Research Institute in Verified Trustworthy Software Systems

Call for Proposals: VeTSS Research Awards

The Research Institute in Verified Trustworthy Software Systems (VeTSS), co-hosted by Imperial College London and the University of Surrey, is a UK Academic Research Institute in Cyber Security funded by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

This VeTSS call is funded by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), for research to commence after 1/9/2025.

THE CALL

This call aims to support projects aligned with VeTSS research on topics including, but not limited to, those outlined in the VeTSS Problem Book. Problems not listed in the Problem Book are also eligible for funding, provided that the proposal clearly links the project with VeTSS objectives.

This call is open to projects led by researchers at postdoctoral level or above. We particularly welcome proposals led by early career researchers (ECRs) and by researchers currently underrepresented in computer science and / or belonging to marginalised communities.

PROPOSAL DETAILS

VeTSS would like to support excellent proposals that are perhaps more difficult to fund through traditional routes, examples include proposals transferring technology from academia to industry; proposals on ambitious blue-sky research as a step towards more standard funding; and proposals focussing on the development of well-engineered tools rather than cutting-edge research. Finally, VeTSS would also support proposals for bringing talented international PhD students/RAs/academics to spend time with UK research groups, as well as proposals for international workshops to sustain and further improve the UK-based VeTSS community.

The previous calls were highly competitive. Proposals should provide evidence of engagement with the international academic or industrial verification community, or the UK industrial community interested in applying such techniques to industrial practice.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The application process for this call is deliberately lightweight. The submission should contain:

- A 3-page project proposal that clearly identifies deliverable outcomes, with an additional page for references, following EPSRC formatting guidelines: the font should be 11-point Arial or Helvetica, with 2 cm margins. Within this proposal the investigators must describe alignment between their project and VeTSS (1-2 paragraphs).
- 2-page CVs for each of the investigators and named researchers including: a list of current and past grants and a web link to their publications.
- 1-page list of relevant publications, up to 5 per investigator.
- A 1-page detailed breakdown of costs, by year, with justification including, for example, equipment, travel and expenses. Please see the guidelines below for full details on costings requirements.

ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS

The PI must be at a postdoctoral level or higher and employed at a UK university. Only one proposal will be accepted per PI. The investigators of projects funded in this call are expected to become core VeTSS members and to play an active role in VeTSS (including presenting their work at a future VeTSS Annual Event). They are required to complete both an initial and a final report. The funder is committed to full and open publication of the research outputs of VeTSS.

APPLICATION SELECTION

Proposals will be assessed by a panel of verification experts from academia, industry and government, who will judge the proposals on quality, viability and significance. Please note that their decision will be final.

COSTINGS GUIDELINES

The costs should be up to maximum of £50K per proposal.

Proposal will be funded at 100% Full Economic Cost, although PI salary costs cannot be included. Eligible costs include directly incurred cost (consumables, travel, equipment, PhD studentships and staff costs, apart from the PI salary costs), directly allocated costs and indirect costs, if applicable.

We anticipate proposals will be exempt from VAT as research work. Should your proposal not fit on that category, please give full details on your costing section. We are sorry but we are not able to give VAT advice.

Proposals should be sent to contact@vetss.org.uk by **16:00hrs on Friday, 4 July 2025.**

Enquiries regarding the application process should be addressed to the VeTSS Program Managers: Teresa Carbajo Garcia or Ling Zhang at contact@vetss.org.uk.