

Kaplan Assessments Emerging Voices Award Scheme 2026-27 Terms & Conditions

Read before applying

By submitting an application, the lead applicant confirms that they have read and accepted these Terms and Conditions and that the information supplied is complete and accurate. Successful applicants will also be required to sign a separate Award Agreement before any payment or project support begins.

1. About the Award Scheme

1.1 The Kaplan Assessments Emerging Voices Awards 2026-27 (the “Award Scheme”) are administered by Kaplan Testing Services Limited, trading as Kaplan Assessments, company number 16774108, with registered office at 179-191 Borough High Street, London SE1 1HR (“Kaplan”, “we”, “us” or “our”).

1.2 The Award Scheme supports emerging researchers whose work can contribute to digital English assessment, with clear relevance to the Kaplan Test of English (“KTE”).

1.3 These Terms and Conditions govern applications and selection. A separate Award Agreement will govern the funded project, payment, intellectual property, confidentiality, data support and deliverables for each successful applicant.

2. Key dates

Applications open	21 st September 2026
Application deadline	30 November 2026 at 23:59 UK time
Private outcome notification	Before 24 December 2026, subject to completion of review and due diligence
Anticipated project start	Early 2027, after the Award Agreement and required approvals are in place
EALTA recognition event	During the 2027 EALTA Annual Conference, subject to final conference and sponsorship arrangements
Project completion	Within 12 months of the agreed project start date, unless Kaplan approves a written variation

2.1 Kaplan may amend these dates where reasonably necessary. Any material change will be published on the Award Scheme webpage and communicated directly to applicants where practicable.

3. Award package

3.1 Kaplan intends to make up to two awards. Each award package comprises:

- a research award of £2,500;
- reasonable mentoring from Kaplan Assessments on project planning, ethics, delivery, dissemination and conference participation;
- one standard registration for the 2027 EALTA Annual Conference, subject to the final conference arrangements and the recipient meeting registration requirements;
- public recognition at a Kaplan-sponsored EALTA conference event, with an opportunity to introduce the project; and
- agreed opportunities to feature the recipient and project in Kaplan and, where approved, EALTA communications.

3.2 Conference travel, accommodation, subsistence, visa, insurance and other attendance costs are not included unless Kaplan confirms otherwise in writing.

3.3 The recognition event is separate from EALTA's formal academic programme. The award does not provide an automatic paper, poster, workshop, symposium or other programme slot. Any formal EALTA proposal must be submitted through EALTA's normal process and will be subject to its independent review criteria.

3.4 Award benefits are non-transferable and no cash alternative is available for mentoring, conference registration or the recognition event. If a recipient cannot attend, Kaplan may offer an alternative form of recognition but is not required to provide a cash substitute.

3.5 Kaplan may make fewer than two awards, or no award, if the review panel concludes that applications do not meet the required standard or if legal, financial or operational checks cannot be completed satisfactorily.

4. Eligibility

4.1 The full eligibility criteria published with the call form part of these Terms and Conditions. The lead applicant must satisfy every mandatory criterion at the application deadline and remain eligible until the Award Agreement is signed.

4.2 Applicants may be of any nationality. For the inaugural cycle, the lead applicant must be enrolled at, employed by, or formally affiliated with a recognised higher education institution in the UK.

4.3 Current employees of Kaplan group companies, people directly involved in administering or judging the Award Scheme, and their immediate household members are not eligible to apply.

4.4 Collaborators may be included, but the lead applicant is responsible for the accuracy of the application and delivery of the project. Only the lead applicant is the award recipient unless the Award Agreement states otherwise.

4.5 Kaplan may request evidence of age, enrolment, employment, institutional affiliation, degree status, PhD award date, supervisor support, residence or other eligibility information. Failure to provide satisfactory evidence may result in disqualification or withdrawal of an offer.

4.6 Payment and participation are subject to applicable sanctions, anti-fraud, anti-bribery, tax, identity, banking and compliance checks. Kaplan may be unable to make an award or payment in certain circumstances even where the academic application is strong.

5. Applications

5.1 Applications must be submitted through [Application Submission Form](#) by the stated deadline. Late, incomplete, inaccessible, corrupted or misdirected applications will be rejected.

5.2 Each person may submit one application as lead applicant. If more than one lead application is received, Kaplan may require the applicant to nominate one application or may reject all duplicate submissions.

