

BBSRC collaborative training partnerships

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) , UK Research and Innovation
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[Start application](#)

UK registered businesses can apply for funding to set up and run collaborative training partnerships, in collaboration with research organisations. These partnerships should address industrial research challenges.

The programme aims to:

- build capacity
- address strategic skills challenges in the UK bioeconomy
- provide candidates with research, innovation and transferable skills.

The lead applicant should not be eligible for UKRI or BBSRC grant funding.

We will fund up to 10 partnerships to support up to 75 four-year studentships per year. There will be three consecutive intakes. The first cohort will be in 2022-23 and the final cohort will be in 2024-25.

Who can apply

We are keen to see the training of doctoral candidates in centres of research excellence which promote and facilitate inter- and multi-disciplinary working and expose doctoral candidates to a wide range of expertise.

Collaborative training partnerships must:

- be led by industry
- have a UK research and/or manufacturing base
- include a lead applicant who is not eligible for UKRI-BBSRC grant funding.

CTPs may be led by a single company, but where relevant we encourage multi-partner bids involving two or more companies, assuming collaborative agreements are in place. In some instances, it may be appropriate for a defined network to be awarded an allocation of studentships to distribute (either competitively or strategically) on behalf of a consortium of companies, providing that details of how the resultant cohort will be managed are acceptable.

Through this approach, UKRI-BBSRC expects integrated plans for research, innovation and training which meet UKRI-BBSRC's strategic priorities, address sector skills challenges and foster inter-disciplinarity.

An industry organisation may **only submit one proposal as lead applicant**. There is no limit to the number of organisations within the partnership. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact UKRI-BBSRC for advice if they are considering being part of more than one partnership.

Managing a UKRI-BBSRC CTP is a significant undertaking and each potential applicant should consider carefully the benefits vs obligations. Those non-academic organisations not in receipt of CTP funding can still be awarded individual CASE studentships through collaboration with UKRI-BBSRC DTP organisations.

What we're looking for

Working in partnership

We encourage applications from non-academic and academic organisations, including:

- partners from business
- academia
- charities

- public sector research establishments (PSRE).

You can apply to be a full partner or associate partner. Full partners will be expected to:

- make decisions
- contribute resources or advice as per an individual agreement.

Associate partners will have fewer privileges than full partners, but may still contribute some resource or advice as per an individual agreement.

Where associate partners are named on a CTP application, the partnership must demonstrate that there is significant added value from their inclusion. This may include (although is not limited to):

- financial commitments to underwrite a number of studentships
- commitment to cover the costs of access to facilities or training that cannot otherwise be provided
- strategic links to an important stakeholder or user.

Details of any degree-awarding research organisations (i.e. universities) aligned with the partnership should be included in the application. Eligible research organisations can be included as 'associate partners' on a CTP application.

It is the responsibility of the partners involved in recruitment of doctoral candidates to confirm individual candidate eligibility, and to have an open, transparent and merit-based recruitment process, cognoscente of equality and inclusion considerations.

Whether an individual organisation or a consortium, partnerships must show a clear strategy for how they will work to deliver their goals and how they will grow and mature collaborations over the funding period.

Proposals must justify their structure, make a clear case for the size of the partnership, and the added value each partner brings to the delivery of training and to the doctoral candidate experience. UKRI-BBSRC acknowledge that it may take time for a new collaborative arrangement to fully evolve and for partnerships to be consolidated and will direct the assessment panel accordingly.

Partnerships will be encouraged to include smaller companies and organisations offering centres of excellence in bioscience research, innovation and training. Applications including these will be given extra weight in the final studentship allocation process.

Capacity building across sectors and industries of the UK bioeconomy

Our aspiration is to integrate businesses of all sizes, UK regions and from across supply and distribution chains into doctoral training provision. This is intended to help the identification and addressing of short- and long-term skills challenges faced by sector and industry employers.

