

NRF AI INVESTIGATORSHIP – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Q1. What is the difference between the NRF AI Investigatorship and the usual NRFI Investigatorship (NRFI) and NRF Fellowship (NRFF) schemes?

A1. The NRF AI Investigatorship call is a dedicated call to attract AI talent currently based overseas and at their mid- or established career stages, to Singapore. The nominees must not be those already based at local institutions at the point of nomination. In contrast, the NRFI is intended for mid-career or established researchers, in any area of science & technology (including AI) and can be those based overseas or at local institutions. The NRFF is targeted to support early-career researchers based overseas or at local institutions (with no more than 7 years post-Ph.D. experience), and who are ready to take on their first independent position as junior faculty or equivalent.

Nomination Process

Q2. Can a faculty/researcher self-nominate or nominate a peer for the NRF AI Investigatorship?

A2. No, the nominator must be part of the senior leadership of the eligible institutions.

Q3. How should the nomination be done?

A3. The respective offices of research or A*STAR Research Councils (BMRC/SERC) will coordinate and submit the nominations through email to the secretariat (not through IGMS).

Q4. Can the nomination timeline be extended?

A4. There is no deadline for the call as nominations will be considered on a rolling basis (until further advised). For a start, NRF intends to consider nominations submitted until 28 June 2024, at the latest.

Q5. Is there a standard template for endorser's comments?

A5. There is no standard format for the endorser's comments. As the endorser's comments will be an important aspect in the evaluation consideration, there should be sufficient comments made on the nominee's accomplishments and qualifications for the NRF AI Investigatorship.

Eligibility

Q6. Can previous NRFF/NRFI applicants/nominees/awardees be nominated for the NRFI AI Investigatorship?

A6. There is no restriction on previous NRFF/NRFI applicants/nominees/awardees being nominated and considered for the NRF AI Investigatorship scheme. However, for NRFF/NRFI awardees, they must have completed their existing NRFF/NRFI projects before being nominated for the NRF AI Investigatorship. NRFF/NRFI applicants/nominees/awardees would need to be based overseas at the point of nomination.

Q7. Will Principal Investigators who have successfully completed their research projects, e.g. by the CRP or MOE ARF Tier funding schemes, be deemed as better candidates to be nominated?

A7. It is not a prerequisite for Principal Investigators to have successfully completed their existing funded projects to qualify for the NRF AI Investigatorship. However, the nominee's ability to secure grants as Lead PI will provide an indication of the research track record and level of commitment to research.

Q8. Is there an age limit for the nominees?

A8. There is no age limit for the nominees.

Q9. Are Principal Investigators holding joint appointments with industry eligible for the NRF AI Investigatorship?

A9. Nominated candidates should hold a fulltime appointment with the eligible institutions. However, joint appointees who are exceptional and have at least 50% FTE with the host institution may be considered. Joint appointees must hold appointments with the host institutions for a minimum of 6 months a year. Should a PI be on No Pay Leave for more than 6 months in a Calendar Year during the project, he/she will no longer be eligible for the grant for that Calendar Year. Additionally, all grant monies can only be utilised by Principal Investigators for projects with the host institution and cannot fund his/her projects with industry.

Research Proposal

Q10. What are eligible research topics to be undertaken by an NRF AI Investigator?

A10. The research proposal must have artificial intelligence as the core technology. However, e.g. proposals with deployment/adoption of commercial AI solutions, spin-offs/commercialisation activities as the core will not be accepted.

Q11. Is there a standard format for the proposal?

A11. The main text of the proposal should not exceed 5 pages; references can be attached in the annexes. In terms of formatting, the text should be written in Arial font size 12, full justification, single paragraph spacing.

Selection criteria

Q12. For track record of achievement and impact in S&T, would a nominee with a record of technology transfer be rated with higher priority?

A12. The nominee's track record will be assessed holistically, which includes research accomplishments, professional contribution and technology transfer. There is no specific weightage placed on any of the evaluation criteria.

Q13. Will basic research and application-based research be rated equally?

A13. There will be no bias either for or against basic or applied research. The assessment on the proposal is based on the originality of the research idea, potential impact and the PI's ability to execute.

Q14. Is there a time limitation that the proposed research project has to be completed in 5 years?

A14. Funding for the proposed project will not extend beyond the 5-year timeframe. There will be no renewal of the NRF AI Investigatorship.

Q15. Can the nominee propose interdisciplinary projects and include co-PIs?

A15. As the funding is given to an individual based on track records and vision, the award is not designed to support a team of PIs. For projects involving team efforts, the nominee should be advised to apply for CRP, MOE AcRF Tier 3 or other relevant schemes.

Q16. Would the criteria for non-fundable items be similar to the AI Investigatorship scheme?

A16. Yes, the same criteria for non-fundable items will be applicable to the NRF AI Investigatorship scheme.