



AI Nurses Network Seed Funding Guidelines

Questions and completed application form are to be sent to
ainurses@kcl.ac.uk by 28th February 2025 – 12:00 noon

AI Nurses Network – The Vision

The AI Nurses Network was established with the goal of:

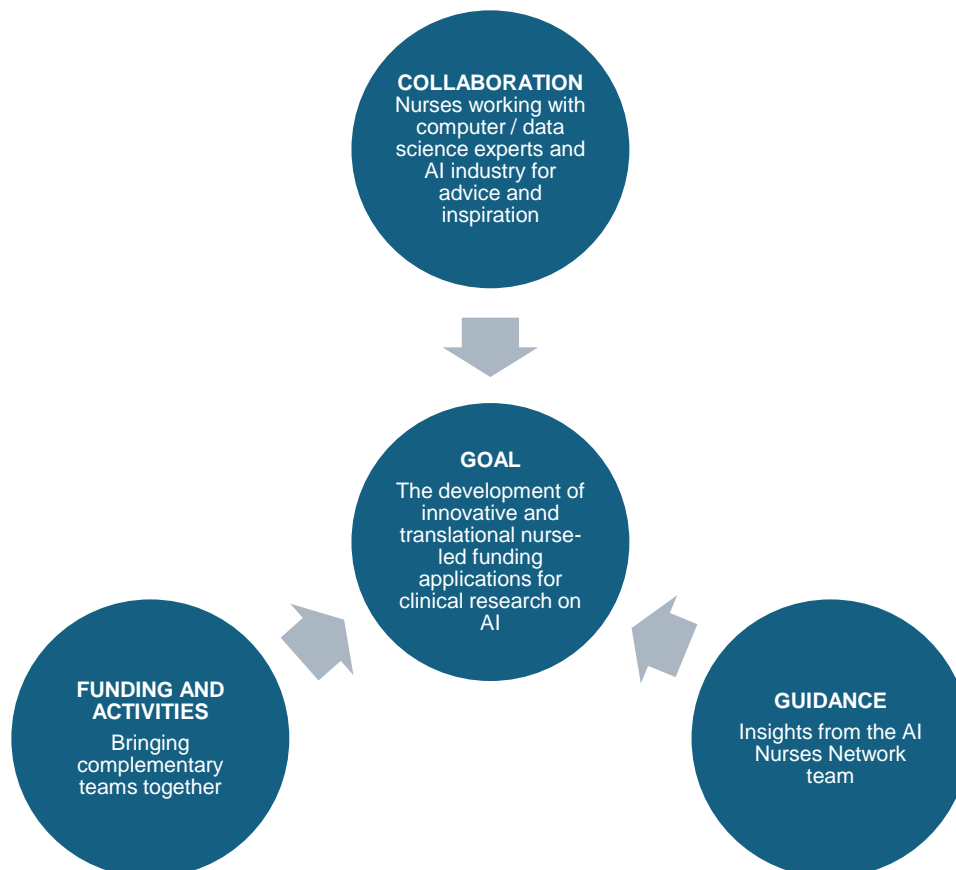
- 1) building and connecting a community of nurses across the United Kingdom (UK) who are interested in or actively researching artificial intelligence (AI) in nursing to improve patient care,
- 2) providing resources and support to nurses to increase their knowledge and skills in artificial intelligence to enable them to conduct AI research in healthcare,
- 3) strengthening professional networks and collaborations between nurses, computer/data scientists, and industry to produce nurse-led research on AI that delivers high quality care.

The AI Nurses Network aligns with the Chief Nursing Officer's strategic plan for nursing research in NHS England ([NHS England and NHS Improvement, 2021](#)) and is supported by funded from the Burdett Trust for Nursing.

A recording of the launch of the AI Nurses Network at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust on the 4th December 2024 can be viewed on YouTube [here](#).

Seed Funding - Key objectives

The AI Nurses Network seed funding scheme funds the early development of innovative and translational nurse-led clinical research on AI to enable future competitive applications for larger research funding. The research must be aimed at creating positive change and value for patient care or population health.



This seed funding call welcomes proposals that showcase clinical research on AI in nursing which identifies and tackles a clear health and care challenge. Funds will support nurses to work together and with partners and communities with relevant expertise on applications covering the full spectrum of clinical research and areas of AI from smaller, focused projects through to larger collaborations to address new or emerging health and care problems. This can include but is not limited to research which develops and validates AI predictive models in healthcare, deploys new or existing AI tools in professional practice, or examines the benefits, limitations or risks of AI in nursing. The fund encourages applications from all areas of nursing that break disciplinary silos and integrate various types of clinical research activities into the proposed programme of work.

Award-winners will be expected to use the seed-funding to work towards a significant research grant application, submitted to a major UKRI funding body e.g., National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), Medical Research Council (MRC), Innovate UK, or a charity funder. Setting out your pathway to a research grant application that is sustainable, scalable and will generate impact is a core part of the AI Nurses Network seed funding application and will be carefully scrutinised by the panel. Successful projects will be able to demonstrate a viable forward trajectory (funding and delivery structure) beyond the funded period via the most appropriate means.

