

FeME-STEPS

Student Teams for Environmental and Participatory Solutions

Information Package for External Partners

Failure Mode 1: Diverse Engineering



FeME



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FeME STEPS External Partners Open Call

FeME1 is recruiting external partners for its FeME STEPS programme. These are 5-week summer projects where multidisciplinary teams of students will work on delivering fresh ideas and perspectives on a challenge or problem you have identified in relation to your work on climate change, resilience, mitigation, or justice.

Applications are now **open**.

If interested, get in touch with the FeME1 team via email at feme@ed.ac.uk

Deadline: 30th March 2026

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What is FeME? What is the programme?

Failure Modes of Engineering (FeME) is a network for future inclusivity, sustainability and global impact. Our mission is to create an inclusive, resilient, and adaptable engineering to better confront climate change and biodiversity loss, recognising their disproportionate impact on women, children, and underrepresented communities. Our goal is to empower them as vital agents for the future of engineering. As such, we created:

FeME - STEPS

Student Teams for Environmental and Participatory Solutions

With FeME STEPS, multi-disciplinary teams of students, especially women and students from underrepresented communities, will work together on a 5-week summer project. The project will be designed in collaboration with external partners to help them address a partner-identified challenge related to climate change, resilience, mitigation, or justice. The students will receive training and guidance from FeME for working in a multidisciplinary team and will be given space to take risks and to develop ideas creatively and collaboratively, before sharing findings with partners. Engineering is at the heart of these projects in the sense that they are all about problem-solving through the creation of solutions that benefit society and the planet.



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What are we looking for?

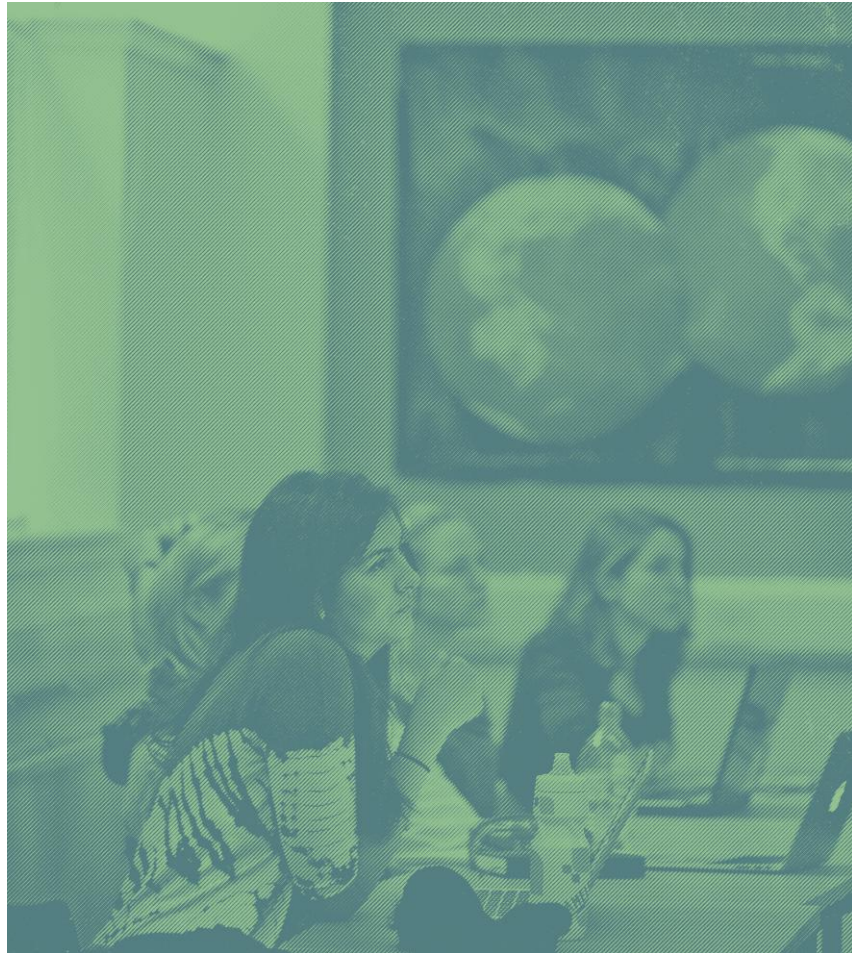
We are looking for partnering organisations that:

