

IMPERIAL



Imperial College Foundation

September 2026

Annual report

Imperial College Foundation

Through its enduring support, the Imperial College Foundation plays an instrumental role in enabling investment in priorities that advance Imperial's excellence across research, education and innovation. Imperial raised £97.5 million in philanthropic donations in the last year, marking the highest fundraising total the university has received in a single financial year. US-based supporters have been central to this achievement, contributing to more than 25 funds across the university. We remain deeply grateful to the Foundation's support, and to the Board members and trustees whose steadfast dedication help Imperial to deliver scientific breakthrough and world-renowned teaching.

Against this backdrop of strong philanthropic support, Imperial has continued to reinforce its position as a world-leading institution, drawing on its distinctive strength as a STEMB university. Imperial has once again ranked 2nd in the world in the QS World University Rankings and has retained its 1st-place position in the UK and Europe. In addition, Imperial has been named the University of the Year 2027 by the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, in recognition of its student experience and graduate prospects. These honours reflect Imperial's prestige and international outlook, thanks to the excellence of staff, the ambition of students and the strength of the academic community. It also speaks to Imperial's distinctive ability to pair world-leading research and education with real-world relevance, drawing on the advantages of its London location and the interdisciplinary approach taken to prepare graduates to lead and contribute toward the world's toughest challenges.

The impact of an Imperial education is reflected in the achievements of our alumni. The 2026 Alumni Awards celebrated a remarkable group of Imperial graduates whose work spans entrepreneurship, public service, medicine, vaccinology, clean energy, social innovation and education. Together, this year's winners demonstrate the reach of Imperial's international community and the many ways in which an Imperial education equips graduates to shape a fairer, healthier and more sustainable future. This year's Distinguished Alumni Award recognised H.E. Khunying Kalaya Sophonpanich, whose career has followed an extraordinary trajectory across education, technology and sustainability, while the entrepreneur and emerging leader awards highlighted the next generation of Imperial alumni driving impact across continents and sectors.

Imperial's entrepreneurial strength has also continued to flourish. The university celebrated the formation of 14 spinout companies in the past year, sustaining a strong rate of company creation across all faculties and underlining Imperial's position as a powerhouse for translating research into impact. This success builds on the achievements of earlier spinouts, including Brilliant Dye, which recently received a Royal Society of Chemistry Spotlight Award for its potential to address major global challenges through chemistry-led innovation. Imperial's unique entrepreneurial ecosystem was also recognised through its Outstanding Entrepreneurial University title at the Times Higher Education Awards in November, earned for its success in scaling innovation from West London to the world and accelerating the journey from discovery to impact.

This year marked 175 years since 'the Great Exhibition' of 1851, the legacy of which helped shape South Kensington as a global centre of science, culture and discovery, and in turn, the environment in which Imperial itself was established. As Imperial's flagship public engagement event, this year's Great Exhibition Road Festival celebrated that anniversary while looking firmly to the future with displays of innovative science and inspiring art. The 2026 Festival was the largest and most ambitious to date, welcoming around 57,000 visitors and featuring more than 100 Imperial teams sharing their work with the public through talks, workshops, demonstrations and performances.

As we reflect on a year of outstanding achievements across Imperial's community, we also look forward to the public launch of Imperial's comprehensive philanthropic and alumni engagement campaign next Autumn. The campaign builds on our ambitious strategy, Science for Humanity, by raising the resources we need to harness the full power of science and technology to make the world a better place - healthier, safer, smarter, more prosperous, and more sustainable. Support for our campaign will unlock more of the power of science to serve humanity - shaping the future for our students, our community, our planet and everyone who calls it home.

The following updates provide a snapshot of the impact made possible through gifts to the Imperial College Foundation, demonstrating the breadth of their contribution across the university.