Funding Available

The AI Nurses Network seed funding scheme has two tiers of investment of up to £20,000 and we aim to support as many projects as we can.

- Tier 1 – Small scale scoping project focusing on AI in nursing. This may be a type of rapid review (e.g., scoping, narrative, realist), a primary study that collects or analyses data, a Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) activity, or the secondary analysis of an existing dataset. A maximum of £10,000 is available to support Tier 1 projects over a maximum of 6 months.
- Tier 2 – Pilot project that seeks to undertake a more substantial clinical research study focusing on AI in nursing. This may be a more in-depth and rigorous evidence synthesis (e.g., systematic review, qualitative evidence synthesis), a primary study that collects or analyses data incorporating Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE), or the secondary analysis of an existing dataset. A maximum of £20,000 is available to support Tier 2 projects over a maximum of 6 months.

All applications must include a breakdown of costs; value for money is one of the assessment criteria. Funding will be allocated as early as possible in 2025.

Please work with your local research support colleagues to finalise your budget, as you would for an application to a major UKRI or other research funder.

Please read what the seed funding scheme does and does not fund carefully, and if you are in any doubt, please contact ainurses@kcl.ac.uk for pre-submission advice.

Eligibility criteria

Applications for clinical research proposals which include AI techniques, tools, or systems and take a nurse-led approach to developing, deploying and/or evaluating AI in healthcare are considered within remit for this seed funding call. Other healthcare practitioners such as medical doctors, midwives, allied health professionals and nursing associates are **not eligible** to apply as lead applicants/principal investigators but may be co-investigators on the team.

AI research that relates to staff or student education/training or workforce development, knowledge exchange, policy advocacy or research methods **are not** within remit for this seed funding call.

Existing transformative clinical research projects in early/developmental stages may also be considered where support from this seed funding would significantly accelerate and/or scale projected impact. Applications for follow-on funding for established research projects or programmes **are not** eligible.

Lead applicants can be from any nursing discipline. Research proposals **must be** led by a nurse registered with the UK's Nursing and Midwifery Council. Applicants should not be a joint PI or co-investigator on any more than one proposal so that they have sufficient capacity to contribute to the proposed research.

Proposals could include collaborators from industry, the NHS, social care, voluntary and/or public sector. International collaborations are eligible, but all funding must reside with a UK based organisation. Funding cannot be transferred to subcontracting organisations.

The AI Nurses Network seed funding **can be used** for...

- **Short Term Salary Costs** - Directly incurred salary costs of a researcher to support project tasks e.g. evidence synthesis, data collection or analysis. Funds can also be used to extend FTEs of temporary/part-time staff members to allow them to dedicate time to the funded projects. If you are requesting PI salary costs as a directly incurred cost, you will need to provide full justification for this in your application.
- **Small equipment** - hardware or software e.g., AI tools up to the value of £5,000. However, laptops for researchers are not eligible.
- **Consumables** – travel for research participants or PPIE members, vouchers or payments to research participants or PPIE members, catering for research workshops or other research activities, stationary, printing, online survey costs, postage, transcription, travel to/from the field site for research, room hire etc.

The AI Nurses Network seed funding **cannot** be used for

- **Directly allocated salary** - Directly allocated salary costs e.g. paying for the PI or Co-I's clinical time or for technicians/administrative staff already paid by the organisation.
- **Business as usual research** - Funding should not be sought for 'business as usual' activities of existing projects nor permanent roles.
- **Studentships** - Student stipends or fees.
- **Overheads** - Estates and indirect costs or bench fees.
- **Large Equipment & Data Purchases; Open Access** - Large equipment: individual items of equipment should be below £5,000. In exceptional circumstances we may accept applications which include multiple items of small equipment (each under £5,000)

which collectively total more than £10,000 if fully justified. Data purchases will not be funded; Open access publication fees will not be funded.

- **Conference Attendance** - Conference attendance should be funded via travel grants or departmental funds.

Timeline and milestones for seed funding

- **28th February 2025:** Applications close
- **March 2025:** Shortlisting and panel meetings
- **Early April 2025:** Awards announced
- **April/May 2025:** Funding disbursed, and projects begin
- **September/October 2025:** Projects finish, and final reports submitted

Application process

Proposals should be submitted by the lead applicant using the application form available on the AI Nurses Network website (<https://www.ai-nurses.com/ai-funding>). Please ensure you have read the guidance carefully before applying, ensuring your eligibility and your project's adherence to the seed funding scheme's criteria.

Applicants must ensure they discuss their application with their home department/directorate and have the approval of their Head of Department/Director who must sign off the application form prior to submission. The application round will close at **12.00 noon** on the **28th February 2025**. To apply, return your completed and signed application to ainurses@kcl.ac.uk before **28th February 2025 at 12:00 noon**.

If you have any questions about the application process and/or criteria, please first check our FAQs available on the AI Nurses Network website (<https://www.ai-nurses.com/ai-funding>). If you cannot find the answer to your question on our webpages, then please contact ainurses@kcl.ac.uk

Applications will be assessed by a peer-review panel and scored according to the assessment criteria. Outcomes will be announced in early **April 2025**.

