

**Office for
Students**



Office for Students funding competition

**Artificial intelligence and data science
postgraduate conversion course
scholarship funding**

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Enquiries to PGconversion@officeforstudents.org.uk

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Summary

1. This document sets out the arrangements for the distribution by the Office for Students (OfS) of funding for up to two financial years for the artificial intelligence (AI) and data science postgraduate conversion course scholarship programme. This funding will be delivered in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).
2. Funding will be provided by DCMS in the financial years (FY) of April 2023 to March 2024 and April 2024 to March 2025. Successful bids must be able to begin delivery by autumn 2023.
3. Initial funding allocations will only be confirmed for the financial year 2023-24. We will distribute funding across the two years of the programme through the following mechanisms:
 - a. £8,180,000 of government funding has been confirmed to deliver up to 818 scholarships in FY 2023-24. This will be delivered through a single bidding exercise to be run in 2022-23. The competition is open to all higher education providers that are registered (or have applied to register) with us in the Approved (fee cap) category and will be offering postgraduate conversion courses in AI and data science for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years. This publication invites bids from such providers. It gives guidance on the requirements for submitting a bid, and on our approach to prioritising those bids that meet the broader aims of the funding as set out in paragraph 15.
 - b. The amount of funding available for financial year 2024-25 is subject to confirmation from government. Once confirmed this funding will only be available to providers that are successful in their bids for this funding competition. Funding will be allocated based on outcomes and progress made against objectives and subject to the approval of updated operating plans, which will inform decisions on allocations of funding as part of ongoing monitoring and reporting processes. We expect that funding allocations for 2024-25 will be confirmed by spring 2024.

Action required

4. Eligible providers are invited to submit a competitive bid for scholarship funding for the two-year funding period, following the guidance in this document. Bidding templates will be available to providers through the OfS webpages.¹ A copy of the bidding template is included for information in Annex A.
5. Bids from eligible providers must be received by **1700 on Wednesday 11 January 2023**. We expect to announce the outcomes of the bidding competition in March 2023. Bids should be submitted by emailing completed templates to PGconversion@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Timeframe

6. The timeframe for the funding competition is set out in Table A.

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/office-for-students-funding-competition/.

Table A: Timeframe

Date	Activity
1700 on 11 January 2023	Deadline for bids
January 2023	Assessment process
February 2023	Panel meeting to review and recommend bids for funding
March 2023	Decisions communicated to providers and public announcements made
April 2023	Funding commences

Introduction

7. The National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, sets out how continuing to develop, attract and train the best people to build and use AI is at the core of maintaining the UK's position among the global AI superpowers.² This aims to ensure that the UK continues to lead in the research, development, commercialisation and deployment of AI.
8. In support of this and in response to the issues outlined in paragraphs 16 to 27, DCMS announced funding in February 2022 for up to 2,000 scholarships, each worth £10,000.³ The scholarship funding aims to increase the diversity of students studying AI and data science postgraduate conversion courses. Up to £17 million will be made available to deliver these scholarships over the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25.
9. This funding builds on the success of the existing £13.5 million of government investment into the current AI and data science postgraduate conversion course programme.⁴ Funding began in April 2020 and is due to end in March 2023. The scheme funded 28 higher education providers to develop new university AI masters' conversion courses to quickly upskill graduates. To address the lack of diversity in the AI and data science workforce, funding for up to 1,000 scholarships, each worth £10,000, was provided to increase diversity in the UK AI and data science workforce.
10. With conversion course programmes in AI and data science successfully established, this new funding competition builds on evaluation findings that suggest that the provision of scholarships has supported enrolments and is driving diversity.⁵ The programme has already exceeded its aim to enrol 2,500 AI and data science students by autumn 2023, with 3,859 students enrolled up to March 2022. This competition aims to continue the progress to increase diversity in the UK AI and data science workforce through the delivery of scholarship funding to prioritise underrepresented groups, as outlined in paragraphs 51 and 52.
11. The OfS strategy for 2022 to 2025 outlines the OfS's core regulatory objectives⁶:
 - a. **Participation:** All students, from all backgrounds, with the ability and desire to undertake higher education, are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.
 - b. **Experience:** All students, from all backgrounds, receive a high quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus or course closure.
 - c. **Outcomes:** All students, from all backgrounds, can progress into employment, further study, and lead fulfilling lives, in which their qualifications hold their value over time.

² See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-ai-strategy>.

³ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/23-million-to-boost-skills-and-diversity-in-ai-jobs>.

⁴ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/skills-and-employment/postgraduate-conversion-courses-in-data-science-and-artificial-intelligence/.

⁵ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/skills-and-employment/postgraduate-conversion-courses-in-data-science-and-artificial-intelligence/evaluating-impact/.

⁶ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/office-for-students-strategy-2022-to-2025/.

d. **Value for money:** All students, from all backgrounds, receive value for money.

By working with DCMS to deliver funding for scholarships through this competition, we aim to contribute to the delivery of objectives a., c. and d.

12. Conversion courses enable graduates from a wide range of disciplines to achieve a postgraduate degree and begin working in AI and data science occupations. The graduates will be from a range of prior educational backgrounds including:
- cognate: students who have studied the same broad subject area as conversion course (e.g. computer science, AI, data science).
 - 'core-STEM': science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects such as physics, engineering, mathematics, statistics, IT
 - 'far-STEM': other STEM subjects (e.g. biology, geology, psychology, medicine)
 - 'non-STEM': any other subject (including economics, business, arts etc.).

The aim for this funding competition is to increase the supply of digitally skilled workers by converting graduates who did not study a science, technology, engineering or mathematics (cognate or core-STEM) undergraduate degree subject.

13. Scholarship funding will be prioritised for women, black students, disabled students and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, to ensure that AI reflects the makeup of our society. Funding is intended only for those underrepresented students who meet the eligibility criteria outlined in paragraphs 51 and 52.
14. In addition to the funding provided by DCMS, business and industry partners are being encouraged to provide co-investment for scholarships. Industry co-investment is being sought to increase industry support to develop a diverse future pipeline of AI talent. Providers are encouraged to work with industry to secure funding agreements to deliver industry co-funded scholarships as part of their bids.
15. We are seeking bids for OfS funding for scholarship proposals with a particular focus on meeting the aims of the programme to:
- increase the diversity of people entering the UK AI and data science workforce
 - increase industry support to diversify the UK AI and data science workforce
 - increase the supply of digitally skilled workers by converting graduates who did not study a STEM undergraduate degree.

AI and data science skills shortages

16. The government's industrial strategy identifies AI and data as one of its four grand challenges to address so that the UK may be put at the forefront of the AI and data revolution.⁷ That strategy also named the OfS as a key partner to address employer and student needs in the

⁷ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-building-a-britain-fit-for-the-future> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-the-grand-challenges/industrial-strategy-the-grand-challenges>.

short, medium and long terms. The OfS has been asked to consider the skills shortages that exist today and anticipate the demands of the future economy.

