

IIT Madras & University of St Andrews Joint Seed Funding Scheme

Guidelines for Applicants -Round1

Purpose

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) and the University of St Andrews (St Andrews) have identified each other as strategic partners to foster deep collaborations in research and education. The IIT Madras and St Andrews Joint Seed Funding Scheme have been established to facilitate and support joint initiatives that will strengthen the two universities' strategic priorities as well as develop multi-disciplinary cutting-edge research to create academic and societal impact.

In this pilot round, applicants are encouraged to submit funding proposals for innovative and sustainable programs built around collaborative research linking IIT Madras and St Andrews. The funding shall enable academic staff from all disciplines to identify complementary strengths, explore areas of synergy, and develop outstanding future projects in research and academic innovation. Proposals for learning and teaching initiatives may also be considered if included as part of a larger collaborative research proposal. The joint seed funding aims to support the first steps of cooperation and is not meant as complete project funding.

Proposals should plan for long-term engagement that includes leveraging external funding and publication outputs. Proposals must include a team of participants from both institutions and are encouraged to include PhD or masters by research students, postdocs, Early and Mid-Career Researchers (EMCR). Projects which are multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary in nature are encouraged.

In this round, up to two proposals will be funded (each with two Principal Investigators; one from IIT Madras and one from St Andrews). Each successful proposal may receive up to the equivalent of £5,000 from each university for a total of £10,000.

Equality Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Adherence to respective equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies are an important feature of this programme to ensure that all participants can do their best work, thrive and succeed. Applicant teams should consider how they can take meaningful steps in their future collaborations to foster an environment that values, supports and respects a diverse range of views, knowledge and experiences. Applicants should consider EDI as it applies to e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, (dis)ability, and career stages.

Sustainable travel

IIT Madras and St Andrews recognise the importance of organising in-person meetings and events to support the development of collaborative partnerships. Therefore, both institutions encourage applicants to consider the environmental impact of their proposed research and travel. Please refer to the University of St Andrews' [Sustainable Research and Business Travel](#) webpage for more guidance.

Trusted Research (for St Andrews applicants)

Trusted Research, the term used by the UK Government and other bodies to refer to national security issues in the planning and undertaking of research, has been an increasingly prominent agenda since 2019. The University of St Andrews is required to put in place, and enforce, relevant provisions to ensure that it attends to this agenda. We have created guidance and a Trusted Research Tool to assist researchers and direct colleagues towards existing policy and process to ensure compliance where necessary. As part of your application to this programme, you confirm that you have (or will) review/ed relevant guidance and complete/d a Trusted Research Tool submission including any required outcomes. Please see the [Trusted Research web page](#) for information and access to the Tool.

1. Eligibility

- 1.1 Proposals are invited from academic staff from all disciplines at IIT Madras and St Andrews.
- 1.2 For IIT Madras, applicants from affiliated Research Centres and Institutes must be University Title Holders, and investigators must be employed on a full-time basis.
- 1.3 For St Andrews, applicants should be full-time or part-time academic staff with a contract of employment until at least the end of the project.
- 1.4 PhD and master's by research students and research assistants/associates are not eligible to apply as Investigators. Post-docs may apply only if they are based at St Andrews. All are welcome to join applications as project team members.
- 1.5 Activities can take place in Chennai or St Andrews. The motivation for holding the activity should be clearly explained, including how the involved IIT Madras and St Andrews faculties and schools can benefit in the long term from this cooperation.

2. Duration

Funding is available up to one year from the date of the award.

3. Important Dates

Applications open	Monday 30 March 2026
Applications close	Monday 18 May 2026
Successful applicants notified	Late June 2026

Earliest start date for projects	Wednesday 1 July 2026
Mid-term progress review	Monday 11 January 2027
Latest date for projects to end	Wednesday 30 June 2027
Final reports due	Monday 2 August 2027
Post-project update	Monday 7 February 2028

4. Eligible grant activities

4.1 IIT Madras allowable expenses include:

- Airfares: Only travel on economy class will be considered
- Other travel expenses (e.g. train, rental car)
- Costs for hosting seminars/conferences or workshops
- Accommodation and subsistence
- Consumables
- Publications and printing costs

4.2 St Andrews allowable expenses include:

- Travel, accommodation and reasonable expenses incurred during international travel
- Costs linked to organisation of joint meetings, seminars or workshops
- Cost of developing shared online resources, e.g., video editing
- Consumables needed for the implementation of the project
- Costs related to publication/dissemination of results

4.3 All travel activities must comply with the guidelines of the respective universities.

- **IIT Madras** – All IIT Madras travel must comply with its relevant travel policy. Must apply through workflow, obtain letter of support upon invitation from partner institute, apply for VISA, and post travel to submit bills.
- **St Andrews** – All St Andrews travel must comply with University's [expense policy](#), and [travel and fieldwork policy](#).

