Doctoral Training Partnerships

Announcement of Opportunity

Issued on: Monday 8 January 2018
Notification of Intent deadline: 16:00 on Wednesday 7 March 2018
Proposals deadline: 16:00 on Wednesday 16 May 2018

1. Summary

NERC invests in Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) to provide excellent postgraduate research opportunities across the NERC science remit as well as varied professional and technical skills and personal development training.

Proposals are invited to host and deliver the second phase of NERC DTPs. The first student intake of this second phase of DTPs will begin in October 2019.

NERC will invest in between 10 and 20 DTPs through this call. Each DTP award will provide funding for five years of new student intakes (i.e. eight years of funding in total, from the start of academic year 2019/20). Each DTP will be allocated between 12 and 24 studentships per annum.

Each DTP will offer training across a range of scientific topics within the NERC remit and it is anticipated that, collectively, the DTPs awarded through this call will cover the breadth of NERC’s remit. However, there is no expectation that a single DTP will cover the whole of NERC’s remit.

This opportunity is open to organisations eligible for NERC research grant funding, i.e. applicants based in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), NERC Research Centres, and Independent Research Organisations (IROs) approved by the Research Councils. Each DTP must include an accredited Higher Education PhD award-making body. Individual organisations may only act as the administrative lead for one proposal in this call, but may be involved as a partner in multiple proposals. (Please see the Eligibility section for full details of partner eligibility criteria for this call.)

NERC recognises the value of delivering studentships in partnership. NERC encourages proposals that demonstrate cross-disciplinary working, including across departmental boundaries within organisations, or between organisations. Partnerships with end-users (i.e. non-academic organisations within the private, public and other civil society sectors) are strongly encouraged.

This call includes a Notification of Intent stage.
The closing date for Notifications of Intent, to be submitted using the online form provided (available via the call web page), is **16:00 on Wednesday 7 March 2018**.

Proposals will only be accepted from those that have submitted a Notification of Intent via the online form and NERC must be informed of any changes to hosting partners following the submission of a Notification of Intent.

Proposals must be submitted via the Research Councils' Joint electronic-Submission system (Je-S). The deadline for submission of full proposals is **16:00 on Wednesday 16 May 2018**.

This is an open competitive call for new DTP awards and no existing NERC DTP awards will be automatically renewed. **Existing NERC DTPs must follow the application process outlined in this document and submit both a Notification of Intent and a proposal through this call.**

A Town Hall meeting will be held on **30 January 2018** in central London to give potential applicants the opportunity to discuss the call with NERC. Registration for this meeting has already closed and the final attendee list has been confirmed. A summary of the meeting will be published on the NERC website.

### 2. Background

NERC supports the training of postgraduates to ensure a supply of technically able, skilled and experienced people to underpin the UK’s economic ambition to grow and adapt to the demands of a changing world. By investing in training excellent individuals at the starting point of a research career in this way, NERC supports the advancement of the body of knowledge in environmental sciences and ensures those individuals are equipped with the necessary skills to successfully pursue their chosen careers, both within and outside the academic context.

DTPs provide excellent postgraduate research opportunities across the NERC science remit, as well as varied professional and technical skills and personal development training. Training delivered through DTPs can be drawn from any part of NERC’s remit and research topics are chosen by students and supervisors. This training plays a key part in maintaining the breadth and diversity of our research base and in ensuring that as a community we are responsive to new ideas.

DTP students are trained in cohorts, and postgraduate training is delivered in collaboration with both academic and end-user partners from a wide range of backgrounds to ensure students are equipped with the skills and experiences required across NERC’s diverse community, for the benefit of science, policy, the wider labour market, and the economy.

The first phase of NERC DTPs invested in five annual student intakes between 2014 and 2018. A total of 15 DTPs were awarded.

In 2016/17, NERC undertook a mid-term evaluation of its existing DTPs to assess the performance of individual DTPs against NERC’s success criteria and provide evidence of the
impact of the DTP scheme. Lessons learned from the DTP evaluation have been used to inform this call.

3. Scope – programme objectives and requirements

3.1 Training remit

Training provided by DTPs must be within the NERC remit, and relevant to the NERC strategy. Each DTP must be able to offer training across a range of subject areas within NERC remit, and may include training at the interface between environmental sciences and other disciplines, where many major research challenges exist. There is no expectation that a single DTP will cover the whole of NERC remit.