5.3 Applications must be in English and must use the required form and word limits. Applicants are responsible for retaining a copy of everything submitted.

5.4 The lead applicant must ensure that every named supervisor, mentor, referee or collaborator knows that their information is being supplied to Kaplan and has been given access to the Applicant Privacy Notice.

5.5 Applicants must not include confidential, personal, copyrighted or proprietary information that they are not authorised to disclose.

5.6 Applicants must disclose:

- all actual or potential conflicts of interest;
- any current or proposed funding that overlaps with the work in the application;
- whether generative AI or other automated tools were used to prepare any part of the application; and
- any planned use of generative AI in participant recruitment, instrument creation, coding, analysis, scoring, reporting or dissemination.

5.7 Use of generative AI is not automatically prohibited. The applicant remains fully responsible for accuracy, originality, academic integrity, data protection, confidentiality and compliance with institutional policy. Non-public KTE information must never be entered into an unauthorised public AI tool.

5.8 Kaplan may contact the applicant, supervisor or institution to clarify information, confirm support or verify eligibility. Kaplan is not obliged to allow material changes to a proposal after the deadline.

6. Eligible projects and KTE relevance

6.1 Projects must be prospective or at an early stage and must make substantive use of the award. Completed projects and applications seeking only retrospective recognition are not eligible.

6.2 The project must address the annual theme and explain clearly how the findings could inform KTE design, delivery, score use, candidate experience, accessibility, fairness, opportunity or responsible digital innovation.

6.3 The project does not have to use KTE operational data. Applicants may propose research using public KTE materials, practice or demonstration access, self-generated data, participant interviews or surveys, or approved KTE summary outputs.

6.4 Applicants must identify every requested KTE data item, material, voucher or staff input and mark it as “essential” or “desirable”. If Kaplan cannot provide an essential request, the proposal may be rejected, placed on reserve or offered subject to a feasible redesign.

6.5 No statement in the call, application guidance or correspondence guarantees access to KTE data, test content, participants, staff, systems, scoring services or fee waivers.

7. KTE data and support bands

Support band	What it means
Band A - public/open materials	Public technical materials, website information, general policy documents and public practice materials.
Band B - low-risk support	Practice or demo access, limited research vouchers or fee waivers
Band C - aggregated outputs	Kaplan runs agreed analyses internally and supplies safe summary tables, counts, means, distributions or other limited descriptive outputs. The underlying record-level data are not supplied.
Band D - restricted record-level data	Exceptional access to de-identified or pseudonymised record-level data under a separate data-sharing schedule, security controls and approval process. In cases where the applicant recruits project participants to take the KTE test, the applicant will enter into a separate data sharing agreement and research participation consent with the research participant.
Unavailable by default	Identifiable candidate data, data about test takers under 18, biometric data, item psychometric parameters, secure item content, security rules and other security-sensitive materials.

7.1 Approval of an award does not automatically approve a Band C or Band D request. Any non-public support remains subject to separate feasibility, privacy, security and legal review.

7.2 Where non-public KTE data or materials are approved, the recipient and, where applicable, their institution must sign a separate data-sharing or confidentiality schedule. The schedule may set controls on users, devices, storage, access, analysis, onward sharing, retention, deletion, incident reporting and publication.

8. Review and selection

8.1 Kaplan will first conduct an administrative eligibility and completeness check. Eligible proposals will then be independently scored and moderated by a panel comprising Kaplan reviewers and members of the KTE Technical Advisory Board or other suitably qualified external experts.

8.2 EALTA supports promotion and conference recognition but does not select recipients and is not responsible for the outcome of applications.

Evaluation criterion	Weight
Fit with annual theme and KTE relevance	20%
Importance and originality of the research question	15%
Methodological quality and feasibility	20%
Potential value to KTE and the wider field	20%
Applicant capability and supervisor/mentor support	10%

Evaluation criterion	Weight
Dissemination and visibility potential	10%
Budget and value for money	5%

8.3 Ethical credibility and participant protection are threshold conditions. A proposal that is not ethically or operationally credible will not be funded regardless of its numerical score.

8.4 Panel members must declare conflicts of interest and will not review affected applications. Kaplan may seek additional specialist, legal, finance, data-protection or security advice before making an offer.

8.5 The panel will not reward scale for its own sake. A focused, well-supported and deliverable study may score more highly than an over-ambitious proposal.

