



UKRI-BBSRC Collaborative Training Partnerships (CTP) Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

What are Collaborative Training Partnerships?

UKRI-BBSRC Collaborative Training Partnerships (CTPs) scheme is a doctoral training programme directed at industrial research challenges and delivered by consortia led by businesses in collaboration with Research Organisations. It's ambition is to build capacity and address strategic skills challenges in the UK bioeconomy at doctoral level and provide candidates with the research, innovation and transferable skills needed to be competitive for high-quality jobs in the labour markets of the bioeconomy, academia and beyond.

UKRI-BBSRC will make funding available to CTPs through provision of a block award (Training Grant) to a RO or a consortium of ROs.

What are the objectives of the CTP2 scheme?

- Build the capacity of the research and innovation workforce at doctoral level across sectors and industries of the UK bioeconomy to support their productivity and growth.
- Support businesses and business-led consortia to deliver doctoral programmes that address sector and industry based strategic skills challenges.
- Develop cohorts of enterprising and entrepreneurial doctoral graduates equipped with the research, innovation and transferable skills they need to compete for high-quality jobs in the bioeconomy and beyond.
- Ensure accessibility to doctoral training for candidates from diverse backgrounds and personal circumstances.
- Ensure the physical and mental well-being of candidates is protected.
- Create an outcomes-focussed programme capable of evidencing its progress and impact.

What are the key features of Collaborative Training Partnerships?

- Competitive assessment of training strategy and environment.
- Concentration of doctoral training into up to 10 CTPs
- Cohort management
- Capacity building across sectors and industries of the UK bioeconomy
- Partnerships will work to a Portfolio Agreement
- Placements
- Evidence of around 20 percent of the funding (cash or in-kind) to be supported by the non-academic partner(s) and other non-Research Council sources
- An accountable governance structure to enable effective management and communication and a significant role for UKRI-BBSRC in strategic engagement and post-award monitoring
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan
- Partnerships to provide administrative support

What are the key features of the second CTP call and how do they compare to the previous calls?

The 10 key features of the second CTP call are outlined above (FAQ 1.2). The main changes compared to the first CTP competition are:

- Capacity building across sectors and industries of the UK bioeconomy
 - CTPs will be expected to enable an appropriate balance of support for frontier bioscience, strategic priorities and areas of skills shortages through the CTP model, and set their own targets.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan
 - CTPs are expected to provide a dedicated two-page equality, diversity and inclusion plan detailing their strategy for the wide participation of doctoral candidates from all backgrounds, as well as the support systems in place to protect their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

In addition to CTPs, what other funding does UKRI-BBSRC provide to support studentships?

UKRI-BBSRC intends to continue funding four-year PhD studentships through:

- Block awards to Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) (approx. 340 p.a. including 90 CASE studentships);
- On occasion we will deliver additional studentship funds from Government initiatives such as the National Productivity Investment Fund studentships. For further details, see <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/skills/>

Funding

How many studentships does UKRI-BBSRC expect to make available through the CTP competition?

Funding is available for up to 75 four-year studentships per annum for three consecutive intakes, the first being 2021-2022 and the final cohort commencing in 2023-2024.

Partnerships will be able to apply for an allocation of studentships, fully justifying how these studentships will be utilised. Partnerships are advised to consider how many studentships they can realistically accommodate.

However, as usual, the figure given is for guidance only and normal Training Grant flexibility will apply to allow institutions to seek part-funding with other sponsors or draw down higher levels of consumables costs for specific high-cost PhD projects.

How many CTPs does UKRI-BBSRC expect to support?

Based on the funding available, UKRI-BBSRC expects to award up to 10 CTPs.

Do I still have to create only 3-year or 4-year studentships?

UKRI-BBSRC believes that doctoral candidates require a full 4-year period to complete a challenging project alongside their broader training and skills development, including a

mandatory placement (see below) and to protect their physical and mental well-being. 3-year studentships are permissible provided there is a strong justification for this shorter period. Such studentships will still be required to complete a placement and the wider training associated with the studentship. If a doctoral candidate does complete within 4 years, the 'remaining' funding earmarked for that studentship is available in the Training Grant to support other doctoral candidates.