- Works on climate related issues
- Can identify an issue that can be solved by a variety of solutions (not all technical)
- Has availability and enthusiasm for collaboration with students

We're looking for partner organisations with an openness to innovation, who are willing to invest some time in nurturing student talent, and are interested in their multidisciplinary and fresh ideas by working more closely with the FeME network. It adds authenticity to the experience for students when they realise that organisations are genuinely interested in their ideas and are willing to implement or adapt some of these where possible.

We will work with you to identify a suitable challenge that your organisation or sector is facing, which has a wider social and environmental impact. Ideally, you will have direct contact with the students and provide them with relevant information and data. If appropriate, we could involve other partner organisations who are stakeholders in this challenge to provide a plurality of inputs to the students.

If interested, get in touch with the FeME1 team via email at feme@ed.ac.uk



Benefits for the partner

By becoming a FeME STEPS partner, you will gain:

- New ideas and creative solutions stemming from interdisciplinary collaboration to challenges your organisation has identified.
- Innovative approaches from enthusiastic and creative students
- Access to fresh talent from some of Scotland's best universities (University of Glasgow, University of Edinburgh, and Heriot-Watt University)
- A set of deliverables we will work with you to identify

Integration into the FeME network and a role in shaping new ways of engineering

FeME will work with the partnering organisation to establish a list of deliverables that would allow future implementation of the findings. Whether it is a proof of concept, an implementation plan, or predicted financial revenues, the outcomes of the project will be useful to your needs.



Expected commitment from the partner

The time commitment is around 15 hours in total, which includes:

- Working with the FeME Team to create the challenge question
- Preparing and delivering an introductory presentation
- Attending a video call during the programme
- Answering questions by email during the programme
- Attending the final presentation event
- Debriefing of your experience with the FeME Team to shape future FeME-STEPS projects

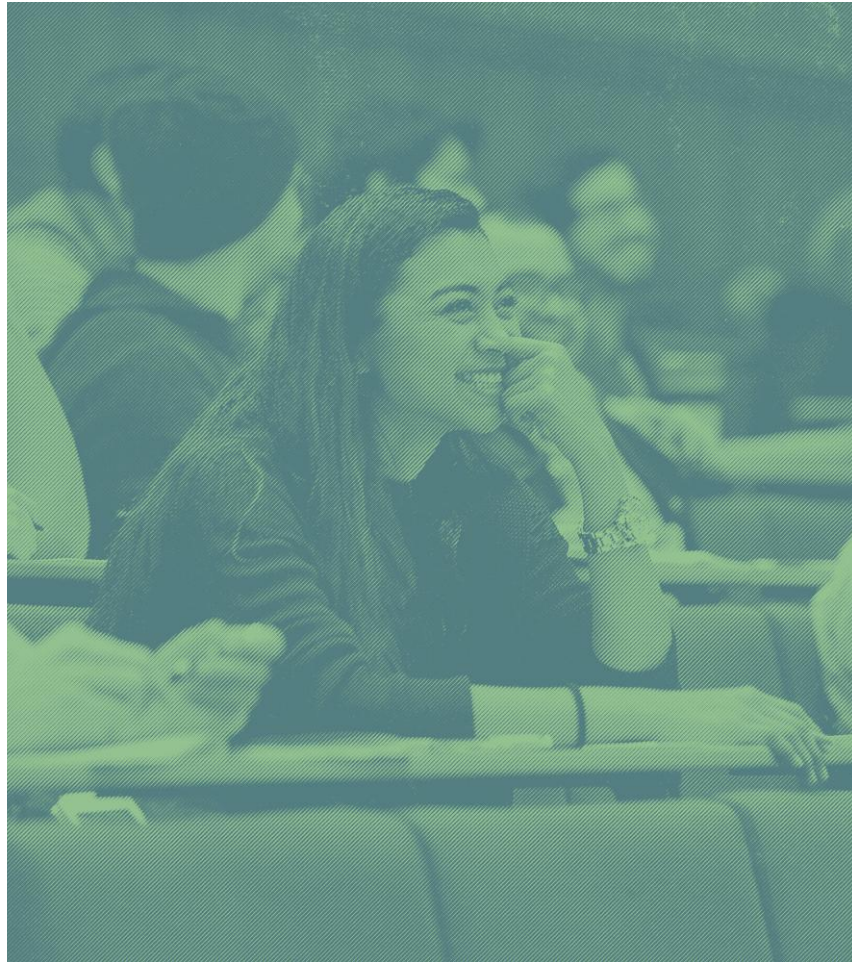
The project will run for five weeks from 1st June 2026.

