

CASE STUDENTSHIPS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

OVERVIEW

These FAQs are aimed at those who are new to Research Council Funding Processes and those who are familiar with the process but wish to clarify aspects of CASE studentships.

These FAQs relate to all CASE Studentships - please see [DTP - Case Studentships](#) and [Collaborative Training Partnerships \(CTP\)](#) for full details of these studentships. Where a FAQ does not apply to both schemes it will be flagged against that specific question.

PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY

1 The student placement at the non-academic partner is at a company outside of the UK; is the industrial partner eligible?

Probably. Provided that the non-academic partner has a UK research and / or commercial production capability within the UK, a placement overseas is likely to be acceptable.

1.1 The non-academic partner does not have a UK research and / or commercial production capability within the UK; are they eligible?

Possibly. In exceptional cases, organisations based overseas may be eligible, but only where they can provide the student with **an opportunity to gain skills currently not available within the UK.**

1.2 The non-academic partner is partly owned by an academic institution; will this affect eligibility?

Possibly. Academic partner(s) may not own more than 50% of the non-academic partner / company. This is to ensure that all CASE studentships offer genuine collaborations between academia and industry and provide a research training experience to the student not available in an academic setting. It also ensures that conflicts of interest between academic founders and their companies are managed and that students receive independent supervision by both partners.

1.3 The non-academic partner is a very new enterprise; will this affect eligibility?

Possibly. It will be the responsibility of the partners to establish any possible risk to the project and have contingencies in place should there be changes in the priorities of the non-academic partner that affects them meeting project commitments.

1.4 The non-academic partner supervisor has limited experience managing doctoral research students; will this affect our eligibility?

The non-academic partner should ensure the student receives the appropriate level of management and supervision, especially during their placement with the non-academic partner. Additionally, the non-academic partner should ensure that the non-academic supervisor is supported and mentored adequately throughout the studentship.

1.5. Is it possible to have more than one non-academic partner?

It is acceptable for a CASE studentship to have more than one non-academic partner involved in the studentship, provided one acts as the lead non-academic partner. The student can have a placement with one or both non-academic partners, or more if more than 2 non-academic partners are involved in the studentship.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE NON-ACADEMIC PARTNER

2 What are the financial requirements of the non-academic partner?

2.1. For CASE Studentships only, the financial contributions are as follows:

- A contribution to the student stipend is not required but is encouraged.
- For **all non-academic partners**, all costs associated with the placement must be met. Non-academic partners must support all expenses associated with the work carried out by the student while on placement, including additional expenses (such as travel and accommodation) incurred by the student as a direct result of attendance at the premises of a company. This includes the cost of flights in the case of overseas companies.
- For non-academic partners who have **more than 50 employees** (including employees in parent companies or subsidiaries), the mandatory requirement for financial contribution is an annual cash contribution to the academic partner of at least £1400 per annum.
- Non-academic partners who have **50 or fewer employees** (including employees in parent companies and subsidiaries), are not required to contribute to the academic partner costs. However, this is encouraged where possible.

2.2. CTP studentships have separate financial requirements for the non-academic partner – please see [CTP Frequently Asked Questions](#) for further details.

The costs associated with both CASE Studentships and CTP are summarized in the table below. Please note, CTP contributions have been included for information purposes.

Table 1. Mandatory financial contributions to CASE studentships.

	CASE		
	Companies <50 Employees	Companies >51 Employees	Collaborative Training Partnerships (CTP)
Placement Expenses	Yes	Yes	Yes
Academic Contribution	No	Yes	Yes
Studentship Stipend	No	No	Yes

2.3 The non-academic partner is a public funded body, or charitable organisation, do they have to contribute financially?

For CASE studentships –financial requirements given in paragraph 2.1 above apply

For CTP studentships – the financial contributions should be considered on a case-by-case basis, please contact the BBSRC for guidance at postgrad.studentships@bbsrc.ac.uk

2.4. The non-academic partner is an overseas company; who meets the cost of the placement?

If the non-academic partner is international, the costs of airfare must be provided for by the non-academic partner. For CASE studentships it is advisable to confirm with the non-academic partner that this is acceptable (particularly in the case of smaller companies).

THE PLACEMENT

3 Does the student have to spend time at the non-academic partner?

Yes. It is essential that all students spend a minimum of 3 months on a placement with the non-academic partner. This 3-month period can be at any point during the studentship and may consist of a number of shorter visits if appropriate. The BBSRC encourages placements of longer duration up to a maximum of 18 months.