Partnerships will be expected to deliver leading edge, frontier and applied bioscience research and innovation training across the remit of UKRI-BBSRC and address strategic bioscience skills and capacity challenges faced by their sector and aligned to the Forward Look for UK Biosciences. Partnerships may highlight how their proposal will address other challenges identified in the government's Industrial and Bioeconomy strategies.

There is no expectation that an individual CTP proposal should seek to cover the full range of UKRI-BBSRC's priorities. Partnerships are advised to play to their research and innovation strengths and identify bioscience topic areas where they have world-class expertise and infrastructures to develop disciplinary expertise in their doctoral candidates. Where they are seeking to use the CTP to grow capacity in a new research or innovation area, they must justify their rationale.

CTPs will be expected to enable an appropriate balance of support for frontier bioscience, strategic priorities and areas of skills shortages through the CTP model, and set their own targets.

Applicants will be encouraged to embrace interdisciplinary approaches to bioscience where there is a strategic need for these skills and where the partnership has the capability to do so. Collaboration between CTPs and other training investments made by UKRI, institutions and other funders will be encouraged to facilitate this interdisciplinarity.

Defining an excellent collaborative studentship

All doctoral projects on a CTP programme must be conducted in collaboration between a non-academic and academic partner. Collaborative studentships are characterised by:

- **high-quality project:** a challenging, feasible and realistically achievable doctoral project that stimulates excellent research. Through a truly collaborative approach, it provides tangible benefits to all partners.
- **high-quality training environment:** through access to distinctive but complementary environments, partners provide a stimulating framework for research training in the proposed field. Joint supervision gives a unique and broadening perspective on the impact of collaborative research.
- **high-quality student experience:** an enriched integrated training experience allows the student to acquire novel skills and expertise. The student gains a wider understanding of how their research may have an impact in a wider context that will enhance their future employability.

Developing highly skilled and employable people

UKRI-BBSRC expects partnerships to provide skills provision geared toward preparing doctoral candidates for employment in varied, highly skilled jobs across the bioeconomy, academia and beyond. Partnerships are expected to describe how

individual research projects sit within a broader structure of training designed to give doctoral candidates learning in:

- the technical and analytical aspects of research
- critical and creative thinking and problem-solving skills
- quantitative and computational techniques (including artificial intelligence and machine learning) for the production, management, analysis and dissemination of research data
- experimental design and statistics appropriate to a discipline to ensure research results are robust and reproducible
- research integrity, ethics and reproducibility
- contextual skills and knowledge for business, for instance in management and leadership, markets, supply chains, intellectual property, regulation etc. relevant to the sector, and other areas identified by the partnership
- enterprise and entrepreneurship in the biosciences
- communication and engagement of their work with different stakeholders
- wider transferable skills development in response to personalised training needs analysis.

UKRI-BBSRC recognises that high-quality supervision is an integral part of developing highly skilled people and expects formal systems to be in place for the continuing professional development of supervisory skills for all staff with doctoral supervisory responsibilities.

UKRI-BBSRC welcomes applications describing other innovative models of doctoral training with academic partners, including the co-creation of projects and training elements with academic organisations, non-bioscience disciplines and other doctoral programmes to meet the objectives of the programme.

Cohort management

Current good practice advocates that doctoral training is most effective when delivered in viable cohorts and each CTP should aim to support around 10 doctoral candidates (UKRI-BBSRC funded and other) per annum to build critical mass and enable doctoral candidates to train together.

Training as part of a cohort is highly beneficial in terms of the support doctoral candidates receive from one another and the training opportunities available to them.

Applicants are expected to outline their strategy for enabling optimal peer-to-peer interaction and developing a cohort identity across all partners. Applicants requesting fewer than 10 studentships per annum not belonging to a defined cohort will need to provide compelling justification of lower numbers and explain how doctoral candidates will be integrated into a more comprehensive cohort over time.

It may be possible for an allowance to be made if the proposed focus of the CTP is in an area of recognised strategic importance or in need of building national capability.

