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Will reviewers will be guided regarding assessment/scoring of PRISM (professional research investment and strategy managers) roles that are being added as Co-Is in proposals?
We are keen to see details of the whole team, their roles and their contribution to the delivery of the CDT. Early indications suggest that there will be a variety of Co-Is included on proposals. The need for specific guidance to be given to peer review will be considered.

Is a CDT manager considered a Professional research and investment strategy manager? i.e. Would it be appropriate for a CDT manager to be named as a Co-I (co-investigator)?
It would be appropriate to include the CDT manager as a Co-Investigator on the proposal if they are involved with the development of the proposal and will be maintaining involvement in the centre throughout the lifetime of the grant, like any other member of the management team.

If a research professional is included as a co-I, can the grant also be funding their position (e.g. as Centre Manager)?
Yes, if justified. If applicants are unsure, please email students@epsrc.ukri.org

We were hoping to include a teaching-only colleague as an investigator, to bring their experience to the training programme. Is this permitted, and would it be considered an academic or more like a PRISM role?
EPSRC would be keen to see this. They could be considered as either academic or a PRISM depending on their role in the CDT. For example PRISM roles include knowledge exchange managers and scientific managers.

Can a 100% FTE (full time equivalent) administrator support for the duration of the Centre be requested?

Yes, if it can be justified for peer review.

We are requesting resources for 102 months. What is the maximum period of an administrative job that we can charge for in the case of a new CDT when a programme manager is assumed?
There is no maximum period, provided the request is justified and within the 102 months duration of the grant.

What FTE of investigator would be appropriate? Does 20% director, 10% Co-I seem appropriate?
We don't have any specific guidance; this should be as appropriate to deliver the proposed CDT, and any requested costs should be justified (especially at full proposal stage).

What Co-I costs are eligible?
PI (Principal Investigator)/Co-I time will be funded through the Centre costs. Supervisors' time is not an eligible cost.

In terms of numbers of Co-Is - is no more than 10 Co-I advisable or are more than 10 Co-I not allowed?

We would generally expect no more than 10 investigators to be named, and a strong justification will need to be provided for a larger core management team. No more than 10 investigators are recommended as too many individuals can make the management of the CDT more complex.

Supervisors not on the core management team do not need to be recorded on Je-S. Investigators should not be confused with supervisors; PI/Co-I form part of the core management team who deliver the CDT.

Can investigators and supervisors whose research is less in EPSRC remit be named and supervise interdisciplinary projects that are relevant for a proposed CDT?
There are no specific restrictions on the disciplinary background of the principal or co-investigators, or supervisors, provided the application overall is centred in EPSRC's remit, and the application demonstrates that the chosen applicants are appropriate to deliver the proposed vision.

The call asks that there is a critical mass of supervisors with internationally recognised research excellence, and a proven track record of doctoral supervision. What is a critical mass and to what extent does the EPSRC envisage the involvement of less experienced supervisors and others from wider research teams such as postdocs and technicians being involved in supervisory activities? Is it within the scope of a CDT to support supervisors' engagement with CPD (continued professional development) e.g. encouraging UK Council for Graduate Education research supervision accreditation?
We have defined a critical mass is 20-40 supervisors of internationally recognised research excellence with a track record of doctoral supervision. This does not preclude further supervisors or co-supervisors from different backgrounds and experience, provided that the CDT management team can ensure appropriate support for students across cohorts. There is no numerical limit on supervisors. Costs associated with student supervision may not be included, so support for supervisor CPD is very unlikely to be eligible.

Reasons for increasing number of co-investigators allowed and for research strategy and investment managers (i.e. non-academics) to be allowed as Co-Is.
The recommended limit of 10 investigators is similar to the previous call. The explicit statement on professional research strategy and investment managers is to recognise their important role in successful delivery of CDTs. Further information is available from the PRISM network: https://www.pris-managers.ac.uk/epsrc-cdt-call

Can co-creators from outside of academia (e.g. industry) be named as Co-Is on the bid?
This is only permitted if the co-investigator is based at an eligible UKRI institution at the time the funding opportunity opened; see the UKRI website for a list: https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-research-and-innovation-funding/eligibility-as-an-organisation

Will the funding cover 80% of the cost for CDT coordination and management or do we need to seek external funding for the cost?
We would cover up to 100% of the cost for CDT coordination and management as an eligible cost for this call.

Flexibility in the call

What is the max number of applications an institute can lead?
Please see the Demand Management section of the funding opportunity page for full details. All eligible institutions (those with research degree awarding powers that are eligible for UKRI funding as of

November 2022) are able to submit 1 application as the lead, and those with a limit greater than 1 are listed on the funding opportunity page and were informed of their allocations. There is a different cap on proposals for the UKRI artificial intelligence (AI) CDT call than for EPSRC CDT proposals.

What happens if an HEI (higher education institution) has already submitted two to the AI call and then you want to move one across? Will that HEI end up with three in the AI call? Or will you come back to the HEI and ask them to prioritise?

Initially, proposals should be submitted on the basis of the call's remit, and we encourage applicants to contact EPSRC in advance if unsure. Transfer of a proposal from one call to the other will be done on a case-by-case basis and as an exception.

Are there any rules around the flexibility of costs between outline and full stage proposals, e.g. the 10% rule that often applies? Can partnering organisations/Co-Is on a CDT outline change between outline and full stage?

Minor changes (for example, one Co-I changing or moving institution or additional partners) will be permitted. There should not be substantive changes from the centre described at the outline stage. Where more substantive changes are required in exceptional circumstances, these should be discussed and agreed with EPSRC before submission of the full proposal. There is no specific percentage to the flexibility in costs between outline and full.

Will you be able to modify the numbers included in the Je-S form in the final stage or is it fixed at the outline stage?

Some modification to costs between outline and full proposals will be allowed as long as these do not represent substantive changes from the centre described at the outline stage.

Structure of the CDT

Is there a minimum of institutions that need to be members of the CDT?

Applications must consist of a minimum of 1 institution which must be a research degree awarding body. Single site applications are welcome, proposals do not need to cover multiple sites to be eligible to apply against the funding opportunity. For the geographical breakdown requested at the outline stage, we need to understand where students will be studying by nation/region.

Question related to multi-institutional bids: are the partner institutions classed as project partners? We cannot find where the partner HEI should appear in the JES form?

Outline proposal stage says 'no partner information should be provided on the Je-S form at this stage'. Does this only mean industry partners or does it mean that academic partners in a joint bid should not be mentioned, just the lead institution?

HEIs where Co-Is are based are not classed as project partners. The investigators are named on the Je-S form. No statements of support are required for the outline stage. Instead, where appropriate, applications will need to detail the co-creation of the bid by significant partners (within and between organisations, and with project partners as appropriate) as part of the case for support. Applicants will not be able to record project partner details on the research councils' Je-S system form at this stage. Any queries should be directed to university research offices/Je-S helpdesk.

