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Foundational AI for Autonomous Decision Intelligence

Program Overview

We seek proposals that advance the foundational science required for next-generation AI—systems that move beyond assistive tools to become proactive, trustworthy partners for individuals and small businesses. We aim to fund high-risk, high-reward research that builds the scientific basis for autonomous, outcome-driven decision-making.

We welcome interdisciplinary work in machine learning, human-computer interaction, operations research, information retrieval/knowledge representation, privacy/security, economics, and design.

Core Research Challenges

Proposals should address one or more fundamental challenges in AI that enable systems to make reliable, strategic financial and operational decisions:

- **Robust & Adaptive Decision Modeling:** Counterfactual reasoning, causal inference, and time-series forecasting with calibrated uncertainty and robustness to major distribution shifts (e.g., seasons, business cycles).
- **Trustworthy Autonomy & Planning:** Multi-step agentic planning, self-reflection, and tool-use orchestration with explicit safety policies, guardrails, and auditability.
- **Cross-Domain Knowledge & Memory:** Unified, private representations for complex, longitudinal data across personal/business contexts; dynamic knowledge integration from structured data, documents, and regulations.
- **Evaluation and Action Metrics:** New benchmarks and metrics that measure decision quality, trust, usefulness, and action readiness (beyond mere accuracy).

Key Dates

RFP Release: December, 2025

Proposal Acceptance Period (AoE): March 2 - March 27, 2026

Notification: June 5, 2026

Earliest Start Date: August 3, 2026

Award Structure

Funding: Up to US \$100,000 in gift funds per funded project.

Duration: The funding is allocated to facilitate the advancement of the proposed research over an estimated duration of one year.

Use of Funds: Graduate student/postdoc support, faculty summer salary, research materials/compute, and reasonable travel.

Eligibility and Requirements

Principal Investigator (PI) Requirement: The PI must hold a faculty appointment (e.g., Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor) at an accredited, degree-granting academic institution in the US.

Research Scope: Proposals must focus on research related to computing, technology, or quantitative science that advances the program's vision.

Submission Limit: Applicants may serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) on only one proposal during this funding round.

IP and Publication Commitment

Intuit provides funding as a gift. The intellectual property (IP) is owned by the Principal Investigator's institution of affiliation (following institutional policy). We strongly value the dissemination of knowledge. Therefore, by accepting an award, PIs commit to the following:

- **Publication:** Award results should be published in a peer-reviewed venue (conference or journal).
- **Open Source:** Any novel software, code, models, or reusable artifacts developed under this award is recommended to be released under a permissive open-source license (e.g., MIT, Apache 2.0).
- **Data & Benchmarks:** The release of de-identified data, synthetic data, or reusable evaluation benchmarks is expected where ethically and legally permissible.

This structure ensures the university retains ownership while enabling the wider research community (including Intuit) to benefit from the funded work.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Focus and Explanation
Research Rigor & Potential Impact	The proposal must demonstrate a creative, scientifically sound approach that significantly advances the state-of-the-art in AI/Decision Intelligence. The research should promise substantial, lasting contribution to the broader academic field.
Fit to Program Vision	The proposed work clearly addresses the Core Research Challenges and advances the scientific basis for autonomous, trustworthy, and outcome-driven decision support for individuals and small businesses.
PI Caliber & Execution Plan	The Principal Investigator (PI) should demonstrate a strong track record of research excellence and publication. The plan must define clear, realistic milestones, and confirm the PI's ability to successfully execute the project.
Submission/ Proposal Quality	The proposal must be clear, focused, and well-organized. It must clearly define the project's metrics and evaluation methods and include a realistic budget and timeline.
Responsible AI & Ethics Considerations	The proposal must actively and thoughtfully address potential privacy, safety, and fairness implications. It must include a clear plan to mitigate risks and align with established responsible research practices (e.g., proper data governance, IRB compliance where applicable).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the mission of the Intuit Faculty Research Awards (IFRA) program?

The Intuit Faculty Research Awards (IFRA) aims to strengthen Intuit's innovation and research ecosystem by engaging deeply with the global academic community. Through strategic partnerships with universities, IFRA seeks to:

1. Advance the state-of-the-art in AI, ML, and data science in alignment with Intuit's mission to power prosperity for ~100M consumer and small/mid-market business customers worldwide.
2. Accelerate technology transfer from research to production to make a tangible impact on Intuit's products in service to our customers.
3. Foster academic collaboration and raise external visibility through publications, patents, and open research.
4. Create a pipeline for internships, mentorship, and career opportunities for prospective talent at Intuit.