NERC reserves the right to manage the balance of the overall DTP portfolio to ensure broad coverage of the NERC remit. Annex A of this document presents data showing coverage of NERC’s remit by existing DTPs after three student intakes. This information will be used when considering the portfolio balance delivered through this call.

In addition to the broad research training remit identified above, there are a number of transferrable professional, technical and personal development training requirements that must be delivered by all DTPs funded through this call:

- Access for all DTP students to placements, internships or other relevant work experience opportunities (this includes RCUK Policy Internships). This does not mean that all students must complete an internship/placement, but that these opportunities must be available to all, and training programmes should be designed with the flexibility to enable students to undertake such work experience opportunities if they wish to do so.
- Explicit careers training and continuous professional development relevant to both academic and non-academic career trajectories. Careers training must take place suitably early in students’ training to enable it to inform their choice of training opportunities.
- Strong end-user engagement with all levels of DTP training.
- Dedicated professional skills, and innovation/translation training available to all DTP students.
- Access for all students to appropriate data skills training.
- Opportunities to network across DTP/CDT/Research Council cohorts and gain multi-disciplinary perspectives.
- Training Needs Analysis (or equivalent) for all students at the outset of training and the opportunity to discuss individual training requirements throughout their PhD. Discussion of training needs and available opportunities should take place in discussion with end-users as appropriate and be placed within the context of potential future careers.

All proposals must state clearly how these training requirements will be delivered.

In addition to the specific remit requirements above, there are a number of requirements for successful delivery of training through DTPs, which must be evidenced in all proposals submitted to this call:
3.2 Research capacity

Proposals must demonstrate that the DTP offers a scientifically excellent training environment and sufficient high-quality research capacity to deliver training in all the areas of NERC remit that are included within the DTP.

3.3 Collaboration with end-users and non-HEI partners

Collaboration with a variety of partners is vital for delivery of excellent multidisciplinary training and for framing research questions to ensure production of research outputs with real-world applications and of direct relevance and use to the environmental science community as a whole. Collaboration with both end-users and other non-HEI partners must therefore form a significant part of the DTP’s training programme – at both the design and delivery stage – and successful proposals will demonstrate clearly how students will benefit from engagement with multiple types of organisations, on both an individual and a cohort level, via a variety of mechanisms. In outlining their approach to engaging with stakeholders, proposals must evidence a track record of collaborative working and describe a coherent strategy for engaging with multiple stakeholders.

3.3.1 CASE studentships

DTPs awarded through this call must ensure that, over the lifetime of their award, at least 25% of the studentships offered by the DTP are formal CASE studentships with eligible CASE partners (see Eligibility section for further details, including important changes to CASE partner eligibility for this call). It is important that these requirements are adhered to, and compliance will therefore be monitored via reporting processes. Progress and predicted trajectory of DTPs’ delivery against the CASE conversion requirement will be reviewed after two student intakes. Applicants must demonstrate in their proposals the mechanisms they will use to ensure the CASE conversion requirement is met.

3.3.2 Collaborative (non-CASE) studentships

In addition to CASE studentships, any number of DTP studentships may be ‘collaborative’ (i.e. no formal partnership requirements and/or project partners not eligible to be CASE partners). These collaborative studentships will also be monitored and recorded through reporting processes and will be formally recognised by NERC as a success metric as part of its ongoing monitoring of DTP performance. Proposals must describe how such collaborative relationships will be developed and maintained, and the benefits they will provide to students’ training.

3.4 Management

The DTP will need to have strong leadership and management. It should have both a lead operational manager and steering committee/management board. The steering committee/management board should be comprised of all hosting DTP partners and must also have representation from relevant end-user organisations. It will have overall
responsibility for the effective governance of the DTP and its relationship with NERC and provide a strategic needs framework to aid the prioritisation and development of PhD projects.

The DTP must demonstrate that robust and transparent governance arrangements will be in place from the outset of the DTP, which may include the development of formal partnership agreements, communication plans and systems for monitoring the DTP’s overall progress and success. NERC strongly encourages applicants to incorporate DTP students into the management/running of activities within the DTP. Where appropriate, formal partnership agreements must be in place ahead of the start of the first student cohort.

