

Industrial Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering (iCASE) studentships

Guidance Notes

Please read carefully before completing your application.

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Competition Overview

Closing Date: 20 July 2017

Announcement of awards: October 2017

Driving innovation and collaborating with industry remains at the heart of the MRC strategy and delivery plans. Our industrial CASE (iCASE) PhD studentship scheme has for many years played a key role in this by helping develop partnerships and enabling students to benefit from a broad and unique training experience.

Starting from 2017 we will allocate studentships directly to Research Organisations (ROs) for 1 intake year in the first instance (2018), but potentially up to 3 years (2018, 2019 and 2020) so your bid should include a request across the 3 intake years. This will enable iCASE studentship opportunities to be created and implemented in a flexible and scalable way. Participating ROs must be strongly committed and well-placed to deliver the scheme's objectives, which are to:

- Provide students with experience of collaborative research with a non-academic partner
- Strengthen and develop collaboration and partnerships between ROs and non-academic partner organisations
- Offer outstanding students an experience of at least two distinct research cultures
- Provide access to a wider than usual range of technology, facilities and expertise
- Enable the student to spend a period of time with the non-academic partner (usually no less than 3 months over the lifetime of the PhD)

Assessment criteria are detailed below but, in general, we expect successful ROs/DTPs to come forward with an exciting vision and strategy for how they will partner with industry to develop new opportunities for iCASE studentships. This could involve development of new partnerships or enhancement of existing collaborations - such as those driven by complementary MRC investments.

Identification of successful research organisations, and confirmation of the number of studentships each of these will be allocated, will be announced in the autumn of 2017.

1 Eligibility

1.1 Academic and non-academic partners

Both ROs holding MRC Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs), and non-DTP ROs will be eligible to apply as the lead partner. ROs already part of a DTP should apply as part of that DTP and not lead their own separate bid. Each RO may only lead on one bid, but may partner on others where there is a clear strategic case for this involvement; no bid should be dependent on another bid being successful.

MRC Units and Institutes are eligible to apply but, when co-located with a DTP, would normally be expected to be associate partners and not to lead a bid (see Annex 3).

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. [Organisations eligible for Research Council funding](#) (such as NHS Trusts) cannot act as a non-academic partner. Where the non-academic partner is a company, it must have an established UK based research and/or commercial production capability. In exceptional cases,

organisations based overseas may be eligible, but only where they can provide the student with an opportunity to gain skills not currently available in the UK.

Non-academic partners cannot apply directly but can be involved as associate partners.

MRC will allow the recruitment of clinicians to undertake CASE studentships if the project will offer valuable training for a clinician and appropriate arrangements are in place for the student to maintain clinical skills during the award and to continue their clinical training post-award. MRC will not provide the additional funds, over and above the stipend allowance, to meet the additional salary requirements.

1.2 Non-academic partner responsibilities

Whilst the MRC appreciates that it may sometimes be difficult to ensure the financial stability of a company three or four years hence, at the time of commitment to the studentship, companies should have strong regulatory, supervisory and other policies in place to ensure the continuity of the studentship. Changes during the studentship should be notified to the MRC immediately.

As a measure of its interest and commitment, the non-academic/company partner must make a specific, identifiable contribution to the research training of the student.

In addition to the contribution to the research training of the student, the company's contribution must include:

1. An annual cash contribution to the academic partner towards the cost of the project of at least £1400 per annum, for the period during which research data are being collected and analysed – a minimum of 80% of the approved length of the studentship;
2. A mandatory cash payment of at least £2500 per annum as a supplement to the stipend for the entire length of the studentship award.
3. A cumulative period of no less than three months spent working in the facilities of the industrial collaborator. This 3 month period can be at any point during the studentship and may consist of a number of shorter visits if appropriate.
4. The company's costs while the student is working at the premises of the company.
5. All additional expenses, such as the cost of travel and accommodation incurred by the student as a direct result of attendance at the premises of the cooperating body.

MRC may agree to vary any of the above stipulations provided that the case is made in the application.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are NOT required to make the contributions under bullet 1 and 2 above as these will be met by the MRC via increased levels of stipend and Research Training Support Grant payments to the academic partner.

SMEs are companies that meet the definition included in Recommendation 1996/280/EC of a small to medium size enterprise (SME) i.e.