17. Effective digital skills training is essential to ensure the workforce is prepared for future technological changes. In 2016 the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee's report on the digital skills crisis estimated that the digital skills gap is costing the UK economy approximately £63 billion a year in lost additional gross domestic product.⁸
18. According to the government's UK digital strategy, over 80 per cent of all jobs advertised in the UK now require digital skills.⁹ The industrial strategy states the UK's ambition to generate good jobs and greater earning power for all; addressing skills shortages is a key component of the AI and data 'grand challenge', which aims to remove retraining barriers, normalise career changes and drive diversity.
19. Employer demand for more skilled people in AI and data science is proven. Employers say that only 48 per cent of people leaving full-time education have the advanced digital skills required.¹⁰ An online survey of the UK's AI ecosystem conducted by the Alan Turing Institute in June 2021 found that only around one in five respondents (19 per cent) thought that business currently had the necessary skills and knowledge to understand where value could be gained from using AI. Only 18 per cent agreed there was sufficient provision of training and development in AI skills available to the current UK workforce. 81 per cent of respondents agreed there were significant barriers in recruiting and retaining top AI talent in their sector or domain within the UK.¹¹
20. There is also demand for digitally skilled employees in traditionally non-digital industries. The government's UK digital strategy predicted that within 20 years, 90 per cent of all jobs will require some element of digital skills.¹²
21. Since 2017, the Open University Business Barometer has provided detailed insights into the UK skills landscape, looking at the impacts across regions, nations and sectors. The June 2020 report found that even though the pool of job candidates has grown significantly, employers are still struggling to find the right people, with management and leadership and digital skills most difficult to find. Organisations spent £6.6 billion to plug short-term gaps in 2020, up from £4.4 billion in 2019.¹³ The number of business leaders reporting that their organisation is experiencing skills shortages has continued to increase from 63 per cent in 2021 to almost 75 per cent in 2022.¹⁴

⁸ See <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmsstech/270/27002.html>.

⁹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uks-digital-strategy/uk-digital-strategy>.

¹⁰ See <https://www.worldskillsuk.org/insights/disconnected-exploring-the-digital-skills-gap/>.

¹¹ See <https://www.turing.ac.uk/ai-ecosystem-survey-summary-report>.

¹² See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy/2-digital-skills-and-inclusion-giving-everyone-access-to-the-digital-skills-they-need>

¹³ See <https://business-school.open.ac.uk/news/open-university-report-shows-key-skills-gaps-remain-businesses-plan-recovery>

¹⁴ See <https://www.open.ac.uk/business/pse-business-leaders>.

22. To meet demand, the UK will need a larger workforce with AI expertise. An independent report on growing the artificial intelligence industry in the UK underlined that the experts needed to develop AI are in short supply.¹⁵ The report also emphasised that the current workforce is not representative of the wider population. In the past, lack of gender and ethnic diversity has been shown to affect the equitability of results from technology processes. If UK AI cannot improve the diversity of its workforce, the capability and credibility of the sector will be undermined.
23. The lack of diversity is further highlighted in the AI sector deal review, which acknowledges that increasing diversity in the AI workforce is vital to ensure that everyone with the potential to participate has the opportunity to do so.¹⁶ A report from Ipsos Mori also emphasised that the current workforce is not representative of the wider population.¹⁷ 53 per cent of the AI-related firms surveyed said none of their employees were female, and 40 per cent had no employees from an ethnic minority background.
24. In the past, lack of gender and ethnic diversity has been shown to affect the equitability of results from technology processes. If UK AI cannot improve the diversity of its workforce, the capability and credibility of the sector will be undermined. It is essential that AI developed in the UK reflects the needs and make-up of society as a whole. It is also crucial that industry and the public sector can access the greatest supply of talent in terms of numbers.
25. There has been significant progress made since the publication of the AI sector deal review. Venture capital investment into the UK's AI sector has risen almost sixfold over the last five years and the UK has a world leading AI ecosystem, home to a third of Europe's total AI companies and twice as many as any other European country.¹⁸
26. The Careers Research and Advisory Centre has been commissioned to evaluate the current postgraduate course programme. Findings from the latest interim report suggest that there is evidence that the offer of scholarships has resulted in a more diverse profile of UK-domiciled students in relation to the target underrepresented groups (black, women and disabled students). There is a high proportion of enrolments from UK-domiciled scholarship students who are female (74 per cent), black (38 per cent) and disabled students (26 per cent). Early evidence also suggests most students are successfully completing their degrees with most graduates securing jobs using data and AI skills.¹⁹ These findings are only the beginning, with evaluation due to complete in autumn 2023. The funding provided in this latest competition aims to continue the progress.
27. This competition aligns with the regulatory duties of the OfS, as set out in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, to promote equality of opportunity, create more choice for students and ensure progression to further study or employment for all graduates. It helps to deliver on the government's ambitions by encouraging innovation and stimulating a new, more

¹⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/growing-the-artificial-intelligence-industry-in-the-uk>.

¹⁶ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/artificial-intelligence-sector-deal>.

¹⁷ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-the-uk-ai-labour-market-2020>.

¹⁸ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/artificial-intelligence-sector-deal/ai-sector-deal-one-year-on>.

¹⁹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/skills-and-employment/postgraduate-conversion-courses-in-data-science-and-artificial-intelligence/evaluating-impact/.

diverse supply of highly skilled people to fill data science skills shortages, in line with employer needs and in support of the wider economy.

Bidding competition

28. We will distribute total AI and data science postgraduate conversion course scholarship funding of up to £17 million over the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25, through a competitive bidding exercise to be run in 2022-23. Our intention is to distribute the confirmed £8,180,000 of funding available in FY 2023-24 and funding for FY 2024-25, subject to confirmation, through a single bidding exercise in 2022-23.
29. Funding allocations for successful providers will be confirmed on an annual basis. Funding for 2024-25 will be based on outcomes and progress made against objectives, subject to approval of updated operating plans to inform funding decisions as part of ongoing monitoring and reporting processes. We expect funding allocations for FY 2024-25 to be confirmed by spring 2024.
30. However, we wish to prioritise the highest quality bids, and if we consider that we have not achieved this in a single bidding exercise, we reserve our position on whether to run a further bidding exercise during the two-year funding period.
31. A bidding process across multiple years will provide greater assurance that funding provided by the government is achieving value for money in supporting projects that meet the aims set out in paragraph 15. In developing this funding competition, we have had regard to our general duties in Section 2 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, in particular to:
 - the need to promote value for money in the provision of higher education by English higher education providers (2(1)(d))
 - the need to use the OfS's resources in an efficient, effective, and economic way (2(1)(f)).²⁰
32. The available funding is for delivery of scholarships only, and not for the cost of curriculum development, internal validation or advertising and promotion of the courses, including outreach and recruitment activity. It must not be used for work placement or internship salaries or for capital expenditure.²¹
33. We will not fund the essential support services that providers should already be making available for their students. Providers must already have the resources and strategic approaches in place to deliver their duty of care and other legal obligations for their students.
34. We have set a minimum threshold for funding through the bidding competition of £70,000 for FY 2023-24. This will ensure that funding is prioritised towards more significant proposals that have a higher probability of meeting scholarship delivery targets across the two years of the programme.
35. There is no maximum limit on requests for scholarship funding for FY 2023-24, but requests must be supported by a credible proposal. We expect the funding requested to reflect the size

²⁰ See www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/section/2/enacted.

