

EPSRC AI ICURE Discover Sprint - February 2027

A 4-week intensive programme to test your research in the real world

DSFEB27 AI Turing & CDTs Focused

Thursday 18th February to Thursday 23rd March

KEY DATES AND EXPECTATIONS**

Thursday 10th September 2026 12:00-13:00	Information Session REGISTER via Eventbrite
Monday 7th December 2026	Applications open
Monday 18th January 2027 23:59	Applications close
Week commencing Monday 1st February 2027	Notification of results sent to applicants
Programme Outline	
Week 0 - Welcome Call (Online)	Thursday 18 th Feb 12:30-15:30
Week 1 – Bootcamp (in Person & Online) Location TBC	Tuesday 23 rd Feb 09:30–17:00 (In Person) Wednesday 24 th Feb 09:30–17:00 (In Person) Thursday 25 th Feb 12:30–14:00 (Online)
Week 2 – Validation (Online)	Tuesday 2 nd Mar 12:30-14:00 Thursday 4 th Mar 12:30-14:00
Week 3 – Pitch Preparation (Online)	Tuesday 9 th Mar 12:30-14:00 Friday 12 th Mar 12:30-14:00
Week 4 – Pitch Training (Online)	Friday 19 th 12:30-15:30
Week 5 – Options Roundabout (Online)	Tuesday 23 rd Mar Full day (09:00-14:00)
Please note: All sessions are mandatory unless stated otherwise. Timings subject to final confirmation. ICURE Discover (including Sprint) is a compulsory route into ICURE Explore. - The research student/technician will be expected to attend all sessions scheduled above and should hold these dates in their diary when applying. - Technology Transfer Representatives are also welcome to attend all sessions, but it is not obligatory. - Kindly note, <u>you will be expected</u> to attend either Tech Show London (10-11 March 2027) or the NVIDIA GTC San José (14-18 March 2027) conferences depending on relevance during this Programme.	

** Timetable subject to change.

Please note that this opportunity forms part of a pilot programme with select UK Research Councils to gauge interest and test the market, EPSRC is involved with this programme. Beyond this pilot, a range of ICURE programmes operate throughout the year, offering additional routes for participation and there is no guarantee that EPSRC will be directly involved in future programme iterations.

Application Process

Before applying, we advise you to look at the application template to understand what information is required. Please complete the application form clearly and concisely. Sections with * must be completed. Before submitting your application, please ensure both your superior and, if possible, your Technology Transfer Office (TTO) is aware and supportive of your application and therefore programme attendance.

What is EPSRC AI ICURE Discover Sprint?

This sector-specific Innovate UK ICURE Discover Sprint is a full-time 4-week intensive market discovery programme designed to help researchers quickly test whether their idea has real-world demand.

It focuses on customer conversations and practical validation, enabling participants to gather evidence, challenge assumptions, and explore the commercial potential of their research in a short timeframe.

ICURE Discover Sprint offers an accelerated, action-led route to market insight, supporting participants to move rapidly from idea to evidence. The programme is only open for those projects directly linked to the [Turing Fellowships](#) and / or the AI CDTs (see 'Who is eligible' section below)

This ICURE Discover Sprint is focused on innovations in the sectors described below. If you are unsure whether your technology or research fits these sectors, please get in touch icure@setsquared.co.uk.

UKRI Pathway

Through 2026/27, Innovate UK ICURE is working more closely with UKRI councils to bring the programme directly into the research communities they support. The UKRI council pathways initiative is delivered via the same ICURE Engage, Discover, Explore and Exploit stages, but the cohorts, examples, networks and onward routes are shaped around the research priorities of the partner council. The aim is that researchers attached to a UKRI-funded environment experience ICURE as part of their own sector, with the programme shaped around the work they are already doing.