The DTP must also commit adequate support for appropriate administrative resource, and proposals must be explicit about how administrative structures will be managed and funded.

### 3.5 Widening participation

In line with RCUK’s commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, NERC wishes to ensure that it supports the most talented students whatever their background and regardless of where and when they undertook their first degree. To ensure that this happens, we require:

- Selection processes to be open and transparent and enable the potential of the candidate to be assessed whether they are applying on a full- or part-time basis, whether they have prior research training or not, and regardless of their demographic.
- All studentships to be available on a full- or part-time basis and the availability of part-time awards to be clearly set out when advertising funding opportunities.
- Opportunities for NERC-funded studentships to be actively publicised both within and beyond the host Research Organisations.
- Support to be made available to all students to discuss mental health and wellbeing.

NERC expects applicants to think imaginatively and demonstrate in their proposals that they have considered how they will contribute to the widening participation agenda and promote postgraduate research to a diverse base of talented graduate students across the UK. In particular, consideration should be given to training programme flexibility and the ability to address individual students’ needs.

### 3.6 Legacy and impact

Proposals must demonstrate consideration of the legacy and impacts of the DTP beyond the lifetime of NERC investment.
4. DTP scheme requirements

4.1 Funding

NERC will invest in between 10 and 20 DTPs through this call. The minimum notional studentships awarded will be 12 per year and the maximum will be 24 per year. However, where the proposal justifies it (e.g. on the basis of the research concentration resulting from a strong partnership), requests for more than 24 notional students per year will be considered on their merits.

NERC DTP funding may be used to leverage additional investment (either cash or in-kind support) from multiple stakeholders. NERC strongly encourages such leverage; however, there is no formal requirement for match-funded studentships or cash leverage for this call.

The overall DTP award will be based on the allocated number of notional studentships per year. The funding awarded is calculated on the basis of: the RCUK minimum student stipend, the RCUK minimum fee level, the standard NERC Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), and the standard NERC doctoral training programme management costs, all multiplied by the allocated number of notional studentships. All NERC notional studentships comprise funding for four years. Awards will be supplemented with London Allowance where necessary (see the RCUK training grant guide for details of eligibility for London Allowance).

The indicative costs of a notional studentship are provided below. The student stipend and fees are indicative estimates only, based on the 2017/18 agreed RCUK minima multiplied by four, and excluding London Allowance (at the time of award, stipend and fees will be indexed to accommodate rises in the RCUK minimum stipend and fees levels over the lifetime of the award); the RTSG and management costs are fixed.

Indicative funding per notional studentship:

- Student Stipend £58,212
- Fees £16,780
- RTSG £11,000
- Management Costs £1,500
- Total £87,492

A contribution towards operational management costs has been included within the above indicative funding calculation, in recognition of the need to manage the partnership. NERC acknowledges that this does not reflect the full cost of DTP administrative structures. In line with the requirements in Section 3.4 (Management), adequate funds must therefore be committed by the DTP from either flexibility within the NERC grant or leveraged support, or a combination of sources.

DTPs will have flexibility in how they use the funding awarded (subject to the normal RCUK terms and conditions of training grants), as long as the minimum numbers of students are supported each year (the minimum being the number of notional studentships allocated by
NERC). All DTP students should be funded at the minimum RCUK stipend level, for at least three years and up to a maximum of four years.

**Please note:** the mandatory training requirements listed in Section 3.1 (Training Remit) must all be delivered using funds available from the NERC training grant plus any additional leverage secured by the DTP – no additional funding will be provided by NERC to support the activities listed in Section 3.1. This also applies to support for students taking part in the RCUK Policy Internship and Environment YES schemes. The costs of students’ participation in these schemes must be borne by the DTP and will not be reimbursed by NERC.

Given the aforementioned flexibility in use of funding, it will be possible for DTPs to use the DTP training grant to support more than the minimum number of students each year. This could be achieved by having students undertake training over a variety of time frames (i.e. between 3 and 4 years as appropriate, depending on the discipline and the student’s experience/knowledge) and by co-funding students from other sources. **Students must be funded at least 50% by a NERC training grant (or funded on a fees-only basis, if eligible for fees only) to be classed as a NERC student.** It is strongly recommended that, wherever possible, co-funding from non-Research Council sources is used to part-fund NERC students (rather than wholly fund individual students) so that all DTP students have equal access to the opportunities available to Research Council-funded students and can be registered on Je-S for reporting purposes. In situations where it is not possible to part-fund students, the DTP must ensure suitable measures are in place to ensure those students’ training experiences are comparable to NERC students’, and all relevant data are provided to NERC outside Je-S.

