



KAUST GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP 2026: Webinar for Prospective Candidates

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Today's Agenda

About KAUST

Program Overview

Benefits & Support

Eligibility & Applicant Profile

Application Process

Our Global Fellows

Next Steps & Q&A

ABOUT KAUST



KAUST is **#1** in
**Arab University
Rankings**

- Founded in 2009 and located on the eastern shores of the Red Sea, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) is officially recognized as the most acclaimed postgraduate research university in the Middle East.
- During its first 16 years, KAUST has established itself as the most collaborative and innovative university in Saudi Arabia.
- KAUST named the top University in the Arab world by the Times Higher Education University Rankings for two years in a row with scores in the Research Environment and the Research Quality pillars comparable with global leaders such as Cambridge and Harvard.

KAUST attracts some of the brightest minds from across the globe, with almost 120 nationalities living, working and studying on campus, creating a dynamic international environment that is supporting Saudi Arabia to achieve Vision 2030 goals.



KAUST has developed to become more than a University; it is a unique ecosystem where **education**, **research**, **innovation** and **industry** converge.



Education

1,741 students (MS/Ph.D.)
from 77 countries



Research

974 researchers and
postdocs, 183 faculty



Innovation

374 startups supported by
KAUST



Industry

180+ industry partners,
2,473 SMEs trained



Life at KAUST

- Accommodation Services
- Education & Child Care
- Food & Retail
- Public safety services
- Family and Child Support Center
- Transportation services
- Recreational Activities
- Community Life Events

THE GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Our vision



To **drive innovation** and **accelerate discoveries** that tackle global challenges, advance knowledge, transform societies, and build a sustainable, prosperous future for Saudi Arabia and the world.

Our mission



To **identify, develop, and empower** early career scientists and engineers to reach their **full potential, push boundaries, transform** ideas into **real-world solutions** and shape the **next generation of research leaders**.

What do we offer?



Lead your own research for 3 years: pursue your innovative ideas with an annual research support grant of up to US\$40,000 (division-dependent).



Generous stipend & benefits: US\$75,000 per year plus medical insurance, relocation/travel allowance, accommodation, schooling for up to two children 4+, and daycare subsidies.



World-class infrastructure: Access state-of-the-art labs, facilities, and equipment to support your research.



Mentoring & professional development: guidance from globally-recognized faculty, plus leadership and teaching programs.



Vibrant research community & cohort experience: collaborate across disciplines, network with peers, and build lasting connections.



KAUST Research Facilities

- Core Labs & Research Infrastructure
- Centers of Excellence
- Research Platforms
- KAUST Library
- KAUST Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center
- National Transformation Institute (NTI)

Who are we looking for?



- **Curious & creative early-career researchers** ready to explore bold ideas.
- **Academically excellent, risk-positive scientists and engineers** committed to high-impact research.
- **Future leaders** capable of driving innovation and transformative discoveries.
- **Innovators who bring new skills & ideas** to elevate KAUST research.
- **Talented individuals** from diverse disciplines, motivated to promote interdisciplinary collaborations aligned with Vision 2030.



APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Postgrad experience:

Up to 4 years of post-PhD experience.

Host PI:

PI must agree to host and support 50% of the stipend as part of the application process.

Publications:

1 to 2 publications.

Recommendation Letters:

2 recommendation letters. At least one from a referee other than academic supervisor.

PROPOSAL ELIGIBILITY

Focus in one or more of the KAUST research priorities and divisional programs

Have 3-years duration.

Follow the budget and financial guidelines of the call.



KAUST Affiliated Applicants

- Must meet the general eligibility criteria.
- KAUST Alumni (M.Sc./ Ph.D.) not eligible to apply.
- Must be affiliated with KAUST **no more than 1 year** at the cut-off date.
- On-boarding postdocs who apply before joining KAUST are **not considered** 'internal' or 'kaust affiliated' postdocs.

Host PI Letter: A key to success

WHY?

- Endorsement by a KAUST faculty member
- Mentoring commitment
- Agrees to co-fund 50% of Fellowship stipend
- Access to facilities, labs, and resources

HOW?

- Explore relevant links to identify potential PIs.
- Contact potential PIs directly via email.
- Do not send random emails to PIs that have different research background or interests.

