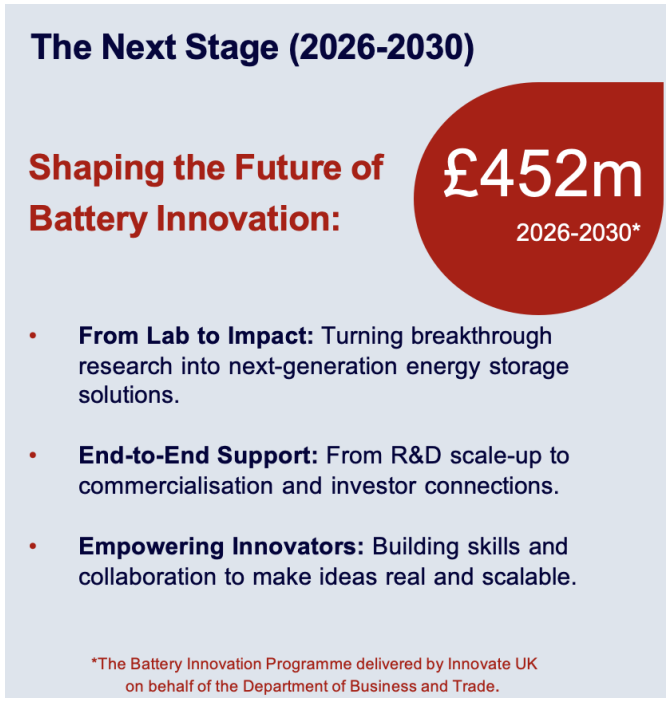
- Can be accessed by clicking CC on the bottom toolbar

Supporting documents for this call

- Can be found on our webpage

Introduction from Matt Howard

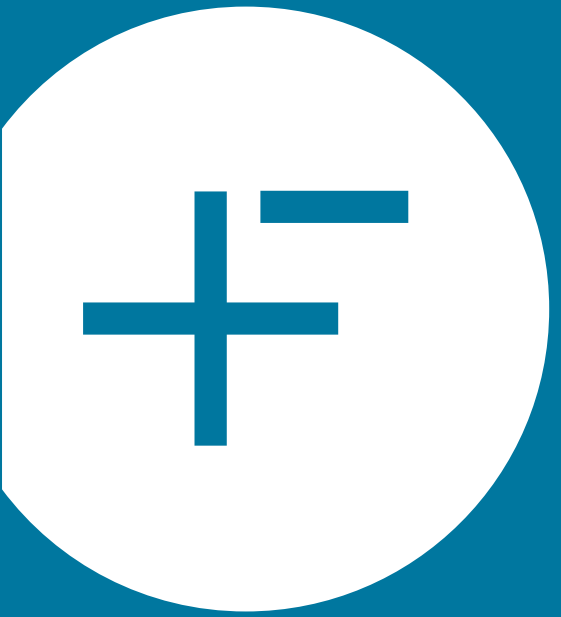
Overview: Call for Proposals Faraday Institution PhD and EngD Studentships



- The 2026 PhD/EngD studentship call invites proposals combining academic excellence with industry relevance.
- What to provide an opportunity to support industry, academics and foster collaboration
- Will support up to 4 years of PhD/EngD funding (covering fees, stipend, training)
- Once PhDs are recruited into successful studentships they will form Cohort 9 of the Faraday Institution PhD Training Programme, commencing October 2026
  - Offers 280 hours of training, developing skills and careers in battery research
  - Impact: 89% of graduates from cohorts 1–3 secured their first roles in the battery and energy storage sector

Background

- Will fund a *minimum* of 15 fully funded studentships
- By combining with third-party co-funding in some cases, we aim to increase the total number of studentships available
- Subject to funding confirmation from Innovate UK, anticipated by February 2026
- The call is open to the wider battery community, encouraging new and diverse research areas
- We expect high application numbers and are piloting a new review process to ensure efficiency and fairness



The call

Core Aims and Objectives

Impact: Deliver high-quality research with the potential for both academic excellence and real-world impact.

Skills shortages: Expand the number of skilled PhD/EngD graduates entering the UK battery sector across academia and industry, strengthening the UK's long-term expertise in electrochemical energy storage.

Academic excellence / industrial relevance: Proposed PhD/EngD projects should demonstrate academic excellence and make a clear contribution either to fundamental understanding and/or to challenges facing the UK battery sector.