### 4.2 Implementation and delivery

DTP awards will provide funding for five years of new student intake – i.e. eight years of funding in total, from the start of academic year 2019/20.

There is no stipulation regarding size or geographical spread of DTP consortia and proposals will be accepted from both single- and multi-institution consortia. Please note that while DTP studentship funds/management may be focused within particular departments within an institution, to ensure delivery of a truly multidisciplinary training environment, DTPs must engage effectively with other departments across their partner organisations as appropriate.

### 4.3 Data Management

It is NERC policy to increase the visibility and awareness of environmental data and to improve their management as a resource. DTPs funded through this call should therefore ensure that NERC Environmental Data Centres are aware of significant datasets generated, or to be compiled, under the award so that their long-term stewardship can be planned.

### 4.4 NERC Facilities

Funding for NERC services and facilities cannot be requested as part of a training grant proposal. Students wishing to use NERC services and facilities must fund the costs of doing so using RTSG funds or gain access to facilities through other routes (e.g. grants held by
supervisors). Anyone wishing to use a NERC service or facility must contact the facility to seek agreement that they can provide the service required.

4.5 Reporting requirements and monitoring

There will be mandatory annual reporting requirements for all DTPs, in addition to the standard studentships information captured through the Je-S Studentship Details functionality. This information will be used by NERC to report on the success of our training investments to government and other partners. Information provided will also be used to provide assurance that the DTP is being managed appropriately and is progressing in accordance with its original funding proposal, the NERC Training Strategy, and the aims and expectations outlined in this Announcement of Opportunity document. This additional reporting will take the form of an annual return. Indicative reporting headings include:

- Information regarding student recruitment (including demographics of unsuccessful applicants).
- Information regarding the DTP student population, including those funded by alternative sources to the DTP award.
- CASE studentships and other collaborative partner engagement.
- Information regarding partners’ in-kind investment and co-funding.
- Cohort-level training activities.
- Cross-DTP/CDT training activities.
- DTP-level success stories and impacts (individual student research outputs will be captured via Researchfish).

In addition to annual reports, NERC will conduct regular institutional visits to each DTP.

NERC will use all these information sources to monitor the performance of DTPs against their original funding proposals and NERC’s priority success criteria and engage in a two-way dialogue aimed at developing DTPs to the benefit of their students and mission over the period of the DTP award.

NERC may evaluate the DTP mechanism periodically as appropriate. In the event of an evaluation, NERC expects full cooperation from all DTP award holders in providing any information requested.

5. Application process

5.1 How to apply

5.1.1 Notification of Intent

Closing date: 16:00 on Wednesday 7 March 2018

The Notification of Intent stage will be used to identify hosting partner organisations that will be involved in full proposals to allow NERC to prepare for the assessment process. Proposals will only be accepted from those that have submitted a Notification of Intent.
One Notification of Intent is required for each proposed DTP; this should be submitted by the administrative lead organisation on behalf of all consortium partners.

Notifications of Intent must be submitted using the online form provided (available via the call web page). Email submissions will not be accepted.

Applicants must ensure that their Notification of Intent is received by NERC by 16:00 on the closing date.

5.1.2 Proposals

Closing Date: 16:00 on Wednesday 16 May 2018

Proposals must be submitted using the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system. Applicants should select Proposal Type – ‘Studentship Proposal’ and then select the Scheme – ‘Doctoral Training’ and the Call – ‘DTP 2 May 2018’.

To use the Je-S system, the Research Organisation must be registered as a Je-S user. Full details are available on the Je-S website. Further information can also be obtained by contacting the Je-S Helpdesk by email or by telephone on 01793 444164.

Applicants must ensure that their proposal is received by NERC by 16:00 on the closing date (at which point the Je-S portal closes). Applicants must allow enough time for their proposal to pass through their organisation's Je-S submission route before this deadline. Any proposal that is incomplete, or does not conform to all the eligibility and submission rules outlined in this Announcement of Opportunity, may be rejected without peer review.

