

Studentship webinar Q & As

03 April 2018

Q: Can a studentship application include a collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry?

A: Yes, collaborative proposals are encouraged. However, pharmaceutical organisations are ineligible to be the lead organisation on an application and can only apply as project partners or collaborators.

Q: To be eligible, should the lead supervisor have a minimum of five year's postdoctoral experience at the time of application or at the proposed project start date?

A: The lead applicant must have five year's postdoctoral experience at the time of application. Applicants with limited supervisory experience are encouraged to name a more experienced colleague as a co-supervisor.

Q: How would you encourage the uptake of an *in vitro* model as a replacement for an *in vivo* model?

A: Engagement with the *in vivo* community is essential for uptake and is strongly encouraged. Discussion with potential end-users can be used to inform aspects of the application and their support can be evidenced at the time of application through the inclusion of letters of support.

It is also important to build into your proposal a convincing and realistic dissemination plan to help drive further uptake of your 3Rs approach by the wider scientific community. There are many different approaches that can be taken to deliver an effective dissemination plan that achieves 3Rs impact. For example, alongside the gold standard routes of publishing and attending scientific conferences/ meetings you could hold a workshop to train new end-users in your approach, share resources such as cell lines or develop online resources such as web apps or online tutorials.

Q: Is it sufficient for the Head of Department letter of support to state that the lead supervisor's contract of employment will outlast the duration of the proposed application?

A: Yes, that is sufficient evidence that the lead supervisor meets the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

Q: Should an applicant use the Experimental Design Assistant (EDA) online tool even if their application involves the use of an invertebrate model?

A: The EDA is aimed at scientists who use animals in their research. Whilst the functionalities of the tool have been built with animal users in mind, several functionalities may still be useful for researchers working with invertebrate models, such as the ability to perform sample size calculations. Also for all scientists, the EDA is an extremely useful communication tool.

Please note that the EDA is not designed to replace specialist statistical advice. Depending on the level of expertise on experimental design and statistics, the EDA can be used in different ways.

Q: Does the EDA report need to be included as part of the outline stage?

A: No, this level of information is not required at this stage.

Q: Is this funding call only open to applications from the field of cardiovascular science?

A: No, applications from any area of medical, biological or veterinary research are within remit.

Q: How can an *in vitro* model be validated against an *in vivo* model if the applicant does not use the animal model?

A: If an applicant does not work directly with animals, collaboration with researchers that conduct *in vivo* studies is encouraged. Applicants should aim to validate their *in vitro* model against historical *in vivo* data or by piggy-backing onto existing/ ongoing *in vivo* studies. This collaboration should also aim to inform the performance characteristics of the *in vitro* model and the measure(s) of success that will be used by potential end-users to determine whether it is fit for purpose and to encourage wider uptake within the scientific community.

Q: Are public sector research organisations eligible to apply to this scheme?

A: Only Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Independent Research Organisations (IROs) and Research Council (RC) Institutes are eligible to apply as lead research organisations to this scheme.

Q: Should letters of support from end-users/ collaborators be submitted at the outline application stage or only at the full application stage?

A: No, this level of information is not required at the outline application stage but would be beneficial to include at the full application stage.

Q: Should an application involve the development of a new method, what level of preliminary data is required?

A: The inclusion of preliminary/ proof-of-concept data is strongly encouraged. It is important to balance risk and ambition in your proposal, and convincing pilot data can help demonstrate the feasibility of the project. The amount of data to include is dependent upon the project and is left to the discretion of the applicant.

Q: Can an applicant submit more than one application to the PhD Studentship funding call?

A: Yes, an applicant may submit a maximum of two applications per call deadline to this scheme. Applicants are advised to seek funding on the basis of the quality of their application rather than the number that can be submitted.

Q: What is the purpose of the outline stage?

A: The purpose of the outline stage is to assess whether the proposals fall within NC3Rs remit and are suitable for the targeted scheme.