Removing barriers to an Imperial education

Student experience is fundamental to Imperial's mission and will remain a key pillar of the campaign. Philanthropy at Imperial helps ensure that exceptional students have the financial support they need to thrive, regardless of their background, while enriching their experience by enabling them to make the most of every opportunity available to them. The launch of Imperial's flagship scholarship programme, Inspires, marks an important milestone in widening access to an Imperial education. The stories that follow highlight just some of the students whose time at Imperial has been transformed by financial support.

Scholarships

Scholarships continue to play a transformative role in widening access to an Imperial education and enabling talented students to pursue their ambitions free from financial pressures. Through philanthropic support, more than 135 new students joined Imperial in the last year with a scholarship, helping to strengthen our community of future leaders, innovators and researchers. A significant number of these scholars were PhD students who strive toward advancing vital research across a wide range of disciplines while benefiting from access to world-class expertise and cutting-edge facilities.

The impact of scholarships extends far beyond financial support. They provide scholars with the freedom to focus on their studies and make meaningful contributions to society.

Euodia Dodd: Wendy Tan White and Joe White PhD Scholar

Euodia is a second-year PhD student and recipient of the Wendy Tan White and Joe White Scholarship. Her research explores how advanced AI systems can be made safer, more secure and more trustworthy, helping to address some of the most pressing ethical and technological challenges surrounding the widespread adoption of artificial intelligence.

Over the past year, Euodia has contributed to several research publications, including a paper accepted to USENIX Security 2025 and her first lead-author paper on the privacy risks of AI models. She has also broadened her research into AI safety and control through the highly selective MATS programme, contributing to the development of methods to help ensure increasingly autonomous AI systems behave as intended. By easing the financial pressures of her studies, the scholarship has enabled Euodia to pursue her ambitious ideas and make these impressive contributions to her field. Reflecting on the impact the scholarship has had on her life, she shared:



“The biggest thing this funding did was make it possible for me to leave my job and take up research full-time. That was not a step I could have taken on my own, and everything I have done this year has followed from it. The scholarship has given me both time and focus, and this year that has let me produce more impactful research and move into AI safety and control.

Having the support of the funding has given me room to take more risks and explore areas I would not have been able to otherwise. I can focus on working on topics I feel will be most impactful in the long-term without the concern of supporting myself financially in the short-term.”

Student Assistance Fund

The Student Assistance Fund provides essential support to students facing financial barriers, as well as those recognised for their academic potential, helping them access the assistance they need. Contributions to the fund sustain a variety of programmes, including hardship relief, bursaries, President's Scholarships and Faculty Dean's funds. With the cost of living in London continuing to rise, this support remains a vital lifeline, helping students to meet everyday expenses and make the most of their time at Imperial.

Gustavo Alexander Chaparro Maldonado: President's PhD Scholar, Faculty of Engineering (2026)



“Imperial is one of the top leading universities in many fields, especially in molecular thermodynamics, which is the topic I feel the most passionate about. During my master's program, I attended an international conference and was very impressed by the many impactful contributions from the Imperial group. This is when I realised that being a part of this group would be a dream for me.

Looking back now, my PhD years have been some of the best of my life. I am a completely different person compared to when I started and I feel I have grown in so many areas, not just academically. Your support is not only making a difference in the world, but also making a huge difference in someone's life.”

Herman Mehta: President's PhD Scholar, Faculty of Engineering (2026)



“At Imperial I found the perfect combination of research interests and capabilities. I had the opportunity to work with some of the leading scientists in my field of research and Imperial provided me with the resources needed to make meaningful contributions to the field.

I am deeply grateful for the support that I received for my PhD. It would not have been possible to achieve what I did at Imperial anywhere else in the world. Imperial attracts some of the best talent from across the world and your donation could be the deciding factor for someone being able to attend and avail this opportunity.”

Faris Chaudhry: Faculty of Natural Sciences Dean's Fund undergraduate recipient (2026)



“I used the Dean's Fund to cover travel and accommodation costs to attend the International Joint Conference on Neural Networks in Rome, where I presented my paper on Physics-Informed Neural Networks for modelling a particular kind of wave in discrete lattice systems.

