

EPSRC University Doctoral Landscape Awards (UDLA)

Newcastle University

Invitation to collaborate on Doctoral training awards (PhD projects) - 2026/27

Overview

We are writing to you with an update on the new EPSRC Doctoral Landscape Awards (DLA), formerly known as the EPSRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). This funding stream was announced by the UKRI in their recent [funding announcement](#).

We aim to recruit a minimum of 45 students over 3 annual recruitment rounds for entry 2025, 2026 & 2027.

New collaborative approach:

The EPSRC have removed the former 10% CASE conversion target (which included a minimum of 32k cash contributions) after receiving feedback from partners that the CASE model was too restrictive, especially for SMEs and civic organisations.

The EPSRC now expect that a minimum of 25% of studentships awarded will engage in collaborative studentships, working with one or more non-academic partners who take an active involvement in the direction and outputs of the doctoral project and career development of the student. This must include cash or in-kind contributions, but with no minimum level. In most cases, students on a collaborative studentship will also spend at least 3 months hosted by a collaborating partner.

The EPSRCs aim for these awards is to:

- place students in excellent research environments based on the location of our research portfolio
- support the health of our research disciplines
- enable students to work in the early stages of emerging research areas
- provide an opportunity for **early career researchers** to supervise their first students
- support **collaboration with business and other organisations** engaged in research and innovation
- offer organisations flexibility to meet different needs in the research training landscape.
- Studentships should primarily be in EPSRC's remit, although multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research training is welcomed.
- We ask you to pay particular attention to the balance of training between theoretical and experimental research areas, and also fundamental and applied research.

Our approach

We will ensure that our doctoral training programme meets both the needs of the University, our industrial partners and EPSRC priorities as a natural outcome of our core research structures.

The DLA provides the funding and delivery mechanisms through which we can coordinate research projects that meet both our own growth areas and those of our partners, as well as progressing the aims and ambitions of the EPSRC strategic plan.

In addition to research projects, we also deliver a general training programme that meets the needs of our doctoral students; this is developed with due consideration to EPSRC priorities, as well as consultation and oversight from our industrial partners. We will utilize the knowledge of our industry and academic partners to provide training that embeds knowledge and understanding of innovation, integrity, and sustainability into their applied research techniques, and personal development via training workshops such as RRI, trusted research and Environmental Sustainability, leadership, and impact.

Through active engagement of the Business Development team in the management of the DLA, we will ensure that we maximize the opportunity to foster links between new partners and ECRs. We will engage with partners at the start of the DLA by inviting them to be part of our DLA community by submitting PhD research project ideas, time-critical mini-projects (placements), identification of skill gaps/needs, and training opportunities. We will then help connect these colleagues with academics within our EPSRC community. Confirmed collaborative project partners will be contacted to discuss their skills needs and to request any input or contributions to the training programme.

Collaboration options

The DLA provides a new opportunity for a broader range of support and investment to Doctoral research from external partners.

This can range from small in-kind contributions (e.g. time for supervision), mid-level cash contributions towards project costs (e.g. consumables, travel, equipment, access to industrial facilities, data etc.), up to a high-level contribution of 50% of the total studentship costs (fees, stipend & project costs). We have set out some examples in Appendix 1.

How can I submit PhD project ideas, and find an academic partner?

- **Established collaborations:** If you have an existing partnership with an academic colleague or Business Development Manager, please contact them to discuss your interest.
- **New collaborations:** Please contact one of the general contacts below and we can help introduce you to an academic partner(s):

EPSRC DLA team (general enquiries): doctoral.training@ncl.ac.uk

Strategic partnership team: karen.allenby@newcastle.ac.uk

Business development team: Geraint.lewis@ncl.ac.uk

UKRI Advice: [EPSRC-09052024-ICASE-tips-and-considerations-for-industry.pdf](#)

Progressing collaboration awards

Once you agree terms with your external partner and there are any cash contributions to be paid to Newcastle University, please follow these instructions:

1. Ask your partner to list the agreed contributions (cash and in-kind) that have been agreed by the company in writing via an email or letter, including a contact name and address.