Placements

Placements are a key feature of CTP and UKRI-BBSRC expects all doctoral candidates on a CTP programme to undertake a placement.

This may come in the form of research placements such as the CASE model of collaborative training (i.e. 3-18 month placements with the industry partner) where the placement is directly related to the research project, or in other models such a professional and practice-based doctorates or industrial doctorates in which doctoral candidates spend as much as 75% of their time situated with the industry partner.

Alternatively, placements could be used more flexibly for experiential learning of professional skills for business and/or entrepreneurship. All placements should be developed in collaboration between the partners with input from the doctoral candidate. Placements can be based overseas. All costs (e.g. travel, accommodation and lab costs) associated with the placement must be met by the industry partner.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

As per UKRI's policies on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), inclusivity will be a core feature of this second phase of CTP. Partnerships are asked to describe their strategy for EDI to enable the wide participation of doctoral candidates from all backgrounds, and the support systems in place to protect their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

This should include the embedding of EDI principles at all levels and in all aspects of research and training practice in the CTP, including the selection and management of doctoral candidates and cohorts, and ensuring EDI principles are embedded as appropriate within research programmes. This may also include the consideration of re- and up-skilling existing employees within partner companies to doctoral level.

The plan should consider current good practice to make allowances for career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working and alternative working patterns (please see our [Equality and Diversity webpages](#) for further information). As flagship investments, CTPs are expected to take a wider leadership role in driving improved EDI within relevant areas.

Partnerships must describe their strategy and actions in a **dedicated EDI plan**, as a two-page additional document submitted as part of the proposal documentation.

Please see **Annex 3** for more information.

Governance of the partnership

Partnerships will be expected to describe:

- the governance arrangements that will enable effective decision-making and engagement with all relevant stakeholders to deliver the objectives
- the arrangements for sharing best practice amongst the partners and with other CTPs

- how the partnership will ensure UKRI-BBSRC receives value for money in the delivery of PhD training.

Collaborative agreements

At the time of application, collaborative agreements should be in place regarding management of the doctoral candidate's work, and agreements concerning any intellectual property that may arise as a result. This collaboration should be effectively managed, to maximise the benefits for all parties concerned.

Whilst new intellectual property may arise from some studentships, it should not be expected in most cases.

Monitoring progress and capturing impact

Partnerships will be expected to describe:

- what success looks like for their doctoral candidates
- how the CTP will deliver this
- what evidence they will capture to measure progress and show impact towards their goals
- the process of capturing the data.

UKRI-funded doctoral candidates are required to use our nominated online system to provide an annual update of information relating to the outputs, outcomes and impacts arising from their UKRI funded research and training. These updates must be provided during the life of the studentship and for at least three years after the funding has finished. Further information on reporting requirements can be found on the UKRI website.

UKRI-BBSRC will describe what key information it will require from CTPs in annual reports including diversity statistics for doctoral candidate recruitment, financial leveraging, training and development activities offered and examples of doctoral candidate achievements.

UKRI-BBSRC wishes to continue a high level of engagement with successful partnerships. This will include the partnerships being able to seek advice on issues which may emerge in their management of the CTP, as well as enable UKRI-BBSRC to provide guidance on emerging skills issues and policy developments. This will take the form of the annual partnership visit and good practice sharing events.

In submitting a proposal to become a UKRI-BBSRC CTP, the research organisations involved thereby agree to comply with monitoring arrangements established by UKRI-BBSRC, and to work in partnership with UKRI-BBSRC to support its priorities for PhD training.

Costs

It is important for UKRI-BBSRC to form partnerships with organisations which have a clear and long-term strategy for developing their bioscience research and innovation, and where this is backed up by recent and ongoing investments.

Therefore, in assessing proposals to become CTPs, UKRI-BBSRC will ask its assessment panel to take account of the investment that applicants are committed to making in their bioscience research, innovation and training relevant to UKRI-BBSRC's remit. This may also include the co-funding of additional studentships, a commitment to enhanced training grants or improved access to research facilities.

