



Medical  
Research  
Council

**BIOMED3**

GW4 BioMed3 MRC Doctoral Landscape Award

# Project Call 2027-28

**Project Application Call**

Frequently Asked Questions

**IMPORTANT:** This call for project BioMed3 project applications is being launched **before** we hear the outcome of our application for MRC funding to support the GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA. We have done this to provide supervisors with reasonable time to submit a project for consideration. We expect to receive the result of our bid in mid-July 2026. **We will only be able to advertise the shortlisted projects, should we be successful in securing the funding.**



Medical  
Research  
Council

**BIOMED3**

## FAQs for supervisors

The GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA aims to attract and select the best students for training in high quality projects and environments. This document contains guidance for supervisors who are considering submitting a project for a GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA funded studentship, commencing in the academic year 2027/28.

- [1. What is GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA?](#)
- [2. How many studentships are available?](#)
- [3. How do I submit a project proposal?](#)
- [4. What are the key dates for the recruitment process?](#)
- [5. Can I apply in more than one year?](#)
- [6. Can I resubmit the same project proposal?](#)
- [7. Does the project have to fit in with one of the four themes?](#)
- [8. Can non-biomedical supervisors apply?](#)
- [9. How many supervisors can be on the proposal?](#)
- [10. How will the DLA correspond with the supervisory team?](#)
- [11. Is it advantageous to have supervisors from more than one GW4 Partner?](#)
- [12. Can other partners be involved?](#)
- [13. Is the DLA looking to convert projects to Collaborative Studentships?](#)
- [14. What is covered as standard for all studentships?](#)
- [15. What is the Research Training Support Grant \(RTSG\)?](#)
- [16. What other funding is available?](#)
- [17. What is not covered by the studentship?](#)
- [18. When students undertake research at different GW4 institutions, how will their research be funded?](#)
- [19. What training will the DLA provide?](#)
- [20. The 'Prep' period](#)
- [21. Broadening Horizons Placement](#)
- [22. Should proposals include full costings?](#)
- [23. How will projects will be selected?](#)
- [24. What is your definition of the research environment?](#)
- [25. What is your definition of an early career researcher?](#)
- [26. Is it important for the supervisors to have a record of MRC funding?](#)
- [27. How many projects will be selected for advertisement?](#)
- [28. Can applicants apply from disciplines other than biomedical science?](#)
- [29. What are the student eligibility criteria?](#)
- [30. How will candidates apply?](#)
- [31. How will students be selected?](#)
- [32. What happens if my student withdraws?](#)
- [33. How will the balance between the themes and institutions be achieved?](#)

[34. Who will students be registered with?](#)

[35. Further questions.](#)

[36. Application Form Template](#)

## 1. WHAT IS THE GW4 BIOMED3 MRC DLA?

The UKRI launched the Doctoral Landscape Award (DLA) scheme in 2023 as part of its transition to collective talent funding. The award is designed to provide broad, flexible funding to develop a skilled workforce equipped to address medical research and innovation challenges across a range of careers. This has replaced the former Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) scheme, through which the highly successful GW4 BioMed1 and BioMed2 programmes were funded. BioMed3 will be an enhancement of our previous BioMed DTPs.

The BioMed3 programme will remain similar to BioMed2 offering MRC-funded 4-year PhD studentships, but with some important changes which will include:

- **\*NEW\*** A more structured skills and development training programme,
- **\*NEW\*** Inclusion of a new 'Cardiometabolic Disease' theme,
- **\*NEW\*** Additional ECR supervisor training,
- **\*NEW\*** Focus on careers, with 18 new industry partners on board,
- **\*NEW\*** Revised governance structure, adding more student input,
- **\*NEW\*** Changes to the project funding we can provide.

**IMPORTANT:** This call for project BioMed3 project applications is being launched **before** we hear the outcome of our application for MRC funding to support the GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA. We have done this to provide supervisors with reasonable time to submit a project for consideration. We expect to receive the result of our bid in mid-July 2026. **We will only be able to advertise the shortlisted projects, should we be successful in securing the funding.**

---

## 2. HOW MANY STUDENTSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE?

If successful in our bid for MRC funding, we hope to offer up to 18 (notional), 4-year GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA studentships to start on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2027.

---

## 3. HOW DO I SUBMIT A PROJECT PROPOSAL?

Before preparing an application, please ensure that the School and Department the project comes under has the operational capacity to support the project and that the supervisory team

satisfies the local supervisory regulations. If any institution is unhappy for the project to be considered further, it should not be submitted for consideration.

Once agreed, project proposals must be submitted using [the online form](#) from Wednesday, 3rd June 2026. The deadline for applications is **5pm on Friday, 10th July 2026**.

**Please ensure that you read these FAQs before completing your proposal.**

A copy of the survey questions has been included in this document to help with writing your project proposal. As there is no function within the online system to share partially completed forms, please use this document to prepare your project application and share the answers with your supervisory team before copying and pasting your final answers into the online survey.