- The enterprise must have a staff headcount of <250
- The enterprise must have a turnover not exceeding €50m AND/OR a balance sheet total not exceeding €43m

1.3 Intellectual Property rights and Publication

The host research organisation will need to agree Intellectual Property arrangements with industrial collaborators (taking care to retain IP rights themselves). The agreed distribution of project generated IP should meet either the [fully flexible requirement or gated contributions](#) requirement. The Intellectual Property (IP) management and distribution arrangements should therefore reflect the requirements of the appropriate category.

PhD students must be able to publish their project outcomes without restriction in accordance with good research practice. Consequently industrial CASE studentships are expected to be pre-competitive. The host institution will need agreement and confirmation that the data generated from this research can be placed in the public domain within a reasonable timeframe prior to commencing the studentship.

2 Studentships and Funding Available

2.1 Number of studentships

The total funding available will support in the region of 30 notional¹ industrial CASE studentships per year will be available. The allocation will be for 1 year in the first instance (2018 intake) but potentially up to 3 years (2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes) so your bid should include a request across the 3 intake years. Studentships will be allocated to successful DTPs/RO hosts in accordance with the quality of their training environment and strategy for developing industry partnered studentship opportunities.

Successful DTPs/ROs will be awarded in the form of a single profiled Training Grant to the leading RO. The normal flexibility of Research Council Training Grants will apply, for example enabling grant holders to:

- provide support for up to four years if a studentship project requires it;
- part-fund awards, for example with matched institutional funding (as long as at least 50% of the total cost of a studentship is funded by the Medical Research Council).

2.2 Funding available

Applicants should calculate their requested funding package based on the number of notional studentship requested across 3 intake years starting 2018 (for costs please see [MRC's minimum stipend and allowances](#)) and the likely interactions proposed. SMEs are **NOT** required to make the contributions under bullet 1 and 2 in section 1.2 as these will be met by the MRC.

Table 1. Notional studentship costs intake years 2018, 2019, 2020 (indexed)

	2018 Intake		2019 Intake		2020 Intake	
Location	SME*	Non-SME	SME*	Non-SME	SME*	Non-SME
London	£107,891	£94,241	£109,246	£95,596	£110,647	£96,997
Outside London	£100,891	£87,241	£102,246	£88,596	£103,647	£89,997

3 Assessment criteria

The assessment of proposals for industrial CASE studentships will be made by a panel in September 2017. Interviews will not be conducted.

¹ A 'notional' studentship is set at the equivalent of a 3.5 year studentship, based on [Research Councils UK minimum stipend and support levels](#)

*MRC meets enhanced stipend and consumables contribution

The Assessment Panel will consider the information provided by applicants against two main criteria:

3.1 Excellence of the industrial CASE training programme and training environment across the institutions involved

- 3.1.1 A strategy for an RO/DTP-level engagement with industry (large companies and/or SMEs) that will create clear opportunities for industrial CASE studentships. This could include enhancing existing collaborations/investments and/or plans to develop new ones.
- 3.1.2 The rationale for the proposed partnership(s) (academic and non-academic) involved in the submission and how industrial CASE studentship funding will add value to the partnership(s).
- 3.1.3 Procedures for ensuring delivery of the objectives of the scheme (see page 2), in particular that placements provide the student with access to training, facilities and expertise not available in an academic setting alone
- 3.1.4 Alignment of the industrial CASE programme with the RO's/DTP's research and training strengths, and with MRC's strategy (including the [MRC's skills priorities](#), [MRC strategic plan](#) or other specific [MRC research priorities](#)).
- 3.1.5 How the quality of the supervision offered by both the academic and industrial supervisors will be ensured throughout the studentship.
- 3.1.6 For DTPs, the number of MRC DTP studentships converted to industrial CASE studentships to date, and / or a clear strategy for converting existing studentships.
- 3.1.7 The quality of the research training environment (e.g. staff, expertise, infrastructure and facilities).
- 3.1.8 Wherever possible, details of expected complementary in-kind or cash contributions to MRC's industrial CASE investment from ROs or industry partners) over and above the minimum contributions. See section 1.2 on non-academic partner responsibilities.

