

OXFORD-MRC ENTERPRISE (INDUSTRIAL CASE) STUDENTSHIPS

2020 intake

Call for Expressions of Interest – Deadline 30th August 2019

We are currently inviting Expressions of Interest from Principal Investigators wishing to supervise an MRC Enterprise (Industrial CASE) student in collaboration with an eligible commercial partner. Each successful proposal will be awarded ca. £88K funding towards a doctoral studentship, starting October 2020. MRC Enterprise students will benefit from the training available within the Oxford MRC Doctoral Training Partnership – including MRC Harwell and Diamond Light Source. To increase the attractiveness of the awards, host departments will be required to increase the stipend and to extend it to four years.

The Oxford MRC DTP has been awarded 4 iCASE DPhil studentships, to commence in 2020. We are seeking expressions of interest by Friday 30th August 2019. Shortlisted projects will then be invited to submit a full detailed proposal by late September, so that selected projects can be advertised by October. Candidates will be interviewed in early February.

Expressions of interest can be submitted for projects across the scientific remit of the MRC. We particularly welcome projects that include training in the MRC's priority skills (quantitative, interdisciplinary and whole organ/organism research) and industrial strategy priority topics (digital technologies, bioinformatics, advanced therapies, accelerated drug discovery, translational development, precision healthcare and diagnostics).

The iCASE award will fund 4 Enterprise studentships at the same level as MRC DTP studentships¹. However, we aim to make these studentships highly attractive, to ensure the best students are recruited. Therefore host departments will be required to increase the stipend to at least £20k p.a. and to extend it to four years. This will require additional input of ca. £27.5k (comprising £5k p.a. for years 1-3 and £12.5k for year 4), either from the Department or from the commercial partner. (It may be worth noting that, if by having one of these studentships a Department is able to recruit a student who would otherwise have gone elsewhere, the financial contribution is offset by JRAM income that the Department will receive in respect of the student.)

MRC Enterprise students should spend a cumulative period of no less than 3 months working in the facilities of the industrial collaborator. This minimum 3-month period can be timed at any point during the studentship and may consist of a number of shorter visits if appropriate.

Financial contributions expected from the commercial partner:

Commercial partners can be large companies or small and medium enterprises (SMEs). They are required to contribute as follows:

¹ Oxford-MRC DTP studentships awarded through the annual MSD Graduate School Studentship Competition in 2020 will cover, as a minimum, an RCUK-level stipend (£15,009 p.a. in 2019/20), University fees at the standard home/EU rate, a research training support grant of £5,000 p.a., and a travel allowance of £300 p.a., for a period of 3.5 years. Departments are encouraged to supplement these awards.

1. (Non-SMEs only) A financial contribution to the academic partner towards the cost of the project of at least £1.4K per annum;
2. (Non-SMEs only) A mandatory payment of at least £2.5K per annum² as a supplement to the stipend for the entire length of the studentship award. (This does not apply to SMEs, where the MRC will enhance the stipend by £2.5K p.a. for 3.5 years)
3. The company's costs while the student is working at the premises of the company.
4. 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.

Partner eligibility:

UK-based organisations can be considered as the non-academic (commercial / industrial) 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.

Intellectual Property:

Academic and commercial partners will need to sign an agreement prepared by Research Services (based on a Russell Group studentship template), before the award can be confirmed.

Criteria for shortlisting:

1. Scientific quality
2. Scientific synergies arising from the academic-commercial partnership
3. Training available for the student
4. Fit with MRC's priority skills areas and industrial strategy priorities.

How to apply:

Please email the completed Expression of Interest form (which may be found on page 3 below) to mrc@medsci.ox.ac.uk by Friday 30th August 2019.

² This is the level of partner contribution to stipend required by the MRC, but please note that is not sufficient on its own to bring the stipend level up to £20K p.a. for four years; a *further* ca. £27.5K is required, which either the Department, or a combination of Department and commercial partner, will need to contribute.

MRC Enterprise (iCASE) Studentship Competition – Expression of Interest

Provisional Project Title:

Supervisors: (Academic and Commercial; the lead Academic supervisor will be required to have supervised a student to successful completion of a PhD/DPhil prior to this project)

University Department(s) and Commercial Partner:

Is the commercial partner an SME³? Yes/No

Does the commercial partner have its own premises? Yes/No

Is the commercial partner UK-based? Yes/No (If 'No', how will they provide the student with an opportunity to gain skills not currently available in the UK?)

Brief description of project (*max 300 words*):

Role of the commercial partner (*max 100 words*)

Training and support available (*max 100 words*)

3 SMEs are defined by the MRC as 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