



**BBSRC CASE STUDENTSHIP AWARDS  
INFORMATION PACK**

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## INTRODUCTION

This Information Pack is aimed at those who are new to Research Council Funding Processes, and those who are familiar but wish to clarify changes to the way CASE Studentships are now allocated as a result of the recent announcement to cease the annual CASE competition for individual studentships (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/news/people-skills-training/2015/150325-n-changes-to-icase-studentships/>).

Following the Evaluation of BBSRC's CASE schemes in 2012, changes were made to Industrial CASE Studentship awards; namely:

1. The minimum student placement length has been **reduced to three months**, bringing it in line with other CASE studentships funded by BBSRC and a number of other Research Councils.
2. The mandatory requirement to make financial contributions for non-academic partners that are classed as small companies (i.e. those which have 50 or fewer employees), has been removed. The requirement to meet the costs associated with the placement remains.
3. The mandatory requirement for financial contributions from companies with more than 50 employees has also changed, please see the 'Financial Contributions' section for more details.

## RESEARCH COUNCILS JOINT VISION FOR COLLABORATIVE TRAINING

### 1. **Objectives**

Research Council Collaborative Training will provide doctoral students with a first-rate, challenging research training experience, within the context of mutually beneficial research collaboration between academic and partner organisations in the private, public and civil society sectors.

**Benefits to the student** – Collaborative Training provides outstanding students with access to training, facilities and expertise not available in an academic setting alone. Students benefit from a diversity of approaches with an applied/translational dimension. Students have an opportunity to develop a range of valuable skills and significantly enhance their future employability; the expectation is that many will become research leaders of the future.

**Benefits to the academic / partner organisations** - Collaborative Training studentships encourage productive engagement between partners who benefit from a motivated, high-quality doctoral student undertaking cutting-edge research relevant to the organisation's priorities and objectives. Collaborative Training provides opportunities to explore novel research collaborations and strengthen current partnerships.

## 2. **Defining an excellent CASE Studentship**

**High-quality project** – A challenging, feasible and realistically achievable doctoral project which stimulates excellent research. Through a truly collaborative approach, it provides tangible benefits to all partners.

**High-quality training environment** – Through access to distinctive but complementary environments, partners provide a stimulating framework for research training in the proposed field. Joint supervision gives a unique and broadening perspective on the impact of collaborative research.

**High-quality student experience** – An enriched integrated training experience allows the student to acquire novel skills and expertise. The student gains a wider understanding of how their research may have an impact in wider context, which will enhance their future career prospects.

### ELIGIBILITY

Before allocating a CASE studentship award it is imperative that you ensure that the non-academic partner (e.g. industry) is eligible.

**Organisations eligible for funding from any Research Council cannot act as a non-academic partner;** this includes NHS Trusts, and organisations such as the Beatson Cancer Institute and the Diamond Light Source. In most cases, the non-academic partner will be a company, and must have an established UK-based research and/or commercial production capability. BBSRC would recommend that such organisations that may be interested in becoming a CASE partner scope out a potential partnership with a BBSRC Doctoral Training Partnership organisation.

UK-based organisations can be considered as the non-academic partner if they can provide students with distinctive research training and experience not available in an academic setting. These organisations **may include Charities, Trusts and Levy Bodies.**

In exceptional cases, organisations based overseas may be eligible; however they must have an established UK-based research and/or production capability and be able to provide the student with an opportunity to gain skills not currently available in the UK. If eligibility remains unclear contact BBSRC.

**Note:** BBSRC recommends that for companies that are less than five years old and are new to the BBSRC CASE scheme, details of the purpose, remit and history of the company are obtained along with copies of the last two years' business statements if necessary.

## KEY CRITERIA

The primary aim of CASE is to provide high quality research training relevant to BBSRC's remit.

**The key criteria will be the overall quality of training offered by the academic institution and the proposed non-academic partner**, in line with the "Researcher Development Framework" developed by Vitae which outlines the areas of professional development that research organisations should be addressing in their training programmes. The Researcher Development Framework replaces the Research Councils' Joint Skills Statement and is available at:

[www.vitae.ac.uk/rds](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rds).