Can I part-fund a doctoral candidate, i.e. part from the CTP and part from another source?

Yes, the normal part-funding flexibility applies to Training Grants awarded under the CTP scheme – but there are limits to the part-funding arrangements. See the Research Council Training Grant Guide¹ for further information.

Can I part-fund a studentship from the Training Grant of another Research Council?

Yes – again the normal 50:50 funding arrangement from the Training Grants of different Research Councils applies, and the Research Council Training Grant Guide provides further details of this.

The CTP scheme will award Training Grants at institutional or multi-institutional level and it is hoped that this will help institutions coordinate part-funding arrangements in interdisciplinary areas using their Training Grants from different Research Councils. Where a UKRI-BBSRC studentship is part-funded with the Training Grant of another Research Council, the CTP must satisfy itself that sufficient research within the project is within UKRI-BBSRC's remit in order to justify the joint arrangement.

Can I part-fund a studentship from two different UKRI-BBSRC Training Grants, e.g. from a Doctoral Training Partnership?

Yes. Institutions in receipt of a DTP award may well secure additional studentship funding through one of UKRI-BBSRC's other studentship schemes and may find it useful to maximise the number of studentships it can advertise by joint funding studentships from their DTP awards. The institution will clearly need to ensure that it has suitable mechanisms in place to accurately record the funding drawn from each grant.

Can I request funding for administrative resource?

UKRI-BBSRC expects the Partnership to cover the cost of administrative resource for the number of studentships for which the Partnership is bidding.

Can my Partnership pool the RTSG funding?

Yes. The £5,000 RTSG funding per student can be pooled to balance the cost of expensive vs less expensive projects.

Who can apply

Can any institution apply?

No, [CTPs](#) must be led by industry and have a UK research and/or manufacturing base and the lead applicant should **not** be eligible for UKRI-BBSRC grant funding.

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/publications/rcuk-training-grant-guide-pdf/>

However, eligible institutions/organisations, companies, charities and public sector research establishments may be included as Full and Associate Partners on a Collaborative Training Partnership application, providing the Partnership can demonstrate that there is significant added value/benefit to their inclusion.

Can an existing Partnership apply for a CTP?

Yes. Where Partnerships already exist and operate well together to meet continued shared objectives, then they may apply for a CTP within this call. All applications to the CTP call will be assessed equally and existing Partnerships should not look on this as a renewal.

What is the definition of a Partnership: is the expectation that any proposals will be single-institution based?

There is no obligation to be multi-institutional however it is expected that the majority of CTP applications to be multi-institutional to meet the range of objectives.

The term 'Partnership' is intended to capture not only the potential for partnership between industry and academia, but also partnership with UKRI-BBSRC.

How many proposals can an organisation lead on?

Only one.

How many proposals can an organisation be involved in?

Organisations will normally only be involved in one CTP proposal, however, there may be circumstances where an organisation wishes to make a case to be part of two or more Partnerships. Organisations considering being part of more than one Partnership should contact the UKRI-BBSRC office for advice.

What is an Associate Partner and who can apply?

Eligible and non-eligible institutions/organisations, companies, charities and public sector research establishments and UKRI-BBSRC Doctoral Training Partnerships may be included as 'Associate Partners' on a CTP application.

Where Associate Partners are named on a CTP application, the Partnership must demonstrate that there is significant added value/benefit to their inclusion. This may include (although is not limited to) financial commitments to underwrite a number of studentships and/or commitment to cover the costs of access to facilities or training that cannot be otherwise provided by a full partner, and/or strategic links to an important stakeholder or user.

Can a Partnership include an International organisation as a Partner?

Yes, however the Partnership must demonstrate that there is significant added value/benefit to their inclusion and show what the benefits will be to the student.

Can I apply as an Associate Partner if I am an eligible RO?

Yes.

Can funds from the Training Grant support research costs of Associate Partners?

No. In all instances of collaborative activity both applicants and collaborators/project partners must be aware that any costs incurred, direct or otherwise, by either collaborators or collaborators institutions (project partners) in connection with collaborations, cannot be met by UKRI-BBSRC.