You will be able to save and revise your proposal online. However, once it has been submitted, no amendments can be made. Once the deadline for applications has passed, the online form will close, and you will not be able to submit your project proposal.

Due to our recruitment schedule, we are not able to accept late applications.

---

#### 4. WHAT ARE THE KEY DATES FOR THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS?

BIOMED3 DLA RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE		
KEY DATES (2027-28 Intake)		
Date	Time	Deadline
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 26	By 9am	Supervisor project proposal submission form opens
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> July 26	By 5pm	Supervisor project proposal <b>submission</b> deadline
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July – Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> August 26	By midday	<b>Project</b> panel scores projects and submits scores to DLA
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> August 26	10.30am – midday	Project selection panel
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> August 26	By 5pm	Supervisors notified of project shortlisting outcome
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September – Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> October 26		Projects advertised for student applications
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> October 26	By 5pm	Student application deadline
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> October – Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> November 26	By 5pm	Panel scores and shortlists applicants – 1 <sup>st</sup> triage
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> November – Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> December 26	By midday	Panel scores and shortlists applicants – 2 <sup>nd</sup> triage
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> December 26	1.00pm – 2.00pm	Student shortlisting panel
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December 26	midday	DLA notifies candidates and supervisors of successful applications
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> January 27	midday	Supervisor meets with all candidates by this date
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> January 27	midday	Candidates send references and transcripts to the DLA
<b>Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January – Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 27</b>		<b>DLA interviews</b>
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 27	12.00pm – 1.00pm	Student shortlisting panel
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> February – 29 <sup>th</sup> March 27		Clearing period
w/c Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> September 27		Local induction events
1 <sup>st</sup> October 27		Official funding start date

## 5. CAN I APPLY IN MORE THAN ONE YEAR?

Supervisors are only permitted to submit **one proposal per year as lead supervisor** and, if successful, with no more than two in any three-year rolling period across BioMed2 and BioMed3 applications.

Supervisors can be co-supervisors on an unlimited number of projects in all years.

---

## 6. CAN I RESUBMIT THE SAME PROJECT PROPOSAL?

Yes, if you were unsuccessful during previous BioMed2 recruitment rounds, you will be able to submit the same project proposal again. We would recommend that you read the full application guidance, recognising important adjustments to BioMed3 project funding provision and adjusting your application accordingly.

---

## 7. DOES THE PROJECT HAVE TO FIT IN WITH ONE OF THE FOUR THEMES?

Yes. The studentships will be awarded against the four key research themes that characterize the GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA:

- Infection, Immunity and Antimicrobial Resistance
  - Neuroscience and Mental Health
  - Population Health Sciences
  - Cardiometabolic Diseases.
- 

## 8. CAN NON-BIOMEDICAL SUPERVISORS APPLY?

Yes. The DLA and MRC are particularly keen to promote interdisciplinarity with particular reference to mathematics, physical sciences and engineering. We also aim to attract excellent students from these disciplines.

The lead supervisor should, regardless of discipline, be the most appropriate person to lead the project.

---

## 9. HOW MANY SUPERVISORS CAN BE ON THE PROPOSAL?

The application form allows space for 1 lead supervisor and 3 co-supervisors, so please use those spaces to identify the main supervisory staff and include the remainder as a project team in the later sections.

Those listed as co-supervisors will be required to have a greater level of involvement in the student's progression monitoring than in conventional supervisory teams. Less experienced supervisory teams may include an experienced supervisor to act in a 'mentoring' role.

Further details can be found in the Supervisor Expectations [Under How to Apply/Supervisor Applications] in the document on our website.

---

## **10. HOW WILL THE DLA CORRESPOND WITH THE SUPERVISORY TEAM?**

Most communication will be directed via the lead supervisor who will be expected to cascade the information onto the rest of their team. Funds relating to the project will also be paid to the institution of the Lead Supervisor.

---

## **11. IS IT ADVANTAGEOUS TO HAVE SUPERVISORS FROM MORE THAN ONE GW4 PARTNER?**

Yes. The GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA aims to show what can be achieved by harnessing the combined power of four research-intensive universities. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to seek out partners for training or experience in other GW4 HEIs and include them as co-supervisors.

Please note that collaboration can mean access to laboratories and specific training, rather than just co-supervision.

---

## **12. CAN OTHER PARTNERS BE INVOLVED?**

Any partners (academic and non-academic) can be involved in the project - not just those within the GW4 partnership. Supervisors should be aware, however, that the DLA seeks to have at least 90% collaborative projects across at least two of the GW4 institutions, so should consider opportunities for 'internal' collaboration as a priority. We have included a list of our project partners for the DLA below if supervisory teams are interested in involving one of them.

---

## **13. IS THE DLA LOOKING TO CONVERT PROJECTS TO COLLABORATIVE STUDENTSHIPS?**

Formerly known as iCASE studentships, the GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA can feature 'collaborative studentships'

The GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA has no collaborative studentship conversion target. However, this does not preclude industrial involvement which can take several forms (including placement, co-supervision and financial contribution to project costs).

