MATS

Fellow Research Plan Guidelines

MATS Program – Winter 2026 Cohort

Due: Friday, February 6, 2026 by 11:59 pm PT
Submit your plan using this form

Task Description

In order to demonstrate research progress and to help inform extension selection decisions, MATS is requesting that all fellows submit a Fellow Research Plan, by Friday, February 6, 11:59 pm PST. It is our intention that this be a relatively lightweight task - the document should be approximately 2-3 pages in length (~1000-1200 words), and take ~3 hours to complete. We are not evaluating writing quality — it's fine to ask others, including your RM and even LLMs — for assistance writing. We primarily need enough information to assess research quality/impact and forecast research progress.

As such, the structure of the FRP is somewhat flexible. In addition to a **one-line project description**, the document should include the following sections:

- **Abstract (100-200 words)**
- **Background (250-350 words)**
- **Work conducted so far (200-300 words)**
- **Planned work (300-500 words)**

In these three sections, you should provide enough information to allow reviewers to answer the following questions:

1. *What problem are you trying to solve?*
2. *What is your approach?*
3. *What have others done on this topic?*
4. *How will solving it advance AI safety?*
5. *What is the path to impact? (e.g., for labs/third-parties to implement, for technical projects, or for this message reaching policy-makers, for governance projects)?*
6. *Are there potential risks introduced by this work (e.g., dual use)?*
7. *What progress have you made?*
8. *What do you plan to do over 1) the remainder of the main program and 2) (if applicable) the extension period?*
9. *Is this plan likely to make significant progress towards solving the target problem?*
10. *What will the output(s) be?*

11. How might your plan fail, and what are your contingency plans?

In #7, we are not looking for figures or tables — you may include them, although they count towards the page limit — but primarily a verbal description of research efforts and, where applicable, findings, so far. In order to reduce the burden on fellows, we ask that you not create new artifacts for this document. In #8, we are not looking for a detailed week-by-week timeline, but we do want to know the sequence of steps you plan to take and their approximate duration.

 In your research plan it is acceptable to, for example:
- Use either bullet points or prose to clearly and concisely outline your project
- Link to words, pages, and definitions that are not obvious to an outside reader
- Use section headings to structure your document
- Use first person prose
- Submit a single document as a research team

Review the example FRPs below to see how this can work in practice.

When the research will be conducted as a team, to the extent possible, make clear which team member will be responsible for what (see FAQ regarding anonymization for teams).

Review Process

In descending order of importance, we will be evaluating this project based on:
1) Impact of this project on AI safety
2) How the plan reflects on your strength as an AI safety researcher and creates opportunity for professional growth

We use a **double-blind review process**: both the reviewers and authors remain anonymous to each other. To facilitate this, please **remove any identifying information** from your submission. This includes your name, your mentor's name, explicit references to your affiliated institution, and personal URLs. If you refer to you or your mentor's past work, do so in the third person. If it's necessary to reference a particular external document, **anonymize** it. This measure helps ensure that feedback is based only on the quality and rigor of the research itself.

We have assembled a reviewing committee and have plans for each submission to receive at least two independent reviews. This is designed to provide comprehensive and diverse feedback on your submission.

FAQs

Example Fellow Research Plans[1]
📄 FRP Samples - Tech1

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[1] These are MATS 8.0 research plans revised to meet the new guidelines

- FRP Samples - Tech2
- FRP Samples - Tech3
- FRP Samples - Gov1
- FRP Samples - Gov2