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What is the structure of the project?

Around 50 students will be recruited and split into teams to work on a challenge set by one of our partners. They are expected to work 40 hours on the project over the course of 5 weeks. Their work will be structured with worksheets, coaching and mentoring sessions and support for data handling. The training will be tailored to the partner's needs and the students' professional skills development.

This project is part of the wider FeME network, which aims to 're-engineer engineering' with and for women and underrepresented groups. As such, members of these groups and those who have an interest in working in this environment are welcome to apply. We hope to create a safe space where the students can be adventurous with their ideas.



Outcomes for the participating students

The expected outcomes for the students are:

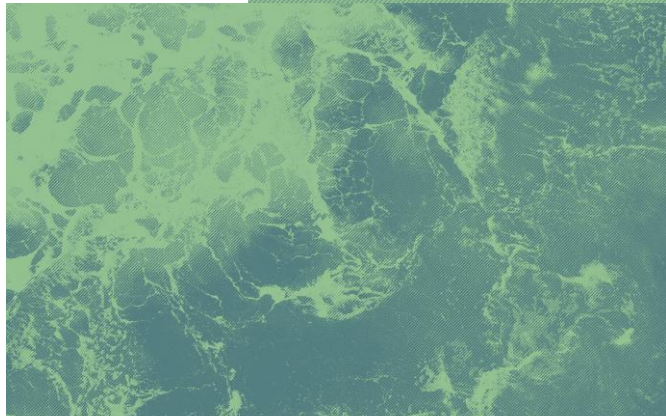
- Industry-relevant experience which will be helpful for future professional endeavours.
- Enriching interdisciplinary collaboration, problem solving and creative thinking, leading to solutions they will be proud of.
- The opportunity to experience firsthand the challenge of applying their discipline alongside engineering, or engineering alongside other disciplines.
- Confidence in their ability to contribute to a real-life project whose outcome can be used.

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What is a good FeME STEPS challenge?

A good challenge is likely to:

- Address real-world issues which have a societal or environmental impact
- Be a complex challenges that has numerous causes and is unlikely to have one right answer
- Benefit from being looked at from different angles
- Not require in-depth technical knowledge in one field but a holistic understanding of technical issues
- Have engineering, in the broad sense, as a central focus. FeME will ensure that there is one engineer per team.



Previous example from an adjacent program - SaCHA at UoE (no longer running), includes:

How might we tackle the pollution crisis in our rivers and seas in the UK? - With Rhizocore, Edinburgh - fungi for woodland restoration.

How might we influence the food industry to ensure innovative food products are as sustainable as possible? With Prozymi, Edinburgh - enzyme-based gluten-free solutions.