8.6 In a tie between proposals of comparable quality, the panel may give preference to first-time applicants for external research funding or to projects that meaningfully involve underserved candidate groups or underrepresented educational contexts.

8.7 Selection decisions are made at Kaplan's discretion in accordance with the published criteria. Kaplan may create a reserve list.

9. Notification and acceptance

9.1 Kaplan intends to notify all lead applicants by email before 24 December 2026. Timings may change if clarification, conflict, finance or compliance checks take longer than expected.

9.2 An outcome notification is not a binding award until the successful applicant has:

- accepted the offer by the stated deadline;
- provided all requested identity, institutional, banking and compliance information;
- agreed a feasible project plan and KTE support package;
- confirmed the ethics and data-protection route; and
- signed the Award Agreement and any data-sharing or confidentiality schedule.

9.3 If a selected applicant does not complete these steps within the required period, Kaplan may withdraw the offer and approach a reserve applicant.

9.4 Kaplan may provide brief general feedback but is not obliged to provide individual scoring sheets, reviewer identities or detailed academic feedback.

10. Payment and use of funds

10.1 Unless the Award Agreement states otherwise, the £2,500 award will be paid in two instalments: 60% (£1,500) after the agreement is signed and project commencement conditions are met, and 40% (£1,000) after Kaplan accepts the required final deliverables.

10.2 Payment will be made to the recipient, as specified in the Award Agreement. Payment is subject to successful compliance checks.

10.3 The award is not an employment contract, consultancy appointment or promise of future work. The recipient is responsible for obtaining advice about any personal tax, benefits, immigration, visa, scholarship or institutional consequences of accepting the award.

10.4 Funds must broadly follow the approved budget. Appropriate uses may include participant costs, transcription, research software or licences, travel required for data collection, minor research assistance, accessibility costs and approved dissemination costs.

10.5 Unless Kaplan approves otherwise in writing, funds must not be used for tuition or degree fees, unrelated living expenses, repayment of debt, large capital equipment, institutional overheads, activities already fully funded elsewhere or expenditure incurred before the Award Agreement start date.

10.6 A material budget change requires prior written approval. The recipient must provide a short final expenditure statement and reasonable supporting information if Kaplan requests it.

10.7 Kaplan will not increase the award if the project costs more than anticipated or takes longer than planned.

11. Project delivery, ethics and conduct

11.1 The recipient must conduct the project with academic integrity, professional care and in accordance with applicable law, institutional policy, research-ethics requirements, data-protection law and the agreed project plan.

11.2 No participant recruitment or data collection may begin until the required institutional ethics approval or written confirmation of exemption has been obtained and supplied to Kaplan.

11.3 The recipient is responsible for informed consent, safeguarding, participant welfare, secure data management and the lawful use of third-party materials.

11.4 The recipient must notify Kaplan promptly of any serious delay, change in status, loss of supervision, ethics concern, complaint, data incident, conflict of interest, research-integrity concern or other event that may affect delivery.

11.5 Material changes to the research question, method, sample, KTE data request, project end date, budget or lead researcher require Kaplan's written approval.

11.6 Kaplan mentoring is advisory. Responsibility for research design, ethics, analysis, conclusions and institutional compliance remains with the recipient and their supervisor.

12. Deliverables and dissemination

12.1 The precise schedule will be set out in the Award Agreement. Expected deliverables include:

- a confirmed project plan and ethics/data-management update at the start of the project;
- a short interim progress update at the agreed midpoint;
- a final research report;
- a concise public-facing project summary and implications note;
- a final expenditure statement;
- brief project remarks for the Kaplan-sponsored EALTA recognition event, where attendance is reasonably possible; and
- participation in one agreed Kaplan dissemination activity, such as a webinar, interview or written feature.

12.2 Formal journal publication or conference acceptance is encouraged but is not guaranteed and is not, by itself, a condition of receiving the final instalment unless the Award Agreement says otherwise.

12.3 All public outputs must acknowledge the award using wording agreed with Kaplan. A standard disclaimer should make clear that the findings and views are those of the researcher and do not necessarily represent Kaplan.

13. Intellectual property, publication and confidentiality

13.1 The recipient will retain ownership of copyright and intellectual property in their original research outputs, subject to any rights held by their institution, collaborators or third parties and subject to Kaplan's ownership of KTE data, materials, systems, brands and confidential information.