3.2 Quality of management and governance of the training programme

- 3.2.1 A governance structure to provide oversight and coordination for industrial CASE studentships (or for DTPs, how this will be integrated with the current governance arrangements). Describe how the broader RO/DTP training environment governance will support the training and development needs of the industrial CASE students.
- 3.2.2 Clear commitment to RCUK's [statement of expectations](#), including an action plan for ensuring how students will be supported, trained and monitored in line with this vision.
- 3.2.3 Policies for student recruitment (including policies to ensure equality and diversity), monitoring and support.
- 3.2.4 Criteria for supervisor selection at academic and non-academic partners.
- 3.2.5 Arrangements for managing IP rights and publication in accordance with the MRC policies (see section 1.3 above).
- 3.2.6 Arrangements for monitoring the progress of the programme against the scheme objectives.
- 3.2.7 Commitment to submit student details via JeS within 3 months of the student start date and maintain accurate records.

4 Submitting your application

All applications must be submitted through the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) system (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>). The deadline for receipt of proposals is **4pm on the 20th July 2017**. Applications will not be accepted following this deadline.

- On entering Je-S follow the menu selections illustrated in the screen shots at *Annex 1* to create your proposal
- A guide to completing your MRC industrial CASE Competition Je-S application form is provided in *Annex 2*
- A guide to the structure for your MRC industrial CASE Competition case for support is provided in *Annex 3*
- A 1 page letter of support is required from every partner research organisation named on the bid.

5 Contacts

If you have any queries regarding registration with Je-S, please contact the Je-S Help Desk:

- Email: JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01793 44 4164
- Staffed Monday to Friday 9am-5pm (excluding Bank Holidays and other holidays)

For all other queries please contact the MRC fellowships team: fellows@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

ANNEX 1: Guide to create your Je-S Proposal Form

Please note that the call will be available from **18th May 2017**. Supporting documents, such as the Case for Support, can be prepared in advance.

Please login to your Je-S account via <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Logout.aspx>.

- Select '**Documents**' from the left hand menu list from your Je-S account home page
- Select '**New Document**' from within the Functions/create section of your documents page
- Select Council: **MRC**
- Select Document Type: **Studentship Proposal**
- Select Scheme: **industrial CASE**
- Select Call/Type/Mode (optional): **I CASE (Research Organisation Submissions Only) July 2017** (Please note that the call will be available from **18 May 2017**)
- Select '**Create Document**' option

Je-S Add New Document

To find the council, document type and scheme combination for a particular call please use the call search.

Call Search (opens in a new window)

Select Council:
MRC

Select Document Type:
Studentship Proposal

Select Scheme:
Industrial CASE

Select Call/Type/Mode (optional):
I CASE (Research Organisation Submissions Only) July 2017

Copy existing document?

Create Document Cancel

ANNEX 2: Guide to Completing MRC iCASE Je-S Application Form

The administrative lead Research Organisation, named first in the Case for Support, should complete and submit the application through Je-S.

Application Form Tab	Guidance
Project Details	<p>Start Date: Indicate earliest start date of students, e.g. 01/10/2018</p> <p>Duration: Details the duration of the I CASE Training Grant e.g. 60 Months.</p> <p>Your Reference: The reference is intended to be a unique identifier for the proposal and is unrelated to the reference that the organisation would be asked to provide if a grant were awarded. If an organisation does not have a system for referencing grant proposals, users should create their own short reference (reference cannot exceed a maximum length of 20 characters).</p> <p>Title: Title cannot exceed a maximum length of 150 characters.</p> <p>Call: I CASE (Research Organisation Submissions Only) July 2017Submissions Only).</p>
Research Organisation	<p>Organisation (Select Organisation option to search Je-S database): Please identify the administrative lead Research Organisation (RO) named first in the case for support (see Annex 3). This RO will be the administrative lead of a successful industrial CASE bid.</p> <p>Lead Department (Select Department option to search Je-S database): Please provide the details of the "Lead Department" for the application.</p> <p><i>A single "Lead Department" must be identified within the Je-S application form. This is for <u>administration purposes only</u> and does not affect the submission of a collaborative multi-department proposal – participating departments should be indicated in the Case for Support.</i></p>
Contact details Grant Holder	<p>(Grant Holder on Je-S) Academic Contact Details</p> <p>Please name the primary academic lead for the MRC industrial CASE host (this should be the same individual as identified in the Case for Support, Section 1.3, and should be based at the lead RO)</p>
Overall Strategy Details Project Summary	<p>Applicants are required to indicate text of 'NA' within the narrative text box provided (and Save this input text to ensure that the section validates correctly in the Je-S form).</p> <p>Please note, applicants are directed to include the overall strategic details within the Case for Support (Please see below ANNEX 3 section for further guidance).</p>
Attachments	<p>Please attach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a single case for support (Exactly 1) (up to 6 pages, see Annex 3). • Other Attachment (1 minimum required): Applicants should upload a letter of support for each collaborative partner participating in the project.