BioMed3 has agreed project partnerships with the following organisations who could be involved in collaborative studentships:

- Health and Care Innovations Limited
- DigiTherapix
- Huru
- SETsquared Bristol
- Public Health Wales NMH Trust
- University of Plymouth
- UCB Pharma (United Kingdom)
- All Wales Medical Genomics Service
- Molomix Bioscience Ltd.
- Llusern Scientific Ltd.
- Science Creates Services Ltd
- GVI Travel II Limited
- Mary Lyon Centre at MRC Harwell
- Medicines Discovery Catapult
- Charles River Discovery Research Services Ltd.
- ImmunoServ Ltd.
- Sophion Bioscience
- Siemens Healthineers

Applications for projects which already have an industrial partnership in place are welcomed.

---

#### **14. WHAT IS COVERED AS STANDARD FOR ALL STUDENTSHIPS?**

**UKRI National Minimum Stipend:** 4 years stipend payments to support living costs for the student, paid at the UKRI minimum stipend rate. Part-time studentships will also be considered and are usually arranged on the basis of working between a minimum of 50% and 90% of a full-time studentship, over a period of 6 years but can be up to 7 years' duration.

**Fees:** Standard UKRI home level fees paid directly to the institution of the lead supervisor for the 4-year duration of the studentship or part time equivalent.

**Conference and Travel Allowance:** An annual amount of £300 per year or part-time equivalent to contribute to travel and conference attendance. This amount is set by the UKRI and can be topped up by using the RTSG.

---

## 15. WHAT IS THE RESEARCH TRAINING SUPPORT GRANT (RTSG)?

Each studentship will also include a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG) as a contribution towards opportunities that will facilitate training for the student only. Ongoing project costs are not included in the MRC's funding model. The MRC makes a distinction between wet-lab and dry-lab projects and expects wet lab projects to receive a higher amount than dry projects. This could be between £2,000 (dry lab) and £5,000 (wet lab) per year, depending on the project.

The RTSG is not intended to relieve a research organisation of any part of its normal expenditure. The UKRI makes it clear that money cannot be reimbursed for items that would normally be expected to be provided by the institution or research lab. The RTSG can be used as follows for costs exclusively for the student:

### PERMITTED SPEND

- **Consumables incurred during the training of the DLA student in any technique**
- Fieldwork expenses
- PPI/E engagement expenses
- Training course attendance not provided by the GW4 institutions
- Conferences where the student is presenting a paper or poster
- Research methods training
- Survey costs e.g. printing, stationery
- Purchase of small items of equipment e.g. cameras, recorders
- Reading materials not available through libraries
- Costs associated with the BH placement

### SPEND THAT DOES NOT MEET UKRI APPROVAL

- **Ongoing consumables** – these should be covered by the supervisory team e.g. sample collection kits, reagents, tips
- **Incidental resources** generally available through the department e.g. gloves, stationery, lab coats
- Providing resources prior to the start of the studentship e.g. relocation costs or visas
- RNAScope, gene expression, qPCR or sequencing as these are ongoing project costs not associated with training
- Services provided by a third party e.g. sequencing, blood analysis
- Capital equipment for facilities normally provided by the university e.g. laptop
- Supervisor expenses for visits to fieldwork/off-site placements less than 9 months
- Training that all departmental postgraduate students are required to attend (e.g. Health and Safety courses). RTSG cannot be used to fund these courses, where non-UKRI students are not expected to pay.
- Stationery for home use where these would be available for use on university premises
- Purchase of books or journals available through libraries
- Thesis binding costs
- Anything that takes place after the funding end date or submission e.g. courses, conferences or publication costs

## 16. WHAT OTHER FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

**Biannual Flexible Funding Call:** The DLA's grant from the MRC will include a Flexible Funding Supplement, which is a small budget that aims to support high-cost research and/or training needs or transition from PhD, including costs associated with the Broadening Horizons placement. To determine the allocation of this funding the Management Board has set up a funding panel, comprising of the four Research Theme Leads. Calls for funding will be made twice a year (March and October). Supervisors should identify any high-cost training or training-related expenses (including travel) integral to the project in the biannual call application form. This fund is limited to a maximum of £5,000 per student during the lifetime of their studentship.

Conference participation cannot be funded by the Flexible Fund.

**IMPORTANT: \*NEW\*** The MRC does not provide DLAs with a high-cost training fund, which is a change from BioMed2 and beyond our control. Our application form asks if you would like to request funding for any high-cost training in the following areas, however, it is important that you consider contingency plans for these costs if we are unable to support them from the new grant.

- In vivo biology – one off payment to support specialist in vivo training and licencing costs
- Brain and other organ scans
- High performance computing access
- Database access
- Large data storage. (N.B. this is for the lifetime of the project and cannot be applied for again).