2. Please complete a Project Initiation Form (PIF): [Newcastle University & NuTH - Project Initiation Form v2](#) attaching the above letter, and any studentship project details. If this is being completed after recruitment has taken place note the name of the PhD candidate.
3. The Research finance team will contact you to review the information.
4. Once this is finalised, the finance team will enter this into NU Projects, and this will progress to the Grants & Contracts team.
5. The G&C team will work with the company to complete the studentship agreement.
6. If there are IP issues to resolve the Business Development Team can help. Please contact your School BDM.
7. Once the contact is signed the funds will be confirmed and a RES account set up.
8. The costs breakdown can be reviewed and agreed at this point. If there is any contribution to the studentship fees and/or stipend then the School PGR/Finance team need to know for the studentship finance set-up form.
9. The RES account number will be sent to the lead supervisor (PIF lead) and they are responsible for making sure the PGR is aware of the account number and budget.

Further information

UKRI advice for external partners: [EPSRC-09052024-ICASE-tips-and-considerations-for-industry.pdf](#)

Please contact your academic or Business contact to discuss. General enquiries: doctoral.training@ncl.ac.uk

NUCores: [NU Centres of Research Excellence - Who we Are - Newcastle University](#)

Our Schools:

[Our Research | School of Engineering | Newcastle University](#)

[Our Research | School of Natural and Environmental Sciences | Newcastle University](#)

[Our Research | School of Computing | Newcastle University](#)

[Our Research | School of Mathematics, Statistics and Physics | Newcastle University](#)

APPENDIX 1. EPSRC DLA – External collaborations options

PhD projects:

Collaboration level	Contribution examples	Target group	Award allocation/value
Low-level	Light-touch input to PhD project design and in-kind supervisory time provided by external partner. Access to facilities, data & supervision etc. committed by external partner and placement/visits funded via DLA fund. Provides strategic advice regarding skills training programme.	<i>Aimed to engage new emerging research areas, ECRs looking for first lead supervision opportunity, and SMEs who are looking to start exploring and establish new working relationships via PhD projects.</i>	No cash contributions In-kind/ DLA grant/ in-house costs.
Mid-level	Co-design of research project. In-kind supervisory time provided by external partner. Access to facilities, data etc. and potential placement/regular visits to partner funded by project funds. Small-medium contribution to project costs from external partner.	<i>Aimed at ECR and established academic supervisors and external companies that have one-off projects and funds for individual projects but cannot fund 50% of a studentship.</i> <i>SME- large companies who are not UKRI strategic/IDLA partners.</i> <i>Additional funds provided for travel inc. visits to company, additional equipment, consumables, training etc.</i>	£4,000 - £50,000 suggested
High-level	Industry led project. 50% of total studentship is funded by external partner. High level of In-kind supervisory time provided by external partner.	<i>Aimed at external companies with higher level of cash contributions (Newcastle Strategic partners, and new & existing collaborations with large scale companies who are looking to invest in Doctoral research outside</i>	£58,136 min plus any RTSG contributions (50% of UKRI fees and stipend)

	Established access to facilities, data etc. and placement/ regular visits to partner part-funded by project funds. Higher level contribution to project costs from external partner (equipment, consumables etc.) PGR could be based at partner in UK on outside study basis.	<i>of current Industrial DLA, Focal award areas or between calls.</i> <i>Option to be run as a mini cohort under same research theme/topics (2026/27 entry onwards to prepare for future Focal awards.</i>	
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Other contributions:

Activity	Overview	Estimated contribution/costs
PhD placements	Placement ideas are welcome. <i>This could be a mini-project or completion of an outstanding project.</i> <i>Length can be 1 – 3 months</i>	The DLA has funds available for PGRs (who do not have an external partner involved in their project) to undertake an ESPRC funded placement. Contributions to placement costs from external partner are welcome (cash or in-kind).
Delivery of training workshop	We welcome the input of our external partners into our training programme. This could include talks on your R&D, careers, specific skills workshops etc.	In-kind as external advisors.
Strategic input into design of cohort training programme (skills need)	We welcome nominations for external partners to sit on our strategic advisory board, to contribute to our DLA delivery plan, and identify/advise on end user requirements (skills gaps etc).	In-kind as external advisors.