



IBioIC Collaborative Trainings Partnership (CTP) PhD Programme – Call for Projects #6

1. Introduction

A key activity of IBioIC is the support of industrially relevant PhD Projects that bring biotechnology closer to industrialization. IBioIC currently manage a PhD portfolio of IBioIC and BBSRC funded projects, delivered as part of our Collaborative Training Partnership (CTP). All IBioIC project applications are assessed by way of competition. **This paper is a call for PhD Projects to enter this competition for projects commencing October 2019.** It sets out the rules, processes and guidelines on how this competition will be operated. IBioIC reserves the right to alter these processes in order to comply with the imposed timetable. Any changes of process will be notified to all entrants.

2. Criteria for all PhD Projects

The number of PhD Projects to be awarded in this sixth IBioIC PhD competition are as follows:

- BBSRC funded CTP studentships: 14
- IBioIC funded CTP studentships: 6

Awarded PhD Studentships must be 4 years in duration.

The difference in the requirements for the two funding streams is in relation to project funding as detailed in Section 3. For **any** PhD Project to be considered for either funding stream it must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. IBioIC will only award a PhD studentship for projects of 4 years in duration.
2. The Project topic must align with one or more of the five major themes of IBioIC:
 - a. Sustainable Feedstocks
 - b. Enzymes and Biocatalysis/Biotransformation
 - c. Cell Factory Construction and Process Physiology
 - d. Downstream Processing
 - e. Integrated Bioprocessing
3. The Project must demonstrate industrial relevance by the innovative use or application of biotechnology.
4. The Project must be championed and led by an IBioIC HEI Partner (BBSRC and IBioIC funded) or N8 University (BBSRC funded projects only) and must be supported by at least one Industrial Partner which is evidenced through a Letter of Support. Applications with SME involvement are particularly encouraged. If any of the Industrial Partners are not Members of IBioIC at the time of the application, then **all** Industrial Partners **must** become Members **before** funding is awarded, with lead Industrial Partners required to become Leading or Core members at least two months in advance of project start date. Additional Industrial Partners must also become Associate Members as a minimum. This membership must be maintained for the duration of the Project. The Project may consist of any number of Partners so long as these criteria are met.

5. The Industrial Partner must commit to providing a 3 to 12 month industrial placement directly relevant to the PhD project.
6. Evidence of additional funding, either in cash, cash equivalent or in-kind form the Industrial Partner is essential to the application (actual requirements vary dependent on funding source as detailed in Section 3). In particular, cash/cash equivalent contributions will be used as a deciding factor during the review process, while taking into account our funding requirement to support a significant proportion of SME led projects.

IBioIC reserve the right to instruct a hold on funding if any of these requirements are not met at any point throughout the duration of the Project.

3. Value and Funding

The funding available will differ dependent on which funding stream is applied for. **Applicants can apply to one or both** of the available funding streams if the funding criteria are met.

3.1 BBSRC funded studentships

For BBSRC funded Projects, the studentship costs will be covered in full by the BBSRC in line with published RCUK funding levels. The annual cost of a studentship for academic year 2018-19 is provided below for reference and will be adjusted to reflect RCUK fees/ stipend level once published.

	Published 18/19 funding levels from RCUK	Estimated total studentship cost over 4 years (2.5% annual uplift)
Fees	£4,260	£18,132
Stipend	£14,777	£62,896
Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)	£5,000	£20,000
Total studentship costs (estimated)		£101,028

The studentship monies will be transferred directly to the lead Academic Partner organisation by BBSRC. It is expected that £1500 per annum of the RTSG will be ring-fenced by the Academic Partner to support IBioIC cohort training activities. Evidence of spend against this requirement may be requested throughout the Project.

Academic and/or Industrial Partners are responsible for all other remaining costs to the project.

Additional costs to the Academic/Industrial Partner may include, as examples, additional consumables budget, a top-up stipend or enhanced training budget.

In order to be considered for a BBSRC funded project, the joint in-kind and cash contribution from the Industrial Partner will be required to be equivalent to at least 25% of the studentship costs as a minimum (approximately £25,500). As part of this, the Industrial Partner will be expected to cover **all** costs of the agreed industrial placement (travel, accommodation, lab costs etc.). The value of the

Industrial Partner contribution, in particular cash contributions, may be used to differentiate between projects of sufficiently high quality.

Key points to note for application to BBSRC funding:

- The BBSRC cover the full studentship costs. Monies will be transferred directly from BBSRC to the recipient through their existing processes and BBSRC standard regulations will need to be followed.
- BBSRC funded studentships are open to all IBioIC's Scottish Academic Partners in addition to Universities within the N8 Partnership.
- The Industrial Partner must have a UK-based research or manufacturing facility unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the project could not be undertaken with any UK facility.
- With regards recruitment, applicants must be have settled status in the UK, meaning they have no restrictions on how long they can stay and have been 'ordinarily resident' in the UK for 3 years prior to the start of the studentship.
- To qualify for BBSRC funding, the University Department named in the application must have at least a 70% submission rate for PhD theses within 4 years. If submission rates are less than 70%, the application will only be considered if there is a supporting statement detailing reasoning behind the lower submission rates and improvement measures in place. Any acceptance of lower than required submission rates will be at the discretion of the BBSRC.

