



Candidate Guidance

**Guidance for candidates
applying for job vacancies
with the Nuffield Foundation**

June 2026

Introduction

At the Nuffield Foundation and our Centres ([Nuffield Council on Bioethics](#), [Nuffield Family Justice Observatory](#) and the [Ada Lovelace Institute](#)), we are committed to ensuring that all applicants are treated fairly throughout the recruitment process and that candidates are clear on what to expect.

We want candidates applying to our job vacancies to have a positive experience, recognising that unfortunately the majority of applications we receive won't result in an offer being made. We appreciate candidates giving their time when applying for a job, and in return we want to ensure we provide a fair, inclusive and accessible process.

This document provides guidance to candidates on:

- Our values and ways of working
- How to prepare and submit an application (including the use of AI)
- How we assess applications
- What to expect from the interview process and any assessments
- Reasonable adjustments

Our values

The Foundation has agreed a set of values which guide our decision making and the way we work with partners, stakeholders and with each other, in pursuit of our purpose to improve people's lives.

It is likely that our recruitment process will incorporate questions and other assessments that relate to our values in order to help us understand your alignment with our ways of working.



Independence

Our financial and political independence gives us the freedom to be open and objective in our approach, and to focus on the power of evidence.



Collaboration

We convene and connect with individuals and organisations to maximise our collective impact, recognising that we will not bring about change on our own.



Rigour

We have high standards in all that we do, achieving a quality that gives us influence and impact.



Curiosity

We foster a spirit of exploration, encouraging our staff and those we fund to pursue new ideas and challenge old assumptions.



Inclusivity

We will further diversity, and work to ensure that everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered.

Completing an application

Candidates submit an application using the Applied recruitment platform. We use the Applied platform as it helps us to consider applications in a way which reduces any potential bias in decision making.

We usually require 4 questions to be completed as part of your application. The specific questions asked will vary for each role but will normally cover your reasons for applying as well as your examples of the particular skills, knowledge or experience that we are looking for. Each response is limited to 250 words, so candidates should think carefully about how best to articulate their answers and ensure they cite specific examples. Candidates may find it helpful to use the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) approach when constructing a response.

An up-to-date CV is also required to be uploaded as part of the application, which we will use to cross-check skills and experience.

The Applied platform lets candidates save an application and resume it ahead of submitting. Candidates should note the closing date and time for the vacancy, as we are unlikely to accept requests for late applications. The Applied system will send an automated email to confirm receipt of the application. Any candidates looking to make an application in a different format or who require any adjustments as part of the application process should email recruitment@nuffieldfoundation.org.



Use of AI in applications

Applicants should write their applications and respond to the questions using their own experience, thinking and opinion, writing in their own tone of voice rather than using generative AI tools such as ChatGPT. We believe that the use of generative AI can result in generic responses to individual questions which stand out less to reviewers.

We recognise that AI-enabled tools can provide support to applicants (eg assistive technologies could be a reasonable adjustment), but candidates using such tools should make sure that they are representing themselves accurately and authentically.

For example candidates might use AI when researching our work, to edit their responses for length or to check spelling or grammar. However they should not use AI in order to generate text, or in a way which invents or distorts their knowledge, skills or experience.

Candidates are required to tick a statement as part of their application on Applied confirming that they have completed their application truthfully and that they have not generated any answers using such software.

We feel strongly that all recruitment decisions are to be made by a person - we do not use AI to rate or rank applicants.



Assessing applications

Responses provided as part of an application are reviewed individually by members of the hiring team, normally at least two people. These responses are anonymised by the Applied platform and presented to the reviewer in a random sequence in order to reduce the potential for any bias.

We use a range of criteria to assess responses. We look for relevance to the role being recruited to, and for responses that have been grounded in examples of when the particular skills, knowledge, expertise, behaviours or values have been previously demonstrated.

The Applied system also anonymises CVs. These will also be reviewed by the hiring team - normally after the scoring of responses, but for vacancies which receive a high volume of applications we may undertake an initial screening of CVs. At the final shortlisting stage, the responses provided are checked against the CV in order to check that the experience cited in the application is reflected in the CV.