All proposals submitted to this call must use the proposal proforma provided on the NERC website and in Annex B of this document. The Case for Support section of this form must not exceed 16 sides of A4 in single-single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11), with margins of at least 2cm. Please note that Arial narrow, Calibri and Times New Roman are not allowable font types and any proposal which has used any of these font types within their submission will be rejected. References and footnotes should also be at least 11 point font and should be in the same font type as the rest of the document. Headers and footers should not be used for references or information relating to the research training case.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include a high-level vision statement for their DTP within the Case for Support section of their proposal.

Proposals must provide evidence of any financial or in-kind contribution that has been committed by partners using the partner contribution table at the end of the proposal proforma (see Annex B of this document). No attachments other than the proposal proforma will be accepted. Applicants referring to websites should note that reviewers may choose not to use them.

Please note that on submission to council ALL non PDF documents are converted to PDF; the use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document.

Additionally where non-standard fonts are present, and even if the converted PDF document may look unaffected in the Je-S System, when it is imported into the Research Councils’ Grants System some information may be removed. We therefore recommend that where a
document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc.), the document should be converted to PDF prior to attaching it to the proposal.

A single proposal should be submitted from the administrative lead partner of the DTP.

The expected start date for DTPs funded under this Announcement of Opportunity is no earlier than 1 October 2019.

By submitting a proposal to this call, all Hosting Partners are agreeing to the following:

i. To support and host students within the DTP.
ii. To contribute towards an appropriate management structure for the DTP.
iii. To comply with NERC’s reporting and evaluation procedures for the DTP.

Submission of a proposal to this call will be taken as confirmation that the proposed training programme and any formal contributions identified in the proposal have been approved by the Vice Chancellor (or equivalent) of each of the Hosting Partners involved in the DTP.

5.2 Eligibility

This opportunity is open to organisations eligible for NERC research grant funding – i.e. applicants based in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), NERC Research Centres, and Independent Research Organisations (IROs) approved by the Research Councils.

Organisations that are not eligible for NERC research grant funding may act as Collaborative Partners in DTP proposals and information regarding the nature of this collaboration must be included within the proposal.

Each DTP must include an accredited higher education PhD award-making body.

Involvement in a DTP may take two forms:

i. **Hosting Partners**: organisations that are both (a) eligible for NERC funding; and (b) intending to provide the principal base (host) for students during the tenure of the award.

ii. **Collaborative Partners**: (a) those institutions not eligible for NERC funding; and/or (b) organisations that are eligible for NERC funding but do not intend to provide the principal base (host) for students during the award. Collaborative Partners provide additional benefits to the students’ experience e.g. real-world experience, training, equipment, facilities, understanding or opportunity.

Each DTP proposal will be asked to identify one of the Hosting Partners as the administrative lead (the administrative lead does not have to be a higher education PhD award-making body). Identification of the administrative lead should not be interpreted as recognition of a dominant partner which will host the majority of studentships.

Individual organisations may only act as the administrative lead for one proposal in this call, but may be involved as a partner in multiple proposals (with no limit). However, applicants should bear in mind that involvement of individual organisations in multiple partnerships will
be closely scrutinised during assessment of proposals. Evidence of genuine partnerships must be provided.

Potential applicants should contact NERC well in advance of the submission deadline if they have any queries regarding their eligibility.

5.2.1 CASE partner eligibility

As stated previously, DTPs awarded through this call must deliver at least 25% of their studentships as formal CASE studentships with eligible CASE partners. For this phase of DTP investments the organisational eligibility criteria for CASE partners have been updated to better reflect the objectives of the CASE scheme and harmonise with the policies applied by other Research Council CASE studentship delivery mechanisms.

From the start of the DTPs awarded through this call, any organisation eligible to receive NERC research funding will not be eligible to act as a CASE partner. This includes NERC Research Centres and [Independent Research Organisations (IROs) as defined by RCUK](#). However, acknowledging the focus on collaborative multidisciplinary research training environments, NERC strongly encourages continued collaboration of all types across a range of partners, including Research Centres and IROs.