WHEN CONTACTING A PI

- Introduce yourself, attach your CV, and discuss:
- ✓ Fit of your research with their lab
 - ✓ How your work can add value to their research
 - ✓ Equipment and resources requirements
 - ✓ Request a support letter



Tips for Applicants

To improve your chances of obtaining a Host PI letter:

- Keep your communication clear, concise, and relevant.
- Be specific on what you want to do under the Fellowship and what you could bring to their lab and research.
- Search the PI and his work prior to contacting them.
- Follow up politely if you don't receive a response.
- Consider alternative faculty within the same program or division.
- Reach out early to potential PIs and start building that relationship.
- Include your CV and potentially an abstract of your proposal in the email.

- Robotics and autonomous systems
- Future of urban livability (Smart Cities)
- Deep ocean and space exploration
- AI, Cybersecurity, big data analytics, and deep learning

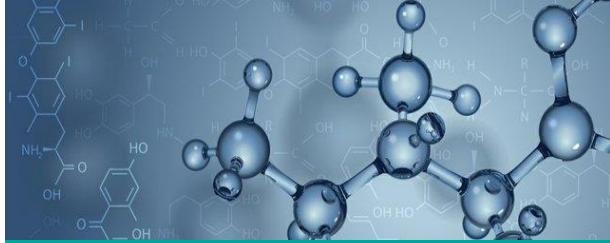
- Infectious, genetic, and metabolic diseases
- Precision, personalized, and preventive medicine
- Aging, health span, and chronic disease management
- Advanced disease screening, diagnostics, and bioinformatics

- Water desalination, conservation, and smart resource management
- Sustainable agriculture, food security, and nutrition technologies
- Climate change mitigation, carbon capture, and ecosystem resilience
- Biodiversity conservation and green urban environments

- Renewable and low-carbon energy technologies (Hydrogen, Solar, Wind)
- Advanced Oil & Gas sustainability and emissions reduction
- Smart manufacturing, advanced materials, and industrial innovation
- Sustainable mining, circular economy, and resource efficiency



3 Divisions



Physical Science & Engineering (PSE)



Computer, Electrical & Mathematical Science & Engineering (CEMSE)



Biological & Environmental Science & Engineering (BESE)

14 Academic Programs

- Chemical Engineering
- Chemistry
- Earth Systems Science & Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Material Science & Applied Physics

- Applied Mathematics & Computational Sciences
- Computer Science
- Electrical & Computer Engineering
- Statistics

- Bioengineering
- Plant Science
- Marine Science
- Bioscience
- Environmental Science & Engineering

4 Centers of Excellence

- Generative AI
- Renewable Energy & Storage Technologies
- Smart Health
- Sustainable Food Security

4 Initiatives and National Centers

- Climate and Livability Initiative
- Circular Carbon Initiative
- KAUST Semiconductor Initiative
- Climate Change National Center



Budget Guidelines

Annual research grant depending on academic division:

- **Up to** USD\$20K per year for CEMSE applicants
- **Up to** USD\$30K per year for PSE applicants
- **Up to** USD\$40K per year for BESE applicants

Expenses might include:

- Business purpose travel: Conferences/ Field trips/ Research visits
- Core labs use
- Consumables/ Small Equipment/ Software licences
- Patents/ Publication fees
- Other expenses needed for the implementation of the proposed research and activities

APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS



Completing your application

Read all guidance before starting **any** of your application.

- ☐ Check your eligibility
- ☐ Find a Host PI
- ☐ Prepare the required documentation
- ☐ Inform your referees

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: JANUARY 15, 2026, 23:59 (ARABIA STANDARD TIME – AST+3)

Your Online Application on PlutoEdu

General Information

- Where did you hear about the Fellowship?
- KAUST-Affiliation Info

Personal Details

- Demographic information
- English competency self-assessment

Academic Qualifications and Current Position

- Ph.D. details and completion date
- Current employment (if applicable)

Research Proposal Summary

- Proposal abstract and key words
- Host PI, division, and program information

Referees Information

- Details for two referees. They will be notified to provide recommendation letters.

Document Upload Requirements

- Most recent CV (max 4 pages)
- Two publications (attachments)
- Research proposal (template)
- KAUST Host PI letter (template)

Evaluation & selection process

PROCESSING AND PRE-SCREENING

- Check of eligibility and completeness of applications.
- Formation of divisional committees.