Is there a view on how well multi-institution training has worked in previous rounds? Is it, generally speaking, preferrable to single institution training?

Both models can work well. Applicants should consider what works best for the research area, cohorts and the student experience for their individual CDT.

Is it a problem if, for good reasons, the CDT is split along 3 locations? This is assuming good online communication and trips for cohort to interact.

This will be dependent upon what works well for individual CDTs. Applicants should consider what works best for the research area, cohorts and the student experience.

Cross-Institution bids: as long as there is a good and viable justification (and evidence) of cohort building (even amongst institutions), is there a limit on the number of institutions that can join in a proposal?

We have not set a numerical limit. In assembling the centre team, applicants must consider what is most beneficial to deliver the centre vision, research environment, and training provision being proposed. All applications have to meet the criteria and most relevantly, demonstrate a coherent, cohort-based proposal.

Leverage

What counts as leverage? Where can leverage come from?

Will the proposal still be considered if it does not meet the 20% cash from industry/third sector? What is expected in terms of co-creation by partners - is this expected to reduce the costs to EPSRC?

All applications must identify cash contributions equivalent to at least 20% of studentship costs. This leverage can come from the host institution(s) and/or industry, civic or other user partners. However, collaboration is wider than cash and/or appropriate in-kind contributions alone. Partners may also: lead design of the centre, co-fund studentships, co-supervise, provide access to facilities or provide samples or data, be on an advisory board or join occasional workshops.

With respect to leverage, will there be any distinction made between industry Co-Investigators and PSREs based Co-Is? Does co-creation refer only to industry, or also to NHS institutions, for example?

We encourage co-creation with a range of research users, which includes NHS institutions as well as industry and PSREs. The funding opportunity page provides a non-exhaustive list, as well as a list of civic organisations.

What forms can collaborations with Catapults take?

We welcome inclusion of Catapults in CDTs. Catapults can provide engagement with user-needs, a good research and innovation environment, for example. Innovative ideas for working with Catapults and similar partners would be welcomed – please contact students@epsrc.ukri.org to have a chat.

Is collaboration - including in kind and funding contribution from EU / non-UK companies welcome in CDT bids?

Does overseas funding such as China Studentships Council count as leverage?

Contributions from non-UK project partners (e.g. international funding agencies, companies or other organisations) are welcome, subject to [UKRI's trusted research and innovation principles](). Students registered at international institutions will not count towards the minimum cohorts, nor will the

additional funding count towards the minimum additional support requirements of the funding opportunity.

Many potential partners (understandably) will not be able to commit at the outline stage as there will be such a big call - can you advise what is expected here. Is an indicative interest sufficient?

Finalised project partner contributions with letters of support are not required at the outline stage. Details such as the leverage model, how you will meet the minimum leverage required and the added value of partner contributions alongside your ideas, vision and the team to deliver the CDT should be provided in the outline case for support at this stage. An indication of cash leverage is requested in the additional information form, to give EPSRC a better idea of expected leverage, and therefore how many CDTs EPSRC's funding is likely to cover.

Is there a risk of not being funded at all if there is a sense that strong partner support is in place?

How important are industrial contacts for the success of a CDT bid, given that some subject areas find it much easier to have industrial collaborators than others.

Partner support is not essential, but you must have the minimum contribution of 20 % of studentship costs. We will be looking for the appropriate partnerships depending on the research areas or sectors being addressed by the CDT.

Can University overheads be included?

No, university overheads cannot be included in costings or as leverage in CDT bids. (UKRI training grants are not funded under the full economic costing (fEC) model.)

If an industrial partner can provide substantial "in kind" support, but little or no cash contribution, would that necessarily be a problem? Will cash contributions be weighted more than the in-kind contribution?

What will be important is the strength of partner co-creation and commitment, including the importance of the research and training to the partner as well as how the involvement of the partner benefits the training experience of the students. We will be looking for partner contributions appropriate to the company and sector and you should explain this in your outline proposal.

Does EPSRC have any guidance on IP (intellectual property)? Each university has different IP policies and with industry's cash input, they may ask for all IPs generated. Will IP policies be assessed?

IP policies will not be assessed but an appropriate governance structure must be in place within the university to deal with such issues. Collaboration agreements must be in place between the university and industry. It is up to universities and partners to take the most sensible approach in such matters.

My proposal is regarding SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and project management. Can one industry-fund scholarship be shared by several small companies? These companies may come from variety of sectors and nations.

Yes, we welcome a variety of models of company engagement and support for students. Contributions from non-UK project partners (e.g. international funding agencies, companies or other organisations) are welcome, subject to UKRI's trusted research and innovation principles.

For user led CDTs which specially target SMEs, will the level of cash funding needed from Industry be reduced?

We expect the level of cash and in-kind contributions and model of engagement to be appropriate to, for example, research and development intensity of the sector or size of the companies or other

partners involved. We expect that collaboration with small and medium-sized enterprises may need a different approach to collaboration than with major international companies.

Letters of Support and Additional Information

As part of the outline submission additional information form, we are required to input HEI and partner contributions towards the CDTs. Is this simply an indication at this stage? Is this value for in-kind or cash contributions, or both?

This should be an indication, although there should not be substantive changes between outline and full proposal. We do recognise that there may be the opportunity to secure further partner contributions between outline and full, and would welcome examples with increased leverage. The additional information form submitted as part of the outline call should include values for cash contributions only.

What additional information/documents can be submitted at the outline stage?

At the outline stage, all that can be submitted through Je-S is a) the Je-S application form, b) a 3-page case for support, c) the additional information form. No additional documents or letters of support can be submitted at the outline stage. It is not possible to submit a cover letter via Je-S, however, if applicable, where the proposal spans the remit of other research councils and applicants have any information EPSRC should be aware of with respect to their application please forward this by email to students@epsrc.ukri.org with the specific subject heading of 'EPSRC CDT Call – Cover Letter Information'. This information will not be seen by the panel.

Letters of support will be required at the full proposal stage.

Is supervision in-kind contribution classed as 'studentship costs' or 'centre costs' on the form please?

Only **Cash** contributions are requested on the Additional Information Form Applicants may provide details of their cash and in-kind contributions within their case for support.

Since letters of support are not required, how do we budget for/justify in-kind contributions from industrial partners?

At this stage letters of support are not required, so contributions should be estimated. Applicants will not be able to record project partner details on the Je-S form at this stage. Instead, where appropriate, applications will need to detail the co-creation of the bid by significant partners (within and between organisations, and with project partners as appropriate) as part of the case for support. Detail should be in line with the assessment criteria, which differ for each focus area.

Funding models

What is UKRI/EPSRC's view on different models for non-academic partner contributions towards studentships, in terms of models used? For example, are there any perceived risks towards partners contributing say 20% studentship costs towards studentships, as opposed to 100% costs for a studentship?