As noted in section 3.3 (Collaboration with end-users and non-HEI partners), in addition to CASE, any number of DTP studentships may be ‘collaborative’ (i.e. no formal partnership requirements and/or project partners not eligible to be CASE partners). NERC Research Centres and IROs will be able to act as either hosting partners or collaborative partners within DTPs and thus continue to make valuable contributions through collaborative studentships.

Individual student eligibility for studentships delivered by DTPs funded through this call will remain in line with the harmonised [Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants](#) document and associated guidance, and full reliance is placed on hosting organisations to ensure students meet these eligibility criteria.

6. Assessment Process

Proposals will be assessed by a panel consisting of independent experts which may include members of the NERC Training Advisory Board (TAB). The panel will review the proposals and provide written comments ahead of an assessment panel meeting. Applicants will be given the opportunity to provide a written response to reviewer comments prior to the assessment panel. Applicants will not be invited to give a presentation at the assessment panel.

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Research Excellence
- Training Excellence
- Multidisciplinary Training Environment
- Partnership Operational Management

These criteria will be weighted equally.
The assessment criteria and scoring definitions to be used by the assessment panel are given in Annexes C & D.

Feedback will be provided to both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

NERC will use the recommendations of the assessment panel along with the overall call requirements and the available budget in making the final funding decisions.

7. Timetable

- Announcement published: 8 January 2018
- Town hall meeting (Central London) 30 January 2018
- Deadline for Notifications of Intent: 7 March 2018
- Deadline for submission of proposals: 16 May 2018
- Assessment panel initial comments on proposals: Mid-July 2018
- Deadline for submission of PI response to assessment panel comments: 31 July 2018
- Assessment panel meets: Early September 2018
- Earliest start date for awards: 1 October 2019

8. Contact

For all enquiries, please contact NERC Research Careers Team.
Annex A. Remit coverage of current DTPs after three student intakes (*primary areas* of individual studentships mapped against NERC remit areas).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research subjects</th>
<th>Student numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservation ecology</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community genetics and evolution</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavioural ecology</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate and cryospheric systems</td>
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<td>Global and cryospheric changes</td>
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<td>Biogeochemical cycles</td>
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<td>Volcanic processes</td>
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<td>Paleoenvironmental processes</td>
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<td>Palaeoecology</td>
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<td>Tectonic processes</td>
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<td>Environmental amentities</td>
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COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998
In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the personal data provided on this form will be processed by NERC, and may be held on computerised database and/or manual files. Further details may be found in the guidance notes.

Doctoral Training Partnership PROPOSAL

Administrative Lead Partner (This is the organisation that will receive the funding for the DTP from NERC, and will be the main point of contact between the two bodies. The organisation must be eligible as a Hosting Partner).

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<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Division or Department</th>
<th>Internal Research Organisation Reference</th>
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Lead Applicant (The individual should be from the Administrative Lead Partner and be the administrative lead/head of the DTP).

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Division or Department</th>
<th>DTP Role</th>
<th>Email</th>
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Hosting Partner(s) (Please only include HEI or Research Organisation partners that will be acting as hosts for DTP students).

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<th>Name</th>
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Number of studentships per annum requested (Minimum 12; Maximum 24).

Title [up to 150 characters]

DTP Summary [maximum 4000 characters with spaces]
Please provide a summary of the proposed training in terms appropriate for a general audience, including details on what will make your training offer unique and what its impact will be.
Doctoral Training Partnership – Case for Support

Please justify and evidence your proposal using the following headings:

- Research Excellence
- Training Excellence
- Multidisciplinary Training Environments
- Partnership Operational Management

This Case for Support must be completed on standard A4 sized paper in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11), with margins of at least 2cm. Please note that Arial narrow, Calibri and Times New Roman are not allowable font types and any proposal which has used any of these font types within their submission will be rejected. References and footnotes should also be at least 11 point font and should be in the same font type as the rest of the document. Headers and footers should not be used for references or information relating to the scientific case. Embedded diagrams or pictures or numerical formulae may contain text that is smaller than 11 point but applicants should ensure that the font is legible. Text in tables and figure labels not within embedded diagrams should be at least 11 point. Applicants referring to websites should note that referees may choose not to use them.