ANNEX 3: Guide to Preparing your MRC iCASE Studentship Case for Support

In addition to completing the information required within the electronic Je-S form (see *Annex 2*), your case for support should also be uploaded as part of your application.

Please consider the following requirements when preparing your case for support:

- Your case for support should not be longer than 6 A4 sides
- You must use Arial 11 point typeface
- You must leave margins of minimum 2cms on all edges
- You can upload only one case for support document
- Proposals containing appendices in addition to those requested will be rejected
- Ensure all pages of each document are numbered
- Set out your case under each of the headings specified below

Headings for your case for support include:

1 Applicant Details

1.1 Lead Research Organisation

- Please state the lead RO including participating departments in brackets after the RO name (this RO should submit the bid through Je-S). This RO may only lead one bid.

1.2 Partner Research Organisation(s)

- Please list one partner RO per line, listing participating departments in brackets after the RO name.

1.3 Associate Partner Research Organisation(s)

- Associate Partners (such as non-academic organisations) are not expected to lead any bids, but will need to demonstrate clear additional benefit to the partnership and an ability to strengthen the training environment.

1.4 Academic lead (Name, Position, Organisation)

- Please name the primary academic lead for MRC studentships across the industrial CASE host, including the name, position and contact details of this individual. This individual should possess the necessary expertise and experience to coordinate such a multi-faceted and flexible programme.

1.5 Administrative lead (Name, Position, Organisation)

- Please name the primary contact for administration of MRC studentships across the industrial CASE host, including the name, position and contact details. *This person will be MRC's primary contact on matters relating to administration of MRC industrial CASE programme including Je-S submissions.*

1.6 Industrial CASE Studentship Leadership Team

- Detail the academic leadership team (which should include the academic lead identified in 1.3) who will be overseeing the industrial CASE programme, including name, affiliation, position and contact details for each member.

For multi-institutional bids, the leadership team should include an academic lead per institution. For bids coming from DTPs, the leadership team is expected to be the same (although additional members could be added where relevant.)

Excellence of the industrial CASE training programme and training environment across the institutions involved (see criteria, section 3.1)

1.7 Research Training Strategy

- Provide details of the research training strategy, including the rationale for the proposed partners involved. Explain how your industrial CASE programme will deliver the aims of the scheme.
- Describe the approach to engagement with industrial partners to create industrial CASE studentship opportunities.
- Explain how the industrial CASE programme aligns to the research strengths and focus of the RO/DTP.

1.8 Training Environment

- Outline specific benefits of the training environment.

Please include the relevant research skills training, methodologies and technologies accessible to students and highlight how these will benefit industrial CASE students.

- Describe the supervision arrangements for industrial CASE students.
- For DTPs, provide the number of MRC DTP studentships converted to industrial CASE studentships, and / or a clear strategy for converting existing studentships.

1.9 Number of studentships and Financial Contribution

- Provide details of the institutional financial commitments and investments that could complement the industrial CASE programme (not compulsory).
- Provide the number of studentship requested (The allocation will be for 1 year in the first instance (2018 intake) but potentially up to 3 years (2018, 2019 and 2020 intakes) so your bid should include a request across the 3 intake years), details of the likely interactions proposed and total funding package (for costs see table 1, section 2.2) as per example below. If differing numbers of students are requested across the 3 intake years please use separate table(s) for each intake year.

Number of studentships per annum	e.g. 2
Likely number of SME interactions per annum	e.g. 1
Likely number of non SME interactions per annum	e.g. 1
Total funding requested (see table 1, section 2.2)	e.g. £188,132

2 Quality of Management & Governance of the Training Programme (see criteria, section 3.2)

2.1 Industrial CASE Programme Governance Arrangements

- Describe the programme's governance arrangements, including mechanisms for selecting and supporting students in line with industrial CASE scheme aims and the expectations for RCUK studentships.
- Describe how the industrial CASE programme leadership team will identify suitable supervisors and projects from across the organisations involved. Also explain how students will be matched to supervisors and projects.
- Describe the arrangements for managing IP rights and publication in accordance with the MRC policies

2.2 Reporting and submission of student details

- Explain how the leadership team will ensure that details of all MRC industrial CASE students are captured and reported to MRC.