Both models have been used in the past. This will be dependent upon what works well for individual CDTs and their non-academic partners.

Are there specific rules around how partner cash contributions work? For instance, if you have lots of partners each making small contributions, can they go towards a common pot that collectively funds studentships or does each contribution need to be assigned to a specific studentship?

We are happy to be open to flexible approaches - the key thing is that the partnership(s) add value to the CDT. Institutions will need to be cognizant of the need to set up IP arrangements and collaboration agreements.

Will 2 Incorporated Students per cohort of 10 be required?

Not necessarily, but EPSRC will only provide studentship costs for the equivalent of 40 students in total, and there is a minimum requirement to fund 50 students across the 5 cohorts. See worked examples.

Do we need to decide on partner contributions models at outline stage for all the 50 students, i.e. 20% or 100% costs for a studentship?

An idea of your anticipated model is important, but we appreciate that leverage may change before the full proposal stage.

There is flexibility in this dependent upon the availability of leverage. In line with the UKRI terms and conditions, EPSRC funded students must be funded at least 50% by EPSRC. The CDT could be designed to fund 40 EPSRC students at 100% or more studentships based on 50:50 from UKRI/non UKRI sources (which would be equivalent to 40 EPSRC students). Please see worked examples. Applicants may contact EPSRC if unsure on their proposed model.

Interdisciplinarity

What opportunities are there for co-funding interdisciplinary CDTs with other research councils? How will the process work for indicating interest in AHRC/MRC co-funding?

All UKRI Councils are aware of the CDT funding opportunity but only AHRC/MRC have currently confirmed co-funding. All proposals must be centred in EPSRC's remit but can include the remit of all other UKRI Councils as well. As part of the process UKRI Councils will continue to work together regarding potential cross-Council interest in proposals, including panel member suggestions.

These proposals will be assessed in the same way as all other proposals and be part of the portfolio balancing exercise. It is recommended that applicants explicitly refer to AHRC/MRC in their proposals, aligning to the AHRC/MRC vision/strategic plan, etc.

Will Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) engage with this Call as they did last time?

SFI continues to partner with EPSRC, although SFI is not in a position to participate in this particular call for CDTs. SFI and EPSRC encourage continued engagement in existing and new partnerships between collaborators in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

How does this call align with the UKRI call for CDTs in AI?

Proposals focused on the applications and implications of novel and existing artificial intelligence technologies should be submitted to the UKRI AI CDT funding opportunity. Other proposals centred in EPSRC's remit (including proposals focused on the mathematical and computational foundations of AI without a clear application to one of the UKRI AI CDT priority areas) should be submitted to this EPSRC CDT funding opportunity.

Applicants who are unclear about which funding opportunity is best suited to the vision for their CDT should seek advice from EPSRC. We reserve the right to move applications from this funding opportunity

to the UKRI AI CDT funding opportunity before or after the outline assessment, and vice versa, should an application better fit the scope of the other funding opportunity.

What is the guidance for CDTs focusing on robotics regarding whether to target the EPSRC or the AI call. Robotics obviously has a core AI component but at the same time being very much addressing core EPSRC priorities.

We encourage applicants to contact EPSRC if unsure. Proposals are eligible for the EPSRC call unless they are focused on the applications and implications of novel and existing AI technologies, as outlined in the scope of the UKRI AI call.

Is a space-focused CDT within the remits of this call?

All proposals must be centred in EPSRC's remit (and not, for example, in STFC's: https://www.ukri.org/councils/stfc/remit-portfolio-and-priorities/). If you have questions about a specific proposal, please contact EPSRC.

If a bid has potential to be co-funded with another Council or MOD, does the applicant team need to initiate that discussion with the funder in advance of submission (and highlight in the proposal) or will this be facilitated/managed by EPSRC during the assessment process or post-award?

Is there a particular way that proposals should indicate potential interest to MOD (or AHRC, MRC etc) as a potential co-funder)?

This will be managed by EPSRC, and the application and assessment processes are not affected by who may ultimately fund the proposal. Applicants should explicitly refer to other UKRI Councils or MOD in their proposals if relevant. Additional information on the MOD funding is set out in the call document.

Could you elaborate on the way in which interdisciplinary research will be covered, in particular in cases of cross-council work? Do we need to calculate, for example, which percentage would be covered by AHRC or MRC?

All proposals must be centred in EPSRC's remit and all proposals will be assessed against the same criteria, regardless of disciplinary balance. There is no requirement to calculate % remit, but applicants are invited to flag where the proposal spans the remit of other research councils. We will ask other UKRI councils for suggested panel members to ensure proposals are appropriately assessed.

Is interdisciplinarity an evaluated criteria?

No, all assessment criteria have been outlined in the call document. There is no explicit assessment of interdisciplinarity, and centres should be designed in the most appropriate way for each individual centre.

Ministry of Defence (MOD)

Is there a preference for the PI of the MOD-funded CDT to be strongly EPSRC-facing, or could their background be aligned to another research council?

The PI does not have to be EPSRC-facing. In the funding opportunity document, under 'MOD additional information' it states that the MOD is looking to fully support a CDT seeking transformational developments and training in interdisciplinary research. However, the proposal should be centred in EPSRC remit to make it eligible for the call. With regards to a research priority area, a broader programme aligning to key issues would need to be addressed. Please refer to the MOD additional information in the call document for further information.

Does a MOD CDT bid count as part of a HEI's bid allocation? Is the MOD funded CDT in addition to the planned 40 EPSRC funded CDTs or will it form one of the 40?

The MOD CDT does count towards the HEI allocation at outline stage, and should be submitted in line with the timelines for the EPSRC call. The MOD funding is being supplied in addition to the EPSRC budget of £324 million, and therefore will be in addition to the CDTs funded by EPSRC.

How much funding is MOD providing for the CDT?

For the CDT funded by MOD, the funding will be the same as those funded by EPSRC, which includes studentship costs for the equivalent of 40 students over 5 cohorts, with a 100% contribution to eligible costs.

Are there any requirements on nationality or is security clearance required for all academics, students and even companies involved for the MOD case?

Yes - see the Additional Information section of the funding opportunity page.

Can you expand on how the MoD supported CDT will be assessed and if there is any requirement for industrial support as well.

All proposals will be assessed against the same criteria, regardless of who ultimately funds them. To be eligible for the MOD funding, the proposal must address MOD's priorities and meet MOD's additional security requirements, both outlined in the Additional Information sections of the funding opportunity page.

Focus Areas and Cross-Cutting Priorities

Split Between Focus Areas

If all CDTs need to be linked to one of those 7 priorities, what additional information are you looking for in focus area 2?

