

EPSRC Centre for Quantum Commercialisation Skills

Frequently Asked Questions

Scope and activities

Should the centre be focused on a specific area of Quantum Technologies or align with the Quantum Missions?

The Centre should not focus on a single area of Quantum Technologies and should be open across the Quantum Technologies remit. Therefore, it is not a requirement to align with a particular Quantum Mission. However, applicants are encouraged to be aware of them and consider how their proposed activities support broader UK priorities.

Is the Centre expected to deliver a fixed set of activities or can applicants propose their own approaches?

Applicants have flexibility in how they design and deliver the Centre's activities. While key components as outlined in the opportunity are expected, there is no single prescribed model. Proposals should set out a coherent and well-justified approach that best delivers the aims of the funding opportunity and utilises the flexibility provided by the flexible funding.

How does the Centre's accelerator activity differ from ICURe or similar schemes?

The Centre's accelerator draws inspiration from established programmes such as ICURe but is not intended to replicate them. Instead, it provides quantum-specific, skills-focused support that encourages researchers to view commercialisation as a viable route for exploiting their research and equips them with the capability to pursue it. The emphasis is on moving ideas toward commercialisation through practical experience, helping participants engage with markets, users and pathways while building the skills, insight and confidence needed to progress. The Centre does not fund spin-outs or commercialisation activity directly but instead prepares participants to access existing downstream mechanisms, such as investor funding or innovation programmes, and therefore acts as a bridge between early-stage research and the wider commercial ecosystem.

Is later-stage spin-out or launch support in scope?

No. The Centre should not provide direct financial support for spin-outs. Instead, it should take participants to the point where they understand the commercial potential of their work and are able to access appropriate follow-on funding, investment, or support mechanisms.

What is in scope for flexible funding?

Flexible funding should support the Centre's overarching aims. Applicants have flexibility in how they use this funding, provided they clearly justify how it contributes to delivering the Centre's overall vision and the objectives of this funding opportunity. There is no prescribed use for the flexible funding, however it should not be used to support a programme of research.

Can flexible funds be used for prototype development

Activities that resemble direct research funding or technical development are not the primary intention of the flexible fund and should not form a significant component of the programme.

Is there a minimum or maximum flexible fund allocation?

No. Applicants have flexibility to propose an appropriate level of flexible funding, provided it is well justified and clearly delivers on the Centre's vision and the aims of this funding opportunity.

Can grant funds including the flexible funds be used to fund industry?

The Centre can fund the salaries and travel and subsistence of researchers undertaking placements into industry. However, it cannot fund the salaries of individuals employed by industry. For industry personnel engaging with academia, the Centre may fund travel and subsistence, but salary costs must be covered by their employer.

Can the Centre include training for Research Technical Professionals, technology transfer professionals and/or end users?

While the primary focus of the Centre is on developing commercialisation skills for researchers, there is scope to include training for Research Technical Professionals, technology transfer professionals or end users where this is clearly justified. Any such activity should directly support the overarching aim of enabling the commercialisation of quantum technologies. Applicants should therefore demonstrate how including these groups would strengthen the impact of the Centre, for example by improving pathways to application, supporting translation, or enhancing engagement with users and partners and would provide benefit across the UK and not just within the host organisation(s).

Is the aim to upskill existing researchers or recruit new individuals?

The primary aim of the Centre is to upskill existing researchers and research teams, rather than to recruit new individuals into the sector. The focus is on building the commercialisation, entrepreneurial and translational skills needed to help researchers move their work towards real-world application. While some roles may be created to support delivery of the Centre itself, the core objective is to develop capability across the existing quantum community and enable a broader range of researchers to engage with commercialisation pathways.

Is the Centre expected to operate physically in one location?

No, the Centre does not need to be a single physical location. It is expected to operate as a national programme, which may be delivered across multiple organisations and locations.

Should the Centre need support different career stages?

Yes, the Centre is expected to support researchers across a range of career stages, rather than targeting a single career stage. Applicants should consider how activities will be accessible and relevant to different levels of experience.

Partnerships and consortia

Can organisations be involved in multiple applications?