13.2 As a condition of the award, the recipient will grant Kaplan a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to reproduce, store, publish, communicate, summarise and cite the agreed final report, public summary and related award outputs for research, validation, educational, corporate and promotional purposes, with appropriate attribution. The detailed scope will be set out in the Award Agreement.

13.3 Where a project uses non-public KTE data or materials, the recipient must provide proposed publications, conference abstracts and presentations to Kaplan sufficiently in advance for a limited review of confidentiality, security, data-protection risk and factual accuracy. Kaplan will not seek to suppress findings solely because they are critical or unfavourable.

13.4 The recipient must not publish secure item content, identifiable or re-identifiable candidate information, confidential operational information or any material prohibited by the Award Agreement or data-sharing schedule.

13.5 The recipient may not use Kaplan name or logos in a way that implies endorsement of the research findings. Logo use requires prior written approval.

14. Publicity and conference recognition

14.1 By accepting an award, the recipient agrees that Kaplan may publish their name, institutional affiliation, project title, short biography, award status and agreed project summary and may share the minimum information required with EALTA for conference registration and the recognition event.

14.2 Kaplan will seek a separate release or consent where required for promotional photographs, recorded interviews, video, audio, testimonials or other optional content beyond the core award announcement and event administration.

14.3 Kaplan and EALTA may change the format, timing, location or availability of the sponsored conference event. If the event is cancelled or materially changed, Kaplan may provide an alternative recognition opportunity. No formal EALTA programme place or conference outcome is promised.

15. Withdrawal, suspension and termination

15.1 A recipient may withdraw by giving written notice. Any unspent funds or amounts relating to undelivered work may have to be returned, as specified in the Award Agreement.

15.2 Kaplan may suspend support, withhold an instalment, terminate the award or require repayment where there is:

- materially false, misleading or incomplete application information;

- loss of eligibility or required institutional support;
- research misconduct, plagiarism, fraud or undisclosed conflict of interest;
- failure to obtain or comply with ethics, data-protection or safeguarding approval;
- misuse of funds, KTE data, confidential information, branding or award status;
- material non-delivery that is not remedied after reasonable notice; or
- a legal, sanctions, security or compliance reason that prevents continuation.

15.3 Kaplan will normally give the recipient an opportunity to explain and, where appropriate, remedy a breach before termination, except where immediate action is required to protect people, data, security, legal compliance or research integrity.

16. Procedural review and complaints

16.1 Academic judgements about proposal quality are final and are not subject to re-marking or appeal.

16.2 An applicant may request a procedural review only where they reasonably believe that: the published eligibility rules were applied incorrectly; a material procedural irregularity affected the outcome; or a relevant conflict of interest was not managed.

16.3 A procedural-review request must be sent to EmergingVoices@kaplan.co.uk within 10 working days of the outcome notification, identify the specific ground and provide supporting information. Dissatisfaction with a score or disagreement with reviewer judgement is not a valid ground.

16.4 Kaplan will appoint a person not materially involved in the original decision to review the procedure. The review outcome will be final.

17. Data protection

17.1 Kaplan will process personal information in accordance with the [Applicant Privacy Notice](#). Applicants must read that notice before submitting the application.

17.2 Core application processing does not rely on consent. Separate consent may be requested for optional marketing, promotional media or accessibility information where appropriate.

18. Changes, cancellation and liability

18.1 Kaplan may amend, suspend or cancel the Award Scheme where necessary because of legal, financial, security, operational, conference or other circumstances outside its reasonable control. Kaplan will seek to minimise adverse effects and communicate material changes.

18.2 Applicants and recipients are responsible for their own application, research and attendance costs except for benefits expressly included in the award. Kaplan is not responsible for indirect or consequential loss, loss of opportunity, institutional decisions, tax or visa consequences, or costs above the stated award.

18.3 Nothing in these Terms and Conditions excludes or limits liability where it would be unlawful to do so.

19. General

19.1 These Terms and Conditions and any Award Agreement are governed by the law of England and Wales, and the courts of England and Wales will have jurisdiction, subject to any mandatory legal rights that apply.

19.2 EALTA is not a party to these Terms and Conditions and is not responsible for the administration, selection, funding or delivery of the Award Scheme.

19.3 If any provision is found invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions will continue to apply.

19.4 Questions about the Award Scheme should be sent to EmergingVoices@kaplan.co.uk.

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