Career-ready researchers: Equip researchers with deep technical knowledge and transferable skills, preparing them for leadership positions across academia, industry, and the wider energy research ecosystem. (Training programme)

UK impact: Reinforce the UK's position as a global leader in battery science and innovation by producing high-quality post-graduates and internationally recognised research.

Research areas: Expansion of research areas across the full battery value chain from materials development and cell design, to battery safety, performance and cost, sustainability and recycling. (page 5 for list)

2 Funding Options

Option 1: Fully funded by the Faraday Institution

- These projects should advance battery science and engineering in areas where the UK battery industry is not yet established (but where there is potential to do so), while maintaining the highest standards of academic excellence.
- The Faraday Institution will fund 100% of the PhD
- **Total Value Grant**: £116,064 (non-London)
  £124,064 (London)
- Applicants are invited to submit compelling PhD/EngD topics that can be undertaken within an academic setting.

Option 2: Co-funded by the Faraday Institution and a third party

- Co-funding may come from a university department, research and technology organisation (RTO), national facility, UK-based industry partner, or a combination of these.
- Applicants are expected to strategically strengthen and expand these partnerships through PhD/EngD studentships.
- Applicants invited to submit compelling PhD/EngD topics that align with the third-party funder's longer-term R&D objectives.
- These co-created projects should both demonstrate academic excellence and address challenges directly relevant to the UK battery industry.
- **Faraday Institution funding for 2 years**: £58,032 (non-London) £62,032 (London)
- **OR Faraday Institution funding for 3 years**: £87,048 (non-London) £93,048 (London)
- **Applications must total** of at least £116,064 (outside London) or £124,064 (London). Application to demonstrate 3rd party costs

Eligibility

Who Can Apply

- Open to academics working in fields related to battery research based at UK universities
- Researchers new to the Faraday Institution encouraged to apply

Supervisor Criteria

- Each researcher may act as primary supervisor on one application only.
- No limit on the number of secondary supervisor roles
- Primary supervisors must:
  - Participate in the **Distributed Peer Review (DPR) process** (up to 5 reviews within two weeks)
  - Meet UKRI/EPSRC eligibility criteria to apply for research grants
  - Hold at least one active research grant in the field of batteries*
- Co-supervisors may be from international institutions, industry, or other partners, provided the primary supervisor is UK-based and eligible

The Approach

All proposals must be submitted via the Faraday Institution's Flexi-Grant platform.
The application will include:

- A written project proposal
- A letter of support from Head of Department at the academic institution, uploaded as a PDF
- A letter of support from at least one co-supervisor, uploaded as a PDF (option 1)
- A letter of support from all third-party funders/ partners, uploaded as a PDF (option 2)
- Agreement of participation in the Distributed Peer Review (DPR) process.

Distribution Peer Review: We will go through this after the Q&A for the call

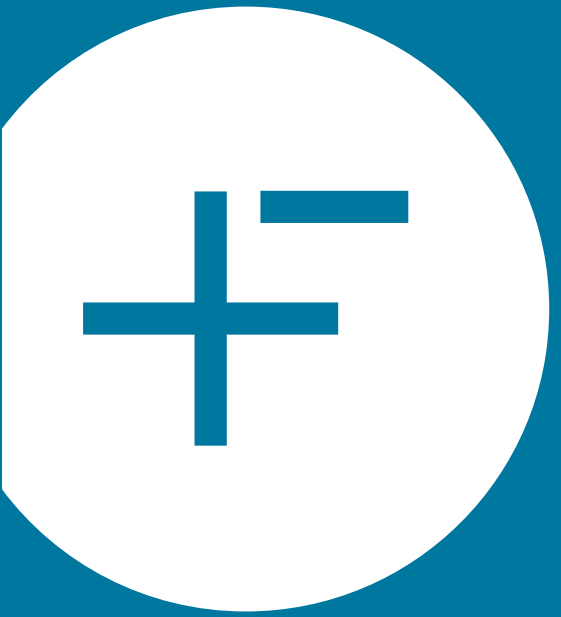
Timeline

Activity	Date
Funding competition launch	2nd October 2025
Open Flexi-Grant	14th October 2025
Deadline for applications	12th December 2025 at noon
Distributed peer review process (open)	5th January for 2 weeks
Distributed peer review process (closed)	19th January 2026
Funding decision (subject to Innovate UK approval)	February 2026
Agreement of 3rd party funding	1st April 2026
Grant start date	1st October 2026