This Case for Support section must NOT exceed 16 sides of A4.
Doctoral Training Partnership – Partner Contribution Details

Please use this table to outline any confirmed or planned commitments (either cash or in-kind) from any of the partners within the DTP.

This table should be used to list commitments such as match-funded studentships, administrative resource or other in-kind contributions from Hosting Partners, and leverage/commitments (cash or in-kind) from Collaborative Partners. Examples of in-kind contributions include (but are not limited to): access to facilities/equipment/materials/data, staff time, training provision. Wherever possible, please provide an approximate cash equivalent value for any in-kind commitments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of organisation</th>
<th>Division/ department</th>
<th>Agreed commitment Brief Description</th>
<th>Value (£)*</th>
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*Either true cash value or indicative cash value of in-kind contributions.
## Annex C. Proposal Assessment Criteria

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<th>Assessment Criterion (weighting)</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Evidence that may be considered during assessment</th>
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<td>1. Research excellence (25%)</td>
<td><strong>Research Excellence comprises:</strong></td>
<td>- Number of active NERC-funded research projects and supervisors at host organisations, specifically within the remit of the DTP.</td>
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<td>- <strong>A scientifically excellent training environment</strong> Characterised by original research within the NERC remit that can be described as (e.g.) ambitious, timely, exciting, at the international forefront, transformative.</td>
<td>- REF 2014 profiles (where relevant) specific to the areas of NERC remit covered by the DTP.</td>
</tr>
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<td>- <strong>A critical mass of relevant researchers/teams/projects within the NERC remit</strong> This ensures students are supported effectively and are sufficiently exposed to excellent research and researchers, and exchange and develop ideas.</td>
<td>- Standing in the environmental science community – national, international etc.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Challenging, yet feasible, PhD projects</strong> Projects have well-defined research questions and offer genuine scope for high-level, innovative, research.</td>
<td>- Institutional commitment to research excellence, specifically within the NERC remit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Training excellence (25%)</td>
<td><strong>Training Excellence comprises:</strong></td>
<td>- Amount of NERC and Research Council research income in research areas specific to the DTP’s remit.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Students are managed as a cohort</strong> Cohorts are able – and encouraged – to integrate, work and learn together.</td>
<td>- Originality, quality and significance of potential PhD research topics presented in the proposal.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Excellent training opportunities in both technical and transferrable skills</strong> This includes provision of dedicated innovation/translation and professional skills training. Such training is co-developed with end-users and other collaborative partners as appropriate.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Flexibility in training programmes to allow tailoring to individual needs</strong> Both skills and personal needs are considered and training needs are assessed at the outset of PhD training, in the context of both research and potential future careers.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Clear processes for monitoring and assessing student progress</strong></td>
<td>- Ways of addressing generalist and specialist development needs of individual students.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| 3. Multidisciplinary Training Environments (25%) | Excellence in Multidisciplinary Training Environments comprises:  
- Students’ training is embedded in multidisciplinary research environments  
  This does not mean individual PhD topics are required to be multidisciplinary. Such environments provide excellent networking opportunities.  
- Excellent collaborative opportunities involving end-user and non-HEI organisations  
  This applies both to individual research projects and all other types of training.  
- End-user input considered in all aspects of the DTP’s training programme |  
|  
| Consistency of processes across partner organisations were applicable.  
- Excellent training and support for supervisors and clear processes for supervisor selection  
  Consistency of processes across partner organisations were applicable.  
- (For collaborative projects – CASE or non-CASE): Genuine co-development of projects  
  This ensures research questions and skills development are tailored to partners’ needs from the outset. |  
- Mechanisms in place to ensure the development of independent researchers and world-leading scientists.  
- Completion rates, publication and first destination data for students hosted within DTP institutions.  
- Evidence of employability of graduates from DTP institutions.  
- Time available for students to complete each element of the DTP’s training programme and produce research outputs.  
- Types of training and support offered to supervisors.  
- Examples of collaborative PhD projects  
- Engagement of a student’s supervisory or wider advisory team in research outside the relevant discipline(s).  
- Mechanisms of student interaction outside their own disciplines and DTP.  
- Opportunities to attend specialist training.  
- Types of collaborative training opportunities available to students.  
- Existing and/or newly confirmed collaborative relationships of DTP partners.  
- Involvement of collaborators (end-user and other non-HEI) in supervisory teams and wider training.  
- Mechanisms of seeking input from end-users in development of the training programme. |
4. Partnership Operational Management (25%)

**Excellence in Partnership Operational Management comprises:**

- **Robust and transparent governance arrangements**
  Where applicable, this will include a strategy for managing partnerships between organisations, including aligning ways of working and sharing resources and finances.