We expect around 20% of the total cost of delivering the CTP programme to be supported by the CTP partner(s) and other sources (except other research council sources). This includes administrative resource, stipend top-ups, cohort training etc. We recognise that the contribution from the non-academic partner may be a mix of cash and in-kind contributions.

It is important that all financial and in-kind contributions and their justification are recognised in all proposals.

Businesses employing more than 50 employees will be expected to contribute £1,400 per annum per doctoral candidate to academic partners. However, businesses employing fewer than 50 people do not have to pay this.

UKRI-BBSRC will contribute funds towards the doctoral candidates' tuition fees, stipend and research and training support in line with UKRI policy.

- **Research Training Support Grant – £5,000 p.a. per doctoral candidate**
- **Fieldwork costs – £230 p.a. per student**

Standard doctoral stipend levels and indicative fees are set annually by UKRI. Financial contributions to the academic partner and/or student may vary and should have been agreed in advance by all partners at the time of application.

It is required that the CTP partner makes a financial contribution to the training of the student, including all additional expenses, such as the cost of travel and accommodation, incurred by the student as a direct result of attendance at the premises of the non-academic organisation during placement or otherwise.

UKRI-BBSRC welcomes proposals which use UKRI-BBSRC's investment to leverage additional funding from other sources. The leverage of funding must fit with UKRI-BBSRC's remit and is particularly welcome where it supports UKRI-BBSRC's priority research areas.

Where businesses are involved in international partnerships relevant to UKRI-BBSRC's priorities, proposals may also wish to explain how their PhD training programme may attract international doctoral candidates and investment from international sponsors, bearing in mind UKRI-BBSRC does not permit the funding of doctoral candidates (including international doctoral candidates) on grants.

Partners will be expected to contribute **an appropriate level of administrative resource** to manage the programme and gather evidence of impact as required. UKRI-BBSRC will **not** cover administrative costs for the CTP partnership. Match funding of studentships is encouraged, but not mandatory.

Awards

Awards will be made in the form of individual profiled training grants and successful partnerships will be supported for three cohorts.

The cash limit of the grant will be specified, and information will be given on the number of studentships this could support. However, the indicative number of studentships given is for guidance only.

The flexibility of training grant terms and conditions means that organisations can seek part-funding from other sources to increase the number of studentships being supported provided they are within UKRI-BBSRC's remit.

Proposals will need to meet the [**Statement of Expectations for Postgraduate Training**](#) which sets out common principles for the support of all UKRI funded doctoral candidates.

Awarded proposals will be subject to UKRI Terms and Conditions as well as any specific UKRI-BBSRC conditions. Applicants are advised to refer to the [**UKRI Training Grant Guidance**](#).

How to apply

Applications should be made by the **lead industry partner** only.

Proposals must be submitted using the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system.

The call will be available on Je-S from **13 January 2021** with the deadline for receipt of proposals on **5 May 2021 at 16:00**. Applications will not be accepted following this deadline. Applicants should select the following from the Je-S menu when applying:

- Council: BBSRC
- Document Type: Studentship proposal
- Scheme: Training Grants
- Call/Type/Mode: Collaborative Training Partnerships – 5 May 2021.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read in full the background information provided to better address the requirements of the call including:

- [**Annex 1 – Key Features of BBSRC Collaborative Training Partnerships \(PDF, 50KB\)**](#)
- [**Annex 2 – Assessment Criteria \(PDF, 50KB\)**](#)

- [Annex 3 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(PDF, 43KB\)](#)
- [Annex 4 – Research Topic Areas \(PDF, 313KB\)](#).

A set of attachments which must be completed for all applicants, and uploaded with the training grant proposal, are available and include:

- [Portfolio Agreement Template \(WORD, 70KB\)](#)
- [Cover Letter and Mission Statement Template \(WORD, 26KB\)](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan Template \(WORD, 26KB\)](#)
- [List of Collaborative Studentships \(WORD, 1,066KB\)](#).