4.4 IIT Madras non-allowable expenses include:

- General teaching
- An individual staff member's research projects, unless as catalytic funding for the establishment of an international research collaboration with the prospect of external funding
- Event registration fees
- Venue hire if event held on campus
- Website development

- Salaries or salary supplementation, and honoraria (Research/ project assistants may be possible with the approval of JFBMP advisor-Global Engagement IIT Madras/ Finance Manager and Head of School)
- Scholarships for students
- Course fees for international students
- Bench fees
- Mobile phone cards
- Entertainment costs
- Computers, including laptops (excluding access to high-performance computers or other specialised applications that are justified by the project) and basic computing facilities such as printers, word processing and other standard software.

4.5 St Andrews non-allowable expenses include:

- salaries or salary supplementation of any kind
- indirect and overhead costs
- course fees, stipends or scholarships for students
- infrastructure and equipment purchases, such as computers, including laptops and basic computing facilities such as printers, word processing and other standard software
- conference registrations, unless specifically related to the dissemination of results costs already incurred prior to submission of the proposal

5. Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted separately by the Principal Investigators to their respective home institutions and received no later than 18 May 2026.

IIT Madras: Proposals should be submitted by the IIT Madras Principal Investigator through the IIT Madras online form [\(link\)](#).

St Andrews: The St Andrews Principal Investigator will be expected to upload the following documents using the [online submission form](#):

- completed UStA application form
- curriculum vitae of IIT Madras PI
- curriculum vitae of UStA PI
- brief endorsement letter of UStA Head of School

Proposals should include the following elements:

- Details of team involved and the role and contribution of each member
- Selection criteria (see point 6)
- Expected outcomes

- Project timeline
- Project budget
- CV of the IIT Madras Principal Investigator (maximum two pages in length) which should include:
 - Qualifications, current position, and employment history
 - 10 career-best publications
 - Awards and relevant presentations
 - Current grant income
 - Collaborative track record (limited to 200 words)
- CV of the UStA Principal Investigator (max. two pages in length)
- Brief endorsement letter of UStA Head of School

6. Scoring and selection criteria

6.1 All applications will be reviewed by a joint committee (inclusive of both IITM and UStA universities) and preference will be given to the proposals which meet the selection criteria detailed below.

6.2 The criteria do not have weightings; proposals are assessed holistically. Each proposal will be evaluated based on the selection criteria outlined below.

Score	Category	Justification
10	Excellent	Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor
7 to 9	Very Good	Proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present
4 to 6	Good	Proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present
1 to 3	Weak	Criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses

Selection Criteria	Description
Academic quality & relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clearly describe the objectives and methodology to be employed with the project. The academic quality and innovativeness of the proposed activities will be considered alongside the soundness of the concept and credibility of the proposed methodology. ● Explain how the participants in the research team will bring together the necessary expertise to carry out the project. The CVs of the Principal Investigators will be taken into consideration. ● 500 word maximum

<p>Execution, including sustainability plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elaborate on the work plan and milestones, and anticipated outcomes outlined in the timeframe (there are separate sections in the application form for an outline of activities in the Timeline and Budget). Proposed timeframes and budget estimates should be realistic and appropriate. ● The long-term plan for engagement to attract research funding, produce publications and develop the partnership will be taken into consideration. Proposals must include a specific and concrete plan for how the project will become sustainable. ● This section should also address the appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants [including PhD or master's by research students, postdocs, Early and Mid-Career Researchers (EMCR)^(*1) and have a valid role and there are adequate resources in the project to enable them to fulfil that role. ● 300 word maximum
<p>Impact, legacy, and scalability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outline what the participants will gain from the project and how it will contribute to the discipline and field of research. ● Explain how the project could be transferred to other levels (local, regional, national, etc). ● Explain how the project will impact beyond the academic sphere (i.e. benefit society, address global challenges, Sustainable Development Goals, etc). ● Elaborate on how the project activities and results will be communicated to different target audiences. ● 300 word maximum
<p>Partnership and strategic relevance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain how the project will establish or strengthen a durable cooperation between the universities and participants. ● Explain how the project will be shared with the broader academic communities at each institution and how it will promote and consolidate the relationship between the two universities. ● Outline how the project will contribute to realising university strategies and support the research and teaching priorities of the Faculties/Schools/Departments. ● 300 word maximum

*1 Early-Career Researchers are usually defined as those within 10 years of award of PhD and Mid-Career Researchers are defined

as those between 10-15 years of award of PhD. Individuals who have taken career breaks may also be considered part of this group.