Assessment

How will CTP proposals be assessed?

The assessment of proposals to become UKRI-BBSRC Collaborative Training Partnerships, which will include an interview with the management team of the proposed Partnership, will be scheduled for --- **July 2020**.

The CTP Assessment Panel will be composed of high-profile academic and industrial researchers and doctoral training specialists drawn from the bioscience community.

What are the main elements which will be assessed?

UKRI-BBSRC Collaborative Training Partnerships will be assessed competitively against the objectives of the call and the Partnerships ability to deliver against them. Detailed assessment criteria for the competition is provided at **Annex 3²**.

How will the Assessment Panel decide how many studentships to allocate to each CTP?

UKRI-BBSRC will be seeking to support research training across its remit, with an appropriate balance of funding across different strategic research priorities. In addition, UKRI-BBSRC will expect the Partnerships to provide an innovative, inclusive and outcomes-focused programme of doctoral training to build and maintain the capacity of core bioscience disciplines and deliver skills for impact across the UK economy.

The Assessment Panel will assess the applications against the objectives of the scheme. This will include an interview process. At the end of this process a rank ordered list will be produced and UKRI-BBSRC will seek to support the best applications as fully as it can.

Are there any restrictions on the areas of science in which studentships can be supported?

Yes. All studentships funded wholly from the CTP Training Grant must be clearly in UKRI-BBSRC's remit, and partnerships are expected to have clear processes in place for confirming that doctoral candidate projects are in remit. This is particularly important at the research area boundaries with other Research Councils, where a joint-funding arrangement may be required if there is significant overlap in a project between the remits of different Councils. Partnerships are advised to pay careful attention to the boundaries between UKRI-BBSRC and UKRI-MRC, and the clarification of the Councils' remits published as a BBSRC/MRC interfaces: joint statement³.

UKRI-BBSRC will also expect CTPs to support studentships in the areas outlined in their Portfolio Agreement. Institutions which do not adequately control the areas in which UKRI-BBSRC studentships are being created are at risk of being judged by UKRI-BBSRC to be failing in the commitments made in the Portfolio Agreement. In an extreme case, a Partnership may be terminated.

² <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/filter/2019-doctoral-training-partnerships-programme-3/>

³ <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/research/science-remit/interfaces/>

Does each CTP need to address core bioscience skills and generic and professional skills?

Yes. Cross-cutting core bioscience and generic and professional skills that are increasingly expected of today's bioscience researchers (e.g. mathematics, bioinformatics, statistics and experimental design, multidisciplinary working etc.) should be included as part of CTP training programmes.

How should Performance Indicators be demonstrated?

As a public body UKRI-BBSRC's performance is subject to government scrutiny. One of the performance measures is the number of funded doctoral candidates who complete their PhD within four years. This helps indicate whether the candidate's doctoral training has been satisfactorily completed.

CTPs should describe their policies and processes for monitoring and ensuring PhD theses are successfully submitted within the four years. This will give the Assessment Panel a sense of the organisational culture for ensuring the timely completion of the doctoral degree.

Portfolio Agreement

What exactly is a Portfolio Agreement?

A Portfolio Agreement is a document that institutions are required to submit as part of their proposals through Je-S. The template for this document is on the website⁴, and it essentially asks the Partnership to set out a number of commitments to research training in UKRI-BBSRC's remit. The information given by institutions in the Portfolio Agreement will form part of the assessment by the Assessment Panel but will also form the basis for ongoing engagement with UKRI-BBSRC after awards are made. For example, Partnerships will be asked to report annually to UKRI-BBSRC on their progress in meeting the commitments made in the Portfolio Agreement.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Why is an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan needed?

Inclusivity is a core feature of CTP2 and UKRI-BBSRC expects Partnerships to provide a detailed strategy and actions for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in a dedicated EDI plan as a two page additional document submitted as part of the proposal.

The plan should enable the wide participation of doctoral candidates from all backgrounds, and the support systems in place to protect their physical and mental health and wellbeing. UKRI-BBSRC expect the plan to include the embedding of EDI principles at all levels and in all aspects of research and training within the CTP. This includes the selection and management of doctoral candidates and cohorts.