²¹ Capital expenditure means money used to acquire, adapt or maintain fixed assets, such as land, buildings and equipment, which is normally capitalised in the provider's audited annual accounts.

of the target student group. Purely aspirational or unrealistic bids that cannot be supported by evidence are likely to score poorly.

36. Each eligible provider (see paragraph 42) may submit one bid. The provider must ensure that the bid meets the specified OfS criteria (see paragraph 44).
37. We welcome collaborative bids for scholarship funding. Large collaborative bids are more likely to be successful if they aim to deliver at least 25 per cent of the overall target number of scholarships in 2023-24 (i.e. at least 205 scholarships in the first year of the programme). This will ensure we can prioritise the most significant proposals to meet scholarship delivery targets. Providers intending to submit a bid of this size should contact the OfS postgraduate conversion course team at PGconversion@officeforstudents.org.uk in advance.
38. We will accept no more than one individual bid per higher education provider. Through collaboration, providers may be involved in additional bids, with each collaborative bid requiring an eligible lead provider for funding purposes. Providers may not act as the lead on more than one bid.
39. All funding allocated through this competition must be spent in accordance with the terms and conditions by 31 March 2025. However, evaluation and analysis of project proposals, as well as any scholarships co-funded by industry, may continue beyond this date.
40. By 31 March 2025, we expect all projects to have completed recruitment activities related to this funding initiative, though certain scholarship payments will go beyond that date. We expect that support for the students enrolled should continue throughout the duration of their studies, and that scholarship payments for certain students may continue beyond March 2025, subject to the discretion of the OfS.
41. We will actively monitor spending during the period and expect that any funding awarded by the OfS for a specific financial year to be spent during that year. This is to manage the risk of underspending accumulating towards the end of the funding period. In exceptional circumstances, if our monitoring does not give us confidence that a provider will be able to use the funding in the time available in line with the terms and conditions, we may withdraw the offer of funding in whole or part. Such exceptional circumstances may include significant delays in delivery (for whatever reason) compared with the timetable set out in the provider's bid (or as may subsequently be agreed by us), or failure of the provider to engage to our satisfaction in any reporting and monitoring requirements. We will look to ensure that across all providers collectively, scholarship funding is used in line with government funding schedules.

Guidance on the bidding process

42. To be eligible to bid, a provider must:
 - a. Be registered, or have applied to register, with the OfS in the Approved (fee cap) category. For a bid to be supported, a provider must be registered in the Approved (fee cap) category by the time OfS decisions on which bids to support are taken. This reflects the limit of our funding powers under section 39 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.
 - b. Be able to offer conversion courses in AI and data science for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years. We will accept bids from new courses starting no later than autumn 2023.

43. We will prioritise bids that we consider overall best meet the programme aims for the postgraduate conversion course scholarship programme, as set out in paragraph 15. The criteria in paragraph 44 are designed to achieve this and, to be successful, a bid must explain how it meets these criteria through the appropriate use of evidence.

44. The OfS will assess each bid against the following two criteria:

Criterion 1: The credibility of project proposals to achieve the programme aims to:

- a. Increase the diversity of people entering the UK AI and data science workforce.
- b. Increase industry support to diversify the UK AI and data science workforce.
- c. Increase the supply of digitally skilled workers by converting graduates who did not study a STEM undergraduate degree.

Criterion 2: The project and associated risks will be well managed, and the project will provide value for money.

Further explanation of the OfS's proposed consideration of eligible projects

45. The rationale behind a project and its impact is as crucial as the way it is communicated to the OfS. Even the best project ideas will be let down by a poorly drafted bid. Likewise, even the most sophisticated communication will fall short if it has not been well considered and evidenced.

46. Bids should demonstrate (by reference to evidence, such as written plans, governing body decisions or stakeholder views) that there is a need for the proposal, that the provider has realistic plans in place to address this need, and that the provider is ready for the funding sought. Purely aspirational or unrealistic bids (for example, plans relying on future events or circumstances that cannot be predicted with certainty) are likely to score poorly.

Criterion 1: The credibility of project proposals to achieve the programme aims

47. This criterion assesses the credibility of the project proposals and the likelihood that they will contribute to achieving programme aims.

48. Proposals underpinned by a strategic approach and firm evidence base including alignment with institutional strategies for learning and teaching and for equality and diversity, including where appropriate work set out in the institution's current access and participation plan, will score more highly.

49. Bids that can demonstrate that they have been informed by and integrated with the needs of students and relevant employers are likely to score more highly.

Category a. Increasing the diversity of people entering the UK AI and data science workforce

50. To meet this category, a bid must demonstrate that OfS funding requested will directly support eligible students (as outlined in paragraphs 51 and 52) through the delivery of scholarships worth £10,000 each. OfS funding for scholarships must be used to deliver financial support to students, which can be put towards course costs or living costs incurred while studying.

51. Scholarship funding must be delivered to eligible students from the following underrepresented groups, with priority being given to the first four groups:

- women
- black students
- students registered disabled
- students from low socioeconomic background (Index of Multiple Disadvantage quintiles 1 and 2, low household income)
- care experienced students
- estranged students
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students
- refugees
- children from military families, veterans and partners of military personnel.

52. Funding for scholarships aims to address skills gaps and increase diversity in the UK AI and data science workforce. Therefore, to be eligible for scholarship funding students must meet the nationality or residency status criteria to qualify for the postgraduate masters' loan.²²

53. In Table 6 of the bidding template, bids must provide estimates across the two-year programme, based on anticipated student numbers, for:

- a. The target number of total enrolments on the conversion course (including international students and those not supported by scholarships).
- b. The target number of scholarship eligible students (including those who may not be supported by a scholarship).
- c. The target for delivery of OfS funded scholarships for eligible students (this target should relate to the amount of OfS funding requested; i.e., if a bid is requesting £100,000 of funding, then the target for scholarship delivery would be 10).

54. Bids that evidence that at least 20 per cent of the overall total enrolments in each academic year of the programme will be made up of scholarship-eligible students as outlined in paragraphs 51 and 52, with clear priority given to the top four groups will score more highly. This will ensure that we can prioritise funding towards projects that will have the most likelihood of increasing the diversity of the UK AI and data science workforce.

55. In the narrative response to this category (question 2 in the bidding template), bids must provide information on what evidence has been used to inform the estimates provided. Bids that are unable to provide evidence of how they have informed their estimates are likely to score more poorly for this category.

56. Bids must demonstrate how their outreach and marketing campaigns will help to increase the diversity of UK students studying on AI and data science conversion courses, to increase the AI and data science talent pool. This should focus specifically on women, black students, students registered as disabled and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Outreach

²² See <https://www.gov.uk/masters-loan/eligibility>.

and marketing campaigns designed to attract harder-to-reach groups and based on evidence of effective practice are likely to score more highly.