January
2026

INTERNAL & EXTERNAL REVIEWS

- Internal review by divisional committees.
- Applications with the highest score move to external review.
- Academic and/or industry experts in your field conduct the external review.

Feb – Apr
2026

INTERVIEWS

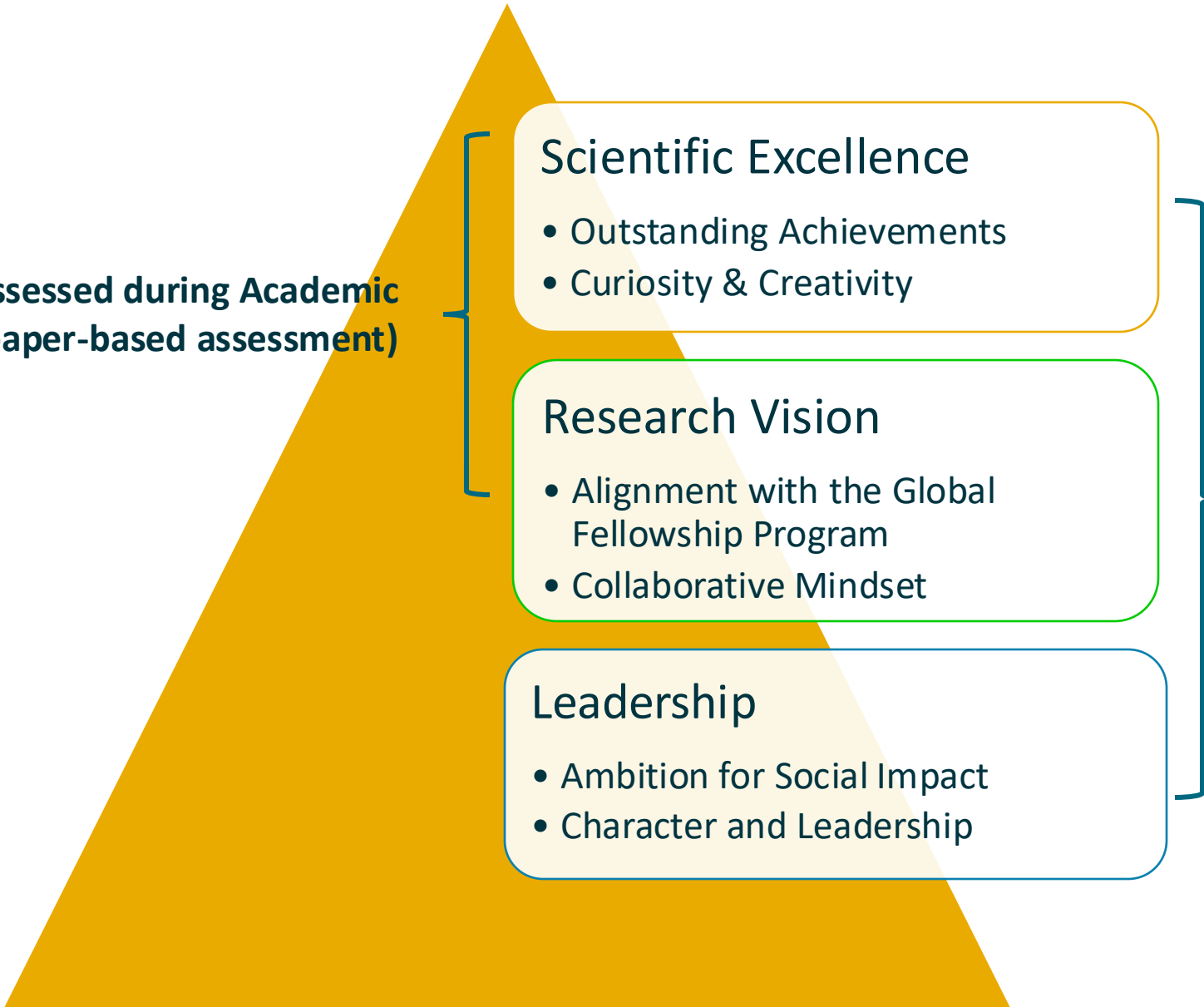
- Shortlisted candidates from external review are invited to the interviews.
- Senior academics from KAUST will interview Finalists.
- Interviewers may not be an expert in your subject area.
- Interviews will be online.

