PROJECT PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Introduction

The Enterprise DTP MRC iCASE Studentships promote partnerships between biomedical scientists and non-academic partner organisations (public, private and third sector).

Note: we anticipate that obtaining the commercial partner letter of support and all relevant signatures required for this call, may take significant time. Therefore, please ensure you allow enough time in order to meet the submission deadline of 7 February 2019.

Important: please inform Corporate Partnerships and work with them during discussions with your commercial partner, and prior to asking for a letter of support. They can also help identify and contact a suitable commercial partner if needed. The contact in Corporate Partnerships for the Enterprise DTP is Stephanie Morris, FoM Head of Corporate Partnerships, stephanie.morris@imperial.ac.uk.

Commercial Partners (non-academic partner)

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.

Partner organisations are classified as either small to medium enterprises (SMEs), defined as a company with less than 250 employees, a turnover of less than €50m and a balance sheet of less than €43m, or as non-SMEs. Projects with SME partners are encouraged, and equally eligible as large commercial partners.

The partner organisation should be committed to realising mutual benefit from the project; in recognition of this it agrees:

- Non-SME partner to provide additional funding to the student and wider research environment and in-kind support (which might include things such as: access to research subjects, field sites, office space, seminar or industry expert groups, data etc.). The Imperial Enterprise DTP requests a financial contribution of £15,000 p/a from non-SME partners.
- SME partners are not required to financially contribute to the studentship.
- All partners will host a 3-month placement for the student as part of the Enterprise DTP Studentship; this placement should be detailed in the Project Proposal Form and detailed in the company letter of support. The Enterprise DTP will reject proposals where industry partners have not committed to a 3-month placement in the letter of support.
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- The Industry Partner must review the draft contract between Imperial and the Industry Partner and confirm agreement or specify any exceptions to the contract in the letter of support.

- The involvement of the partner organisation should be a genuinely collaborative enterprise, provide real added value to the studentship while also advancing the activities of the partner organisation. Industry Partners will be evaluated by the Corporate Partnerships Team as part of the project review process.

Assessment Criteria:

The Enterprise DTP will evaluate project proposals according to the four below criteria; percentage weightings are detailed. All applications will be assessed using the same criteria:

1. Supervisory Team:
   For example, why is this particular combination of academics and partner organisation optimal for the proposed project? Are the research areas of the supervisors relevant to the proposed work? Is at least one member of the team an experienced supervisor? (20% weighting)

2. Quality of research proposal:
   Is the research area likely to provide a stimulating and manageable topic for the student? (eg. are the research topic and questions well formulated?) Is there a feasible plan of action? Does the work offer genuine scope for doctoral research? (50% Weighting)

3. Relevance of research to the DTP:
   The Enterprise DTP research themes are the same as the MRC DTP. How well does the research project resonate with these research themes and the strengths and priorities of the particular Imperial departments in which it will be based? (15% weighting)

4. Quality of proposed collaboration with Industry:
   What is the added value of the research collaboration? What is the nature of the commitment from the partner organisation? For example: what additional training or developmental opportunities will arise through the collaboration for the student? Will the partner institution offer distinctive forms of experience in areas which would be unobtainable without the partner? How will training opportunities be structured an evaluated? Please note it is a condition of all iCASE Studentships that the Industry Partner provide a 3-month placement for the student; provide details of this placement and when the placement will take place. (15% weighting)

Note: Applications will automatically be rejected for consideration where the Industry Partner:
- Has not submitted a letter of support
- Has not met the minimum financial contribution required (non-SME partners only)
- Has not committed to offer a 3-month placement as part of the studentship.
- Has not confirmed their agreement to the draft contract between Imperial and the partner (including any exceptions).
Letters of support need to include the following wording from non-SME partners:

I write to confirm that (insert company name) will meet the MRC’s current expectations of a non-academic non-SME partner contribution to this Enterprise DTP iCASE Studentship commencing in 2019-20.

(Insert company name):

- Will make an annual cash contribution of £15,000 p/a, where the Enterprise DTP will award £1,400 p/a to the student’s consumables budget and £2,500 p/a towards the student stipend, and includes Enterprise DTP Programme costs
- Will offer the student a cumulative period of no less than three months spent working in our facilities during the studentship and further shorter visits if appropriate.
- Will cover the company costs while the student is working at the premises of our company
- Will cover all additional expenses, such as the cost of travel and accommodation incurred by the student as a direct result of attendance at our premises.
- Agree to the draft contract shared by Imperial College London (industry partner to include exceptions here...)
- Understand that the contract between Imperial and (insert company name) must be signed before interviews take place. We understand that the Enterprise DTP reserves the right to withdraw the studentship award if the contract cannot be agreed and finalised prior to interviews.

Letters of support need to include the following wording from Small and Medium Enterprise Partners (SME partners):

I write to confirm that (insert company name) will meet the MRC’s current expectations of a non-academic SME partner contribution to the Enterprise DTP iCASE Studentship commencing in 2019-20.

(Insert company name):

- Will offer the student a cumulative period of no less than three months spent working in our facilities during the studentship and further shorter visits if appropriate.
- Agree to draft contract shared by Imperial College London (industry partner to include exceptions here...)
- Understand that the contract between Imperial and (insert company name) must be signed before interviews take place. We understand that the Enterprise DTP reserves the right to withdraw the studentship award if the contract cannot be agreed and finalised prior to interviews.