



SCHMIDT **FUTURES**

Schmidt Science Polymaths

Guidance for Nominating Partners

Our Program

Achieving tenure (or equivalent status) should be a moment when professors feel a new sense of freedom that allows them to innovate and attempt new research paths as the head of their own teams. Unfortunately, this time is often coupled with a lack of resources and a pressure to continue producing results within their established research portfolio. The key goal of the Schmidt Science Polymath program (“the program”) is to encourage the best “polymath” scientists to expand their research portfolio by exploring new lines of research that are substantively different from their ongoing and proven research activities.

The program will offer long-term research support to professors who have recently achieved tenure or an equivalent status (within the past three calendar years) with remarkable track records and highly promising futures. Awards will consist of USD \$500K per year for up to five years to support part of a research group. These grants are intended for the exploration of new ideas across disciplines that use new technologies and insights that are generally too new or risky to garner regular support. They are not intended to relieve the researcher of pursuing other grants to continue their mainstream work, nor be large enough to fully support a modern lab.

The program will identify and support innovative scientific researchers at this pivotal moment (and potentially the most productive time of their careers) by providing the resources that allow them to substantively explore new lines of research. Instead of focusing on specific research ideas, the goal for the program is to bet on people, their special talents, and their teams – aligning with Schmidt Futures’ overall people-focused approach.

With the addition of the 2023 Polymaths, who will be publicly announced this summer, current Polymaths represent 21 institutions across 6 nations, and work in Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Computational Sciences, Materials Science, Engineering, and beyond. To learn more about our current Schmidt Science Polymaths and their work, please visit [our website](#).

Candidate Criteria

Schmidt Futures is seeking the highest quality candidates from a specific and pivotal period in their career. In order to be eligible for nomination to the Schmidt Science Polymaths application process, candidates must meet the following qualifications:

- Have achieved tenure or equivalent status within the past three calendar years (2020 or later),
- Have a remarkable record of accomplishment in area(s) of science and engineering,
- Have a demonstrated history of pursuing and publishing results in more than one field,
- Demonstrate a need for additional funding to enable new experiments, explorations, or shifts in research directions.



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We recognize that tenure is not a global status, and that even among institutions that award tenure there is variation in title and experience. We are looking for candidates who have recently reached a level of security, seniority, and permanence in their positions who should have significant academic freedom. The three-year window is intended to reflect a period of a candidate's career, not their position in many universities, so eligible candidates should have received tenure or a permanent faculty position for the first time at any institution within the past three years. At many American research universities, eligible candidates are Associate Professors, though depending on the institution, eligible candidates may range from Senior Lecturers to Professors.

We strongly encourage you to read more about our current Polymaths on [our website](#) to inform your nominations.

Please note, the application and selection process, as well as all correspondence and documentation associated with the program, will be in English.

Nominations and Selection Process

Applications to Schmidt Science Polymaths are by invitation only. We seek nominations from leading science, technology, and engineering institutions to identify the highest quality candidates, as well as a targeted call for nominations from individuals within the Schmidt Futures network. **Nominators may nominate up to two candidates**, and should be limited to truly exceptional researchers who meet the candidate criteria.

Once nominees have been identified, institutions or individuals should submit their nomination through this [Nomination Form](#). **The deadline for submissions is September 1, 2023.**

Schmidt Futures will review all nominations and send eligible and promising nominees an invitation and instructions on how to apply. Please note that not all nominees will be invited to apply. Applications will be sent directly to the candidates themselves and will include CVs, past accomplishments, a description of potential problems or projects they might pursue if they received the award, and a list of references who will be able to testify to not just their past accomplishments, but also their creativity, adventurousness, and likelihood they will pursue excellent new directions in research given flexible resources.

We encourage you to nominate only the strongest candidates who demonstrate the selection criteria outlined below. This is a highly competitive award: fewer than 5% of nominees were selected as awardees last year.

Selection Criteria

We are looking for the brightest minds in the sciences, mathematics, engineering, and computing who have gained recognition for significant progress on one or more research problems while also showing a capacity for generating a continuing flow of innovative new ideas and approaches in a variety of areas. They will have demonstrated their high variance thinking through successful research in areas widely divergent from their main field of expertise. Schmidt Science Polymaths are expected to be intensely creative science leaders who demonstrate an immense capacity for innovative new thinking or shifts in



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research directions that can lead to impactful breakthroughs given flexible resources.

Applications will be judged based on:

- The breadth and depth of the candidates' work,
- The quality, impact, and innovation displayed in the candidates work,
- The candidates' track-record of high variance thinking and approaches, as well as their capacity for creative new research or shifts in research directions given flexible resources
- The candidate's proposed research directions and projects as outlined in their application, including likelihood of success and significant impact, and expectation that the candidate's research directions will change over time.

Contact

Please contact polymaths@schmidtfutures.com for further information or inquiries.