An organisation may submit one application as the lead but can be involved as a partner in multiple applications led by other organisations.

Can individuals be involved in more than one application?

Applicants are limited to one application as project lead but may be involved in other applications.

How many partners or HEIs should be involved in a proposal?

Consortia should be constructed based on what is needed to deliver the Centre effectively at a national scale. The emphasis should be on the quality and relevance of contributions, not the number of partners.

Do project partners need to provide financial contributions?

Project partners may contribute through cash or in-kind support, such as hosting placements, providing expertise, or supporting delivery. What matters is that contributions are meaningful and clearly linked to the Centre's activities.

Are international partners expected?

International partners are not required. However, they may be included where they bring clear and substantive value to the Centre's aims and delivery.

Can business support organisations or entrepreneurial organisations be involved?

These organisations can contribute either as project partners or as subcontractors. However, they cannot be both within the same proposal and must comply with standard EPSRC project partner rules.

Can business support organisations be involved in multiple bids?

Yes, organisations can be involved in multiple applications whether as part of the application consortia, a project partner or subcontractor. However, organisations can only lead one application.

What role should industry play in the Centre?

Industry is expected to be actively engaged in the Centre. This includes hosting placements, contributing expertise, participating in co-creation activities, and supporting training delivery. Both academic placements into industry and industry engagement with academia are encouraged.

However, it is important to note that individuals employed by industry are not eligible to be funded through this grant and cannot be named as applicants under standard EPSRC eligibility rules. While industry partners can contribute significantly to delivery, their involvement should be through partnership, collaboration, or in-kind support rather than staff positions funded through the grant.

Will EPSRC be providing matchmaking or networking support to help applicants find collaborators?

EPSRC will not be providing matchmaking or networking activities or support for this opportunity. Applicants should develop partnerships through their own networks, institutional connections and engagement activities.

Leadership and wider management team

Can the funding be used to fund leadership positions from industry?

Leadership roles funded through the grant must be held by individuals employed by an eligible organisation. Therefore, individuals with joint positions between industry and eligible organisations may be eligible but those employed solely in industry would not. Industry representatives can contribute through advisory roles, secondments, and partner engagement, but cannot be directly funded as staff.

Should the leadership team and other staff be existing staff or newly recruited?

Applicants have flexibility in how they structure the Centre's leadership and may draw on a combination of existing staff and newly recruited roles. Applicants may utilise established expertise within participating organisations, while also recruiting new staff where additional capacity or specific skills are required.

Applicants should assemble a strong, well-balanced team with the appropriate mix of expertise across leadership, commercialisation, programme delivery and partnership engagement. Decisions on staffing should therefore be driven by what is required to deliver the Centre's vision and activities effectively at a national scale, rather than a preference for either existing or newly recruited roles.

Do staff in the leadership team need to be academics or are non-academic staff such as research management professionals eligible?

Delivering the centre's aims and vision will require a diverse range of skills, expertise, experiences and talents. We encourage you to consider the full range of expertise, experience and talent required as part of your wider team in order to succeed. We welcome all level of experience and expertise to apply as part of the eligible research organisation whether academic or non-academic.

Should leadership be driven by commercial expertise or quantum expertise?

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Funding and Eligible Costs

Why are estates and indirect costs not funded?

This is a training grant delivered outside the full economic cost (FEC) model. As with other training grant investments, estates and indirect costs are not eligible to be included. Organisations are expected to manage these costs internally.

Can studentships be funded through this grant?

No, studentships will not be funded through this opportunity. However, students funded through other routes can participate in Centre activities, such as training and placements. Where PhD students undertake placements, internships or engage with Centre activities that are not an integral part of their doctoral programme, the studentship may be suspended and the hosting organisation or business may pay the individual a salary. Alternatively, funding from the Centre may be used to support this. Travel and subsistence costs for PhD students engaging with Centre activities are also eligible costs.

Can funding be used to pay for external training providers or subcontractors?

Yes, funding can be used to subcontract elements of delivery where specialist expertise is required, provided this is clearly justified and represents good value for money.