57. In the bid, providers must provide detail of their scholarship allocation process and criteria and outline how they will prioritise scholarship funding for women, black and disabled students and those from low socioeconomic groups. Bids that include consideration of intersections of characteristics in their allocation process to prioritise the most disadvantaged students are likely to score more highly. This may include intersections between income, ethnicity, area-based measures of socioeconomic status and gender.
58. When assessing low socioeconomic background, postcode data on its own should not be used to decide whether an individual is eligible for scholarship funding. Low socioeconomic background should also be assessed using individualised measures, such as household income and other intersections of characteristics. Proposals that make use of postcode data alone to assess the eligibility of low socioeconomic background in their scholarship allocation processes and criteria are likely to score more poorly.
59. In the bid, providers must give detail of how they will provide holistic support packages, both academic and pastoral, that will support students from diverse backgrounds to succeed and progress into AI and data science roles, with a particular focus on supporting women, black and disabled students and those from low socioeconomic groups. Proposals underpinned by a strategic approach and firm evidence base, including alignment with institutional strategies for learning and teaching, employability and equality and diversity, including where appropriate work set out in the institution's current access and participation plan, will score more highly. Bids that can also demonstrate that they have been informed by and integrated with the needs of students are likely to score more highly.

Category b. Increasing industry support to diversify the UK AI and data science workforce

60. Alongside the government funding for scholarships delivered by the OfS, businesses and industry partners are encouraged to work with providers to co-invest in the future pipeline of AI talent by co-funding scholarships. It is anticipated that for every scholarship that is funded by industry, the government will fund an additional three scholarships across the programme.
61. Public sector organisations will not be able to co-invest in scholarships. This is to ensure that we are not duplicating government funding. Any co-investment from public sector organisations included in the bid will not be considered as part of the assessment.
62. As part of their bids, providers should seek to work with businesses and industry partners to agree funding commitments to deliver industry co-funded scholarships alongside bids for OfS funding for scholarships.
63. To ensure consistency and maximise support for underrepresented students, we anticipate that all scholarships, whether funded by government or industry, should be worth £10,000, which can be put towards course costs or living costs incurred while studying.
64. Providers should consider the following recommended funding models to develop agreements with businesses and industry partners for co-investment of full scholarships:
 - a. Businesses and industry partners fund full scholarships (each worth £10,000).

- b. Businesses and industry partners jointly fund scholarships. Organisations that are unable to fund full scholarships may want to consider grouping with other organisations to jointly fund the delivery of full scholarships.
65. We encourage industry partners and providers to use the recommended funding models outlined in paragraph 64 to develop funding agreements and commitments with industry. Bids that can provide evidence of secured industry co-funding commitments to deliver scholarships to students through the recommended funding models are likely to score more highly. However, individualised co-investment arrangements that best suit both parties will also be considered as part of the bidding assessment process. Providers involved in the current postgraduate conversion course funded programme highlighted the benefits to students of other co-investment opportunities such as in-kind support, provision of paid placements and internships, fee sponsorship, employer mentoring, etc. Any contributions in kind must be given a monetary value in Table 5 of the bidding template.
66. We will look more favourably on bids that will deliver direct financial support to students via the delivery of full £10,000 co-funded industry scholarships. However, where a bid includes proposals for the delivery of other co-investment arrangements that do not meet the recommended funding models, a rationale must be provided for the use of these arrangements and how the proposed commitments will directly support students and the programme aims.
67. Employers are the primary focus for encouraging co-investment, and bids that can evidence that the majority of co-investment will be secured from businesses and industry partners are likely to score more highly. However, providers may use their own funding contributions to top up any secured industry co-investment to maximise delivery of full £10,000 scholarships to students.
68. Bids will need to provide estimates in Table 5 of the bidding template for the delivery of industry co-funded scholarships across the two years of this programme, based on investment already secured and future plans to secure industry co-investment. We will accept bids that are unable to evidence any secured industry co-funding at the time of submission. However, bids that can provide evidence of industry co-investment that has already been secured are likely to score more highly. Where a bid cannot evidence any secured industry co-investment at the time of submission, a clear rationale must be provided. Detail of how the project plans to leverage industry support and co-investment must be provided as part of the narrative response to Criterion 1.
69. Bids should consider how their proposals will create additional value for businesses and industry partners that co-invest in the scholarship programme, and how they will work with our employer engagement partner, Group GTI, to support the development of an 'AI skills community' between companies, higher education providers and students (see paragraphs 71 to 73 for more information). In the narrative response to Criterion 1, providers should provide information about how they will enable businesses and industry partners that have co-invested in scholarships to access the wider AI and data science talent pool to support student progression into the UK AI and data science workforce. Bids that can demonstrate that proposals have been informed by and integrated with the needs of relevant employers are likely to score more highly.
70. In the narrative response to Criterion 1, bids should consider how relevant expertise across the provider can be used to help engage businesses and industry partners to increase industry support for the scholarship programme. Bids that can evidence collaborative

approaches between faculties and schools, careers services, employer engagement teams and other relevant expertise within the provider are likely to score more highly.

Further information on how we intend to support providers to engage with industry

71. The OfS has commissioned Group GTI to act as the programme's employer engagement partner. The partner will:
- a. Support the development of an 'AI skills community', helping to forge innovating relationships between employers, higher education providers and students throughout the duration of the programme.
 - b. Support higher education providers to develop strong relationships with employers and industry, by facilitating introductions between eligible providers offering AI and data science conversion course programmes and employers to encourage co-investment into the scholarship programme.
 - c. Recommend and encourage other co-investment opportunities to employers to facilitate industry support (e.g. industry placements and internships) of all Level 7 initiatives (including traditional AI masters' degrees and apprenticeships).
 - d. Provide support and advice to providers and organisations on template funding models and agreements.
 - e. Deliver networking events and other opportunities to support the development of relationships between the employers, providers and students involved in this programme, and provide organisations with benefits such as stronger links to the wider conversion course talent pool.
72. Successful providers will be expected to engage with the employer engagement partner throughout the life of the project, to contribute to the AI skills community and to support monitoring and reporting of industry co-investment.
73. Providers are encouraged to contact Group GTI prior to submitting their bids to discuss the support available to engage with industry. For more information, please visit the Group GTI website.²³

Category c. Increasing the supply of digitally skilled workers by converting non-STEM graduates

74. The funding competition will be available to eligible providers delivering postgraduate conversion courses in AI and data science in the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years with the aim to upskill students from far-STEM and non-STEM backgrounds to progress into the AI and data science workforce. This builds on evidence from the evaluation of the former Higher Education Funding Council for England's Engineering Postgraduate Conversion Course pilot, which found it feasible for graduates from non-STEM backgrounds to attain an engineering or computing MSc degree through a conversion course.²⁴ Emerging findings from the postgraduate conversion course programme also show that most students studying on

²³ See <https://groupgti.com/ai-scholarships>.