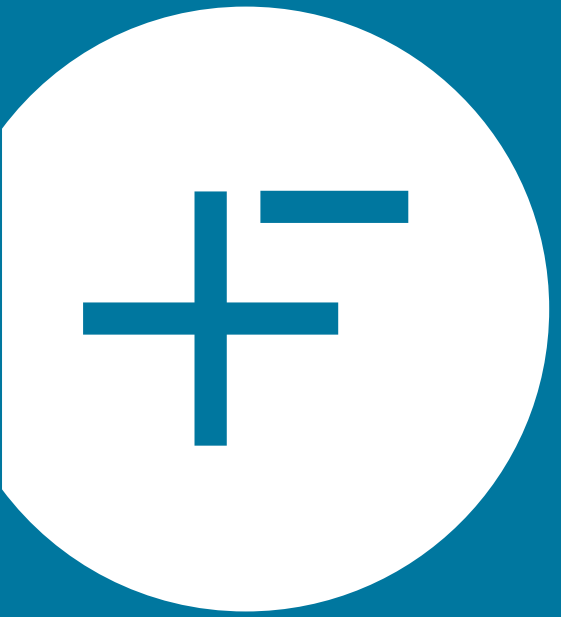
FAQ

Questions received to date:

- **I am a Co-I on an active battery grant but don't hold a grant as PI. Can I still apply?** – Yes.
- **I already have a part-funded PhD/EngD that has started in my lab. Does this count as Option 2 funding? –** No. Studentships must begin between October 2026 and January 2027.
- **The industry partner offering funding can't contribute until 2027. Is that a problem? –** No. A multi-party agreement must clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and funding contributions of each partner over the four-year period. This agreement must be in place by 1 April 2026. ***When*** the funding is actually distributed is up to the university.
- **Will third-party funding improve my score?**– Yes. Proposals that secure two years of third-party co-funding will be prioritised (see scoring criteria).
- **Is there any point in applying for an Option 1 PhD/EngD studentship?** – Yes. We are seeking academic excellence and are keen to support both options.
- **If my university is acting as the third-party funder, does there need to be industry relevance?** – Proposed PhD/EngD projects should demonstrate academic excellence and make a clear contribution either to fundamental understanding or to challenges facing the UK battery sector. An industry partner could still offer an internship, which would add points to your score.



Q&A- Applications



Distributed Peer Review Process

What is Distributed Peer Review and why are we using it?

- The Faraday Institution is trialling a **Distributed Peer Review (DPR)** process for this call.
- Further details and background information on DPR and its success are available in the call document.
- UKRI has previously used the method to assess its Metascience Unit AI Early Career Fellowships.
- DPR will help efficiently assess the large volume of PhD/EngD studentship proposals expected.
- Applicants will review up to 5 proposals from their peers, and their own proposals will be reviewed by the same number of peers.

Main benefits:

- Reduces panel workload
- Eases reviewer recruitment
- Improves feedback quality
- Speeds up the process, allowing more time for PhD/EngD recruitment
- Enables better matching of specialised proposals with expert reviewers
- Broadens researcher participation

Overview of Distribution Peer Review Process

Eligibility checks carried out by the FI

Stage 1: DPR review

- Each applicant reviews up to 5 other proposals. Proposals must be clear for a non-specialist and non–IP-sensitive.
- Non-compliance with DPR process (e.g., missing reviews) may result in withdrawal of the studentship application.

Stage 2: Internal Quality Assurance

- 15% of proposals with highest score variation moderated internally.
- Statistical checks ensure fairness and consistency.
- Conflicts of interest reviewed, and potentially some scores set aside.

Stage 3: Final Selection

- Final selection by academic experts and HQ staff.
- Selection to ensure:
    - Balance of research themes
    - Industry collaboration (where relevant)
    - Broad UK university representation