---

## 17. WHAT IS NOT COVERED BY THE STUDENTSHIP?

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that our MRC studentship funding is expected to cover **training costs** but **NOT** ongoing consumable or equipment costs for the project; support for ongoing project costs is expected to be provided by University funding and/or the project and programme grants held by the supervisory team. We ask you to indicate how the ongoing project costs not associated with training or not permitted by the UKRI will be managed in the project application form questions 54-55. It is not acceptable if the only answer is that grants will be applied for as there is no guarantee that the student will have sufficient funding.

---

## 18. WHEN STUDENTS UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AT DIFFERENT GW4 INSTITUTIONS, HOW WILL THEIR RESEARCH BE FUNDED?

Research at GW4 institutions other than the student's home institution will be supported through the RTSG and Flexible Funding Supplement, which will be made available to the student and the lead supervisor via the host institution.

Please note that it will be the responsibility of the supervisory team to manage the funds across institutions to ensure costs are within budget. Co-supervisory institutions will not receive a portion of the tuition fees.

Costs against these budgets are claimed in retrospect and further information regarding the financial arrangements for the DLA will be sent to the lead supervisor and their student, should the project be successful.

---

## 19. WHAT TRAINING WILL THE DLA PROVIDE?

**\*NEW\*** If our DLA grant is awarded, we will establish a Training and Development Lead to join our Implementation Board. It will be the responsibility of the Training Lead to manage our online core training programme and provide a comprehensive 6-strand interlinked programme incorporating year-specific training. The following training themes were co-developed with BioMed2 students and stakeholder partners and incorporated their feedback.

- Career Development with Flexibility
- Responsible Research Impact
- Data Science and Digital Innovation
- Commercialisation and entrepreneurship
- Professional and Transferable Skills
- Leadership, Networking and Effective Communication

An Online Core Training course has also been developed with 30 elements over 3 modules which covers all aspects of the agreed DLA research skills. As specified in the Supervisor Expectations document on our website, it is a requirement of the GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA that supervisors agree to contribute to student training, including facilitating online training.

A core set of basic research skills consistent with those recommended by the MRC and a training needs analysis form (TNA) have been introduced by the DLA. All students are required to record their projected training plans and progress in completing these on their TNA, which will be shared with supervisors and the DLA management. Supervisors will be required to undertake a review of the Training Needs Analysis with their student on a regular basis and use entries by the student into their form to record this. Periodic review of the TNA record will be reviewed by supervisors and the DLA to ensure that arrangements and progression are satisfactory.

In addition, students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the wide range of advanced training offered across the 4 HEIs of the DLA which they can access as a GW4 DLA student. The DLA will facilitate access to a range of advanced training across the partnership and will co-ordinate specialist focused training days around the research themes that are aligned to MRC priorities for training.

There will also be orientation days, an annual congress, theme days and cohort-building activities and supervisors are required to release students to attend these mandatory events.

Engagement with the DLA training programme is compulsory and continued sponsorship is contingent on that engagement. It is important that supervisors allow time for all these commitments when planning a project.

---

## 20. THE 'PREP' PERIOD

For BioMed3 studentships, we will continue with the inclusion of a 'Prep' period at the start of each studentship. The 'Prep' period is a student-led and focused 3-month period allowing each student to take ownership of their project, reflecting on, and revising their PhD project by experiencing other research and training across different themes and connecting with their peers and other researchers. With the support of the BioMed3 community and their supervisors, the students will refine their project plan and establish connections within and beyond their institution. Students will then start their PhD research work in January 2028.

---

## 21. BROADENING HORIZONS PLACEMENT

During the second or third year of (full-time) study, all students are required to complete an integral and assessed 3-month Broadening Horizons placement. This work experience specifically aims to prepare them for careers post-PhD. Students will explore areas relevant to their future careers in a wide range of organisations including our project partners and may be in an academic or non-academic environment but must be in a potential career or skills development area unrelated to the PhD project.

Further information on this requirement will be provided to students and supervisor at the start of their PhD.

---

## 22. SHOULD PROPOSALS INCLUDE FULL COSTINGS?

We require an indicative budget for shortlisting projects. You are asked to indicate how the RTSG monies will be allocated and the additional anticipated project costs. Please also demonstrate how the extra costs of the project will be met by the supervisory team. Your own institution may require a more formal budget to ensure that the project will not be underfunded. In addition, the proposals need to outline anticipated high costs and potential funding sources. Please use the 'Project Funding' section of [the online application form](#) to provide us with the required information.

---

## 23. HOW WILL PROJECTS BE SELECTED?

Projects will be reviewed by one of the four research theme panels. Each selection panel will consist of the Theme Lead and will include membership from all four universities. Where conflicts of interest are declared, the panel member will abstain from scoring. Declarations are required where the panel member is part of the project supervisory team or has a close involvement in that research group.