²⁴ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/evaluation-of-a-scheme-to-develop-pilot-engineering-and-computing-conversion-masters-courses/.

postgraduate conversion course programmes, regardless of prior study, are successfully completing their degrees, with most graduates securing jobs using data and AI skills.²⁵

75. Providers will be asked to submit details of the proposed courses that they intend to deliver scholarships on to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria. Providers will need to provide details of course codes (where available), a brief summary of course content and modes of delivery, and entry requirements. We will accept bids for new courses that are intended to be delivered no later than autumn 2023.
76. We will be looking to provide funding for scholarships across a spectrum of provision that might include full-time courses and courses that enable flexible, blended learning and part-time learning to co-exist alongside existing employment or caring responsibilities.
77. Bids must demonstrate proposals for how they intend to recruit and support students from far-STEM and non-STEM backgrounds, to ensure they can successfully access and complete their studies to meet programme aims.
78. Bids must demonstrate how their outreach and marketing campaigns and admissions criteria will help to recruit students from far-STEM and non-STEM backgrounds to upskill. Outreach and marketing campaigns designed to target prospective students from far-STEM and non-STEM backgrounds based on evidence of effective practice are likely to score more highly.
79. In the bid, providers must provide detail of their scholarship allocation process and criteria. Allocation processes and criteria that give consideration to supporting students from non-STEM backgrounds where they find they are oversubscribed will score more highly.
80. In the bid, providers must provide detail of how they will provide holistic support packages to upskill students from non-STEM backgrounds to enable them to succeed on the conversion courses. Proposals underpinned by a strategic approach and firm evidence base, including alignment with institutional strategies for learning and teaching, will score more highly. Bids that can also demonstrate that they have been informed by and integrated with the needs of students and employers are likely to score more highly.

Criterion 2: Value for money and project and risk management

81. Bids should set out clearly how the project will provide value for money and how the project and any associated risks will be well managed. This criterion is an important factor in regard to our general duties under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.²⁶
82. Firstly, we are looking to understand how any OfS funding contributes to the overall financing of a project, and how proportionate this contribution is to the benefits that the project will bring to students, graduates, employers and others. Providers should give details of values of monies from the OfS to be used for this project, and specific assurance over the sum of money bid for and how and when it will be used.
83. While we do not require match funding, providers should identify other confirmed sources of funding, particularly any funding for industry co-funded scholarships, which is a core priority

²⁵ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/evaluation-of-data-science-and-ai-pg-conversion-courses/.

²⁶ See www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/section/2/enacted, in particular our duty to have regard, under S.2(1)(d), to the need to promote value for money in the provision of higher education by English higher education providers and, under S.2 (1)(f), to the need to use the OfS's resources in an efficient, effective and economic way.

for the programme. Providers are asked to submit, as part of the bid assessment template, information in Tables 5 and 6 that collects numerical data in a structured format about the financing for the scholarship programme.

84. Bids must provide evidence of clear commitment from the lead provider and any partners, including any co-funding committed by industry. Bids that include detail of other sources of funding or commitments without providing clear evidence of commitment are likely to score more poorly (see Annex A, paragraph 3).
85. Where a bid is unable to evidence any co-funding commitments from industry or other strategic partners, a clear rationale must be provided, along with any plans to secure funding contributions across the duration of the programme to deliver value for money. The rationale and detail of plans to secure funding contributions must be underpinned by evidence. Purely aspirational or unrealistic bids that cannot be supported by evidence will likely score poorly.
86. As outlined in paragraphs 65 and 66, where non-financial contributions such as support in kind are included as part of a bid, this must be given a monetary value in Table 5 of the bidding template. Bids should make clear in their narrative response how these contributions in kind will benefit both students and employers and provide value for money.
87. We cannot expect providers to continue to fund and deliver scholarships beyond the funding period. However, we are asking providers to consider how the key activities delivered by the project and the benefits it may achieve will be embedded and sustained beyond the funding period to provide value for money. This may include sustained relationships with industry and employers, and ongoing evaluation and monitoring to understand impact and 'what works' or dissemination of best practice. Bids that are underpinned by evidence, including a robust evaluation and monitoring plan to understand impact and share effective practice, are more likely to score highly.
88. The second aspect of Criterion 2 relates to our having confidence that the provider will be able to manage public funding effectively throughout the project. This includes management of all aspects of the project, from planning to delivery, ensuring that risks are well managed and that the provider is both ready for the money and able to use it all in the time available. We expect any funding awarded by the OfS in the bidding exercise for a specific financial year to be spent during that year and in line with the terms and conditions of the grant.
89. We expect each provider to evaluate its own activity and share the findings. Individual project evaluations will be essential to assessing what works and to determining the value for money of this investment.
90. The following list is not exhaustive, but we would expect a bid to include brief information on:
 - a. The amount of OfS scholarship funding requested in financial year 2023-24, together with:²⁷
 - i. Its relationship to meeting programme aims described in categories a., b. and c.

²⁷ We are unable to confirm funding for 2024-25 as funding available will be confirmed by government on an annual basis. We will request updated operating plans as part of ongoing monitoring processes to inform decisions on allocations for 2024-25 once funding is confirmed. We anticipate funding allocations will be confirmed no later than spring 2024.

- ii. The target numbers of scholarships to be delivered from the OfS grant sought, along with estimates of total enrolments of all students and scholarship eligible students for the proposed courses.
 - iii. The anticipated spending profile for 2023-24.
 - iv. Any other specified sources of finance, including any industry co-investment secured and the anticipated number of industry co-funded scholarships to be delivered (where relevant).
- b. A summary of the proposed conversion courses including course codes and a brief description of course content, delivery and entry requirements.
 - c. The roles and contributions of any local or collaborative partners involved in the project and the benefits of the project for those partners (including, as appropriate, students and graduates of partner providers).
 - d. Project management. Bids should detail management of the projects specified.
 - e. Risk management. Bids should complete the project risk register (Table 10 of the bidding template), and clearly identify any risk factors that are likely to impact on the success of the project, and how these impacts will be managed.
 - f. Governance and oversight. Bids should include detail on project governance structures and oversight of financial management.
 - g. Evaluation. Bids should be supported by a robust evaluation and monitoring plan.
 - h. Timelines and project milestones for the two-year programme.
 - i. Contingency plans, and any dependences that would impact the project, for example course approval processes for the delivery of new courses starting in autumn 2023.
91. Some of the information described in paragraph 90 is collected in a structured format as part of the numerical section of the bidding template, but providers should also use the narrative section relating to Criterion 2 to provide further detail. Higher-scoring bids will set out clearly how projects and investments are being managed (including, if appropriate, across any collaborative partners).
92. The bid must confirm the provider's ability to use all the OfS funding sought for scholarship delivery with a clear spending profile for the financial year 2023-24. We are not permitted to provide grants in advance of need, and our funding from the government specifically covers the two-year period through to 31 March 2025. Funding is allocated on a government financial year basis so the grant needs to be spent in that period.
93. For those bids that are funded, all monies must have been spent in full by 31 March 2025. We expect the spending profile in FY 2023-24 to reflect the amount requested in a provider's bid. Money spent in a financial year ending 31 March includes contractually committed expenditure that is clearly identified as such within the provider's finance system as at 31 March – that is, in accounting terms, one would expect to be able to accrue for this expenditure to reflect the point at which the contractual commitment was made, and that auditors could confirm this treatment if required.
94. We expect OfS scholarship funding to be paid in intervals to the student throughout the duration of the course. This is to ensure we are not funding in advance of need. Where

possible, we expect successful providers to align scholarship payments with other financial support payments (e.g. payment schedules for masters' loans).