May
2026

SELECTION AND NOMINATION

- Final selection of Fellows to join the program.
- Nomination of Global Fellows by the VPR.

Jun – Dec
2026



Criteria assessed during Academic Review (paper-based assessment)

Scientific Excellence

- Outstanding Achievements
- Curiosity & Creativity

Research Vision

- Alignment with the Global Fellowship Program
- Collaborative Mindset

Leadership

- Ambition for Social Impact
- Character and Leadership

Criteria assessed during Final Selection (online interviews)

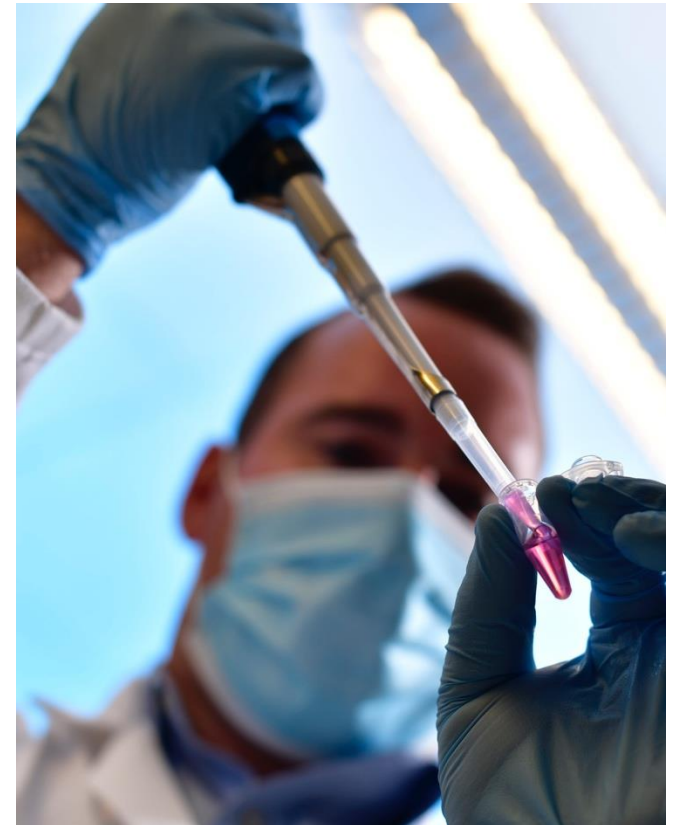
Selection Criteria: Scientific Excellence

Outstanding Achievements

- Strong research track record through publications, patents, or other outputs relative to career stage and field.
- Recognition from awards, fellowships, or other academic/ professional honors.

Curiosity and Creativity

- Demonstrates novel research ideas, continuous innovation, and use of new technologies or methods.
- Shows strong curiosity, enthusiasm, and creative thinking in approaching research challenges.



Selection Criteria: Research Vision

Alignment with the Fellowship Program

- Clear fit with KAUST's research priorities and commitment to pursue the proposed research idea.
- Ability to leverage KAUST's facilities and environment, embracing interdisciplinary approaches, and scientific risks.

Collaborative Mindset

- Motivation to bring diverse people and perspectives together to enhance research outcomes.
- Track record of effective collaboration with diverse team members.



Selection Criteria: Leadership

Ambition for Social Impact

- Research demonstrates potential to address global or societal challenges, aligned with KAUST's strategic priorities and Vision 2030 goals.
- Plans for outreach, application, or sustainable development efforts to create meaningful societal impact in line with KAUST's mission.