UKRI-BBSRC expects CTPs to take a wider leadership role in driving improved EDI within relevant areas.

Governance

What governance structure should there be for the Partnership?

⁴ <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/filter/2019-doctoral-training-partnerships-programme-3/>

UKRI-BBSRC expects a CTP to establish governance arrangements which will enable effective decision-making and engagement with all relevant stakeholders to deliver the objectives, the arrangements for sharing best practice amongst the Partners and with other CTPs, and how the Partnership will ensure UKRI-BBSRC receives value for money in the delivery of PhD training.

UKRI-BBSRC expects to see a clear commitment from the institutions involved to ensure robust management and monitoring arrangements are in place, for example, by ensuring that administrative support for the governance arrangements are provided as necessary. As part of the assessment process, the Assessment Panel will wish to be assured that robust and transparent governance arrangements are in place.

Placements

How important is the industrial placement?

All CTP research doctoral candidates are based at a Research Organisation (RO), but must spend part of their time with the organisation. This placement is an **essential and integral** part of the training and **must** be a **minimum of 3 months** during the four-year period of the studentship, not normally exceeding 18 months.

The aim is to give the doctoral candidate the opportunity to carry out a non-academic work experience placement during their PhD. The experience is important to help early career researchers understand the context of their research and transferability of their PhD training to a different environment, developing new professional skills and competencies and to expose them to the range of opportunities available to them after they graduate.

Who can/should carry out a placement?

UKRI-BBSRC expects all doctoral candidates on a CTP programme to undertake a minimum three-month placement.

What duration should the placement be for?

Internships must be for a minimum of three months and a maximum of 18 months. However, the internship may be taken either in one three-month block or in a number of shorter blocks. This will depend on the preferences of the doctoral candidate and host organisation, as well as the type of internship. Internships could be hosted by more than one host organisation if this is considered appropriate. For example, a doctoral candidate may wish to work for a month in each of three different schools.

When should the placement take place?

Flexibility is important and the timing of the placement should be considered on an individual doctoral candidate basis.

What if a doctoral candidate is studying for a PhD on a part-time basis?

Placements should also be taken by part-time doctoral candidates and the duration should be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

What about doctoral candidates with disabilities?

The needs of doctoral candidates with disabilities should be considered during the organisation of placements within organisations. All doctoral candidates funded from the CTP Training Grant are expected to carry out a placement at some point during their PhD.

How will UKRI-BBSRC monitor placements?

UKRI-BBSRC will monitor placements through liaison with CTP institutions and the academic supervisor as part of the ongoing monitoring of CTP awards, and will request reports from doctoral candidates.

Competition process and timelines

When will the call be open in Je-S?

The call will be live in Je-S from **5 February 2020**. Full guidelines for submission and template documents that need to be uploaded as part of the application are available on the UKRI-BBSRC Funding webpage⁵.

Are EU doctoral candidates eligible for CTP funding?

The Research Councils are discussing the doctoral candidate eligibility requirements for PhD funding, but at the current time the standard requirements still apply⁶. These broadly allow EU nationals with three years residence in the UK to receive full stipend awards, and other EU nationals to be supported with fees only awards.

What is the timeline for funding decisions?

The DTP application deadline is **5 May 2020 at 4pm**. Assessment will take place on -- **July 2020**, including interviews with up to four individuals from the Partnership. Formal announcement of the awards will be made by October 2020.

Post award monitoring and strategic engagement

What reports will be required and when?

CTPs will be required to report annually on progress against their Portfolio Agreements, and also to host formal and informal visits from UKRI-BBSRC.

Doctoral candidates will also be required to use our nominated online system to provide an annual update of information relating to the outputs, outcomes and impacts arising from their UKRI funded research and training. These updates must be provided during the life of the studentship and for at least three years after the funding has finished. Further information on reporting requirements can be found on the UKRI website⁷.

⁵ <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/filter/2019-doctoral-training-partnerships-programme-3/>

⁶ <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/publications/rcuk-training-grant-guide-pdf/>

⁷ <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/research-outcomes1/help-and-guidance/>