



Co-produced evaluation of the JUST AI visiting fellowship programme – request for proposals

Date:

15 November 2021

Request for proposals

1. Background and context

The Ada Lovelace Institute (Ada) is an independent research institute established with the mission to ensure that data and artificial intelligence (AI) work for people and society. In 2020, the Institute established a [visiting fellowship programme](#) with the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), as part of its JUST AI network – delivered with the London School of Economics.

Four fellowships were appointed as part of the 2020 fellowship programme with five participating fellows. Their projects, selected by a Commissioning Board, focused on addressing racial justice in the field of data and AI, and were awarded up to £10,000.

The selection process for the fellowship sought to:

- balance an assessment of the qualities of the proposed project and the qualities of the person applying
- reward potential and emerging talent (rather than previous funding or recognition)
- help redress historical imbalances resulting in underrepresenting people from racialised communities and backgrounds in public-facing research, creative and policy roles.

The fellowships took place during COVID-19, and will finish in December 2021.

2. Project purpose and scope

As the first round of fellowships come to an end in December 2021, the Institute is seeking to commission **an independent co-produced evaluation of the visiting fellowship programme. The evaluation will be of the process used to select fellows, the delivery and support provided to fellows during the programme, through to the impact it had – on fellows and their personal development journey, on Ada's research and work, the LSE's JUSTAI Network, and also wider research and thinking in the data and AI ecosystem.**

We intend for the results of the evaluation to help inform mapping of different approaches to fellowships, and a possible feasibility study for running a similar programme at the Ada Lovelace Institute.



The core output should be a comprehensive report that explores in detail the key learnings from the visiting fellowship, coproduced with the fellows, as well as recommendations for potential next steps.

The budget for this work is up to **£25,000 including VAT**.

The Ada Lovelace Institute will cover additional communications costs, as well as access costs so please do not account for this in your specified budget for this work.

The goals of this project are for the Ada Lovelace Institute and external stakeholders to gain a holistic understanding of:

- The **fellows' experiences** of the fellowship programme -the benefits and the impacts on fellows, and their perceptions of the fellowship programme's impact in achieving its intended objectives and goals to date, including addressing racial injustice in the data and AI ecosystem. We also envisage that the fellows benefit from the evaluation through supporting their own reflections on their achievements, personal development and future aspirations in their work. Good evaluators will provide a safe space for this reflection for the fellows.
- An assessment of the **impact that the fellowships have had to date** - on the wider JUSTAI network, as well as on work at the Ada Lovelace Institute.
- **What elements of the fellowship programme piloted in the past year worked well**, and what elements **demonstrate room for improvement**. We are keen to ensure that this is informed by a range of perspectives including those on the fellowship, those running the fellowship (including JUST AI and Ada) and staff at the Ada Lovelace Institute. This might also consider the impact fellows were able to have through, for instance, their participation on external platforms and public events the fellows participated in.

3. The skills we are seeking

We welcome applications from freelancers, sole traders and/or organisations to undertake this work. Because of the nature of this work, we recognise that a blend of skills might well be appropriate – including qualitative, participatory and evaluation based (so, for instance, facilitation expertise and research evaluation expertise).

We are open to interdisciplinary partnerships in proposals to undertake this work.

Please note that if you are currently connected with the Ada Lovelace Institute you will not be able to apply for this, as this is a commission for an independent evaluation.

Although the scope of the evaluation and study is broader than assessing the impact of the fellowships in the field of racial justice, evaluators should take a culturally aware and anti-oppressive approach and be able to demonstrate a track record of assessing initiatives for their impact on social and economic injustice (including, but not limited to racial justice matters and issues such as access).



The fellows produced a [Community Agreement](#), and we would be keen to see evaluators take an approach that embodied this agreement.

We would therefore like applicants to demonstrate how they would take an intersectional approach that acknowledges racism, ableism, transphobia, sexism, homophobia and other inequities and are able to consider sensitively through the evaluation the impact of the fellowship on racial inequalities, but also the potential for the fellowship or other programmes and activities going forward to help address some of those broader dynamics of power and privilege in society. We would also like to see consideration of this reflected in the methodology for the evaluation which should be coproduced with the fellows. We expect applicants to be able to demonstrate a track record of having undertaken this kind of inclusive work in the past.

4. Selection schedule for proposals

Milestone	Timeframe
Request for proposals goes live	Monday 15 November 2021
Deadline for proposals	Thursday 29 November 2021
Proposals assessed and reviewed against evaluation criteria	30 November – 1 December 2021
Invitations to interview sent out	Thursday 2 December 2021
Selection interviews (please hold this date in your diary)	Tuesday 7 December 2021
Decisions and feedback communicated to applicants	Friday 10 December 2021
Project kick off date	w/c 13 December 2021

5. Process for submission of proposals

Your proposal should consist of no more than three sides of A4 that sets out:

- **Why you and/or your organisation** are well placed to deliver this work for the Ada Lovelace Institute, and why you are interested in delivering it.
- **A proposed methodology for evaluation** (note that research materials relating to the selection and commissioning process are available, and we expect that the evaluation will cover at least 15 semi-structured qualitative stakeholder interviews which include the fellows themselves, Ada staff members, JUST AI team and Commissioning Board members).
- **A detailed breakdown of costs and your proposed project plan for this work, including costs for the time of JUSTAI fellows, and expected outputs, which should include a detailed report accompanied by an executive summary.**
- The **timeframes** within which you feel it is realistic to undertake this work to a high standard. We would ideally wish the work to be completed in its entirety by the end of April 2022.



Please submit your proposals to hello@adalovelaceinstitute.org and copy in Reema Patel (Associate Director for Engagement) at rpatel@adalovelaceinstitute.org.

6. Evaluation criteria for proposals

We will evaluate all received proposals according to the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposal has considered how to iteratively involve fellows and those directly benefiting/experiencing the work in key stages of evaluation – from setting the success criteria, through to co-producing an analysis of the impact, all the way through to the recommendations for next steps and options.
- The extent to which the evaluation recognises lived experience of those contributing to the fellowship. We also expect to see details of how fellows' lived experience will be recognised, acknowledged, attributed and remunerated.
- The extent to which the proposals help meet the goals and scope of the project as outlined in this request for proposals and set out in section 2.
- An assessment of the skills and expertise of the individual(s) and/or team to deliver a high-quality evaluation (to what extent are they best placed to evaluate how the fellowships worked, and to understand and map the gaps in the existing landscape for fellowships). As part of this assessment we will consider whether applicants have a track record for taking a culturally nuanced approach and a good understanding of racial injustice as well as other forms of oppression.
- Value for money on the basis of the proposed methodology.