



CRANE

Call for Phase 1 SIGS and WGs

Issued: 30 September 2025

Outline

CRANE exists to strengthen the cyber security research community. One of the ways we are doing this is to support the creation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and Working Groups (WGs) around topics of interest identified by the community. These will complement other activities and projects arising from CRANE's strategic analysis of trends and needs. Based on topics identified, CRANE will support larger workshops, and calls for small pilot projects.

We invite members of the research community to propose the formation of groups, with aims such as:

- exploration of a research topic where a nascent UK research community already exists but would benefit from additional focus;
- continuing (coordinating) a programme of research begun elsewhere;
- initial discussions of an emerging research theme;
- preparation of a proposal for a substantive research project (e.g. a Platform Grant);
- defining pilot studies which may lead to a more substantial research agenda
- developing understanding of the research needs of a particular sector or application domain;
- scoping the translation of research into practice.

The distinction between WGs and SIGs is not a sharp one, and proposers may choose either term. Typically WGs would be 'task and finish' activities, whereas SIGs would be more long-lived and/or open-ended. The present call is for groups to run during the first phase of CRANE (September 2025 to February 2027), with scope for renewal into the second phase. Another call will be issued at the start of the second phase; depending on the popularity of the scheme, an interim call *may* be issued before that date. CRANE WGs and SIGs should not duplicate work hosted or supported elsewhere.

Normally, outputs from WGs and SIGs should be made available to the academic community. Academic publishing should follow UKRI expectations. Deliverables not formally published should normally be produced on an open access basis, with a creative commons licence. The CRANE website will collate links to publications.

SIGs and WGs are anticipated to meet mostly online. CRANE will provide secretariat functions and membership management. We will also provide funding for occasional face-to-face meetings and workshops, at the CRANE All-Hands meeting (held each summer) or otherwise. This would cover venue costs (but free/discounted university premises should be used wherever possible) and catering (subject to EPSRC norms; note that this will not cover the



serving of alcohol). We can offer a small number of travel bursaries for ECRs to travel to such events.

A group should have a small number of leaders. The *normal* mix would be: an established research lead, an ECR¹ as co-proposer, and a non-academic (industry/business or government, etc.) as external 'sponsor'. (Sponsor understood to mean *supporter* or co-proposer, not *funder* – though external funding or support in kind is welcome, see below). Membership of the group should be across at least three research institutions - preferably more (and other organisations). All groups will be expected to be aligned with the CRANE EDI principles and operate in accordance with its code of conduct.

The academic leaders, and the majority of members of the group, should be eligible for CRANE membership, and should join when CRANE membership is formally launched. That is, they should be engaged in research at a UK organisation eligible for UKRI funding.

CRANE will provide financial support for the ECR co-proposer. Applicants may request an award of up to £5,000 (inclusive of any applicable VAT), which will be contracted through the ECR's institution using a standardised set of terms. Payments will be made quarterly, subject to the delivery of an agreed set of activities—such as preparing discussions, identifying partners, drafting reports, or other tasks relevant to the proposal.

How to apply

Applications should be made using the online form here: [Application form](#)

The deadline for this call is Monday 27th October 2025, 17.00 GMT.

Each proposal will be reviewed by at least three members of the CRANE Community Advisory Board, and prioritised by a panel drawn from that Board according to the following criteria:

- fit to CRANE scope and objectives
- evidence of committed leadership and scope for membership from a wide enough group to warrant support by a national Network
- ambition and potential impact of plans
- viability and achievability of plans within the time and resources available

Where more viable proposals are received than can be supported, priority will go to those with the greatest potential to advance the objectives of CRANE.

¹ Early Career Researcher: the CRANE website has a definition, which we have aimed to align with UKRI norms. <https://crane.ac.uk/early-career-researchers-ecrs>



Notes for Completion of the Application Form

This is a list of fields in the online form. **Note that we are using a simple form: it does not support 'save and come back later' functionality.** You are recommended to prepare your input in a separate document, and paste it into the form when you are ready to submit.

Proposers' Details	Give the name, email address, and institution/organisation for each member of the group's leadership. Normally we expect this to include an established researcher, an early-career researcher, and a government/industry 'sponsor' (a conceptual, not necessarily financial sponsor).
Proposed Name of Group	The group should have a clear, distinct, and compact name. Where a long title seems essential, please also propose a short (1-3 word) version for everyday use. Include 'WG' or 'SIG' in the title, according to your intention.
Aims and Objectives	<i>Up to 400 words.</i> Describe what the group wants to achieve, and how this fits the overall objective of CRANE, which is <i>to strengthen the UK's Cyber Security Research Community</i>. You may also want to refer to the other Objectives and Priorities. Briefly describe why CRANE is the best host for this work, and where necessary explain why it fits into the general category of cyber security research.
Membership and Participation	<i>Up to 200 words</i> As well as the leaders named above, we would like to see an indication of the level of interest from the community – perhaps a list of potential members, or those who have already indicated willingness, or some other measure of the level of interest. Be as specific as possible – but it is not necessary to obtain firm commitments or letters of support (unless a specific kind of support in kind is integral to the proposal). Normally, we would expect the group to be listed on the CRANE website and open to new members.
Method of Working	<i>Up to 200 words</i> Will the group meet online? How often? Will there be group video calls and/or a chat/collaborative working environment? Are face-to-face meetings needed? If so, what form will they take (see 'resources' heading to discuss what's feasible for CRANE). Also cover leadership, and how you will facilitate participation.
Time-Period	The present call is for SIGs and WGs which will run during the first phase of CRANE – Sept 2025 to Feb 2027. The group may plan to run throughout that time, or to finish earlier. If it is likely that the group would continue into the next phase, that should be noted – but this will be subject to a review/renewal process nearer the time.



Similar and Related Groups	If relevant: What other groups and activities (funded projects, conference series, institutes, etc.) are already active in this topic area? How will you avoid duplication? How will engage with and embrace what is already there? Are there other (actual or proposed/potential) CRANE SIGs to interact with?
Deliverables and Milestones	<i>Up to 400 words.</i> Where planned reports, policies, etc. are already identified, describe them here – together with an indication of extent, likely readership, and overall intent (who will read this report, and what will they do with it?). Note on Reporting: Groups will need to prepare a short quarterly report for the CRANE Community Advisory Board, detailing activity and participation, and progress towards production of deliverables, and also a summary end-of-phase report.
Resources	<i>up to 400 words</i> Describe how CRANE can help – over and above providing administrative support and a web presence. Please indicate whether you expect to take up the ECR funding, and how it would be allocated. Please indicate whether you propose to hold face-to-face meetings, and if so, how often, and provide a summary budget (venue, catering, keynote speakers if needed, etc.) We can offer a small number of travel bursaries for ECRs to travel to such events – these will be the subject of a separate application, but an indication of the likely take-up is helpful. Other than the ECR funding indicated, other funds will not be disbursed, but group leaders will be able to submit claims for reimbursement (or arrange for CRANE to pay costs directly to venues and caterers). If you are able to access support, matching funding, etc., from other sources, please describe this briefly.

If there is extra information you would like to share, and/or details which should not be seen by the reviewers of the proposal, please send this by email to crane@cs.ox.ac.uk.