As part of their proposal, partnerships should explain how they will ensure that the PhD projects fall wholly within UKRI-BBSRC's remit, and how they will use the training grant flexibility to train doctoral candidates across the breadth of bioscience and in response to emerging skills needs. UKRI-BBSRC require applicants to set out how the partnership will link to and access wider institutional resources, such as other investments in doctoral training, graduate schools, careers service, knowledge exchange facilities etc.

Industrial organisations **must** ensure they are registered on Je-S as an organisation to submit applications. To register, applicants should contact the Je-S Help team at Je-SHelp@rcuk.ac.uk or telephone 01793 444164.

Please note that the process for registering new organisations on Je-S can take up to six weeks, therefore applicants should ensure that sufficient time is allowed before the deadline for registration to be completed.

Applicants can create and prepare an application during the registration process but will be unable to formally submit the application until registration has been completed.

Document checklist

The table below details the document types that need to be included in the application. **Template documents are provided, and documents must be submitted in this format.** Guidance for completion is found on the template documents.

Document	Document type in Je-S
Cover Letter and Mission Statement	Proposal Cover Letter
Portfolio Agreement attachment	Case for Support
ED&I attachment	Other Attachment
List of Collaborative Studentships	Other Attachment

Documents should be submitted using a minimum Arial 11pt and you should maintain margins of at least 2cm (left and right).

How we will assess your application

We will assess proposals in July 2021 (date to be confirmed). The management team of up to 16 proposed partnerships will be invited to an interview with the UKRI-BBSRC assessment panel. Should UKRI-BBSRC receive more than 16 proposals the assessment process will include an initial sift of the applications.

We will announce the allocation of funding by October 2021. The interview date will be made available on the UKRI-BBSRC website as soon as it is available. The first cohort of doctoral candidates will start in October 2022.

In making its decisions, the assessment panel will assess the information provided by applicants as part of their CTP proposal against the objectives of the call and judge the partnership's ability to deliver against them.

More information on the assessment criteria for the competition is given in **Annex 2**.

Contact details

If your question isn't covered in the guidance, or you need further information, email: ctp@bbsrc.ukri.org

Additional info

The ambition of the Collaborative Training Partnership (CTP) scheme is to:

- build capacity and address strategic skills challenges in the UK bioeconomy at doctoral level
- provide candidates with the research, innovation and transferable skills needed to be competitive for high-quality jobs in the labour markets of the bioeconomy, academic and beyond.

We define the bioeconomy as:

All economic activity derived by bio-based products and processes which contributes to sustainable and resource-efficient solutions to the challenges we face in food, chemicals, material, energy production, health and environmental production.

To address this ambition, partnerships applying to this call **must** demonstrate how their proposal will address and meet the following objectives:

- build the capacity of the research and innovation workforce at doctoral level across sectors and industries of the UK bioeconomy to support their productivity and growth
- support businesses and business-led consortia to deliver doctoral programmes that address sector and industry based strategic skills challenges
- develop cohorts of enterprising and entrepreneurial doctoral graduates equipped with the research, innovation and transferable skills they need to compete for high-quality jobs in the bioeconomy and beyond
- ensure accessibility to doctoral training for candidates from diverse backgrounds and personal circumstances
- ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of candidates is protected
- create an outcomes-focused programme capable of evidencing its progress and impact.

CTPs are complementary to the Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) scheme in underpinning UKRI-BBSRC's goal to build the foundation of people and skills for UK Bioscience (see UKRI-BBSRC [Forward Look for Bioscience](#)) with the additionality of aiming to support the aspirations of the government's Industrial and Bioeconomy strategies as they relate to the workforce.

Supporting documents

- [Annex 1 – Key Features of BBSRC Collaborative Training Partnerships \(PDF, 50KB\)](#)
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Timeline

 13 January 2021

Opening date

 5 May 2021 16:00

Closing date

NOTE This is the first phase of our new website – let us know if you have **feedback** or would like to **help us test new developments**.

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