The final scores from the four research theme panels will be combined to provide overall rankings for consideration by the Management Board. The Director will chair and overview the process, including the removal of scoring biases using a standardisation process.

Project selection will be made based on scientific and training excellence in addition to its alignment with the strategic priorities of the DLA. All projects will be scored against the criteria below. Supervisors are strongly advised to take note of these criteria and consider them in preparing project applications as the scoring will act as an indicative guide for discussions by the Management Board.

### 1. Evidence of high-quality doctoral training (weighting 0.5)

- Significance, originality, feasibility and degree of challenge presented by the proposed research.
- Added-value features, e.g. exposure to working across disciplinary boundaries, opportunities for collaboration with other academic centres or industries.
- Strategy for knowledge transfer and maximising the impact of the doctoral research.
- **Feasibility of project resourcing arrangements.**
- Consideration of student's active participation in tailoring the project brief during the 'Prep' period.

### 2. Evidence of an excellent research and training environment (weighting 0.25)

- Publication of research outputs in high quality journals and track record of the supervisors.
- **Quality of the research environment including PhD completions across the supervisory team in the last 10 years.**
- Consideration of preparation of the student for future career readiness.

### 3. Evidence of alignment with strategic aims (weighting 0.25)

- Cross-cutting priority and training themes aligned to the MRC Foundations for Excellence and Priority Skills Needs and the training opportunities of our Associate Partners (data science & digital innovation, genetics and genomics, commercialisation & entrepreneurship).
- The strategic aim to support collaboration across the partner institutions: as the norm, PhD projects are expected to involve collaboration in supervision and/or specialist training.
- **Evidence to support awareness of the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion across the supervisory team including a significant contribution from early career researchers if relevant (e.g. lead supervisor).**
- In preparing for project proposals, supervisors may want to refer to the following:

[UKRI Statement of Expectations](#)

[MRC Review of Vulnerable Skills and Capabilities](#)

[MRC Strategic Plan](#)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Projects will be automatically rejected by the panel if they do not satisfy the criteria relating to the feasibility of project resourcing arrangements, equality, diversity, and inclusion awareness and quality of the research environment, including PhD completions across the supervisory team in the last 10 years. These elements are highlighted in red in the above criteria.

---

#### **24. WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT?**

We appreciate there are differences in what the ‘research environment’ encompasses when considering wet and dry lab projects. For ‘wet’ lab projects the research environment might refer directly to a physical lab run by a particular academic and the funding and equipment available. Alternatively, a dry lab research environment could be about a wider network of academics and access to expertise from a range of disciplines.

As the proposals will be shortlisted by theme panels, the panel will assess and score the environment based on markers of excellence relevant to the type of research.

---

#### **25. WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF AN EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER?**

For the purposes of the GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA, an ECR is an individual who is either within eight years of the award of their PhD or equivalent professional training, or an individual who is within six years of their first academic appointment. These durations exclude any period of career break, e.g., for family care or health reasons.

The ‘first academic appointment’ is defined as the first paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, which lists research and/or teaching as the primary functions.

---

#### **26. IS IT IMPORTANT FOR THE SUPERVISORS TO HAVE A RECORD OF MRC FUNDING?**

Evidence of a high-quality research environment should include (but is not limited to) the research profiles of all members of the supervisory team which may encompass publications, funding, public engagement, other measures of research quality or impact. Supervisors should demonstrate relevance to MRC remit but there is no requirement for MRC funding. Grants and publications should not predate 2016, please select appropriate examples.

Please note that only information such as grants, and awards recorded on the form will be considered – please do not assume that reputation replaces the need to complete this section.

---

## **27. HOW MANY PROJECTS WILL BE SELECTED FOR ADVERTISEMENT?**

To support our goal of recruiting the best students to the DLA, more projects than available places will be selected for advertisement to ensure that the final selection is based on the quality of the applicant. We aim to advertise as many projects as possible. The selected projects will be advertised on the GW4 BioMed website, on partners' own local websites and FindaPhD (which will be arranged by each partner institution). Supervisors are also strongly encouraged to use their own networks and spheres of influence to attract good candidates.

The GW4 BioMed3 DLA will also promote the programme in targeted advertising. The title and project description wording you put on the application form will be used on our website to advertise your project. Therefore, please ensure that it is jargon-free and understandable to applicants who are not yet experts in your field.

---

## **28. CAN APPLICANTS APPLY FROM DISCIPLINES OTHER THAN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE?**

Yes. The DLA is particularly interested in recruiting students from non-biomedical, but numerate and relevant subjects (e.g. from a computing, mathematics, statistics, chemistry, engineering background).

---

## **29. WHAT ARE THE STUDENT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA?**

Students will need to meet the standard academic eligibility criteria. Applicants for a studentship must have obtained, or be about to obtain, a UK degree, or the equivalent qualification gained outside the UK, in an appropriate area of biomedical sciences. However, the DLA also welcomes students from non-biomedical backgrounds, especially in the areas of computing, mathematics and the physical sciences.

