



Contents

Introduction	1
Eligibility, costs and staff	1
Staffing	1
Engagement with partners and leverage	3
What counts as leverage? Where can leverage come from?	3
Studentship funding models	4
Students	4
What costs can be requested?	5
Placements	6
International Students	7
Cohort size	8
Training	8
Start-Up Costs	8
Preparing the full proposal	9
Interview panels	10
Miscellaneous	10

Introduction

This document includes outputs from the webinar held on 19 May 2023 about the full proposal stage of the UKRI [funding opportunity for Centres for Doctoral Training \(CDTs\) in artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#). It also includes relevant outputs from the webinar on 13 January 2023 about the outline stage of this funding opportunity.

Eligibility, costs and staff

Staffing

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-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.

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?

This type of role would be permitted. 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.

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 Co-I costs are eligible?

Principal and co-investigator time should be for their time involved in managing and delivering the CDT, this will be funded through the centre costs. Time for student supervision 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.

Should all centre management staff costs be requested as directly incurred (DI), i.e. charged directly to the CDT, or will it be possible to request some core management/administrative staff costs as directly allocated (DA)?

Training grants are funding at 100%, they do not follow the fEC model. All costs are funded under the 'Exceptions' heading on the Je-S form. Admin staff costs may be charged to the grant if they are specific to the CDT.

How much information should be provided about members of the supervisory pool?

Applicants should make the best use of the space available in the case for support. If naming potential supervisors will add to the case, then applicants may name some or all of them.

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 or Co-Is change between outline and full stage?

The full proposal should be developed based on the successful outline proposal and any relevant feedback. Changes which enhance the proposal while keeping it within the original centre scope described in the outline proposal are permitted.

UKRI will not limit any changes to costs between outline and full proposal stage to 10%, however applicants may be asked for justification if the change in costs exceeds this.

You may amend or add co-investigators between outline a full proposal stage where they will add value to the CDT, any changes should be justified in the cover letter. We would not expect more than 10 investigators to be named on the application, the roles and responsibilities of each of them in the management of the CDT should be clearly articulated.

Additional project partners may be added between outline and full proposal stages. There should not be other substantive changes from the centre described at the outline stage.

Engagement with partners and leverage

What counts as leverage? Where can leverage come from?

What is expected in terms of co-creation by partners - is this expected to reduce the costs to UKRI?

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 contributions may include but are not limited to: leading design of the centre, co-fund studentships, co-supervise students, provide access to facilities or provide samples or data, 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. Any partners should add value to the proposed centre.

What forms can collaborations with Catapults take?

We welcome inclusion of Catapults in CDTs. Catapults can provide engagement with user-needs, and a good research and innovation environment, for example.

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

We welcome applications which include elements of international engagement where they add value to the proposed centre. Applicants planning to include international collaborators on their proposal should visit [trusted research and innovation](#) for guidance on getting the most out of international collaboration while protecting intellectual property, sensitive research and personal information. Centres will be expected to engage with the relevant regulatory bodies where concerns may arise under the National Security and Investment Act.

Can university overheads be included?

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

Recognising that all universities/institutions will incur similar levels of these costs, they should not be included in the supplementary information table. If applicants wish to capture these they should be stated in the host organisational statement.

Does UKRI 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 but are not required at the time of application. It is up to universities and partners to take the most sensible approach in such matters.

The host organisational statement guidance says we must provide, 'confirmation of the underwriting of leverage from project partners to ensure successful delivery of the centre'. Can you provide more detail on the scale of this underwriting confirmation you're expecting to see please?

UKRI expects that host organisations underwrite the contributions from project partners so that the minimum viable product for the proposed CDT can be delivered, regardless of whether partner contributions are realised or not.

Are for-profit partners favoured over public sector / charity sector?

No. Partners from all sectors are welcome.

Studentship funding models

What is UKRI'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 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.

Can one industry-funded 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](#).

Students

Do contributions from self-funded students count as leverage?

Self-funded students do not count as incorporated students, and self-funding does not count as leverage for UKRI. 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 can 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.

Is the requirement for 50% UKRI support flexible across the four years, for example could we have students fully externally supported for two years and fully UKRI supported for two years?

Yes. The 50% minimum funding requirement for UKRI funded students refers to the total student costs over the 4 years of their doctoral training.

Is there flexibility on the duration of training for part time students, e.g. a 5 year part time programme?

A CDT studentship is a 4-year doctoral programme, therefore part time studentships should be equivalent to 4 years full time. UKRI-funded students should be a minimum 50% FTE. Part time students should join the first year and partake in the cohort activities and any taught modules as appropriate.

What costs can be requested?

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 minimum, but costs must be justified as providing sufficient support to students. UKRI 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.

May different amounts of RTSG be requested for different students (as long as each individual student is at least 50% UKRI funded) e.g. if one source of co-funding can provide RTSG for students, and another cannot?

Yes, different values may be requested for RTSG and should be appropriate for the type of projects likely to be undertaken by students. As long as for UKRI funded students a minimum of 50% of the total student costs over 4 years is funded by UKRI.

Will you allow budgeting for more expensive climate-friendly travel or computational resources?

Applicants may request such costs if they are fully justified. UKRI has an environmental sustainability strategy and is anticipating seeing more such costs included in grant applications.

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.

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.

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. A standard laptop would not be an eligible cost for RTSG funds.