Without this support, I would not have been able to participate in an experience that helped me build confidence as a researcher and gain valuable feedback on the future direction of the work and my research. I am grateful for the opportunity to have shared my work internationally and engage with leading researchers in my field. It was an experience that has had a real impact on both my confidence and my future ambitions.

Looking ahead, I hope to continue working at the intersection of mathematics, computation, and theoretical machine learning, either through a PhD or in a research-oriented industry role. My overall time at Imperial has given me the mathematical foundation and research experience needed to take those next steps with confidence.”

Centre for Psychedelic Research

The Centre for Psychedelic Research is recognised internationally as a leading hub for scientific investigation into the therapeutic potential of psychedelic compounds for mental health conditions. Through pioneering clinical studies and neuroscience research, the Centre has helped to advance understanding of how these treatments may offer new approaches for patients whose needs are not met by existing interventions.

The team at the Centre has received notable recognition over the past year. Centre Co-Director, Professor David Nutt, was ranked the world's leading psychopharmacologist (Scholar GPs), and the Centre's other Co-Director Dr David Erritzoe was promoted to Clinical Associate Professor in Neuropsychopharmacology and Psychiatry. They were also both ranked among the top 0.1 per cent most cited researchers globally (Clarivate) in 2025, reflecting the international standing of the Centre's leadership and the growing influence of its work.

Psilocybin therapy as a treatment for anorexia nervosa

Building on earlier research at the centre, a recent pilot study funded in part by the generosity of Imperial College Foundation donors has reported encouraging findings on the potential of psilocybin therapy as a treatment for anorexia nervosa, a condition for which effective interventions remain limited and relapse rates are high. Led by Dr Hannah Douglass, Dr Kate Godfrey, Dr David Spriggs and Professor Robin Carhart-Harris, the trial explored the feasibility, safety and therapeutic potential of psilocybin administered alongside psychological support in adults with long-standing anorexia nervosa. The study focused on patients whose illness had persisted for several years and for whom previous treatment approaches had not achieved sustained remission, addressing a group with particularly significant unmet clinical need. Given the current lack of consistently effective pharmacological treatments for anorexia nervosa, the findings represent an important step in exploring new therapeutic avenues for those living with this complex and often enduring condition.



Now published in the British Journal of Psychiatry, the results showed promising evidence that psilocybin therapy was safe and tolerable in this patient group, while also indicating reductions in eating disorder symptom severity that persisted for up to 12 months after treatment. Researchers also examined potential mechanisms underpinning these changes, including the effects of psilocybin on cognitive flexibility, interoception, mood and neuroplasticity, using measures such as MRI and EEG to better understand the brain-based processes involved. Psilocybin is thought to induce altered states of consciousness and profound introspection, which may be particularly relevant in addressing some of the underlying psychological factors that contribute to anorexia nervosa. While the trial was small and further research in larger controlled studies will be essential, these findings provide supportive early evidence that psilocybin therapy could offer a novel and much-needed treatment approach for a patient group for whom recovery can be especially challenging.

Transforming early cancer detection through breath testing



Professor George Hanna at the breath-testing lab.

A team of Imperial's researchers are developing a pioneering breath test that could transform the early diagnosis of digestive tract cancers, including pancreatic, liver, colorectal, oesophageal and gastric cancers. Led by Professor George Hanna, Head of Imperial's Department of Surgery and Cancer, the programme builds on nearly two decades of research into the detection of cancer through volatile organic compounds (VOCs) found in exhaled breath.

The technology offers a simple, non-invasive and potentially low-cost approach to cancer detection. By analysing characteristic patterns of VOCs produced by cancer-related biological processes, a single breath sample can identify the likely presence of cancer and help distinguish between

different types. Designed for use in primary care settings, the test has the potential to provide family doctors with a rapid and accurate tool for identifying patients who require urgent investigation, helping to overcome one of the greatest challenges in digestive tract cancers: late diagnosis.