For those applying through the EPSRC research priority focus area, we expect proposals to demonstrate an outstanding opportunity for students to work together in a cohort to progress the chosen research priority. The research area itself is therefore the focus, as opposed to the user need or innovative approach.

Does EPSRC have some ideas about how the £324M funding will be split between the three focus areas?

There is no pre-defined balance, and the panel outcomes against the assessment criteria will be the main driver behind funding decisions. Our current expectation is to fund more through the user/civic and EPSRC research priority focus areas, and less through the innovative approach focus area.

How will the applications in the three focus areas be assessed? Are they assessed against the applications in that one focus area? Are there quotas for the three focus areas?

One of the three outline assessment criteria is different depending on the focus area being applied for. A panel may look at proposals across different focus areas, but they would be banded and ranked on separate lists. During the portfolio balancing (at outline and full proposal stage), EPSRC will consider the balance across focus areas in making decisions; there are no pre-determined quotas.

The chances of success are strongly dependent on the choice of focus areas. How will ESPRC try to balance this? Can you provide a summary of the previous CDTs and how they were distributed?

These focus areas were not used in previous CDT calls. Overall the panel outcomes against the assessment criteria will be the main driver behind funding decisions, but the portfolio balancing will seek to provide a balanced portfolio in line with the EPSRC Strategic Delivery Plan as set out in the outline funding opportunity.

Many proposals will fall across two or all three focus areas. If you end up with a much higher proportion in one area than the others, will you move some of those proposals between areas to remove the element of chance introduced by requiring that we choose just one area, and (if so) at what stage would you move them?

We recognise that many proposals will address elements of more than one focus area, but we are asking you to choose the most appropriate focus areas for your CDT for the assessment and balancing process. We do not have set numbers of each focus area to be invited to the full proposal stage.

Innovative Approaches

Can you give some more details on what "supporting an innovative approach to CDT delivery: an opportunity for centres to design a new CDT model" would look like? Every CDT will say that it's 'innovative' and many already have unusual and/or interesting approaches. So how would the 'innovative approach strand' differ from normal? For the innovative focus approach, how innovative can we be? How drastically can we change the model?

Under the highly innovative approach focus area we are hoping to see new ideas on innovative different approaches to cohort training. We are aware that there are a number of good approaches currently in existence. We want to see really different approaches such as supporting student mobility between sectors, widening career opportunities and pathways and partnering with business/government/other organisations in new ways etc.

We are open to ideas as long as they meet the call scope and are focused on cohort doctoral training. If you have questions about a specific proposal, please contact EPSRC - we are open to discussing this more.

Miscellaneous – Focus Area and Cross Cutting Priorities

7 research priorities - where can we find these?

These can be found under the objectives of 'world-class ideas' and 'world-class impacts' in the strategic delivery plan.

https://www.ukri.org/publications/epsrc-strategic-delivery-plan/epsrc-strategic-delivery-plan-2022-to-2025/#section-our-strategic-objectives

The Focus Area 1 expects higher leverage. Will proposals targeting this area have any advantage/better chances, besides potentially being prioritised in portfolio balancing? As on paper it may look the least attractive offer for academic institutions to aim for.

Looking at the focus area "Meeting a user-need and/or supporting civic priorities", what are the benefits for CDTs to go down this route, as it requires more financial leverage. Are the chances higher?

As EPSRC will consider the balance across focus areas, the success rate may be different across the three focus areas dependent on the spread and quality of proposals. For example, if most proposals come in through the Delivering an EPSRC research priority focus area, the user need and innovative approach focus areas will likely have a higher success rate as long as they are of excellent quality. Furthermore, if added non-UKRI leverage results in a reduced EPSRC contribution for a given CDT, this may allow EPSRC to fund additional proposals with our available budget. We have said that while the expectation may be 40-50% leverage in some cases, the level of contributions should be justified is as appropriate for the partners involved.

How will you deal with proposals that are centred on your 2nd focus, and have spread across multiple areas in the 7 cross-cutting scientific strategic priorities? Many proposals won't fit neatly within 1 of the 7 areas, let alone 1 of the 3 foci.

We appreciate proposals may cut across multiple EPSRC science priorities and welcome CDT proposals that do this. However, as the 2nd focus area is about demonstrating delivery of an EPSRC research priority, applicants will have to select the most relevant of the 7 EPSRC science priorities, and this will be used in portfolio balancing. We will also look at a more granular level within strategic priorities during the balancing process.

If the focus area selected is Meeting a user-need and/or supporting civic priorities would the leverage expected from non-UKRI partners much higher than 20%? Would this be measured only considering the cash or also the in-kind contributions?

If the 'Meeting a user need' is selected, we would expect in many cases, the proposal to include a higher leverage as users would have more influence on the co-creation and co-delivery of the Centre. Also, industry could potentially see appropriately qualified and trained employees as a result. We are aware, however, that civic bodies may not be able to achieve a contribution of more than 20%. We are looking for contributions appropriate to the Centre partnership, for example, smaller companies may be able to provide a lesser contribution but want genuine co-creation, so please explain this in your proposal.

Could you explain the idea of 'cross-cutting' priorities - three of them are extremely broad (such as Physics and maths powerhouse) and 4 others are narrow (such as 'net zero'). Almost everything falls under 'Physics and maths powerhouse'...

This CDT investment addresses key engineering and physical sciences needs aligned to EPSRC's 7 science priorities and to regional, national and global drivers and opportunities as detailed in the EPSRC strategic delivery plan 2022 to 2025. Of those 7 science priorities, 3 are intentionally broad to encourage discovery research across our remit (physical and mathematical sciences; engineering and technology; digital futures) and 4 are mission-inspired (engineering net zero; artificial intelligence (AI), digitalisation and data: driving value and security; transforming health and healthcare; quantum technologies).

Coming back to 'cross-cutting priorities', do you expect to fund the CDTs predominantly in 'mission areas' or ' Frontiers of science/engineering' is a good enough definition for the CDT area? Please can you elaborate as the 3 broad areas in fact include the 4 mission areas - what criteria should the applicants apply in practice?

There should not be an expectation that proposals would predominately fall within the mission areas. Applicants should look at the EPSRC strategic delivery plan 2022 to 2025 for details and select the most relevant research priority.

Shouldn't there only be 2 'focus areas' - societal connection, or novelty of teaching - rather than 3 with every bid required to show links with one of EPSRC's 7 priorities?

We have selected the focus areas in discussion with our Council and Science, Engineering and Technology Board, and based on our strategic delivery plan. While all proposals need to align to EPSRC's strategic delivery plan, the delivering an EPSRC research priority focus area allows proposals that address EPSRC-centred research challenges, but don't fit well with either of the two other focus areas.

Can the CDT's research have a global/overseas focus, rather than UK focus?

We welcome CDT proposals which include elements of international engagement where they add value to the proposed centre. The proposal would have to be justified against the assessment criteria (for example, the need for this CDT within the broader research and innovation system). Students would also have to meet standard residency requirements. If you have questions about a specific proposal, please contact EPSRC.