What can construction businesses do to minimise their environmental impact and change behaviours across the industry? With Robertson, Scotland - construction and facility management

How can we make rough sleeping a thing of the past? With Rowan Alba, Edinburgh - an accommodation service for those who face homelessness

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FeME Code of Conduct

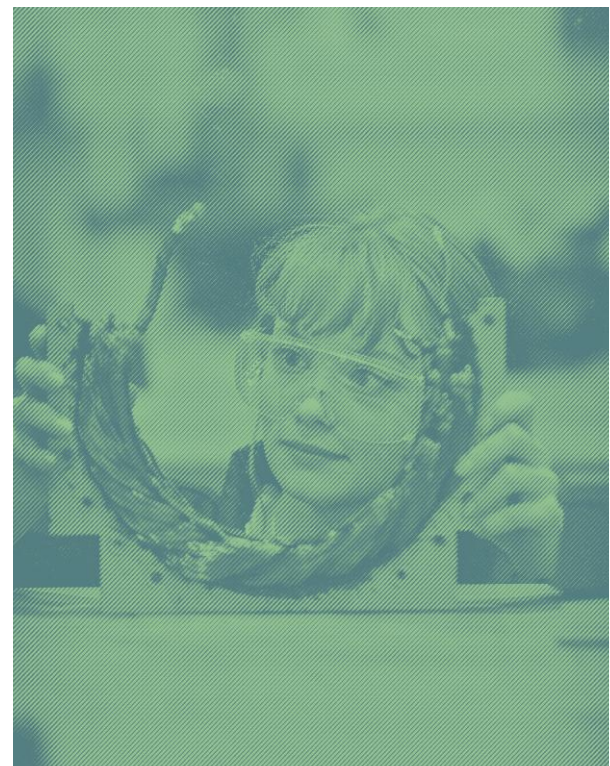
The FeME Code of Conduct outlines the shared standards and behaviours that guide how we work together with respect, inclusion, and care. It ensures all members, partners, and participants help create safe, equitable, and supportive spaces built on integrity, openness, and trust.

1. All members, staff, and participants are expected to act with respect, integrity, and inclusivity. Our community expectations are:
2. Treat everyone with respect, kindness, and professionalism.
3. Value and actively listen to diverse perspectives, particularly from underrepresented groups.
4. Work collaboratively and share credit for successes.
5. Be transparent in your actions and decisions and take accountability for mistakes.
6. Communicate openly and constructively, avoiding exclusionary or harmful behaviour.
7. Create accessible and inclusive spaces, both online and in-person.
8. Use resources responsibly, with care for environmental and social impact.



FeME Commitments

- **Ethical Data Practice** - All projects funded through FeME must uphold the highest standards of data ethics and integrity. This includes compliance with GDPR and the UK Data Protection Act (2018), responsible data collection and storage, and anonymisation of any sensitive equality, diversity, or inclusion (EDI) information.
- **Open Knowledge and Attribution** - FeME is committed to open, transparent, and collaborative research. Wherever possible, project outputs, data, and materials should be made openly available through FeME's digital platforms, with clear recognition and credit for all contributors and partners.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** - EDI principles are integral to every FeME funding call. We ensure diverse and trained assessment panels, accessible application processes, and inclusive authorship practices. Teams are encouraged to embed EDI in their own project design and delivery, with funding available through FeME's Caring Pot to support caring responsibilities or participation needs.
- **Wellbeing and Care** - FeME recognises that equitable collaboration depends on care and flexibility. Funded activities should prioritise participant wellbeing and accessibility, including consideration of time zones, caring responsibilities, and access needs. Hybrid and flexible participation should be standard practice wherever feasible.
- **Climate and Sustainability** - All FeME-funded work contributes to addressing the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Projects should model sustainable practices in their operations and travel, and consider the long-term environmental and social impacts of their methods and outcomes.



These guidelines sit alongside FeME's Terms of Reference and apply to all funded activities under the FeME net

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