This work addresses a significant unmet need. More than 1,000 people across the UK and USA are diagnosed with digestive tract cancers every day, yet many are only diagnosed after their disease has reached an advanced stage. These digestive tract cancers claim over 200,000 lives each year, largely because they are detected too late. Earlier diagnosis dramatically improves outcomes. For example, five-year survival for liver cancer falls from 45% when diagnosed at Stage I to just 5% at Stage IV, while colorectal cancer survival drops from more than 90% at Stage I to around 10% at Stage IV. By enabling earlier intervention, the breath test could increase access to curative treatments while reducing the need for more invasive procedures.

The breath-testing platform has already attracted more than £52 million in research support from government, charitable and philanthropic funders. Researchers are now working towards large-scale validation studies that will expand the platform and move the technology closer to regulatory approval and clinical adoption. Ultimately, the vision is a single breath test capable of detecting multiple digestive tract cancers at their earliest and most treatable stages.

The significance of the research has attracted growing national attention. In February 2026, Stuart Andrew, Shadow Health Secretary, and Caroline Johnson, Shadow Cancer Minister, visited Imperial's breath-testing laboratories to meet the research team and learn more about the development of what could become the world's first breath test for pancreatic cancer. During their visit, they were shown the technology currently being evaluated in a national clinical trial involving more than 6,000 patients and discussed its potential to save thousands of lives through earlier diagnosis. Their visit reflects the increasing recognition of Imperial's leadership in cancer diagnostics and the transformative potential of this research to improve outcomes for patients worldwide.



Caroline Johnson (left) and Stuart Andrew (middle) at a tour of the breath-testing lab, led by Professor George Hanna (right).

Thank you

We would like to extend our deep appreciation to our US-based donors, whose continued generosity has strengthened Imperial's capacity to drive progress and create lasting change. From opening the doors to education for students with exceptional potential to advancing scientific breakthroughs across some of the world's most pressing challenges, the Foundation's steadfast support has helped Imperial deepen its impact across research, education and innovation. We are especially grateful to the Foundation's Board members for their long-standing commitment to Imperial.

Financial Summary

Funds supported – 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026

Fund	Amount
Economics of Pandemic Preparedness Research Programme	\$ 803,748.00
Department of Computing research	\$ 587,106.00
Research at the MSk Lab (Faculty of Medicine)	\$ 557,000.00

General Fund	\$ 425,000.00
Infectious Disease Research Fund	\$ 300,000.00
Research at the Healthcare Robotics Creative Destruction Lab	\$ 142,000.00
Student Assistance Fund	\$ 99,521.02
Fleming Initiative	\$ 93,265.64
Undergraduate scholarship within the Department of Chemistry	\$ 50,000.00
Research in Eating Disorders	\$ 44,000.00
Named PhD scholarship for female students within the Department of Computing	\$ 41,806.00
Research and teaching activities - Department of Life Sciences	\$ 36,200.00
Scholarships within the Department of EEE	\$ 31,900.00
Imperial Bursary Fund	\$ 27,778.00
MSc Scholarship for Sikh students	\$ 25,000.00
The Imperial Enterprise Lab	\$ 15,000.00
Faculty of Engineering Dean's Fund	\$ 9,832.00
Student Hardship Fund	\$ 7,025.00
Imperial College Business School Dean's Fund	\$ 5,100.00
Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering	\$ 4,000.00
Presidential Scholarship for Black Students	\$ 2,200.00
Research High Five for Life	\$ 1,700.00
Faculty of Medicine Dean's Fund	\$ 1,500.00
President's Scholarship Fund	\$ 1,319.00
Faculty of Natural Sciences Dean's Fund	\$ 1,230.00
Department of Mechanical Engineering	\$ 650.00
Roger Sargent Student Support Fund	\$ 500.00
TOTAL	\$ 3,314,381.45

Areas supported

Areas of support	Amount
Departmental support	\$ 462,312.00
Student support – scholarships, bursaries, hardship funding	\$ 287,049.81
Research	\$ 2,565,019.64
TOTAL	\$ 3,314,381.45