Focus area alignment: how is alignment to these being assessed? Will they transfer to full proposal stage later, or can you select a different one than if e.g. industry commitment is not as much as hoped for at outline stage? i.e. changing from area 1 to 2.

One of the three outline assessment criteria is different depending on the focus area being applied for. During the portfolio balancing (at outline and full proposal stage), EPSRC will consider the balance across focus areas in making decisions. Changes of focus area between outline and full proposals will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances, with agreement of EPSRC.

Portfolio Balancing

How many applications are you planning to take forward from outline to full stage?

We anticipate inviting 100-120 proposals to full proposal stage. As in 2018, our demand management modelling was based on receiving approximately 400 outline proposals; we did not reduce this to give institutions the opportunity to submit a diverse range of proposals.

What strategy will inform the rebalancing exercise (i.e. what is considered to be a good balance) given that there are no pre-determined levels of funding for the three focus areas? Are you able to comment on the likely balance between the three focus areas?

The portfolio balancing will mostly seek to reduce adverse outcomes, such as if few funded CDTs are addressing a user and/or civic need, or if no funded CDTs are taking an innovative approach, or if funded CDTs are clustered in one or two science areas.

Many proposals will address multiples of these. The balancing exercise will look at the balance across the focus areas/seven research priorities/geographical location distribution/sectors. The balancing exercise will take place after the panel outcomes.

There is no pre-defined balance, and the panel outcomes against the assessment criteria will be the main driver behind funding decisions. Our current expectation is to fund more through the user/civic and EPSRC research priority focus areas, and less through the innovative approach focus area.

How much weight will you give in the balancing to the locations where students will be based? How is that different from the geographic distribution of the host organisations/applicant institutions?
This will be a factor, although we will look initially at the balance across the focus areas and then EPSRC's 7 science priorities. We need to understand where students will be studying by nation/region as their location may not be at the university leading the bid. Our priority is to reduce adverse outcomes, such as if funded CDTs are heavily clustered in the same geographic area(s).

With the 40 CDT centres being funded, will institutions receive more than 1 CDT or will they be evenly distributed amongst 40 institutions
We will look at the balance across institutions (lead or otherwise) as part of the portfolio balancing process, but this will be done after we have assessed the quality of bids and after other balancing considerations.

Students

For Scottish Universities the 1st Cohort is likely to start in September 2024 (as we start a little earlier), is this an issue?
No.

What is covered in the CDT funding? Is it just the fee and stipend for the PhD students?
The webinar slides and funding opportunity page provide a more detailed list of eligible costs: fees, stipends, research training support, centre delivery, coordination and management, and, for new centres only, start-up costs.

Could you comment if leverage taken from self-funded students counts towards the 20% cash? And is there a distinction?
Self-funded students do not count as incorporated students, and self-funding does not count as leverage for EPSRC. Incorporated studentship awards are those funded by the leverage received from non UKRI funds such as host institutions or project partners. Self-funded students count as aligned students as their funding is not reliant on the CDT funding. Aligned students are able to benefit from CDT activities provided there is no additional cost to their participation. As they are not receiving any funding from UKRI, the UKRI terms and conditions do not apply.

What costs can be requested?

Should we include studentship costs (stipend, fees, RTSG) in the costs requested on Je-S?
Yes.

The UKRI Grant Conditions specify that Incorporated Students (leveraged funding) must not have any UKRI studentship funding. How does that fit in with the rule that you want 10 students per year, 2 Incorporated and that the 8 UKRI are > 50% funded?
EPSRC will only provide studentship costs for the equivalent of 40 students, and there is a minimum requirement to fund 50 students across the 5 cohorts. Any EPSRC funded student has to be funded at

least 50% by EPSRC, but not every student in the CDT has to be EPSRC-funded. See worked examples. If you would like to propose a different model, please contact us using students@epsrc.ukri.org.

What is the level of financial support provided to each student for their own research?
UKRI studentship funding includes a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) component, and this is a contribution towards costs incurred in training research students e.g. the provision of consumables, equipment, travel (including conference attendance), etc. There is no specific minimum, but costs must be justified as providing sufficient support to students, especially at full proposal stage. EPSRC also does not set a cap on RTSG. These costs should be included in the proposal and be appropriate to the CDT and the projects students will be undertaking.

For institutions where our fees are higher than the UKRI standard, can we budget our full fees?
The minimum indicative levels for fees and stipends can be found on the UKRI website. If your standard fee for UK resident students is higher than the minimum (and it is the same fee for all students) we will cover that. Enhanced fees and stipends are eligible costs as long as they are justified.

In terms of student secondments to partner sites, is that covered by RTSG or can be added as an extra?
Student secondments with partners are encouraged. There isn't a specific RTSG allowance per student and EPSRC does not set a cap. Applicants should include the RTSG level required in the case for support along with justification for this request.

Can we cost laptop under student training heading?
This would only be allowed if the laptop was a specialist piece of equipment required for the student's research. A standard laptop would not be an eligible cost for RTSG funds.

Should equipment for individual students be part of the RTSG or costed separately?
This should be included in RTSG.

The current fee basis for UKRI is very low and frequently significantly lower than published fee rates for Masters years and also PhD phases. Can higher fee rates be justified if they are the normal cost basis in an institution? If not, can the difference in fee basis be included as cash contribution.
The minimum indicative levels for fees and stipends can be found on the UKRI website. If your standard fee is higher than the minimum (and it is the same fee for all UK resident students) we will cover that. Enhanced fees and stipends are eligible costs as long as they are justified. UKRI only covers home fees for students. The difference between home and international fees must be covered from other funding sources, or waived – this is up to the institution.

Does CDT funding cover part time studentships?
Yes, all CDTs must offer the option of both full time and part-time studentships; see the UKRI training grant terms and conditions https://www.ukri.org/publications/terms-and-conditions-for-training-funding/

Can funding be requested for additional activities beyond stipends e.g. residentials, conferences, internship opportunities etc.? Can CDTs include funding for Long Term Attachments (LTA) in the proposal? (As is common for STFC)
Yes, provided that the proposal (especially at full proposal stage) details plans for ensuring the experience is beneficial to the research training. This is also subject to any terms and conditions on residency requirements.

Are recognised student fees an eligible cost if the CDT is split across multiple institutions but the taught element is based at one?

Where these can be justified, yes.

"Using current rates" - do you mean 22/23 rates or anticipated 23/34 rates (given that the CDTs don't start until 24/25)

All costs (including stipends and fees) requested in applications should be calculated at current 2022/23 rates with no addition made to consider inflation over the length of the funding period. EPSRC will include indexation at the final funding stage.

With regard to the 4 years funding - can this be used for 1+3 programmes or must the doctorates be 4 years?