The practical implication is that ICURE is being actively built into the research environment around you, as a researcher or technician. There are low-commitment entry points you can take without stepping away from your current work. ICURE Discover is a part-time market discovery programme offering up to £2,500 to support market discovery and assumption testing and a clear onward pathway to ICURE Explore. It is open to all university staff members working in research groups including ECRs, Post-docs, PhD students and research master's students looking to explore the potential of their early-stage projects. The programme uses the lean startup methodology, applying scientific methods of hypothesis, test and learn to early-stage commercialisation.

The Turing AI Fellowships are a £46 million initiative created as part of the [AI Sector Deal's](#) ambitious skills and talent package aimed at retaining, attracting and developing the best and brightest AI international researchers. Turing AI Fellows will undertake world leading creative and innovative AI research, working in collaboration with partners from other sectors to accelerate the impact of their research.

The UKRI AI Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) are training a new generation of PhD students developing novel AI methodology and using AI technology in areas such as improving healthcare, tackling climate change and creating new commercial opportunities. Starting in 2019 and currently due to run until 2032, the programme will train nearly 2000 students in its lifetime. EPSRC has also funded CDTs relevant to AI.

How does it work?

Our 4-week, part-time online market discovery programme is developed using the lean startup methodology, which applies the scientific method (hypothesise, test, evaluate) to business ideas. Participants will learn how to use this approach to gauge their potential customers' opinions about their idea, product, or service. This programme is suitable for participants looking to explore the potential of their early-stage projects or those who require a part-time commitment for market exploration.

What does it include?

- A structured 4-week intensive programme combining online sessions and an in-person bootcamp
- A 2-day in-person bootcamp to build your value proposition and plan customer discovery
- Dedicated mentor support throughout, providing guidance, challenge, and access to networks
- Practical, hands-on workshops focused on customer discovery and validation
- Support carrying out market and customer discovery activity during the programme
- Flexible delivery combining in-person and online sessions
- Introduction to key tools including the Strategyzer Business Model Canvas (BMC)
- Ongoing trainer, mentor, and peer feedback to guide next steps
- Up to £2,500 support for market discovery activities

Why Attend?

ICURE Discover is now a compulsory route into the ICURE Explore Programme.

ICURE Discover Sprint gives you dedicated time to step back from your research and test its real-world potential. Through direct engagement with customers and stakeholders, you'll gain a clearer understanding of where your work fits, how it could be used, and whether there is genuine demand. Participants often find it shifts how they think about their research - moving from ideas and outputs to impact, application, and opportunity.

Who is eligible?

- Please note that this programme is only open for those projects directly linked to the [Turing Fellowships](#) and / or the AI CDTs. Applications will be accepted from:
 - Any Turing AI Fellows – past or present
 - Any AI CDT academics, students and technicians
 - Academics working with/alongside a Turing Fellow, but the application must be supported by that Fellow.

The EPSRC AI ICURE Discover Sprint programme is open to researchers at all levels of seniority, technicians and students from all disciplines undertaking master's degrees, PhDs, and Post-Docs, based at universities and independent research organisations (IROs) across the UK and who are interested in entrepreneurship. This opportunity is available regardless of whether you already have an innovative idea, as the programme introduces you to ICURE and provides the space and opportunity to think about entrepreneurship differently.

Your course of study, your idea and/or your research MUST be directly related to [Turing Fellowships](#) and / or the AI CDTs.

We also welcome applications from individuals in:

- Universities who have not participated in the ICURE programme.
- Universities who do not receive HEIF funding.
- Under-represented groups including women, people of colour, those living with disabilities and those from the LGBTQI+ communities.
- Approved public sector research enterprises (PSREs).

We are committed to supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and welcome applications from anyone who is eligible.

How do I apply?

- The online application form will ask a series of questions about you and your research project.
- There is a limited number of spaces on each Cohort, but we try to provide support to as many applications as possible.
- The application form may be accessed from the links on this website.

If you have any further questions, please direct them to icure@setsquared.co.uk or use the contact form via this website.