Successful applicants will also need to meet the entry requirements of their home institution.

UKRI funded studentships through the GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA are available to applicants who would be classed as an international student. There is a limit to the number of international students we can accept onto our programme (up to a 30% cap per annum). The GW4 partner institutions have an agreement that the fee difference between home and international students will be waived by the home institution.

Students will also need to meet the English Language requirements of their home institution. The scoring panels will not be made aware of the applicant's English language skills during the shortlisting process as all applications are anonymised before scoring.

---

### 30. HOW WILL CANDIDATES APPLY?

Applicants will apply via a centralised online application form **between Wednesday 2nd September, and Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2026 at 5pm.**

The DLA application process aims to select students with excellent potential and motivation and will make an offer of funding to the top ranked applicants. The host institution will be responsible for checking eligibility and making an offer to study once the DLA's offer of funding has been accepted.

The process of applying will be made clear in the advertisements. Documents provided by shortlisted students will be shared by the DLA to speed up the local application process.

---

### 31. HOW WILL STUDENTS BE SELECTED?

All studentships will be awarded competitively. Students can apply for up to two projects in order of preference. Theme-specific panels will consider and score all applications before drawing up an interview shortlist of around 60 applicants.

A reserved shortlisting quota of 20% for students from self-declared under-represented groups (including ethnicity, disability, and other protected characteristics) will be used to increase diversity and inclusion. Up to 30% of our awarded studentships can be allocated to international students, thus we will restrict the number of international students on the shortlist to no more than 30%.

Shortlisted applications will then be passed to the lead supervisor of the chosen project/s by **Tuesday, 22nd December 2026**. Shortlisted students are required to meet (remotely or in person) for a discussion on the project and their suitability, with all their potential lead supervisors **before Wednesday 20th January 2027**.

**IMPORTANT** This informal discussion should **not** be arranged in an interview setting as this could confuse the applicant. It should be an informal discussion only. The onus for arranging these meetings is placed on the students and expenses will not be available for candidates to attend these discussions.

Supervisors will be expected to complete a standardised online report following each interview by **midday on Wednesday 20th January 2027**. The purpose of these reports is to assist the interview panel with their deliberations, and they are an important part of the recruitment process so that the DLA can ensure a suitable match between project and applicant.

Candidates that have been informed they have been shortlisted for interview will be required to provide their academic transcripts and two references to the DLA by **midday on Wednesday 20th January 2027**. References should be sent directly to the DLA from the referee.

Supervisors are reminded that the final selection will be based on the qualities and performance of the student and will be competitive between all students according to set criteria to be published at the time of advertisement.

Candidates will then be interviewed by a centralised DLA theme-based interview panel with representatives from all HEIs. Interviews will be 30 mins in length and will include discussion of a piece of research data that the student was involved with.

Interviews will take place on **26th and 27th January 2027**.

The supervisor report, interviews, academic transcripts, references, and the application form will all contribute to the panel's considerations for allocating studentships. The Management Board will allocate studentships based primarily on candidate quality ranking but will also consider the scientific strategy of the DLA, ensuring balance across themes and strategic skills. Students for whom their first-choice project has already been taken will be offered their second-choice project.

Supervisors should not interact with prospective students between **Wednesday 20th January 2027**, and the interview sessions (**26th and 27th January 2027**). Support and interview preparation advice is provided by the DLA and students will be informed of some of the interview questions 2 days prior. Supervisors should not discuss the interview with the candidate as the interview panel will expect to hear the student's own thoughts.

---

### 32. WHAT IF MY STUDENT WITHDRAWS?

The GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA makes every effort to work with our students, their supervisory teams and their host University to address challenges as they arise. In the event that a student is considering withdrawing from their studentship, we ask that you contact us as soon as possible so that we can provide bespoke support.

GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA funding **is linked to the successful student**. If the student withdraws at any stage before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2027, the funding will be re-allocated by the Implementation Board to the next successful student and their preferred project. As such, supervisors will not be able to re-advertise their project for a new student until the following recruitment cycle, where the project can be considered for advertising again. This does not guarantee the project will be re-advertised, or that it will be successful in securing a studentship.

If a student withdraws during the course of their studies, we will not be able to replace them. We will restrict access to RTSG spending from the date of the student's withdrawal.

---

### 33. HOW WILL THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE THEMES AND INSTITUTIONS BE ACHIEVED?

The overriding goal of the DLA is to recruit students with excellent potential and motivation.

There are no internal quotas and alignment with the research themes should not preclude an excellent project proposal, particularly one which will provide outstanding training in one or more of the vulnerable skills areas. That said, the DLA seeks to recruit students in approximately equal numbers to the four research themes by the end of the award.

The final allocation decisions will focus on the quality of the applicants but also consider:

- balance between themes
- balance between cross-cutting priority and training themes
- balance between institutions
- involvement of diverse groups as supervisors
- inclusion of high-ranking students from non-biological disciplines
- cross-institutional supervision
- protected characteristics such as gender, disability, and ethnicity.