What areas of research does IFRA fund?

We are open to proposals for any AI research that aligns with Intuit's mission to power prosperity.

Past successful [research collaborations](#) include: Optimization of Agentic Workflows, Uncertainty Estimation and Root Cause Analysis in Causality, Advanced Memory Management for LLMs, Multimodal Generative AI, Goal Conditioned Reinforcement Learning, Dialogue Systems, and more.

How is the award structured?

Each award is structured as a gift to the institution or organization of the Principal Investigator of up to US \$100,000.

What is Intuit's involvement in the collaboration?

Each collaboration will be assigned one liaison from Intuit. The liaison will meet the Principal Investigator, and any students that the Principal Investigator has decided to involve, on a regular cadence to provide use case related information and feedback to help guide the research in a direction that aligns with Intuit's mission. If you have a particular liaison from Intuit in mind, you can suggest it in the proposal.

Can Intuit's data be used?

No. The Principal Investigator agrees to publish reproducible research, using publicly available datasets or synthetic datasets for experimentation.

How long is the collaboration for?

Each award is structured as a one-year collaboration.

What artifacts are expected?

The Principal Investigator agrees to artifacts such as joint publications in leading conferences/journals, as well as open source contributions.

By what criteria are the proposals assessed?

Proposals will be evaluated on the following dimensions: (i) research rigor & potential impact, (ii) fit to program vision, (iii) PI caliber & execution plan, (iv) proposal/submission quality, and (v) responsible AI & ethics considerations. For details on each of those dimensions, please refer to the review criteria table in the RFP.

How are the Intellectual Property (IP) rights handled?

Proposals are non-confidential, and Intuit assumes no legal obligation (of confidentiality or compensation) for them. The institution of the Principal Investigator retains the IP rights for the artifacts of the collaboration, but we ask the artifacts be open sourced under a permissive, royalty-free, perpetual, worldwide license, which Intuit can then use commercially. Publications and external artifacts may be created with joint authorship between the liaisons, the Principal Investigator, and any students the Principal Investigator has involved in the collaboration.

Who is ineligible to submit a proposal?

We preclude Intuit employees, Principal Investigators involved in Intuit procurement decisions, and current collaborators. The Principal Investigator must hold a faculty appointment (e.g., Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor) at an accredited, degree-granting academic institution in the U.S.

What is the expected format for the submission?

Filename: We ask that proposals be submitted as a single pdf file with the following naming convention: <LastName>_<FirstName>_IFRA2026

Proposal Sections:

The main proposal document should contain the following sections:

1. Cover page containing full name, institutional contact information (email and postal address), institutional affiliation, and abstract.
2. Problem statement and significance describing what problem you are addressing and why does it matter in the context of Intuit's mission statement.
3. Related literature and proposed idea(s) clearly describing what the state of the art is,, why it is insufficient, and what is the proposed contribution.
4. Justification of how your past research establishes your capacity and provides the relevant expertise to successfully execute the proposed project.
5. Data requirements outlining what public or synthetic data will be used, and why.
6. Proposed artifacts listing what artifacts will be produced (e.g., publications, code, benchmarks) at the end of the funding term.
7. Itemized budget and justification.
8. Updated CV of the Principal Investigator.

Length & Formatting Requirements: We ask that the total length of the proposal is no longer than 5 pages, excluding references, budget, and CV. The proposal should be single spaced with font size no less than 10 pts.

What is the budget submission requirement?

Each proposal is expected to be accompanied by an institutional budget narrative indicating the itemized costs for the duration of the project, including a justification for all requested funds across categories, such as personnel, compute, travel, and indirect costs (adhering to the university's gift policy).

Are there any final reporting requirements?

Yes. A comprehensive final report detailing research outcomes, and complete list of artifacts must be submitted to Intuit within 30 days of the collaboration period end date.

What is the timeline for the proposal?

RFP Release: December 2025

Proposal Submission Window (AoE): March 2 - March 27, 2026

Notification: June 5, 2026

Earliest Start Date: August 3, 2026

Where to submit the proposal?

