

Schmidt Science Polymaths

Guidance for Nominating Partners



Our Program

The Schmidt Science Polymath Program seeks to empower intensely creative, early-to-mid-career researchers to take adventurous leaps into new research domains, experiment with new methodologies and ideas, and inspire impactful scientific breakthroughs.

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. Unfortunately, this time is often coupled with a lack of resources and a pressure to continue producing results within their established research portfolio.

The Schmidt Science Polymath program (“the program”) recognizes extraordinary researchers with remarkable track records, promising futures, and a desire to expand their research portfolios by exploring a substantive disciplinary or methodological shift soon after achieving tenure.

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. Each professor will be awarded \$500,000 per year, paid through their institution, for up to five years to help support a research group through talent, such as three to four students or postdocs, and resources. These grants are intended to make possible the exploration of new ideas across disciplines, using emerging technologies to test risky theories that may not otherwise receive funding or support. They are not intended to relieve the researcher of pursuing other grants to continue their mainstream work, nor to be large enough to fully support a modern lab.

Current Polymaths

With the addition of the 2024 Polymaths, who will be publicly announced this summer, current Polymaths represent 26 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](#).

Nomination Process

Applications to Schmidt Science Polymaths are by invitation only. We seek nominations from a select group of leading science, technology, and engineering institutions to identify the highest quality candidates, as well as a broader call for nominations from targeted leaders within the Schmidt Sciences and broader scientific communities. Nominees 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 August 15, 2024.**

Schmidt Sciences will review all nominations and send eligible and promising nominees an invitation and instructions on how to apply. We especially encourage nominee submissions from geographies outside of the US and/or who belong to demographic groups that are currently underrepresented in scientific research. Please note that not all nominees will be invited to apply.

We encourage you to nominate only the strongest candidates who demonstrate the selection criteria outlined in this guide. The review is highly selective; fewer than 10% of applicants are selected to receive the award each year.

Nominations are typically collected from June to mid-August, applications are due in October, and decisions are shared in April.

Tenure or Equivalent Status

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.



Candidate Criteria

In order to be eligible for nomination to the Schmidt Science Polymaths application process, candidates must meet the following qualifications:

- Have achieved tenure or an equivalent status within the past three calendar years (January 1, 2021 or later),
- Have a remarkable record of accomplishment in mathematics, computer science, natural sciences, and/or engineering,
- Have a demonstrated history of pursuing and publishing results in more than one field,
- Have a desire and plan to expand their research portfolios by exploring a substantive disciplinary or methodological shift, but have not yet launched such shifts,
- Demonstrate a need for additional funding to enable new experiments, explorations, or shifts in research directions.

Application Requirements

Applications will be sent directly to the candidates themselves and will include:

- CV
- Past accomplishments
- A list of the researcher's top five publications or results
- A description of potential problems or projects they might pursue if they received the award
- A list of 8-12 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.

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



Webinars

Please join us for an informative webinar to learn more about the Schmidt Science Polymaths Selection process.

June 26, 2024, 12:00 p.m. EDT (UTC-04:00)

August 1, 2024, 11:00 a.m. EDT (UTC-04:00)

[Register here.](#)

Selection Criteria

We are looking for the brightest minds in mathematics, computer science, natural sciences, and/or engineering who have gained recognition for significant progress on multiple 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 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@schmidtsciences.org for further information or inquiries.