7. Expected outcomes

It is expected that the selected proposal will result in a number of the following outcomes:

Category	Outcome
Research quality and influence	The research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - will advance knowledge in the field which addresses an issue of importance - may result in fundamental outcomes - is innovative in concept - will use well established approaches to good effect
Publications	At least one (1) publication will be in preparation for submission to a nationally/internationally recognised peer-reviewed scholarly journal
External funding	At least one (1) national/international competitive grant application will be in preparation or submitted. Details of the external funding bodies to which you plan to submit applications must be identified within the application form.
Training & education	Supervision and mentoring of visiting PhD students/postdoctoral researchers/ECRs
Joint Workshop	A joint workshop at either institution. This may be in-person, virtual or hybrid.
Conference	A conference presentation to disseminate results of collaboration. This may be online.

Industry engagement is encouraged but not expected. If proposals include industry engagement, then details should be provided in the timeline/activities section of the application.

8. Assessment process

Award selection will be made by a joint committee formed by members of both universities, which reserves final authority over the selection of projects taking into account university, faculty and school strategic priorities, and the availability of funds.

9. Notification of application outcomes

Successful applicants will receive a letter of award outlining the process to accept the award including payment. Feedback from the joint committee may be provided upon request.

10. Change of Investigator

If circumstances change – for example, a Principal Investigator leaves the project - awardees should notify the programme coordinators at each institution. Such changes will need to be approved and documented.

11. Extensions

Only under exceptional circumstances will extensions be approved. Requests for extensions must be submitted to the programme coordinators at both institutions in writing at least 2 months before project end date and include a revised budget and timeline of activities for consideration.

12. Forfeiture of grants

12.1 Grants must be spent within one year of the award being made.

12.2 For IITM researchers, the fund can be claimed as per allotted budget, from the ICSR project account created for this mobility program. The funds can be claimed post travel by submitting relevant bills.

12.3 The St Andrews Principal Investigator is responsible for managing the project funds, reporting on their usage, facilitating the sharing of funds with their IITM partner Principal Investigator where required, and returning unspent funds to the University by the project end date.

13. Financial and reporting obligations

13.1 The funding should only be used for the approved project and in accordance with the proposal and the budget plan. It must not be used for any other purposes and prior approval from both universities is needed for any variation in the budget items. Requests for variations from original proposals must be submitted to both universities for approval.

13.2 Awardees must adhere to the purchasing guidelines of the respective universities to which reimbursement is to be sought. Reimbursement/approval of each expenditure item will be capped at the approved amount.

13.3 Awardees must submit a final report to the respective programme coordinators at IIT Madras and St Andrews.

13.4 Failure to submit a completed report will result in the Principal Investigators of the project being ineligible to submit future funding applications.

13.5 The activation of research funding accounts/submission of claims are not tied to ethics/other approvals being obtained. It is the responsibility of Principal Investigators to ensure that no work requiring approval is commenced until such approvals are in place.

14. Marketing and communications

Awardees are asked to update both institutions about the progress of their project over the 12 months. Materials such as photos, videos, and news stories that provide an update on the project's progress and which can be shared more widely are also welcomed. Both universities may occasionally request brief project updates to support awareness of the partnership.

15. Publications

Any publications (e.g. abstracts, articles) or dissemination (e.g. public presentations) arising from activities supported should acknowledge assistance received from this programme and copies or notification should be submitted to the Office of Global & Research Engagement at IIT Madras and the Global Office at the University of St Andrews. The standard acknowledgment is "Joint seed funding provided by IIT-Madras and the University of St Andrews".

Further Information

IIT Madras	University of St Andrews
Ms Priyadarshini – Coordinator - Jointly Funded Bilateral Mobility Program	Ms Harriet Sheridan, Partnerships Officer (Research and Reputation)
Office of Global Engagement	Global Office
Email: global.relations@ge.iitm.ac.in	Email: partnerships@st-andrews.ac.uk