There is flexibility on this, provided that CDTs provide a cohort approach to doctoral education (including peer-to-peer learning both within and across cohorts) throughout the lifetime of all students' doctorate training programme. This may include taught course work beyond the first year. The requirement is for a CDT to provide a 4 year doctorate, and a formal, assessable, taught programme. Some CDTs structure this as a 1+3 year programme. However this is not compulsory and different models are welcome.

Placements

For the industry placement of students, could they be paid stipend (as part of their placement) instead of asking industry to pay for placement?

Students could continue to be paid their stipend during an industry placement, provided the placement is relevant to their doctoral training, and subject to our usual terms and conditions. Further information on different kinds of placements can be found here: https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/developing-people-and-skills/epsrc/studentships/flexibility-for-funders/internships-and-placements/.

If a student is to work closely with a non-funded partner (e.g. Hospital or tech company), is there a limit to how many months or years they can be based at that partner?

No, but the UKRI training grant terms and conditions stipulate that students are required to be resident in the UK for the majority of their studies.

How does offering studentships to employees match with open recruitment processes?

The UKRI training grant T&Cs and guidance on open recruitment applies to CDTs. There may be situations, especially for CDTs funded through the innovative approach focus area, where some flexibility is possible, and we encourage people to contact EPSRC with specific examples or questions.

International Students

International collaboration. The funding opportunity states: "students registered at international institutions will not count towards the minimum cohorts, not the additional funding count towards the minimum additional support requirements of the funding opportunity". What about students on Joint PhD programmes who are registered both at the international organisation but also the UK university?

The funding would count if it applied to students based primarily at the UK institution, meeting the UKRI training grant terms and conditions on residency. Please contact EPSRC to discuss any specific examples.

Will there still be a max of 30% international students, independent of the funding model?
Yes. This is the level set by UKRI, and the CDT call is subject to this cap. For international students, international fees may now be charged. However only the home fee level can be claimed from the UKRI training grant or other UKRI funding. UKRI funding may not be used to cover the difference between the home and international fee rate. Institutions will have the flexibility to find international tuition fees from other sources. These sources can include contributions from the institution, co-funding partners or from the students directly. The institution can also choose to waive the additional fees. Please refer to the UKRI guidance on the website.

If you have a project partner abroad and you send the student for 3+ months, does EPSRC cover any costs of living and travel?
Yes. This could be funded under the RTSG heading, if justifiable.

Is there scope to include international academic partners who will fund a set of students in their respective countries (basically yielding international PhD cohorts annually under a single UK based centre)?
This is dependent on its purpose. Students registered at international institutions will not count towards the minimum cohorts but international partners' leverage for students in the UK does count towards the 20% cash contribution. Students must meet the UKRI residence requirements

What is EPSRC's position on involvement of International Branch Campuses of UK Universities in CDTs?
We welcome CDT proposals which include elements of international engagement where they add value to the proposed centre. The proposal would have to be justified against the assessment criteria (for example, the need for this CDT within the broader research and innovation system, the appropriateness of partnerships, and developing a cohesive cohort). Students would also have to meet standard residency requirements. If you have questions about a specific proposal, please contact EPSRC.

Can we collaborate with international centres and groups?
We welcome CDT proposals which include elements of international engagement, where they add value to the proposed centre. Please see the International collaboration section of the funding opportunity page for full details.

The call encourages plans for students to engage externally to their home institution but for international students, this may be incompatible with their visa conditions. Will UKRI/EPSRC liaise with UKRI to make it a level playing field for international students?
We are aware of this issue and it is likely to be considered as part of UKRI's work developing a collective approach to talent funding.

From the online information under International collaborations, what is meant by 'nor additional support? "Where a formal, joint training partnership is proposed, the UK component must be able to stand on its own merits. Students registered at international institutions will not count towards the minimum cohorts, nor will the additional funding count towards the minimum additional support requirements of the funding opportunity."
We welcome CDT proposals which include elements of international engagement where they add value to the proposed centre. Students registered at international institutions will not count towards the minimum cohorts and the additional support for students based internationally will not count towards the 20% cash contribution.

Can students be based at an international partner for a significant portion of the PhD?

UKRI training grant terms and conditions stipulate that students are required to be resident in the UK for the majority of their studies.

Cohort size

Is there a maximum number of students/cohort? If each student has to be 50% EPSRC funded, does this set a maximum number of overall students to 100?

No. EPSRC will contribute no more than the studentship costs equivalent to 40 students, and institutions must underwrite the minimum cash support needed, over and above the funding sought from EPSRC, to deliver at least 50 students over the CDT's lifetime. Any EPSRC funded student has to be funded at least 50% by EPSRC, but not every student in the CDT has to be EPSRC-funded.

Expectations around if we have more than 50 students -. If we increase the cohort size can we stick at funding 20% ourselves or do you expect greater investment.

EPSRC will fund a maximum of the equivalent of 40 studentships. We expect a minimum of 50 students in the CDT. Others need to be funded from other sources, whether this comes from the higher education institutions or project partners.

Are CASE conversion students expected to be included in the bid?

CASE conversion is an additional flexibility in our DTP funding mechanism, not our CDT mechanism. Further information can be found here: https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/developing-people-and-skills/epsrc/studentships/industrial-case/dtp-case-conversion/

 You may design the collaboration model that works best for your CDT.

Does every studentship need to be centred in EPSRC's remit? For example, in the MOD opportunity it mentioned pairing students up on topics bringing different discipline perspectives - would this work for non-MOD CDTs?

Each Centre must primarily fall within the EPSRC remit but individual studentships may have different expertise/challenges. For the example given, applicants should identify and address the shared interest/common alignment between the MOD and EPSRC in their proposal.

Existing CDTs and Start-Up costs

Existing CDTs

Please can you define 'existing centres' - does this relate only to centres that were funded in 2018? What about centres that were funded in previous rounds?

Existing centres are those currently running and have infrastructure currently in place. This would include both the 2013 and 2018 CDTs.

Existing and new CDTs - competition between the established and the new ideas. What is being done to ensure that there is fairness in judging between them? For any established CDT, there is localised expertise, established track record and there is an argument of strong government support. How will this NOT be held against new CDT ideas?

Is there an expectation that proposals for continuations of existing CDTs need to be distinct from the existing CDT in some way?

Applications from new and existing centres will be considered together and assessed according to the criteria in the outline funding opportunity. New centres should set out their ideas for the CDT as set out in the funding opportunity and justify their ability to deliver the CDT ; existing centres will be expected to provide additional information, using their achievements and learning to support their proposal, and to demonstrate added value of further investments.

For existing CDTs applying for renewal, would you expect to see the same 10 Co-Is or inclusion of new Co-Is from existing partners?

There are no expectations. The best management team should be selected to reflect the evolution of the CDT. Existing centres should provide evidence of learning from their previous experiences of running a CDT.