3.2 IBioIC funded projects

For IBioIC funded studentships, a maximum of 50% cash funding is available towards the cost of the studentship. The maximum contribution available will be calculated and fixed at time of application based on published RCUK stipend/fees with an assumed 2.5% uplift for inflation in addition to a maximum annual consumables, travel and training budget of £5000. Based on the annual cost of a studentship for academic year 2018-19 and on application of the uplift, the total studentship costs for the four years are assumed to be as follows:

	Published 18/19 funding levels from RCUK	Estimated total studentship cost over 4 years (2.5% annual uplift)
Fees	£4,260	£18,132
Stipend	£14,777	£62,896
Consumables, travel and training budget	£5,000	£20,000
Total studentship value		£101,028

Therefore, the **maximum contribution from IBioIC can be assumed as £50,514 per studentship.**

The studentship monies will be transferred directly to the lead Academic Partner organisation by IBioIC as an annual up front lump sum. It is expected that £1500 per annum of the consumables, travel and training budget will be ring-fenced by the Academic Partner to support IBioIC cohort training activities. Evidence of spend against this requirement may be requested throughout the Project.

Academic Partners, Industrial Partners and/or additional sponsors are responsible for contributing the remaining 50% of the studentship and any other remaining costs to the project. Additional costs to the Academic/Industrial Partner may include, as examples, additional consumables budget, a top-up stipend or enhanced training budget.

In addition to the above contributions, the Industrial Partner will be expected to cover **all** costs of the agreed industrial placement (travel, accommodation, lab costs etc.). Those proposed projects that have significant industrial investment, in particular cash/cash equivalent contributions, may be ranked higher in the funding assessment process.

Key points to note for application to IBioIC funding:

- IBioIC will cover up to 50% of the studentship costs. This contribution will be agreed at the application stage and will not vary in line with published RCUK studentship costs. Monies will be transferred directly from IBioIC to the recipient annually upfront in four equal payments. The student will require payment in alignment with published RCUK stipend/fees figures and differences between this and the upfront agreed amounts (should they occur) will need to be borne by the Academic and/or Industrial Partners.
- BBSRC funded studentships are only open to IBioIC's Scottish Academic Partners.
- The Industrial Partner can be UK or international.
- With regards recruitment, applicants can be from the UK, EU or International. However, at application stage, the fees are assumed to be that of a UK student and any additional fees relating to international recruitment will need to be met by the Academic Partner.

4. Cohort Training Programme

All PhDs awarded as part of this completion will be considered to be a Member of the IBioIC CTP. As a Member of the IBioIC CTP the following conditions must be met:

- A Member of the IBioIC CTP Management Team will be invited to the student recruitment interviews.
- An introductory meeting between the Academic Partner, the student and the Industrial Partner will be undertaken within the first two months of commencing the project.
- The student must be in place no later than 1st October 2018 otherwise the Studentship will not be funded.
- A Personal Development Plan for each student must be submitted within three months of commencing the Project (developed in conjunction with IBioIC).
- Completion of a PgCert Researcher Professional Development (RPD) or equivalent PhD training by the student at the Academic Partner institution is encouraged.
- The student must be released for 2 days per year in order to participate in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) engagement. In particular, PhDs will be expected to be involved in the promotion of IB as a career path at educational institutions.
- The student must be released for a minimum of 10 days per year in order for him/her to participate with other students in the cohort in training in specific Industrial Biotechnology related matters under the instruction of IBioIC.

- The recipient will provide IBioIC with a six monthly report in line with IBioIC reporting requirements. This will include a summary of progress and achievements including scientific, financial and training, in relation to the studentship.

5. How to enter

In order to enter this competition, the IBioIC Project #6 Entry Form must be completed and returned with requested supporting documentation. Appendix 3 contains instruction relating to the completion of this form which is downloaded as a separate form (Word format). The Project Lead should complete this and submit their entry to the IBioIC Skills Team (skills@ibioic.com) before 1st October 2018 (12 noon). The intention is to keep entry requirements to a minimum whilst still supplying enough information to allow reviewers to make an informed decision on the relative merit of each project. The Review Panel may request further information on the Project.