The HR team will advise the shortlisting panel of any positive action that may be taken to determine the final shortlist – for example as a Disability Confident employer we will offer an interview to a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that demonstrate the requirements of the role.

Following the review of applications, candidates will receive an email to confirm if their application has been progressed to the next stage or not. Please note that due to the volume of applications received we are unlikely to be able to provide individual feedback on applications that are not progressed.

The interview process

For shortlisted candidates, they will receive an email and/or a telephone call to advise them of next steps. We will try our best to offer candidates a choice of appointments during working hours. We recognise the time candidates invest when applying for roles and will try to keep the number of stages to a minimum, taking into consideration the volume of applications received, the seniority of the position, the skills to be assessed and the number of colleagues who may need to be involved in the hiring decision.

For roles where there's been a particularly high number of applications, we may arrange a 15-30 minute screening call as a first check of suitability.

There will then be at least one panel interview. The panel interview could also include an assessment such as:

- **Presentations.** We may ask candidates to prepare a presentation ahead of interviews in order to assess research skills, knowledge and ability to communicate information clearly and succinctly.
- **Role play exercises.** Interviews may also involve a role play element (for example to assess the candidate's approach to people management or working with stakeholders).
- **Scenarios.** A scenario may be given to the candidate ahead of the interview or during the interview, in order to assess their thinking and problem solving abilities.
- **Portfolios.** The panel may ask candidates to bring with them examples of previous work, for example written outputs or graphic design work.

Interviews

- Interviews will normally last no longer than an hour and will usually be with the line manager of the role as well as other appropriate colleagues and/or a member of the HR team in order that the panel has a mix of perspectives. There will normally be either 1 or 2 stages of panel interviews.
- Our preference is usually for in-person interviews, but we can accommodate video interviews (using Microsoft Teams). For video interviews, we recommend that you use a laptop or tablet rather than a phone, that you test the joining details ahead of the call, and that you are joining from somewhere with a good internet connection.
- Where we request or require an in-person interview, we will reimburse reasonable travel expenses.
- There is not a dress code - we suggest appropriate 'smart casual' clothing that you find comfortable.
- The panel interview will include questions that explore your career to date and motivations for applying, your skills, knowledge and strengths, as well as questions relating to our values and equity, diversity and inclusion. We'll make sure there is space in the interview for you to ask us any questions that you have.
- We may be able to provide you with themes of the questions ahead of your interview where appropriate.
- Unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment, candidates should not use AI or other automated technologies during the interview.
- All candidates will be met with at least once in person before any offer of employment is made.
- We commit to providing all unsuccessful candidates with feedback following their interview.

Interview tips

When preparing for an interview, you may want to:

- Research the Nuffield Foundation on our [website](#) and [LinkedIn](#). This could include looking at our strategy and recent examples of our work, and if you already know someone working for us you may wish to reach out to them for information.
- Consider our values (detailed earlier in this guide) and our [EDI work](#).
- Understand the roles of the panel members.
- Review the job description and make notes on your transferable experience.
- Think about why this role (and the Foundation) is right for you at this point in your career, and what you can bring to the organisation.
- Have your notes & questions to hand (but avoid reading from these).
- If asked to give a presentation or prepare a task, make sure you've met the brief and kept to the time limit.
- Demonstrate active listening - wait a moment after the panel members have spoken to avoid interruptions and to consider your response.
- You may wish to repeat or re-cap their question to demonstrate that you've listened and are clear.
- Consider using the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your response.
- Have some questions prepared in advance for the panel.
- Confirm your interest at the end of the interview and make sure you are clear about next steps.

Adjustments

We ask candidates to let us know in their initial application (and will check again if inviting for interview) as to any adjustments they may require in order to best participate in our recruitment process. We won't ask you for any detailed medical information or diagnosis.

Examples of adjustments that we could consider include:

- Flexibility for in-person or remote/ video interview
- Providing additional time and/or breaks during the interview and any assessment
- Inviting a support person to accompany the candidate
- Using accessible rooms
- Putting in place appropriate support for candidates with hearing impairment or sight loss
- Providing written questions during the interview
- Using assistive technology

Any candidates who would like to discuss any adjustments they may need can email the HR team at recruitment@nuffieldfoundation.org