Will the existing centres be prioritised? How differently are renewal proposals from 2018 treated compared with new ones submitted this time?

Applications to refresh existing centres and those to support new centres will be considered together, using the same assessment process and criteria. Existing centres are expected to use their achievements and learning to support their proposal and to demonstrate the added value of further investment. EPSRC will not set any expectation on the number of existing or new centres that will be supported.

Start-Up Costs

What are the allowed start-up costs for new Centres? What does EPSRC fund to help with this (e.g. equipment)? If e.g. it will fund for equipment what is the contribution and does it involve some negotiations between the CDT and EPSRC?

EPSRC does provide funding for start-up costs for new centres. Equipment over £10,000 in value (including VAT) is not available through this funding opportunity. At the full proposal stage, smaller items of equipment (individually under £10,000) should be covered under the 'Other Costs' heading. Where possible researchers are asked to make use of existing facilities and equipment, including those hosted at other universities. Major capital investment is not included through this funding opportunity.

Start-up costs can include the development of taught courses, engagement with partners to aid the setting up and running of the centre, etc. This should not include the normal day-to-day running of the CDT.

At what point does a centre count as new for start-up costs. If the main grant holder changes but part of the team is the same is this old? Is the "start-up fund" available for CDTs who are currently existing but will end funding before the start of new CDT funding in Oct 2024?

A change of grant holder would not constitute a new centre with start-up costs. Existing centres are those currently running and have infrastructure currently in place. This would include both the 2013 and 2018 CDTs.

We do not ordinarily allow existing centres to claim start-up costs, and so this would only be allowable in exceptional circumstances where the applicants can justify the costs on the grounds that they could not benefit from the infrastructure or preparatory work of the existing CDT. If you have questions about a specific proposal, please contact EPSRC.

Training

Formal Assessable Taught Programs

Regarding the requirement for a formal, assessable programme of taught coursework. What is the objective of this requirement from an EPSRC perspective? The review of doctoral education noted a lot of students were entering EPSRC CDT programmes having already completed a masters. The ESRC have moved away from the integrated masters model, as people doing another masters is not value for money and was not individually flexible. How does EPSRC envisage this requirement being met? Does it need to be a full university course like a MRes/PG Cert, or would taking standalone modules like externals do as CPD work, or would something like a portfolio submitted to a professional body be sufficient?

This requirement is consistent with the 2018 CDT call. It is designed to ensure all CDT students receive broader, transferable training beyond their research activity, aligned to the findings of the doctoral review. It also recognises that students will come from different backgrounds and disciplines, and shared training will help to provide a baseline level of knowledge and skills.

It is for applicants to design a programme that is appropriate for the CDT being proposed, and to integrate it as appropriate with students' research activity. There are no specific requirements in terms of qualifications. The content could be technical disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, as well as broadening skills including entrepreneurship, commercialisation, responsible innovation and environmental sustainability. The content should be formally assessed, but there is no requirement for this to lead to a qualification

Since the taught component is assessable, do we need to state what happens if the assessment of specific students is deemed inadequate?

In the first instance, normal HEI processes should be followed, and it is up to applicants how much to detail this in the outline case for support. It also depends upon the CDT proposal. Applicants should engage with different communities and think of alternative ways such as career paths, exit routes, etc.

Training Requirements

Waiting for discussions with EPSRC on delivery of training in RRI (responsible research and innovation), ED&I (equality, diversity and inclusion) etc will necessarily preclude inclusion of these elements when seeking university programme approval and assignment of credit points for units. This seems to undermine the emphasis/priority and value of enhanced training elements, the timings just don't work. So, it seems essential to include these elements in our plans for how we will deliver training as a CDT anyway, independent of EPSRC, despite what the funding opportunity says. Any advice on this?

These elements may be included in your plans on how you will deliver the training for the centre based on current thinking. We have not included them as part of the assessment process, to reduce the burden on applicants, prevent it being competitive and support shared practices. Additionally consideration of RRI, environmental sustainability , EDI, trusted research approaches and support for student wellbeing are wider than just formal training, and should be embedded in the complete design and operation of CDTs.

Can you provide more info on the idea to design and share EDI & Training workshop best practice once the CDTs have been awarded? How can we balance how much we prep now within our Centre proposals?

These elements may be included in your plans on how you will deliver the training for the centre, based on current thinking. You may want to look at information on the UKRI website https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/ and for EPSRC specifically, https://www.ukri.org/about-us/epsrc/our-policies-and-standards/ . We have intentionally not included them as part of the assessment process, to reduce the burden on applicants, and prevent it being competitive and enabling shared practices.

Could you clarify what 'enhanced training provision' requirements there are. RRI training is of course compulsory, but what other translational training requirements are there - or are these for us to propose? How much do applicants need to say about these in their outline proposals, or should this detail be added at full proposal?

Could you give some advice about how you expect responsible research and ED&I to be addressed in the outline proposal please?

Applicants should think about the enhanced training which could be offered to students, for example, RRI, EDI, etc, and what could be successful using economies of scale.

We are not looking for detailed information on enhanced training provision at the outline stage. If applicants have training already developed this could be detailed in the case for support. EPSRC is considering the ability for institutions to share enhanced training in the future, rather than offering it on an individual basis, in line with best practice. Further details will be provided at the full proposal stage.

Is formal training required on responsible innovation, environmental sustainability, EDI, impact? Is computational training required for all CDTs?

Computational training will be as appropriate for the CDT. Training will be required in the other listed areas. CDTs are required to embed these generally in the design and operation of the CDT. It is for applicants to design a taught programme that is appropriate for the CDT being proposed, and to integrate it as appropriate with students' research activity. However as outlined in the funding opportunity, we are not asking for these plans in proposals, and will look to work with funded CDTs to develop detailed plans later.

Miscellaneous

Such a short period for peer-review of full proposals will lead to a highly variable quality of reviewing across proposals. How will the impact of this on funding decisions be mitigated? It's easy to fall foul of this, just because your proposal just doesn't have as many reviews as other proposals, this has certainly happened on other calls.

Significant consideration was given to the timelines to ensure that applicants had sufficient time to prepare proposals, but also that decisions were made on proposals by the end of 2023. . We are aware of the issues, and we are designing the full proposal assessment stage to ensure robust peer review within the given timescales.

Where can we see the refereeing pro-forma for the outline proposal stage?

There is no review stage via Je-S at outline stage. The outline panel will be asked to assess proposals against the three outline stage assessment criteria detailed on the funding opportunity page.

Call states: "support for a diversity of career paths and support for entry and exit to doctoral work or alternative doctoral qualifications." What is meant by "support for exit to doctoral work"? does it mean for instance the possibility to just graduate with an MRes if things go wrong or does it mean support at the end of the PhD in terms of careers etc?