At the project selection stage, some consideration will be given to ensure that the portfolio is not too heavily skewed away from a reasonable representation of theme or institutional balance. Note that balance will be sought over the duration of the DLA, so that imbalances in one year may be redressed later.

We are also monitoring for equality and diversity and will act as necessary to redress any imbalance over the lifetime of the DLA.

---

### **34. WHO WILL STUDENTS BE REGISTERED WITH?**

Students will register for a PhD with the HEI of the lead supervisor. They will be registered with one HEI only but will also have the benefit of being registered as visiting students across the other HEIs to provide them with access to training, resources and facilities across the DLA.

The monitoring of progression, appraisal and pastoral support will be provided in the first instance by the relevant PGR office of the home HEI. The GW4 BioMed3 Strategy Board, however, will oversee the progress of all students as well, receiving termly reports from the whole supervisory team as well as the students themselves. Where problems arise, the Strategy Board will seek to provide additional support over and above, but in collaboration with that provided by the local PGR/Doctoral office.

### **35. FURTHER QUESTIONS**

In the first instance please contact the DLA Hub at [GW4BioMed@Cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:GW4BioMed@Cardiff.ac.uk).

Considering more specific institutional or theme-specific queries, please contact the relevant institutional or theme lead at the email addresses below.

Professor Emma Kidd	<b>Director</b>	<a href="mailto:kiddej@cardiff.ac.uk">kiddej@cardiff.ac.uk</a>
Dr Kate Button	<b>Joint Bath Academic Leads</b>	<a href="mailto:Kb658@bath.ac.uk">Kb658@bath.ac.uk</a>
Dr Julien Licchesi		<a href="mailto:Jdf120@bath.ac.uk">Jdf120@bath.ac.uk</a>
Professor Matthew Avison	<b>Joint Bristol Academic Leads</b>	<a href="mailto:Matthewb.avison@bristol.ac.uk">Matthewb.avison@bristol.ac.uk</a>
Professor David Sheppard		<a href="mailto:D.N.Sheppard@bristol.ac.uk">D.N.Sheppard@bristol.ac.uk</a>
Dr David Petrik	<b>Joint Cardiff Academic Leads</b>	<a href="mailto:petrikd@cardiff.ac.uk">petrikd@cardiff.ac.uk</a>
Dr Neil Rodrigues		<a href="mailto:rodriguesn@cardiff.ac.uk">rodriguesn@cardiff.ac.uk</a>
Professor Wendy Noble	<b>Joint Exeter Academic Lead</b>	<a href="mailto:Wendy.noble2@exeter.ac.uk">Wendy.noble2@exeter.ac.uk</a>
Dr Emma Dempster		<a href="mailto:e.l.dempster@exeter.ac.uk">e.l.dempster@exeter.ac.uk</a>
Dr Martin Eichmann	<b>Joint Infection, Immunity, and Antibiotic Resistance Theme Lead</b>	<a href="mailto:M.Eichmann@exeter.ac.uk">M.Eichmann@exeter.ac.uk</a>
Dr Peter Cook		<a href="mailto:p.c.cook@exeter.ac.uk">p.c.cook@exeter.ac.uk</a>
Professor Esther Walton	<b>Joint Neuroscience and Mental Health Theme Leads</b>	<a href="mailto:Ew685@bath.ac.uk">Ew685@bath.ac.uk</a>
Dr Emma Dempster		<a href="mailto:e.l.dempster@exeter.ac.uk">e.l.dempster@exeter.ac.uk</a>
Prof Jon Heron	<b>Joint Population Health Sciences Theme Leads</b>	<a href="mailto:Jon.heron@bristol.ac.uk">Jon.heron@bristol.ac.uk</a>
Professor Rachel Freathy		<a href="mailto:R.Freathy@exeter.ac.uk">R.Freathy@exeter.ac.uk</a>
TBC	<b>Joint Cardiometabolic Disease Theme Leads</b>	TBC
TBC		TBC

Dr Giovanni  
Biglino

Research Culture and  
Wellbeing Lead

[g.biglino@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:g.biglino@bristol.ac.uk)

## 36. APPLICATION FORM TEMPLATE



## GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA: Supervisor Project Proposals 2027/28

This form should be submitted by 17:00 on Friday, 10th July 2026

---

### Project Declaration

1. Please tick the boxes below to confirm the following before submitting your GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA project for consideration. You must agree to all conditions in order to proceed.

\*

- I understand that accepted projects will only be advertised if we are awarded funding to support the GW4 BioMed3 MRC DLA.
- I understand that the funding structure of studentships in this DLA is different to the package provided previously for BioMed 1 and 2 studentships.
- I understand that there may be no provision for high cost training.
- I have read and understood the Project Proposal FAQs.