95. We will work with the successful projects to set out their funding profile as part of the award letter process over the two years of the programme. Funding profiles for FY 2024-25 will be confirmed through the submission and approval of updated operating plans by spring 2024 following confirmation of funding available.
96. Successful providers will be expected to work closely with the OfS funding decision process and during scholarship allocation, to ensure we are able to consider how best to meet bidder requests within our total available funding. Successful providers are expected to work with the OfS to align emergent demand for scholarships across the portfolio during the two-year funded programme.
97. Bids should explain how the provider will review progress of a project, and how it will identify and address emerging risks to the success of the project. This could include, for example, a description of how issues such as risk and reporting will be managed.
98. Bids should explain how the amount of funding sought is justified in the context of the benefits that the project will bring, demonstrating value for money for students and employers.
99. Bids that lack clarity, or where the OfS considers that the sums requested appear disproportionate to the benefits of the project, are likely to score poorly. Bids that provide insufficient detail to assure the OfS that the project and associated risks will be effectively managed (including to minimise slippage and avoid underspending against the funding sought by the end of each financial year – 31 March 2024 and particularly 31 March 2025) will also likely score poorly.
100. Providers should note that where a collaborative bid covers multiple projects, our assessment will be for the bid as a whole, not for individual projects within it. To meet Criterion 2, bids must demonstrate that any scholarship funding requested will be well managed, provide value for money and ultimately minimise risks to public funds.
101. We anticipate supporting a wide range of projects, to deliver a diverse set of evidence-based bids including ensuring we have a wide geographical spread of providers. The final number of funded projects will depend on the quality of bids received, available funding, and the judgements and recommendations made through the assessment process.

Proposed approach to scoring and prioritisation for scholarship funding distributed through this competition

102. Providers wishing to bid must do so by downloading and completing the bidding template (examples shown at Annex A).
103. Providers must complete all sections of the template including numerical data collection and narrative information in five questions.
104. Bids will be assessed internally by OfS officers in the first instance, according to the scoring process outlined in paragraph 110. A panel of external experts will then review the process and consider which bids should be recommended for funding. The panel will particularly consider our aim to fund a portfolio of projects (considering the programme's aims, including regional spread, diversity of providers and diversity of courses). Please note that all bids may be shared with the expert panel, as necessary.

105. Final decisions will be made by the Director for Fair Access and Participation according to the Scheme of Delegation (Part 8, row 11), depending on considerations of cost and risk.²⁸

Question 1: Executive summary

106. A summary overview of the bid, with a limit of 1,000 words. Providers should specify the sums of scholarship funding bid for, and include a clear explanation of the relevant AI and data science courses the bid is for (see paragraphs 42 and 74). The answer to this question should provide a short overview of the bid proposal, including a description of how the proposal meets programme aims (see paragraph 15). A short extract from this text may be published in our funding announcement publication, if the bid is successful.

Questions 2 to 4: Criterion 1 priorities

107. An explanation of how the bid addresses Criterion 1, including how the project proposal addresses each category. Each question has a limit of 2,000 words.

Question 5: Criterion 2

108. An explanation of how the bid addresses Criterion 2, as described in paragraphs 81 to 101. The question has a limit of 2,000 words. Information provided in Tables 9 and 10 will also be used to assess the extent the bid addresses Criterion 2.

Scoring of criteria for the postgraduate conversion course scholarship programme

109. We will score each criterion, and each category within Criterion 1, on a scale from 0 to 4 according to the scale set out in Table B.

Table B: Scoring of criteria

Score		Description
4	Excellent	Clear, well reasoned and evidenced explanation of how the bid meets the criteria. No material weaknesses in explanation or the evidence referred to or provided.
3	Very good	Clear, well reasoned and evidenced explanation of how the bid meets the criteria. Some gaps in explanation or the evidence referred to or provided, but not material.
2	Satisfactory	Basic explanation and evidence provided for how the bid meets the criteria. Substantial gaps in evidence referred to or provided, but not material.
1	Poor	Basic explanation of how the bid meets the criteria. Little or no evidence to support the bid.
0	No score	Little or no explanation of how the bid meets the criteria or little or no evidence to support the bid. Bid contains material inconsistencies or weaknesses in the explanation or evidence referred to.

²⁸ See 'Scheme of delegation', available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/who-we-are/our-board-and-committees/.

110. The assessment criteria, and the categories under Criterion 1, will be individually scored, and providers should ensure that each criterion and relevant category is fully addressed in the template. Providers should be aware that, in reaching final decisions, we will look to ensure we are able to offer an overall package of support across a broad group of providers that we consider best meets priorities set out in paragraph 15.
111. To inform funding decisions we will prioritise between bids based on the mean average score achieved under Criterion 1 against category a., b. and c., plus the score achieved against Criterion 2. This will give a maximum score out of 8. These scores will then be reviewed and moderated by the expert panel to inform its recommendations to the Director for Fair Access and Participation.
112. Where we are unable to afford to support all bids with a particular score using the process outlined in paragraph 111, the expert panel will particularly consider our aim to fund a portfolio of projects considering the programme's aims outlined in paragraph 15, regional spread of providers, diversity of providers and diversity of courses.
113. In reaching decisions on which bids to support, we may offer a successful bidder an allocation that is less than the sum it has bid for. Providers should therefore consider how they will progress their project under these circumstances, for example through alternative sources of finance or amending scholarship delivery targets to meet funding allocations. If a provider is unable to progress its project because reduced funding is offered, we will withdraw the offer and reallocate the funding to other providers. We may also withdraw the offer of funding if, in response, the provider proposes to significantly reduce the scope of the project it bid for, such that the reduced scope would not have scored sufficiently to be prioritised for funding. We will recover funding that is not used for the purposes intended within the two-year funding period that spans financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25. The OfS will invite the provider to submit an appeal for mitigation before it confirms the final adjustment that it will implement.