Assessment criteria

Proposals will be scored against the following five criteria in order to establish eligibility and the degree to which projects meet the seed funding schemes objectives.

- Quality of the proposed research
- Methodology and feasibility
- Research team and environment
- Impact and dissemination
- Justification of funds requested

Applications should outline how the criteria are most appropriately built into the aims and timeline of projects.

Assessment criteria

Criteria and Scores	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 10
Quality of the proposed research	Little to no background information given, little to no reference to the existing literature, not well-related to the themes of the call, poor justification of its need and novelty. The research question(s) are unclear and/or the proposal is poorly written.	Lacking detail in the background information given, lacking detail in reference to the existing literature, partially related to the themes of the call, some justification of its need and novelty. The research question(s) and/or proposal is lacking detail.	Adequate background information given, adequately references the existing literature, adequately related to the themes of the call, adequate justification of its need and novelty. The research question(s) and/or proposal is adequately explained and detailed.	Generally detailed background information given, generally references the existing literature, related to the themes of the call, generally detailed justification of its need and novelty. The research question(s) and/or proposal is generally credible and detailed.	Excellent, clear, detailed and well-referenced background information given, highly related to the themes of the call, clear and compelling justification of its need and novelty. The research question(s) and/or proposal is clear, credible and detailed.
Methodology and feasibility	Flawed scientific and methodological approach. Little to no detail and consideration to risks and contingency plans. The research plan / timescale proposed is over-ambitious and not at all credible and/or sufficient	Weak scientific and methodological approach. Lacking detail and consideration to risks and contingency plans. The research plan / timescale proposed is ambitious and not entirely credible and/or sufficient.	Adequate scientific and methodological approach. Adequate consideration to risks and contingency plans. The research plan / timescale proposed is adequate.	Sound scientific and methodological approach. Generally detailed and considered risks and contingency plans. The research plan / timescale proposed is generally credible and/or sufficient	Excellent scientific and methodological approach. Excellent, clear, detailed and well-considered risks and contingency plans. The research plan / timescale proposed is credible and/or sufficient.
Research team and environment	Not at all appropriate and little to no relevant detail given on their background, expertise and/or track record to carry out the proposed research. And/or the	Not completely appropriate and lacking details on their background, expertise and/or track record to carry out the proposed research. And/or the team has some	Adequate and have given adequate detail on their background, expertise and/or track record to carry out the proposed research. And/or the team has	Generally appropriate and have given appropriate detail on their background, expertise and/or track record to carry out the proposed research.	Exemplary and have given excellent, clear and well-considered detail on their background, expertise and/or track record to carry out the proposed research. And/or the team

	team completely lacks multi-disciplinarity given the nature of the work.	multi-disciplinarity given the nature of the work	adequate levels of multi-disciplinarity given the nature of the work	And/or the team has appropriate levels multi-disciplinarity given the nature of the work	has exemplary levels of multi-disciplinarity given the nature of the work
Impact and dissemination	Little to no detail and consideration of plans for dissemination beyond the academic community and/or to influence policy and practice. Little to no demonstration of the knowledge and connections that will facilitate impact.	Lacking detail and consideration of plans for dissemination beyond the academic community and/or to influence policy and practice. May be a focus on dissemination alone, with no clear indication of how this will lead to impact.	Adequate detail and consideration of plans for dissemination beyond the academic community and/or to influence policy and practice. Adequate demonstration of the knowledge and connections that will facilitate impact.	Generally detailed and considered plans for dissemination beyond the academic community and/or to influence policy and practice. Good demonstration of the knowledge and connections that will facilitate impact.	Excellent, detailed and specific plans for dissemination beyond the academic community and/or to influence policy and practice. Excellent demonstration of the knowledge and connections that will facilitate impact.
Justification of funds requested	Little to no detail and consideration of costs, especially in relation to the proposed aims and activities.	Lacking detail and consideration of costs, especially in relation to the proposed aims and activities.	Adequate detail and consideration of costs, especially in relation to the proposed aims and activities.	Generally detailed and considered approach to costs, especially in relation to the proposed aims and activities.	Clear, detailed, realistic and specific costs that take into account the proposed aims and activities.

Award and project delivery

Awards will be announced in early **April 2025** to give a month's notice to the project teams to organise themselves before the **release of funds in late April / early May 2025**.

Projects are expected to deliver activities within 6 months and submit a final report to the AI Nurses Network within one month of the end of the research project. A statement of financial expenditure is also required to be submitted upon completion of the project and any unspent funds returned.

In order to maximise the impact of funded projects, successful applicants will be expected to present their completed research projects at an AI Nurses Network event to showcase the outputs, outcomes and impact of the award.

If there are difficulties in delivering the research project, please let the AI Nurses Network team know as soon as possible. Requests for no-cost extensions should be made to the AI Nurses Network, with clear justification. **Failure to inform the AI Nurses Network team of any material changes to the delivery of the research project may impact considerations for continuation funding or could result in your budget being clawed back.**