3.1 Does the CASE studentship placement have to be directly related to the student's research project?

Yes. BBSRC requires that the student spends time at the non-academic partner on a placement directly related to the student's research project. The most effective studentships are shaped through collaboration of academic and non-academic partners, with input from the student.

The purpose of the placement is to provide a training experience unavailable at the academic institution. Training in project management, business strategy and finance, for example, should also be an integral component of the training package delivered during the placement at the non-academic partner.

3.2 What is the difference between CASE and PIPS placements?

The Professional Internship for PhD students (PIPS) is an innovative and integral element of the DTP programme, built in to enhance the employability and broaden the training experience of the DTP students. The purpose of the PIPS is to provide students with the opportunity to experience work in an area that is **not directly related** to their PhD project, where destinations for these internships include policymaking, media, teaching and industry. Further details are available at [Professional Internships for PhD Students \(PIPS\)](#).

This contrasts CASE studentships, where the placement **should be directly related to** the research project and, as such, should be developed in collaboration between academic and non-academic partners with input from the student.

3.3 Is a CASE student required to complete a PIPS placement?

CASE students funded via a CASE Studentship are **not required** to carry out an additional placement through the PIPS scheme, although this is still possible.

If a student wishes to partake in a PIPS placement, there will be no additional funding to extend the CASE Studentship, except in the case of a competitively obtained BBSRC Policy Internships. The Policy Internships provide the opportunity for BBSRC-funded PhD students to work for three months in one of a range of organisations involved in science policy. Successful applicants have the opportunity to work on a policy topic of interest to both the applicant and the organisation, by producing a briefing paper, participating in a policy inquiry or organising a policy event. Full details of this annual competition can be found on the BBSRC website at [Professional Internships for PhD Students \(PIPS\)](#).

OTHER

4 The academic partner does not currently have a DTP award; how can I apply for a CASE studentship?

Contact should be made directly with a [DTP award holder](#) where you have overlapping research interests to enquire about access to their CASE studentships as a collaborator; or with a [CTP award holder](#) to investigate the possibility of working with them as a collaborator.

4.1 The project is interdisciplinary; how can I check whether it fits the BBSRC's remit?

The primary aim of CASE is to provide an opportunity for high quality collaborative research training in areas of science relevant to BBSRC's strategic priorities ([Responsive mode priorities](#)). If you have specific queries concerning remit, email remit@bbsrc.ukri.org

4.2 What is the difference between CASE Studentship and Collaborative Training Partnerships (CTP)?

CASE Studentship awards are led by a BBSRC DTP organisation – please see [Doctoral Training Partnerships](#) who select a non-academic partner who can offer the student a placement directly related to the research project.

[Collaborative Training Partnerships](#) awards are led by non-academic partners. The non-academic partner selects the Research Organisation and academic group where the Training Grant is to be held (i.e. where the student will be registered), effectively allowing greater flexibility and managing their allocation in closer partnership with BBSRC.

4.3 The student is an overseas applicant; are they eligible for CASE?

Residency eligibility criteria rather than nationality will determine whether a student is eligible. Please see [UKRI Training Grant Guidance](#) (Annex B) for details of the residential eligibility guidelines.

Please note: BBSRC has given authority to make decisions on students' eligibility to the relevant institution's admin. authority/registrar. Therefore, for a specific ruling the relevant Registrar's Office should be contacted for further guidance.

4.4 Are CASE students required to take part in the Biotechnology Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES)?

Biotechnology YES ([Young Entrepreneurs Scheme](#)) is a free innovative competition held annually and aimed at raising awareness of the commercialisation of bioscience research. Although there is no absolute requirement for CASE students to take part, the evaluation recommended that since YES provides CASE students with an excellent opportunity to network, further develop their entrepreneurial skills, and better understand the benefits of collaborative research, they should be actively encouraged to participate.

4.5 We are approached by companies who wish to initiate CASE studentships throughout the year; are there other opportunities to obtain CASE funding?

If you are in receipt of DTP funding, conversion to CASE can occur at any time. Whilst no longer mandatory, BBSRC still encourages such conversions to take place where appropriate. Please see for [CASE studentships - Collaborative/Industrial placements](#) further information.

4.6 Do collaborative agreements need to be in place before a studentship starts?

BBSRC encourages active dialogue between academic and non-academic partners before a studentship is initiated so that relevant agreements can be in place in a timely fashion, ideally before the start of the studentship. A series of links to popular agreements can be found at [Innovation resources](#) although advice should always be sought from local KEC professionals.