6. Timing and Process for award

Process	Timing	Action	Managed by
Call opens	25 th June 2018	Send out this document to all potential Industrial Members and HEI Collaborators	IBioIC Skills team
Call closes	1 st October 2018 (12 noon)	Collate all applications for review	IBioIC Skills team
Minimum criteria check	2-5 th October 2018	Pass on all eligible projects to SAB for review	IBioIC Skills team
Review by SAB	8 th October – 9 th November 2018	Each application reviewed by two nominated parties and score according to technical merit.	IBioIC SAB
IBioIC CTP Exec Group approval	Mid-End November 2018	Funded projects to be announced.	IBioIC Skills team
Notification of application outcome	Start Dec 2018	IBioIC Governing Board and BBSRC notified of IBioIC decision	
Negotiation of contracts	January 2019- March 2019	Agree detailed project outputs, finalise collaboration/confidentiality agreements and set up of Je-S by BBSRC (where applicable).	Funded University/ Industrial Partner
Student recruitment	January to September 2019	Advertise studentship and undertake recruitment procedure.	Funded University
Funding starts	1 October 2019	Issue funding as agreed.	IBioIC/BBSRC

7. Project Selection Criteria

PhD Projects will be selected on their technical merits. All Projects meeting the minimum criteria set out above will be scored by a minimum of two independent assessors from the IBioIC Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) using a point system. The assessors will also comment on whether the work will lead to an awardable PhD (yes/no answer). The SAB will then meet to set a threshold, projects scoring above the threshold will be eligible for funding. Funding will be awarded to projects scoring above the threshold and in descending order from the highest score until all studentships are filled.

Technical merits will include:

- a. Technical feasibility (Projects should have a good likelihood of technical success and also include details of metrological methods used to support the work undertaken) maximum 40 points
- b. Technical ambition (Projects should have a degree of ambition as well as being feasible; Please provide details of project management activities) maximum 30 points
- c. Degree of invention (Projects should be novel) maximum 10 points
- d. Industrial relevance (Evidence of industrial relevance should be shown) maximum 20 points

8. Additional Guidance

The decision of the IBioIC CTP Executive Group when awards are made shall be final and without appeal. The processes followed and decisions taken by the IBioIC SAB and IBioIC CTP Executive Group shall be minuted and made available to any Member requesting them.

Appendix 1 – Glossary

IBioIC	Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre
BBSRC	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
Industrial Member	A company that has signed an IBioIC Membership Agreement (or Accession Agreement). A competition application can be made by any company so long as the agreement is signed before being awarded funding.
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HEI Partner	HEI that has signed an IBioIC Collaboration Agreement (or Accession Agreement). For the purposes of the first competition application can be made by any HEI so long as the agreement is signed before being awarded funding.
N8 University	The N8 Research Partnership is a collaboration of the eight most research intensive Universities in the North of England (Appendix 2).
SAB	Scientific Advisory Board
Project Team	A combination of at least one Industrial Member and one HEI Partner that has formed a team to submit an entry to this competition.
CTP Executive Group	The Governance Group formed to oversee the delivery of the IBioIC CTP.
Funding Terms	The terms and conditions applied or agreed by any third party in providing Funding.
PhD Project	Any PhD Project funded/managed by IBioIC
Je-S	Online system used by Research Councils to provide electronic grants services.

APPENDIX 2 – Agreed Academic Partners

IBioIC HIE Partners

Edinburgh Napier University
Glasgow Caledonian University
Heriot Watt University
Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen
Scottish Association of Marine Science (SAMS)
The James Hutton Institute
SRUC
University of Aberdeen
University of Abertay, Dundee
University of Dundee
University of Edinburgh
University of Glasgow
University of the Highlands and Islands
University of Stirling
University of St Andrews
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow
University of West of Scotland
Queen Margaret University

N8 Universities

University of Durham
University of Lancaster
University of Leeds
University of Liverpool
University of Manchester
University of Newcastle
University of Sheffield
University of York

APPENDIX 3 – Competition Entry Guidance

- Complete the 'IBioIC Project #6 Entry Form' in full and ensure all items on the checklist are included. Applications will be returned if required information is omitted.
- The 'Project Summary' section of the application must be no more than 2 pages in total (including project outline, structures, Gantt charts or project map/outline associated with goals linked to technical ambition, feasibility). Any applications which are longer than 2 pages will be cut to 2 pages and only these 2 pages will be taken into account when reviewing the application.
- Font size should be 11, Calibri body. Margin size should be 2.54 cm (top, bottom, left and right) with orientation set at portrait. Applications that fall out with these restrictions shall not be assessed.
- Please append the CV's of both primary and secondary academic supervisors (maximum of 2 pages per supervisor). Please include the numbers of students supervised to completion in your CV.
- Where appropriate please include the CV's of industrial supervisor (maximum 2 pages)
- Projects must demonstrate industrial relevance. A Letter of Support is required from the Industrial Partner as evidence.
- Studentships are 4 years in duration.
- The Excel 'PhD funding template' must be completed and attached as part of the submission. If applying for both funding sources, both templates will be required to be submitted.