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/>

Part-time students must undertake study for a minimum of 50% Full Time Equivalent (FTE). They must be recognised as members of the student cohort and should be given the support to enable them to benefit from the cohort training and wider centre activities. We would expect them to be able to engage in activities beyond their individual research projects.

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 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.

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

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 UKRI does not set a cap. Applicants should include the RTSG level required in the case for support along with justification for this request. See [Internships and placements – UKRI](#).

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. See [Internships and placements - UKRI](#)

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, where some flexibility is possible. We encourage people to contact UKRI 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" 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 UKRI 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.

For a 100% UKRI studentship could an international partner provide in-cash contribution to cover the additional international studentship fees i.e. 100% Home UKRI + International in-cash = Overseas studentship?

Yes. 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 UKRI 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 expected cohort size but international partners' leverage for students in the UK does count. Students must meet the UKRI residence requirements.

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 studentships that can be requested as UKRI-funded studentships?

There is no limit on the number of studentships that can be requested from UKRI. However, the expected total number of students is 50 so any additional students requested from UKRI would need to be fully justified. Details of how a larger cohort size would be managed should also be included.

Training

Is it advisable that some CDT centres work together to co-create training courses? How best to do this?

We expect that all host organisations will have processes in place to source any training courses if funding is awarded. Cost estimates and summaries of such courses should be included in the full proposal, but it is expected that transparent procurement processes will be followed before any contract is awarded.

UKRI expects to work with funded CDTs on how they can work across the landscape, whether there are activities they could share between them, and whether there are aspects that could be rolled out to multiple CDTs. However, at the point of developing and submitting full proposals UKRI does not wish to create reliance between bids therefore if appropriate CDTs should outline how they might work with other CDTs but not cost proposal based on this.

Start-Up Costs

What are the allowed start-up costs for new Centres?

UKRI will provide funding for start-up costs for new centres. Start-up costs may include (but are not limited to) the development of taught courses and engagement with partners to aid the setting up and running of the centre. This should not include the normal day-to-day running of the CDT.

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.

Preparing the full proposal

Will we receive individual feedback from the outline stage to help us in developing our full bids? If so, when will this be?

Full proposal applicants will not receive specific feedback from the outline stage.

If an outline application didn't specifically state that they were aiming to address a cross-cutting theme, can a cross-cutting theme be added for full proposal stage? If a portion, but not all or the majority, of the studentships will address a cross-cutting theme can the application state that they are addressing a cross-cutting theme?

Yes, a cross-cutting theme may be added for full proposal stage if appropriate. UKRI is actively encouraging engagement with business and/or government policy and public services. It is not required that every studentship project will address the cross-cutting theme, though it may for example be an area of training provided to all students.

For 'document type' on Je-S it says 'letter of support (up to 3)'. Should 'project partner letter of support' be uploaded as 'other attachment' or is the 'up to 3' a typo?

Project partner statements of support should be uploaded to Je-S as document type 'project partner letter of support'. There is also the option to upload up to three documents type 'letters of support' from partners that cannot be formally recorded as a project partner due to financially benefitting from the grant.

Is the stakeholder engagement plan to be part of the 10 page case for support?

Yes, should you wish to include a stakeholder engagement plan this should be included in the case for support.

You should use the space available to make the best case for your proposal. Headings have been suggested on the funding finder in the 'How to apply' section but applicants are not required to use these.

Can you advise on how you are expecting to see the involvement of project partners presented in the application i.e. should we put this in a specific section of the case?

You should use the space available to make the best case for your proposal. Headings have been suggested on the funding finder in the 'How to apply' section but applicants are not required to use these.

Co-creation and co-delivery with project partners is said to be an important component of this CDT call, but there is comparatively little in the documentation or the selection criteria that explicitly addresses this point. Can you provide some additional guidance on how we should present this and how it will be taken into account by the panel(s)?

The funding opportunity is focussed on the applications and implications of AI, therefore it is expected that partners from application areas might have been involved in the co-design of the CDT. Engagement with project partners is picked up in several assessment criteria, for example 'Added value', 'Research training environment' and 'student training experience'.

From the feedback we got at the Outline stage: “Arrangements for IP between host organisations and project partners should be considered. ” However, our University says “IP is considered on a case-by-case scenario during the contracting stage (the LoS from a partner is not a contract, nor is the submission).” My question is what is expected then in terms of IP?

It is not expected that details of IP will be drawn up by the full proposal submission date. However, the case for support should explain how the CDT host organisation(s) will ensure that appropriate IP arrangements are put in place with project partners.

Interview panels

Do you expect there will be a limit on how many people from the team can attend the interview? Is there an expectation about who should attend?

Details of the interviews will be shared directly with applicants in due course.

Who will be part of the interview panels?

We anticipate that the interview panels will include people with a broad range of expertise. As well as AI and discipline expertise, this may include knowledge of the skills landscape, running CDTs, and managing large, complex investments.

The funding finder page for the call says UKRI is looking to fund 10 to 15 CDTs. Is there an expectation that at least one CDT will be funded in each priority area? Or how those 10 to 15 will be chosen? Assuming all proposal are of high quality and can be funded.

When making funding decisions UKRI will seek to balance the whole portfolio, supporting training to meet the needs of the AI ecosystem. Funding decisions will be approved by cross-UKRI advisory board on quality, fit to priority areas, and the totality of the portfolio.

Miscellaneous

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.

Does being a co-I on a CDT proposal 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.