

**European Talent Academy
for newly appointed lecturers and independent research fellows**

Call to participate in UK-EU networking and training opportunity with the Technische Universität München (TUM) and Politecnico di Milano (PoliMi)

2025 theme: Water and Food for Healthy and Resilient Societies

Application deadline: 24 January 2025 Time: 18:00 (CET) - 05:00 PM (GMT)

This programme provides newly appointed group leaders at Imperial, TUM and PoliMi working in the areas of food, water, healthy and resilient societies to meet each other across disciplines, to make international research connections, and to participate in a series of online and in-person training sessions, focused on both individual career development (e.g. leadership and communication, proposal writing, policy-influencing) and collaborative research skills (e.g. understanding UK and EU research funding and policy landscapes). The programme also aims to help researchers develop interdisciplinary project teams and develop proposals for further research collaboration.

Newly appointed lecturers and independent research fellows who are within 2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD*, from any of the faculties, who are working on topics that fit into the larger theme of food, water, healthy and resilient societies.

Participation offers the opportunity to:

- Connect with other Imperial, Poli Milano, and TUM group leaders doing work in complementary research areas and form important networks for future collaboration.
- Attend training and gain information about research funding available to support UK-EU research collaborations.
- Start thinking early in careers about accessing research funding to support career and research goals.
- Start building a portfolio of collaborative applications and funding for future Horizon Europe and other funding proposal calls.

Each institution will pay for the costs of its selected early career researchers to participate in the programme, including travel for in-person sessions. We anticipate having 5-8 participants from each institution, maximum 24 participants total.

Background

Imperial and TUM formed a strategic partnership in 2018. TUM and PoliMi formed a strategic partnership in 2022. As entrepreneurial universities focused on science and technology and with strong connections to industry, the three universities are well-positioned to collaborate. All three universities are committed to supporting early career researchers in establishing UK-EU networks for research and innovation.

TUM launched the European Talent Academy in 2020-21, and the programme has thus far had over 87 ECRs participate from the three institutions.

Previous themes were the EU Green Deal, Trustworthy AI, Lifelong Health and Climate, Energy and Mobility.

Theme for 2025

To guarantee that the participants have a thematic research link and that the presented funding instruments are tailored to their needs and interests, the European Talent Academy will be based on an annual topic.

The theme for 2025 is: **Water and Food for Healthy and Resilient Societies** Eligible researchers working on this topic from any disciplinary area are encouraged to apply. At Imperial, this means we welcome applications from across our four faculties, as long as the research connects to the programme's theme.

Key words: Sustainable agriculture, bioeconomy, circular economy, agricultural sustainability, food security, green economy, biomass utilization, eco-friendly farming practices, agroecology, climate smart agriculture, water management in agriculture, natural resource management, bio-based products, agroforestry, carbon footprint in agriculture, biodegradable products, sustainable food systems, resources efficiency in agriculture, food waste reduction, biodiversity and agriculture, food chain sustainability, agricultural innovations, land use and conservation, agro-industrial waste, ecological footprint, environmental policy in agriculture, greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture, agri-food system transition, safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, water quality, wastewater treatment, water-use efficiency, integrated water resources management, water-related ecosystems, sustainable water management, access to sanitation, water purification, water infrastructure, transboundary water cooperation, agricultural water management, water for food production, crop water productivity, water footprint of food, drought-resistant crops, water-related ecosystems, soil moisture management, biodiversity protection, sustainable fisheries, fish habitat protection, water pollution control, Water management for agriculture, Resilient food systems, Sustainable water use in agriculture, Water scarcity and food production, Water-efficient agriculture techniques, Resilient societies and sustainable agriculture, Water pollution and food safety, Climate-resilient food systems, water and food sustainability.

Programme and Timeline

The programme takes place February – December 2025. Participants must commit to attending all the following mandatory sessions, which are:

- Session 1 - Virtual - 27th of February (morning) - Introductions
- Session 2 - Virtual – 5^h of March (morning) - Pitch & networking
- Session 3 - In person in London - 19-21 March at Imperial College London
- Session 4 - Virtual - 11th April (morning) - check-in - Idea refinement session
- Session 5 - Virtual - 4th June (morning) - Funding
- Session 6 - In person in Milan - 17-19 June at Politecnico di Milano
- Session 7 - Virtual – Week of 22nd September - Project development session
- Session 8 - In-person in Munich - 12-14 November at TUM

Between March/June and June/November you will be offered 2 project idea clinics and 2 mentoring sessions to be arranged according to your groups/mentors availability.

Between April and December, you should travel to your partners' institutions for at least one in-person exploratory research visit. This will allow you to get to know their research groups better and further discuss your collaborative projects.

How to Apply and Who is Eligible

- **Applicants must be newly appointed lecturers and independent fellows who are within 2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD.** (These periods exclude any career break, for example due to parental leave, family care reasons, health reasons, reasons related to COVID-19 such as home schooling or increased teaching load.)
- Applicants' contracts with Imperial must be active until December 2025 and their research must connect to the theme for this year.
- Applicants must have a commitment to exploring EU research collaboration and funding opportunities.

- Applicants should ideally discuss their intent to participate in this programme with their research leads or line managers.
- **Apply by the deadline of by 24 January 2025 (18:00 CET/ 05:00 GMT) by submitting an [online application form](#).**

Notes:

The International Relations Office and ECRI will be monitoring the expressions of interest. To offer the opportunity to a wide range of people if you have been put forward for previous programs (eg. World Economic Forum, Wilbe Ventures course, Broadening horizons) you will not be eligible to apply.

Workshop Funding

- Up to 7-8 Imperial participants will be selected for this programme to participate with TUM and Poli Milano counterparts.
- Imperial will pay for train and air travel, meals and accommodation (according to College guidance on [overseas travel rates](#)) for Imperial participants to attend in-person workshops and research visits. £500 per Imperial researcher is allocated for the in-person exploratory research visits, for use within [Imperial travel guidelines](#).
- Imperial, PoliMi, and TUM are all contributing equally to the costs of delivering the training and networking sessions, both online and in-person. At Imperial, funding is made possible for this programme via the European Partnership Fund from the [Vice-Provost \(Research and Enterprise\)](#).

Participant Commitment – must agree to this to apply

As the three university partners invest significant funding and staff time to this competitive programme to support early career researchers, all researchers who apply to the programme must agree to the following should they be selected:

- To ensure at the time of application availability on the mandatory session dates (both in-person and online) commit to joining these sessions for the duration of the programme.
- To bring an enthusiasm for meeting and engaging with other early career researchers.
- To prepare and submit any necessary pitch or other materials in advance of training and networking sessions.
- To make at least one visit to potential collaborators after the kick-off session in London
- To discuss participation in the programme with your line manager to ensure support for your participation in the programme.
- Engage with other researchers to develop initial ideas for collaborative research projects.
- Be committed to share information about own research and organise visits to and by potential collaborators.
- **Be proactive in finding and actively engaging** in collaborative opportunities with colleagues across the participating institutions.
- Be open minded and listen to other's ideas building on them in a collaborative approach.
- Provide feedback on the programme that we can use to improve it.
- As an alumnus of the programme, to act as an ambassador of the programme to help us promote the programme to others, so more people might benefit from the opportunity.
- To periodically engage with new participants and other alumni e.g. in alumni gatherings, funding networking sessions, and similar.