



Call for Applications

Southeast Asian Fellowship 2026-27: Sociodigital Futures of Southeast Asia

**An initiative of the Centre for Digital Education Futures (CENDEF),
Open University Malaysia (OUM)**

Date: 26 January 2026

About the Fellowship

The Southeast Asian Fellowship is a new one-year programme developed by the Centre for Digital Education Futures (CENDEF), Open University Malaysia (OUM). It is expected to run from **April 2026 through March 2027**.

Up to five Fellowships will be awarded.

Applicants may apply individually or in groups of up to three persons, with each selected individual or group counting as one Fellowship.

The Fellowship is structured as a remote engagement. Fellows will work primarily from their home base in Southeast Asia, while remaining connected to CENDEF and other Fellows through regular online dialogue and collaboration.

Attendance in Kuala Lumpur will be required for a public exhibition tentatively planned for late 2026.

Fellowship Theme

The theme for this cycle of the OUM-CENDEF Southeast Asian Fellowship is “Sociodigital Futures of Southeast Asia.”

“Sociodigital futures” refer to futures in the making that emerge through the ongoing interplay of social practices, institutions, and digital technologies.

Priority will be given to projects focusing on Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, or Indonesia, whether examined individually, comparatively, or within a broader regional inquiry into Southeast Asia.

Applications are invited from scholars, artists, technologists, and practitioners in and from Southeast Asia (SEA) with a strong interest in the region’s sociodigital futures.

Projects may be situated at national, comparative, or regional levels and should be framed by one or more of the following guiding questions:

- What possible, plausible, and preferable futures come into view when Southeast Asia’s diverse histories, cultures, and political formations intersect with global and local currents in digitalisation, particularly artificial intelligence?
- How are digital technologies adopted and reinterpreted across different contexts, and how does this process reshape Southeast Asian societies as well as the technologies themselves?
- To what extent might Southeast Asia retain any sense of coherence and value, or be continually reconfigured by shifting global flows of people, ideas, goods, and technologies?
- How might human imagination contribute to envisioning and realising Southeast Asian futures that resist technological colonialism and advance alternatives grounded in equity?

Fellowship Eligibility

This Fellowship is open to early- to mid-career academics with a higher education affiliation, as well as industry practitioners in technology, the arts, and related fields, who are Southeast Asian.

Priority will be given to applicants in and from the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

OUM-based applicants will be considered under a separate internal call.

Individuals whose primary status is that of a student are not eligible to apply.

Fellowship Output

Southeast Asian Fellows will develop projects that engage with the Fellowship theme over the one-year period.

Each project will be supported to produce **three key outputs**:

- **A webinar session** showcasing work-in-progress for global audiences [by mid-2026].
- **A 10-minute 3D immersive storytelling work** based on the project to be produced in collaboration with artists and technologists paired by REXPERIENCE.KL [due late 2026]

The immersive work will subsequently be launched and exhibited at REXPERIENCE.KL [see <https://rxpkl.com/>].

For samples of immersive storytelling, see, for instance:

- drive.google.com/file/d/1cX10sesQFUBBdTo9E2IF0LBcrcXQf-Xi/view
- [instagram.com/reels/CxE982Jp55S/](https://www.instagram.com/reels/CxE982Jp55S/)
- baskl.com.my/hanya-batik-shines-at-twilight-by-rxp-kl/

- **A scholarly publication or an equivalent output** that contributes to a critical and regionally grounded understanding of Southeast Asia’s sociodigital futures, and carries OUM-CENDEF affiliation [due early 2027].

Fellowship Support

Each Southeast Asian Fellow will receive the following support:

- **Seed Support:** Up to USD2,000 per Fellowship to initiate and develop project activities during the one-year period.
- **Scholarly Mentoring:** Ongoing academic guidance and critical feedback from CENDEF to support conceptual development, methodological rigour, and reflective practice throughout the Fellowship.
- **Production and Exhibition Collaboration:** Professional collaboration with a team of digital artists to develop the 3D immersive storytelling work for public exhibition.
- **Travel and Accommodation:** Return economy-class air travel from any Southeast Asian country to Kuala Lumpur for the public exhibition; hotel accommodation and main meals for the duration of the event; and local ground arrangements. Travel and accommodation support apply only to the named Fellows (up to three per Fellowship).
- **Publication Support:** Guidance in preparing a scholarly publication or equivalent output, with editorial and peer-review support facilitated by CENDEF.
- **Institutional Affiliation:** Recognition as an OUM-CENDEF Southeast Asian Fellow, with access to OUM’s academic and professional networks.

How to Apply

We invite applications from scholars, artists, technologists, and practitioners in and from Southeast Asia who are at early to mid stages of their careers and have a relevant institutional or professional affiliation.

Applicants should ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria outlined above before preparing their submission.

Applications may be submitted by individuals or by groups of up to three persons. Group applications may comprise members from the same or different institutions or professional affiliations across Southeast Asia and should be submitted as a single joint application.

Applications should include the following:

1. **Project Statement** (up to 2 pages)

- Provide a title and an outline of the idea or focus you wish to explore within the Fellowship theme.
- Explain the project's significance for Southeast Asia's sociodigital futures.
- Indicate how you imagine developing it into the three required outputs:
 - a webinar on work-in-progress
 - a 10-minute immersive storytelling work realised as an exhibition
 - a scholarly publication or equivalent output.

2. **Short Bio** (max. 250 words)

- Provide a concise introduction to your background, areas of expertise, and current affiliation(s).

3. **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** (up to 3 pages).

4. **Sample of Work**

- Submit one representative sample that attests to your ability to carry out a project of the scope required for this Fellowship. This may include:
 - An academic article, book chapter, or report
 - Documentation of past creative or research projects (e.g. exhibition catalogue, performance recording, design portfolio, technical report on AI implementation, system prototype, or software rollout), and/or
 - A link to digital or media-based work (e.g. short film, podcast, interactive project, online portfolio).

If submitting an online sample, please provide a stable link together with a short description (max. 100 words) to contextualise it.

5. **Format**

- Combine all materials into a single PDF named
Surname_Firstname_SEAF2026.pdf

- The main text should be in English. Supplementary images, links, or media files may be included in an annex.

6. Pre-Submission Enquiries

- Enquiries prior to submission may be directed to cendef@oum.edu.my

7. Submission

- Email your application to cendef@oum.edu.my with the subject line: “Application – SEA Fellowship 2026”.
- Deadline for submission: **30 March 2026**

Suggested Preliminary Readings

Dufva, T., and Dufva, M. (2019), “Grasping the future of the digital society”, *Futures*, Vol. 107, pp. 17-28.

Halford, S., and Southerton, D. (2024), “Sociodigital futures? An agenda for sociological research and practice”, *Sociologia Italiana*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 93-110.

Lundberg, R., *et al.* (2025), “Interdisciplinary futures? A conceptual approach”, *Futures*, Vol. 172.

Johnson, D. G., and Wetmore, J. M. (2021), *Technology and Society: Building Our Sociotechnical Future*, MIT Press.

Macgilchrist, F., *et al.* (2024), “Designing Postdigital futures: Which designs, whose futures”, *Postdigital Science and Education*, Vol. 6, pp. 13-24.

Sripakash, A., *et al.* (2025), “Sociodigital futures of education: Reparations, sovereignty, care, and democratisation”, *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 51 No. 4, pp. 561-578.

University of Bristol. (n.d.), “The challenge of sociodigital futures”, ESRC Centre for Sociodigital Futures, <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/research/centres/sociodigital-futures/stories/the-challenge-of-sociodigital-futures/>