All proposals and inquiries should be submitted via email to: ai-research@intuit.com

Intuit Faculty Research Awards Program Rules

By applying to or participating in the Intuit Faculty Research Awards (IFRA) Program (the "Program"), you (defined below) agree to the following rules ("Rules"). These Rules are solely between Intuit Inc. and its affiliates ("Intuit," "we," "us," or "our") and the entity that you represent ("you" or "your"), including the lead researcher/s who applies (the "Principal Investigator" or "PI") and any members of the research team.

I. Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a Program award ("Award"), as the Principal Investigator you must be: (1) a full-time faculty member (e.g., Assistant, Associate or Professor) at an accredited, degree-granting academic institution located in the United States; and (2) at or above the age of majority in their jurisdiction of residence at the time of application.

By submitting your proposal, you represent that you:

- are not an Intuit employee.
- have not been a director, officer, employee, intern, or contractor of Intuit within the 12 months preceding submission of your proposal (i.e., "Ineligible Personnel").
- are not currently involved in, have not participated in, nor had decision-making authority over, any procurements or purchasing decisions involving Intuit on behalf of your organization during the previous or upcoming twelve (12) months.
- are not a current Intuit research collaborator outside of this Program.
- are not under US export controls or sanctions.

II. Proposal Submission and Evaluation

A. Submission Format and Requirements

All proposals must adhere to the following strict guidelines to be considered for funding:

Filename: We ask that proposals be submitted as a single pdf file with the following naming convention: <LastName>_<FirstName>_IFRA2026

Proposal Sections:

The main proposal document should contain the following sections:

1. **Cover page** containing full name, institutional contact information (email and postal address), institutional affiliation, and abstract.
2. **Problem statement and significance:** What problem are you addressing and why does it matter in the context of Intuit's mission statement?

3. **Related literature and proposed idea:** What does prior work do, why is it insufficient, and what is your proposed contribution?
4. **Justification** of how your past research establishes your capacity and provides the relevant expertise to successfully execute the proposed project.
5. **Data requirements:** What public or synthetic data will you use, and why?
6. **Proposed artifacts:** What artifacts will you produce (e.g., publications, code, benchmarks)?
7. **Itemized budget:** A budget narrative indicating the itemized costs for the duration of the project, including a justification for all requested funds across categories, such as personnel, compute, travel, and indirect costs (adhering to the university's gift policy).
8. **CV** of the Principal Investigator.

Length & Formatting Requirements: We ask that the total length of the proposal is no longer than 5 pages, excluding references, budget, and CV. The proposal should be single spaced with font size no less than 10 pts.

B. Non-Confidentiality

No proposal to the Program may contain any confidential information and no part may be marked as 'confidential.' By submitting a proposal, you agree that proposals are non-confidential, and Intuit assumes no legal obligation (of confidentiality or compensation) for them. Intuit reserves the right to implement competitive, similar, or identical ideas in the future, without restriction or obligation.

C. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the following five dimensions:

1. **Research rigor & potential impact:** The proposal must demonstrate a creative, scientifically sound approach that significantly advances the state-of-the-art in AI/Decision Intelligence. The research should promise substantial, lasting contribution to the broader academic field
2. **Fit to program vision:** The proposed work clearly addresses the Core Research Challenges and advances the scientific basis for autonomous, trustworthy, and outcome-driven decision support for individuals and small businesses.
3. **PI caliber & execution plan:** The Principal Investigator (PI) should demonstrate a strong track record of research excellence and publication. The plan must define clear, realistic milestones, and confirm the PI's ability to successfully execute the project.
4. **Proposal/submission quality:** The proposal must be clear, focused, and well-organized. It must clearly define the project's metrics and evaluation methods and include a realistic budget and timeline.
5. **Responsible AI & ethics considerations:** The proposal must actively and thoughtfully address potential privacy, safety, and fairness implications. It must include a clear plan

to mitigate risks and align with established responsible research practices (e.g., proper data governance, IRB compliance where applicable).

III. Awards and Administration

A. Award Structure and Mechanism

The Award includes a gift to the institution of the PI, up to a maximum of one hundred thousand U.S. Dollars (\$100,000), as determined by Intuit in its sole discretion. Such Award:

- Will be structured as a one-time unrestricted gift to the Principal Investigator's academic institution or organization.
- Will be funded through a formal letter, which is the definitive legal document specifying the cash amount, the collaboration period (the, "Gift/Grant Letter").
- is calculated to include a percentage for institutional overhead (indirect costs), if any/where applicable, with the net balance intended to support the research.
- The collaboration period is structured for one year.