Grant funding payments, conditions and monitoring

114. The terms and conditions that apply to OfS grant funding for the 2023-24 financial year, including the arrangements for payment, how it may be used and monitoring arrangements, will be included in 'Terms and conditions of funding for 2023-24', which we will publish separately. We will issue grant award letters to all funded projects setting out the terms and conditions of the funding in each year of the programme, which must be formally agreed before grant payments will commence.
115. We expect to announce the outcomes of the bidding competition to individual providers in March 2023.
116. Funding is provided on a financial year basis and must be used for the purposes intended, in accordance with the terms and conditions that apply. The OfS will not make payments to providers in advance of need, and thus providers must use grant funding in full within the relevant funding period for which they are provided.
117. In addition, any funding awarded through this bidding competition must be used:

- a. On scholarships for eligible students, to be delivered in line with the provider's successful bid. Funding must not be used for ineligible expenditure outlined in paragraphs 32 and 33. We will expect to monitor exactly what the monies were spent on.
 - b. In accordance with any other terms and conditions that we may specify when we award the grant.
118. If our monitoring of a provider's delivery of its project does not give us confidence that it will be able to use all the funding awarded through this competition within the relevant funding period, and in line with the terms and conditions that apply, we may withdraw the offer of funding in whole or part. Such exceptional circumstances may include significant delays in delivery (for whatever reason) compared with the timetable set out in the provider's bid (or as may subsequently be agreed by us) or failure of the provider to engage to our satisfaction in any reporting and monitoring requirements.
119. If we are not satisfied that a provider has used the funds in accordance with the requirements in paragraph 118, or as notified separately, we will reclaim some or all of the funding provided. If providers are unsure whether the use they propose of the scholarship funding is in line with requirements they should contact PGconversion@officeforstudents.org.uk for advice in advance of committing to the expenditure.
120. Funded providers will be subject to individual monitoring arrangements depending on the level of funding awarded and risk assessment. Providers will be expected to report on the delivery against their successful funding proposal on a quarterly basis throughout the duration of the funded programme, with final monitoring reports required six months after the end of programme funding in September 2025.
121. Funded providers will be required to submit updated operating plans, including estimates and funding requests for the delivery of OfS funded scholarships worth £10,000 each for FY 2024-25, as part of ongoing monitoring and reporting. This will inform decisions on funding allocations for FY 2024-25, subject to confirmation of funding. Funding decisions for FY 2024-25 will be confirmed by spring 2024.
122. Competition and Markets Authority advice on consumer protection law outlines guidance to ensure that prospective students are given the information they need to make informed decisions. This includes non-course related information that students consider important and likely to impact on their decision making, such as the availability of funding and support.²⁹ As programme funding is confirmed on an annual basis, individual scholarship funding for each successful provider will be confirmed by spring in each financial year of the programme. Providers should ensure compliance with consumer protection law when providing information to students about the availability of scholarship funding allocated through this competition.
123. We will take a risk-based, proportionate approach to monitoring, to ensure value for money and the delivery of targets, objectives, outputs and outcomes. We will undertake visits to and meetings with projects to better understand scholarship delivery, impacts and outcomes, and to support analysis and dissemination.
124. We will commission an independent evaluation of the overall scheme and will notify the funded projects of this work accordingly. We expect all funded providers to work with the OfS and the evaluators in an open and transparent way, to share learning and best practice for the

²⁹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers>.

benefit of students and the wider higher education sector, and to provide detailed analysis of successful and unsuccessful activities to understand lessons learnt. To support this, we will hold workshops and other engagements to facilitate the forming of a programme network, with which all funded providers must engage.

125. Group GTI will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on all industry engagement and co-investment for the scholarship programme. We therefore expect all funded providers to work with Group GTI to share detailed information on engagement with industry and any co-investment secured.
126. Funded projects should continue their monitoring and evaluation activities until all students supported through this initiative have completed their courses. We will need to be able to measure the outcomes of students involved beyond the funded programme. We anticipate that data for the programme will be collected via Higher Education Statistics Agency returns and ongoing programme monitoring. We expect providers to work with the OfS and the independent evaluator during the life of the programme to monitor those specific outcomes, and to engage with the OfS and our evaluator to ensure relevant data is available to support monitoring, evaluation and comms activity. This may include access to alumni data to support evaluation of graduate outcomes beyond the project funding.
127. The OfS is responsible for leading a national marketing campaign. All marketing and promotional activity delivered by providers taking part in the programme should be complementary and align in support of the wider programme and adhering to programme brand guidelines. Successful providers will be given access to digital communications assets to support outreach and marketing activities, and thereby the development of a national programme brand.
128. At the end of each financial year, the OfS will request monitoring information from providers to satisfy us that spending is aligned with our terms and conditions of funding, and that the outlined scope and scale of the project is being delivered. We will actively monitor spending on a yearly basis, to ensure that the total funding is spent across all providers collectively to meet the budget. Providers must notify the OfS immediately of any changes in the circumstances or delivery plans of individual projects, to ensure that government funding is being used appropriately. We reserve the right to review the offer of funding if there are significant changes to project plans or delays to its delivery. Providers must send details of any proposed change or expected delay to a project to PGconversion@officeforstudents.org.uk as soon as possible, so that these can be reviewed and assessed without delay.

Further information and next steps

129. Eligible higher education providers are invited to download and complete the full bid template at Annex A,³⁰ and email it to PGconversion@officeforstudents.org.uk by **1700 on Wednesday 11 January 2023**.
130. If you have any questions about this competition, please email PGconversion@officeforstudents.org.uk.

³⁰ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/office-for-students-funding-competition/.

Annex A: Bidding template for artificial intelligence and data science postgraduate conversion course scholarship funding

How to complete the template

The deadline for returning completed bids is **1700 on Wednesday 11 January 2023**.

Please email completed templates to PGconversion@officeforstudents.org.uk. We will confirm receipt. You should also use this inbox for any questions throughout the process, and we will respond as soon as possible.

1. Please use the template provided below – your bid will not be accepted otherwise. Please respond to all questions using the text boxes. Boxes can be expanded to the required length and the explanatory notes in *italics* may be removed to provide more space for bidder responses. All sections and tables must be completed. Please do not amend or otherwise alter the template layout.
2. The completed template should not exceed the word limits for each question. It must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document.
3. To include with the completed template, we also require:
 - a. Signed letters of support from the accountable officer of the lead higher education provider, and the director of finance at the lead higher education provider.
 - b. Letters of support from any partner higher education providers and other organisations directly involved in the bid. These letters of support must clearly state what each partner is contributing towards the project: for example, whether cash or investment in kind, and the monetary value of the latter; any conditions on investments; and any issues of timing. The letters should not simply state generic support for the proposal. These letters should be collated into one PDF document and sent in the same email with the completed bid template. The letters are not included in the page limit for the bid template.
4. The outcomes (Table 9) will be used by us to monitor the progress and success of the project. These measures must be suitably stretching and align with the intended outcomes of the project. Set out clear targets, and the timeframe for delivery.
5. The bid should show how it meets the bid requirements and assessment criteria set out in 'Office for Students funding competition: Artificial intelligence and data science postgraduate conversion course scholarship funding' (OfS 2022.52) paragraphs 44 to 101.³¹

³¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/office-for-students-funding-competition/.