Character and Leadership

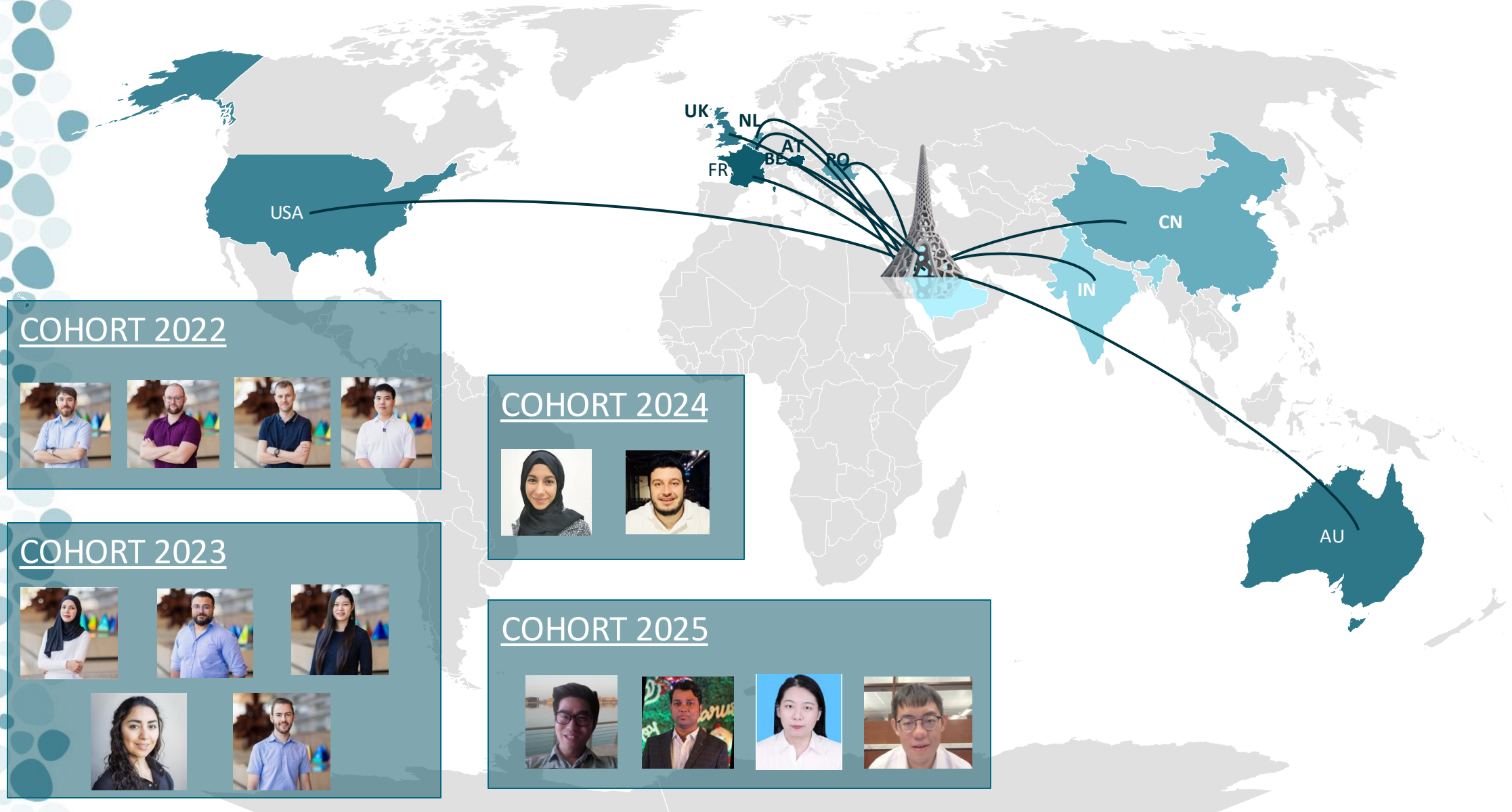
- Demonstrated integrity, resilience, accountability, and perseverance in research and professional activities.
- Shows emerging experience in mentoring, teaching, or leading small initiatives, with strong potential to develop as a future scientific leader.





OUR GLOBAL FELLOWS

Global Fellows from around the world!





NEXT STEPS

Important dates

July 1, 2025	Application opens
January 15, 2026	Application deadline
Feb – Apr 2026	Academic Review (internal & external) and shortlisting of finalists
May 2026	Interviews
June 2026	Final decisions and Fellowship nominations
Jul – Dec 2026	Anticipated arrival of Global Fellows at KAUST!



Q&A

- We are sorry we cannot answer questions about specific proposals.
- For questions about your specific circumstances or any outstanding questions please contact kgfp@kaust.edu.sa.
- The presentation slides will be available on our website.