- **Adequate dedicated administrative resource**
  Sufficient resource is committed to manage partnerships and student training effectively and provide a reliable point of contact for all DTP students within all DTP partners.

- **Clear strategy for engagement with collaborators from the outset of the DTP**
  Robust mechanisms for ensuring CASE conversion requirements are met and for developing and maintaining non-CASE collaborative relationships with a variety of organisations. All parties (including students) have a clear understanding of any collaborative requirements (CASE or otherwise).

- **Input sought from end-users in strategic decision-making within the DTP**

- **Well-considered mechanisms for planning, managing and monitoring the DTP’s training programme**
  This includes strategic and systematic approaches to project selection and attracting and selecting the best-fit students for projects. Student recruitment prioritises potential for excellence in studentship outcomes (i.e. what an individual can bring to a project and the graduate they will be as a result of the DTP’s training).

- **Well-defined legacy of the DTP beyond the lifetime of any NERC investment**

- **Clear strategy for management of data generated under the DTP award**
  Data generated under the award are stored appropriately, and made available in line with NERC’s data policy. Accurate data records are

- **Management and governance structure,** including mechanisms for agreeing management arrangements and monitoring DTP’s overall progress and success.

- **Representation of different parties (including students and end-users) within the DTP’s management structure.**

- **Amount of dedicated administrative resource.**

- **Strategy for engaging with end-users and other collaborators.**

- **Mechanisms for seeking input from end-users in strategic decision-making.**

- **Systems and processes for assessing the suitability of supervisors and projects.**

- **Mechanisms for allocating studentships within the DTP and recruiting the best-fit students.**

- **Processes for student induction, progression, monitoring and submission.**

- **Demonstration of success stories.**

- **Strategy for developing a legacy for the DTP.**

- **Arrangements for management of data generated by studentship projects, and for returning accurate and timely data on studentships to NERC.**

- **Consideration of the widening participation agenda within DTP processes.**
maintained for all students via Research Council reporting mechanisms and other national reporting mechanisms. Suitable mechanisms are in place for recording destination data for DTP students.

- **Good consideration of the widening participation agenda**
  Robust mechanisms to promote postgraduate research to a diverse base of talented graduate students across the UK, with all studentships offered on a full- or part-time basis through an open and transparent selection process. DTP programmes and processes are sufficiently flexible to enable them to be tailored to individual needs.

*Please note, the types of evidence that may be considered are provided as examples only – applicants should develop their proposals in whatever way they feel is most appropriate to address the requirements of the call and provide appropriate evidence to support their proposed training programme and any claims made within the proposal. The assessment panel will use this table as a guide when assessing proposals, but will not expect all proposals to include all types of evidence listed within this table, nor will they ignore additional evidence of excellence or innovative approaches to addressing the requirements of the call.*
Annex D. Overall Excellence Score Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Usual Indicators</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent quality proposal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The proposal is outstanding and represents world-leading standards. Highest priority for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The proposal is excellent and represents world-class standards. Very high priority for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The proposal is very good and contains aspects of excellence. High priority for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good quality proposal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The proposal is good and is internationally competitive. Should be funded if possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The proposal is good and on the borderline between nationally and internationally competitive. Potentially fundable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The proposal is good and has some merit but is not at the leading edge. It is suitable for funding in principle but in a competitive context is not a priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potentially useful proposal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The proposal is good and has some merit, but has a number of weaknesses. Not recommended for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The proposal is satisfactory. It would provide something useful, but fails to provide reasonable evidence and justification for funding. Not recommended for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unacceptable proposal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The proposal is weak, and has only a few strengths. Not suitable for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The proposal is unsatisfactory and is unlikely to train students successfully. Not suitable for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>For special cases, e.g. flawed in approach, subject to serious difficulties, does not address operational risks, sufficiently un-clearly written so it cannot be properly assessed, or outside of NERC remit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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