Table 1: Contact for lead provider

Legal name of lead higher education provider	
Lead provider UK Provider Reference Number	
Project start date	
Project end date	
Approval from both director of finance and accountable officer (for lead provider). Signed letters must be provided.	<i>(All bids need confirmation of these approvals in order to proceed.)</i>

Table 2: Contact for accountable officer at the lead provider

Title and full name of accountable officer	
Accountable officer email address	
Lead provider postal address	

Table 3: Contact person for the bid

Title and full name	
Role	
Phone number	
Email	

Table 4: Course information

Course title	
Course identifier (COURSEID)	
Intake date(s)	
Entry requirements	
Mode of delivery	
Course summary	

Table 5: Project partners and co-investment

Please provide details of all partners involved in this bid, including higher education providers, industry partners and any other partners. Please also provide detail of any co-investment proposed as part of the bid.

Partner name (use legal name for higher education providers)	Type of partner	Role in project	Total level of co-investment to be provided (££)	Status of investment	Type of co-investment*
<i>Please add or remove rows as required</i>	<i>E.g., lead provider higher education provider, industry partners, other partners</i>			<i>(E.g., formally confirmed / to be confirmed / discussed but no formal commitment)</i>	

* State whether cash, in kind, capital, revenue or combinations of these, with specific monetary values. Any contributions in kind must be given a monetary value.

Table 6: Funding and finance

In this section please provide total sums that you anticipate you will deliver across this the duration of the programme, rather than itemised amounts

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25 estimates*
Total scholarship funding requested from OfS		
Total scholarship co-funding from industry partners		
Total contributions in kind from industry partners		
Total higher education provider co-investment		
Total project cost (all funding sources)		

* Funding for FY 2024-25 of the programme will be subject to confirmation following government decisions on funding. Funding will be allocated based on updated operating plans submitted through ongoing monitoring and reporting processes by spring 2024.

Table 7: Target scholarship numbers and number of enrolments

	Total enrolments (including international students and those not supported by scholarships)	Target number of scholarship eligible students, including those who may not be supported by a scholarship	Target for delivery of OfS funded scholarships for eligible underrepresented groups	Target for delivery of industry co-funded scholarships for eligible underrepresented groups
FY 2023-24		<i>(e.g. women, black and disabled students, those from low socio-economic backgrounds and other underrepresented groups)</i>	<i>(This should reflect the amount of scholarship funding bid for, i.e., if bidding for £100,000 then scholarship target will be 10 scholarships worth £10,000)</i>	

	Total enrolments (including international students and those not supported by scholarships)	Target number of scholarship eligible students, including those who may not be supported by a scholarship	Target for delivery of OfS funded scholarships for eligible underrepresented groups	Target for delivery of industry co-funded scholarships for eligible underrepresented groups
FY 2024-25*				

* Estimates for FY 2024-25 of the programme will be re-submitted as part of ongoing monitoring and reporting processes and the outcomes of scholarship delivery will be used to inform decisions on funding and allocations for FY 2024-25.

Table 8: Profile of funding requested

Bidders should provide a financial profile for their proposed OfS scholarship funding for the FY 2023-2024 as well of details of how the funding requested will align with payments to students. Please complete the table – the total should equal total funding requested. Please note that we are unable to fund in advance of need. Funding profiles for funding allocations relating to FY 2024-25 of the programme will be agreed following confirmation of funding for FY 2024-25 as part of ongoing monitoring and reporting processes.

Month and year	OfS Scholarship funding	Details of Scholarship delivery
April 2023		
July 2023		
October 2023		
January 2024		
March 2024*		
TOTAL	£	

* We expect all projects to have completed recruitment activities related to funding provided in the FY 2023-24 by March 2024, though certain scholarship payments will go beyond that date. We expect that support for students enrolled should continue throughout the duration of their studies, and that scholarship payments for certain students enrolled in the 2023-24 academic year may continue beyond March 2024, subject to the discretion of OfS (see paragraph 93 of OfS 2022.52).

Narrative questions

This section of the template is for your qualitative responses to address the two criteria set out in the bidding guidance. You should refer to the guidance for all information on criteria and categories. We encourage providers to submit a concise response and thus have set a word limit for each question.

Question 1: Please provide an executive summary of the bid proposal. Include a brief overview of the bid proposal, the sum of scholarship funding bid for, a description of the relevant AI and data science course(s) the bid is for, and a description of how the bid meets the programme aims (see paragraph 106 of OfS 2022.52):

(Word limit = 1,000)

Question 2: Please explain how this bid proposal addresses priority category a., to increase the diversity of people entering the UK AI and data science workforce. You should include what evidence has been used to inform the estimates outlined in your target numbers for estimated enrolments and scholarship delivery targets outlined in Table 7, details of your outreach and marketing campaigns, details of your proposed scholarship allocation process and how you plan to support students from diverse backgrounds to succeed and progress into UK AI and data science workforce (see paragraphs 50 to 59 of OfS 2022.52).

(Word limit = 2,000)

Question 3: Please explain how this bid proposal addresses priority category b., to increase industry support to diversify the UK AI and data science workforce. Providers should include details of any co-investment secured to date from industry partners, any plans for further engagement with employers to secure industry co-investment across the programme, and plans for the delivery of industry-funded scholarships to students. If you are not using the recommended funding model, as outlined in paragraph 64 of the guidance, then please provide your rationale for this. If you are unable to evidence any industry co-investment or support, please provide the rationale for this (see paragraphs 60 to 73 of OfS 2022.52).

(Word limit = 2,000)

Question 4. Please explain how this bid proposal addresses the priority category c., to increase the supply of digitally skilled workers by converting non-STEM graduates. Please provide details of your course(s), your proposed outreach and marketing campaigns to recruit students from far and non-STEM backgrounds, how you plan to support students from far and non-STEM backgrounds to succeed and progress into UK AI and data science workforce (see paragraphs 74 to 80 of OfS 2022.52).

(Word limit = 2,000)

Question 5: Please explain how this bid proposal addresses Criterion 2, that the project and associated risks will be well managed, and the project will provide value for money. Providers should include details of their plans to manage the project and for how the funding, and its impact on students, graduates, and employers, will be evaluated, monitored, and disseminated. Providers should describe any plans for how the key activities delivered by the project and the enhancements it may achieve will be embedded and sustained beyond the funding period (see paragraphs 81 to 101 of OfS 2022.52).

(Word limit = 2,000)

Table 9: Project inputs, outputs, and outcomes

Using the table below, detail the key inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes for the project. This table will be used to draft the success criteria and measures for project monitoring purposes, should the bid be approved for funding. Information from this table will be assessed in relation to the extent it meets Criterion 2.

These measures must be suitably stretching and align with the intended outcomes of the project. Set out clear targets, and the timeframe for delivery.

Input	Activity	Output	Outcome	Target
<i>The resource</i>	<i>How the resource will be used</i>	<i>What will result from these activities</i>	<i>Change in condition</i>	<i>Aims of project</i>

Table 10: Project risks

Identify the top five risks to this project, how they will be mitigated, and their probability versus their impact. Information from this table will be assessed in relation to the extent it meets Criterion 2.

Risk	Mitigation	Probability and impact



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www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/