**In addition, the studentship should take account of the following:**

**1. THE PROJECT**

Quality and Suitability

Is the proposed project aligned to BBSRC's remit?

Is the project feasible in the timeframe?

Is the proposed project relevant to the non-academic sector involved?

Is the non-academic partner eligible and do they have a suitable track record?

Does the application demonstrate a robust partnership?

**2. ACADEMIC RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT & TRAINING PROGRAMME**

What are the broader opportunities to be made available to the student, e.g. generic techniques and transferable skills training?

What taught courses and facilities does the academic environment provide for research training? How effectively do the facilities support the proposed project?

What opportunities are there for interactions with more senior researchers?

**3. NON-ACADEMIC RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT & TRAINING PROGRAMME**

Is the proposed project relevant to the non-academic sector involved?

Does the non-academic partner have a suitable track record?

What facilities does the non-academic environment provide for research training? How does the proposed project relate to the facilities available?

What opportunities are there for gaining experience not available in an academic setting alone?

#### 4. MANAGEMENT & SUPERVISION

Are there clear day-to-day arrangements in place for supervision of the student at both the academic and non-academic partner?

Do the project supervisors have the specialist capabilities necessary to support the student's advanced research and generic skills training?

Are there suitable provisions for monitoring progress?

Do all supervisors have a good track record in supervising students?

In the case of new supervisors, have appropriate provisions been made, for e.g. with co-supervision?

#### 5. THE COLLABORATION

A placement at the non-academic partner is an essential feature of a CASE studentship; can they offer a suitable placement with added value?

What are the opportunities to be made available by the company to the student for business-related training?

Could the project be done without the collaboration? Due to the truly collaborative and integrated nature of CASE, the studentship cannot be considered a true CASE studentship if, upon removal of input from the non-academic partner, the training and project could still continue.

Should the non-academic partners' circumstances change, are the arrangements for safeguarding the student's PhD progress clear and acceptable.

### FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO BE MADE BY THE NON-ACADEMIC PARTNER

In light of the CASE evaluation, the **BBSRC hopes to broaden participation from small companies and other under-represented industry sectors**, thus the mandatory requirement for the non-academic partner to make financial contributions to the student stipend and research project **has been modified for CASE studentships, although not for its Collaborative Training Partnerships (CTP) competition** (please note, CTP is a separate scheme, with applications submitted by non-academic organisations, which provides studentship allocations covering several years' intake to 'Partner' companies).

Financial contributions for CASE studentships

1. There is no longer a requirement to enhance the student stipend for any CASE Studentship.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. For non-academic partners who have **50 or fewer employees** (including employees in parent companies and subsidiaries), we have removed the mandatory requirement to contribute to the academic partner costs.

#### Financial contributions for Collaborative Training Partnerships (CTP)

1. As a measure of commitment, the CTP partner must make an appropriate financial contribution to the training of the student, with an expectation of around 20 percent of the funding (cash or in-kind) to be supported by non-academic partner(s) and other sources (expect other Research Council sources) or the RO.
2. It is a requirement that the CTP partner makes a financial contribution to the training of the student, including all additional expenses, such as the cost of travel and accommodation, incurred by the student as a direct result of attendance at premises of the non-academic organisation during placement or otherwise.

For non-academic partners that **are not companies**, such as a public funded body or charitable organisation, we encourage contribution to the academic partner. Contact the BBSRC for further guidance.

### COLLABORATIVE TRAINING EXPERIENCE

All CASE research students are based at a BBSRC Doctoral Training Partnership organisation, but must spend part of their time with the non-academic partner. The BBSRC now stipulates a **placement period of a minimum of 3 months**, and up to a maximum of 18 months. The required placement period can be accrued through a number of shorter placements, if appropriate.

In addition, to experience an industrial research environment, the student should receive business-related training, for example, in project-management, business strategy and finance.

### HOW TO APPLY

BBSRC CASE Studentships are allocated through our Doctoral Training Partnerships and Industrial CASE Partnerships further to BBSRC's recent decision to cease the annual iCASE competition for individual studentships

<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/news/people-skills-training/2015/150325-n-changes-to-icase-studentships/>