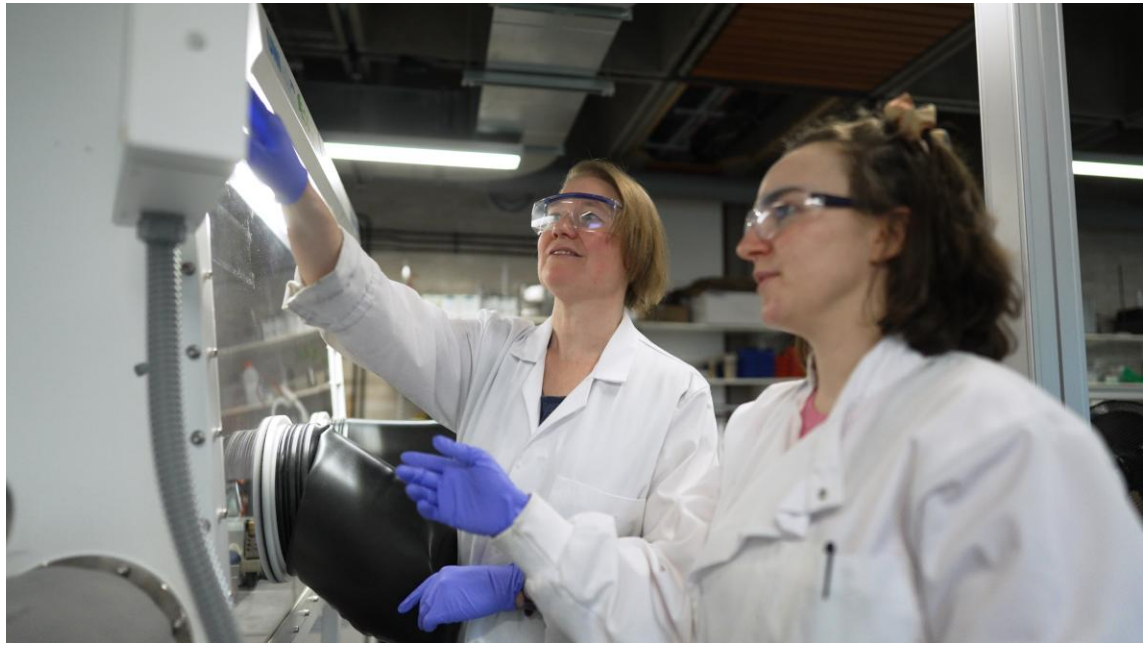
Please note

- In the application you will be asked to select two keywords that most closely matches your “area of specialism.” This will help us match proposals to reviewers.
- Application will be assigned randomly based on the selected keyword. Faraday HQ staff will reassign reviewers where there are obvious conflicts of interest.
- You will then receive an email inviting you to log into Flexi-Grant, where you will be given access to the applications assigned to you to review
- Distributed peer review to open 5th January 2026 for 2 weeks.
- **Please read the distribution peer review process documentation before submitting your proposal.**

Supporting the Process

Guidance provided on:

- **Rules for reviewing**
- **Confidentiality**
  - Agreement signed upon submitting applications
- **Guidance for Constructive Reviewer Feedback**
  - Advice and guidance on how to give short constructive feedback
  - Reviewers' names will be shared but comments will not be attributed to individual reviewers
- **Scoring and Feedback**
  - Transparent about the scoring criteria
  - Scores should reflect the feedback
- **Reducing Biases**
  - Statistical analysis
  - Multiple reviews remove biases
  - Random Screening
- **Conflicts of interest**



Deadlines and Next steps

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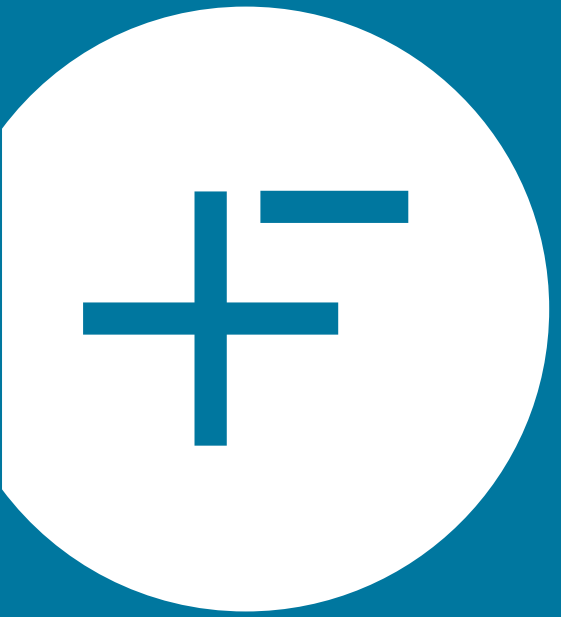

Q&A- Review Process

Thank you

Any questions post this webinar please email: training@faraday.ac.uk