B. Financial and Administrative Requirements

You are responsible for the administration and apportionment of any costs and expenses associated with an Award, including any allowable and allocable overhead or indirect costs.

- To process the cash Award, you will be required to complete administrative requirements, which may include submitting a W-9 form, completing a tax questionnaire, and registering in Intuit's Payee System.
 - You are responsible for all taxes (including income tax and value added tax) that may be imposed on you by relevant local tax authorities.
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IV. Research and Intellectual Property (IP)

A. Intuit Collaboration

Each collaboration will be assigned one Intuit liaison. The liaison will meet the Principal Investigator, and any students that the Principal Investigator has decided to involve, on a regular cadence to provide use case related information and feedback to help guide the research in a direction that aligns with Intuit's mission. Proposers may suggest a specific Intuit liaison in their proposal, but final assignment is at Intuit's discretion.

B. Expected Artifacts & Reporting Requirements

- **Publications and open source artifacts:** The Principal Investigator agrees to deliver the following artifacts: such as publications (including joint publications) in leading conferences/journals, and open source contributions (e.g. code, data sets, etc).

- **Final Report:** A comprehensive final report must be submitted within 30 days of the collaboration period end date. This report must detail the following:
 - Research outcomes achieved.
 - Publications submitted.
 - Open-source code repositories created.

C. Data and IP Ownership

All intellectual property (IP) resulting from the research under this Award shall be owned by the Principal Investigator's institution of affiliation subject to that institution's policies. Intuit strongly values dissemination of knowledge. Therefore, by accepting an award, the Principal Investigator commits to the following:

- **Publication:** Research results should be published in a peer-reviewed venue (conference or journal).
- **Open Source:** Any software, code, models, or reusable artifacts developed under this Award is recommended to be released under a permissive (e.g., MIT, Apache 2.0), royalty-free, perpetual, worldwide license, which Intuit can then use commercially for technology transfer and product development.
- **Data & Benchmarks:** The release of de-identified data, synthetic data, or reusable evaluation benchmarks is expected where ethically and legally permissible.
- **Proposals** are non-confidential, and Intuit assumes no legal obligation (of confidentiality or compensation) for any submitted information contained within submitted proposals.

D. Data Use

Experimentation must utilize publicly available datasets or synthetic datasets. Intuit's proprietary data may not be used for any purpose under this Award.

V. Legal and Administrative Provisions

A. Publicity

You consent to our use of your name, the PI's name and title, proposal title, and proposal abstract text for purposes of identifying Intuit's support.

- You must receive Intuit's prior written consent before issuing a press release or making any public disclosure regarding your participation in the Program.
- You agree not to misrepresent or embellish the relationship between us and you.

B. Privacy, Liability, and Governing Law

- **Privacy:** Intuit may collect, store, and use personally identifiable information provided during the application process (e.g., name, address, email) for administering the Program and conducting publicity, in accordance with Intuit's Privacy Policy.
- **Limitation of Liability:** To the extent permitted by applicable law, you release Intuit from, and waive any and all claims against Intuit for, any losses, liability, and damages of any kind.
- **Disputes/Governing Law:** Any dispute or claim relating in any way to the Program will be resolved in accordance with the terms set forth in the official Gift/Grant Letter. To the extent not otherwise specified in the Gift/Grant Letter, these Rules shall be governed by the laws of the State of California, without regard to its conflict of laws principles.

C. Changes and Amendments

Intuit may amend any of these Rules at our sole discretion by posting the revised terms on the Program website. Your continued participation in the Program after the effective date of the revised Rules constitutes your acceptance of the amended rules.

VI. Representations and Warranties

You represent and warrant that:

- Your receipt of any Award is neither prohibited by nor inconsistent with any applicable laws, regulations, or binding orders, including applicable ethics rules or internal institutional rules.
- You have completed or will complete all legal and ethical requirements necessary to accept the Award.
- Your receipt of the Award will not knowingly create a conflict of interest for Intuit.
- The Principal Investigator has not participated in, nor had, and does not anticipate participating in or having, any decision-making authority over, any procurements or purchasing decisions involving Intuit on behalf of your organization during the previous or upcoming twelve (12) months.
- You will properly book and record the Award in your accounting documents in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

In the event that your representations and warranties under this section are or become inaccurate, you must notify Intuit immediately, and any Award your organization receives will be voidable.