This means support at the start or end of the PhD in terms of careers and mobility into different career paths. This might be additional support to be ready for doctoral work or support to transition to a career e.g. something like doctoral prize or the postdoctoral research associates we funded in mathematical sciences.

Other councils have opened similar calls (e.g. ESRC). It is unclear to me if an institution can submit two different bids, one to a different council and one to EPSRC.

There are no restrictions on applying for both the EPSRC CDT call and any other UKRI call. It is UKRI policy that proposals submitted in parallel must have different objectives. i.e. they must clearly be different proposals.

Are re-submissions allowed?

EPSRC expects previously unfunded proposals to be substantially changed before being submitted for funding again, especially because the requirements of this call are different from previous EPSRC CDT calls. However, there are no restrictions on submitting a proposal in the same area or with the same collaborators as a funded or unfunded application to previous CDT calls.

Is there a similar briefing/webinar for the EPSRC Artificial Intelligence CDT call?

Yes. THE UKRI AI CDT webinar was held on 13th January 2023. This webinar was recorded. Please see the funding opportunity page for the recording and other related Webinar outputs.

Will EPSRC ask partners involved in multiple bids to rank their preferred bids at full stage?

We do not plan to do this for this funding opportunity.

Can we have access to the slides after the webinar?

The webinar slides are published in the additional information section of the funding opportunity page

Considering industry contributions, what is the highest TRL (Technology Readiness Levels) you are expecting?

EPSRC funding is primarily aimed at TRLs 1-3. Core EPSRC remit research is the priority for this call, and development work should not be included in the main CDT funding. Related development more development work could be supported with additional industry or other partner funding.

Does this call cover publication costs as do the UKRI grants?

Publication charges for EPSRC funded students must comply with UKRI's open access policy and the costs should be drawn from the universities' UKRI open access block grant in the first instance.

Some institutes have good credential in applied research - could they use innovate UK and KTPs as evidence of success credentials if this exist alongside EPSRC success?

Yes, of course, both past and current funding partnerships can be included.

Can academic partners find non-academic ones via meeting mojo?

The Meeting Mojo portal is for non-academic collaboration only. There is no plan to open this up to academic partners. There is a possibility, further down the line, to have communications collectively

across the two groups. This portal was specifically requested by the EPSRC Business Engagement Forum (BEF) to enable businesses to engage with each other by providing a platform to discuss CDT leverage support requirements/expectations. Also, to explore if there are any like-minded businesses who have similar interests and who could form new partnerships, share costs and approach academic institutions as a group.

What definition are you using for 'different sectors'?

We do not have a strict definition of sectors and appreciate that the boundaries are often porous. Different industrial sectors may include pharmaceutical, defence, etc.

Will both the Outline and the Full Stage applications go through Je-S? (i.e. Can you confirm that the Full Stage will be through JeS rather than TFS?)
Yes, both the outline and full proposal stages will go through Je-S.

Are there calls for CDTs anticipated annually (or every few years)?
We do not know at this stage. The recent review of EPSRC-funded doctoral education recommends more frequent, smaller calls in the future but this is subject to future funding availability and the outcome of discussions in UKRI on collective talent investments.

Is your intention still to fund ca. 40 centres? - with the overall funding of £324M this equates to ca. £8M per centre - from experience, much too generous perhaps? (while restricting the overall number of CDT much more than in previous calls).
This figure may well be a pessimistic view, hence the reason why we are asking applicants for an indication of costs. Over the last 12 months it has been difficult to predict costs which makes it more difficult to predict a future investment over 8.5 years.

Does it affect NIA (New Investigator Award) eligibility?
Training grants are not research grants, and therefore being a Co-Investigator on a CDT bid does not affect EPSRC NIA eligibility.

Please could we have sight of the outline proposal form (i.e. prior to starting the application process)
This is the standard Je-S outline application form, requesting information such as a summary of the proposal, names of investigators, and a summary of costs (which are all covered under the Exceptions field). Further information is in the Submitting your outline application section of the funding opportunity page.

This will be the first Science Education CDT in the UK - what information should be included to maximise our chance of success?
If you have questions about a specific proposal, please contact EPSRC. All proposals must be centred in EPSRC's remit and will be assessed against the published assessment criteria.

Can EoIs (expression of interest) be viewed from other institutes to enable a best combination of EoIs?
EPSRC will share information on successful outline proposals in late May - early June. Potential applicants are welcome to contact each other at any time, but EPSRC will not be facilitating connections between applicants.

Can a company with a Business status but led by a founder who is a researcher and innovator apply as Lead Applicant? Or should he apply first to the UKRI to obtain the Research status? How can the EPSRC assist these type of Business organizations become a research lead organization as well?

Organisational eligibility is limited to organisations who were approved as eligible by UKRI at the time the call opened in November 2022 (with lead institutions also needing to be research degree awarding bodies).

Is this scholarship support for PhD candidates as a fund? And can I apply by myself or should the university apply for me?

EPSRC does not fund individual students directly.   EPSRC provides funding through training grants to universities via Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs), Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) and Industrial CASE (ICASE). It is the university that advertises opportunities, manages recruitment and makes offers to the students who will be funded by the training grants so you will need to contact your university with any questions about the availability of EPSRC funding.

Further details can be found on our website at: https://www.ukri.org/our-work/developing-people-and-skills/find-studentships-and-doctoral-training/get-a-studentship-to-fund-your-doctorate/.

Worked Funding Model Examples

Please note the following examples are purely illustrative and do not provide the only options available. Any questions regarding funding models please contact students@epsrc.ukri.org

Acceptable examples

Example 1
50 students, each 80% UKRI funded, 20% host institution funded

Example 2
57 students, all with 70% UKRI funding, 10% institutional funding, 20% project partner funding

Example 3
40 students with 100% UKRI funding
8 students with 100% institutional funding
2 students with 100% project partner funding

Example 4
25 students with 100% UKRI funding
30 students, each with 50% UKRI funding, 20% institutional funding, 30% project partner funding

Example 5
20 students with 100% UKRI funding
25 students with 80% UKRI funding, 20% project partner funding
5 students with 50% institution funding, 50% project partner funding

Example 6

80 students 50% UKRI funding, 20% institutional funding, 30% project partner funding
20 students 50% institution funding, 50% project partner funding

Examples that would not be acceptable

Example 1

60 students, each with 70% UKRI funding, 30% project partner funding
Reason: equivalent of >40 studentships requested from UKRI (in this case, equivalent of 42)

Example 2

32 students with 100% UKRI funding
20 students, each with 40% UKRI funding, 20% institutional funding, 40% project partner funding
Reason: there are UKRI-funded students that are not >= 50% UKRI funded

Example 3

25 students with 100% UKRI funding
20 students with 50% UKRI funding, 50% project partner funding
Reason: failure to meet minimum cohort size of 50 total students