## GW4 BioMed3 DLA Project Application - October 26/27 - Cohort 3.1

- This form should be submitted by **17:00 on Friday, 10th July 2026**.
- Please refer to the FAQ document when completing your project proposal.
- Please note that this form can be saved and completed in stages BUT cannot be shared with other people. If you wish to collaborate and share your answers before submission, then you will have to do this via a Word document then cut and paste your answers into this form at a later stage.
- **Once you have submitted the form it cannot be revised or amended.**
- If you realise you have made a mistake after submission (clicking on the 'Finish' button) you will need to re-do the whole form and let us know before the closing date so that we can delete the previous version.
- Please download your submission receipt and save a copy of your answers at the end of the form.

## Project Details

### 2. Project Title:

\*

The title is important for attracting applicants. Please take care to make your title understandable to those who are not yet experts in the area.

0/32,000 characters

### 3. Research Theme: Please indicate the research theme that is most appropriate for this project: \*

- Infection, Immunity & Antimicrobial Resistance
- Neuroscience & Mental Health
- Population Health Sciences
- Cardiometabolic Disease

### 4. Please provide a summary of your project which will attract students to apply, if your project is shortlisted and advertised. This should be written for a general science audience to ensure a broad reach for your project description. (Maximum 100 words)

\*

We use this section on our website to advertise your project. Try to avoid descriptions which are jargon laden and impenetrable to those who are not yet experts in the field.

## The Supervisory Team: Lead Supervisor

Please ensure and confirm that you meet the requirements for supervisor eligibility by your lead HEI.

### 5. Lead supervisor: Title

\*

- Professor
- Dr
- Other

### 6. If you selected Other, please specify:

0/32,000 characters

### 7. Lead supervisor: First name

\*

0/32,000 characters

### 8. Lead supervisor: Surname

\*

0/32,000 characters

### 9. Lead supervisor: Affiliation

\*

- Bath
- Bristol
- Cardiff
- Exeter

### 10. Lead supervisor: College / faculty

\*

0/32,000 characters

**11. Lead supervisor: Department / school**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**12. Lead supervisor: Email**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**13. Lead supervisor: Telephone number**

0/32,000 characters

**14. Please indicate if there are any existing associations between the supervisory team members outside of a work capacity.**

0/32,000 characters

**15. Does one or more members of the supervisory team identify with the following? Please tick all that apply.**

\*

- Early career researcher
- Minority ethnic or gender identifying group
- Other area of diversity
- None

## The Supervisory Team: Co-Supervisor 1

### 16. Co-supervisor 1: Title

\*

- Professor
- Dr
- Other

### 17. If you selected "other", please specify:

0/32,000 characters

### 18. Co-supervisor 1: First name

\*

0/32,000 characters

### 19. Co-supervisor 1: Surname

\*

0/32,000 characters

### 20. Co-supervisor 1: Affiliation

\*

- Bath
- Bristol
- Cardiff
- Exeter
- Other

### 21. If you selected "other", please specify:

Please check your University regulations regarding co-supervisor eligibility.

0/32,000 characters

**22. Co-supervisor 1: College / faculty**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**23. Co-supervisor 1: Department / school**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**24. Co-supervisor 1: Email**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**25. Add another supervisor?**

\*

Yes

No

## The Supervisory Team: Co-Supervisor 2

### 26. Co-supervisor 2: Title

\*

- Professor
- Dr
- Other

### 27. If you selected "other", please specify:

0/32,000 characters

### 28. Co-supervisor 2: First name

\*

0/32,000 characters

### 29. Co-supervisor 2: Surname

\*

0/32,000 characters

### 30. Co-supervisor 2: Affiliation

\*

- Bath
- Bristol
- Cardiff
- Exeter
- Other

### 31. If you selected "other", please specify:

Please check your University regulations regarding co-supervisor eligibility.

0/32,000 characters

**32. Co-supervisor 2: College / faculty**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**33. Co-supervisor 2: Department / school**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**34. Co-supervisor 2: Email**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**35. Add another supervisor?**

\*

 Yes No

## The Supervisory Team: Co-Supervisor 3

### 36. Co-supervisor 3: Title

\*

- Professor
- Dr
- Other

### 37. If you selected "other", please specify:

0/32,000 characters

### 38. Co-supervisor 3: First name

\*

0/32,000 characters

### 39. Co-supervisor 3: Surname

\*

0/32,000 characters

### 40. Co-supervisor 3: Affiliation

\*

- Bath
- Bristol
- Cardiff
- Exeter
- Other

### 41. If you selected "other", please specify:

Please check your University regulations regarding co-supervisor eligibility.

0/32,000 characters

**42. Co-supervisor 3: College / faculty**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**43. Co-supervisor 3: Department / school**

\*

0/32,000 characters

**44. Co-supervisor 3: Email**

\*

0/32,000 characters

## The Proposed Project

Please refer to selection criteria and the FAQ's and consider how your project offers high quality doctoral training and research.

45. Describe the proposed project. Please include a brief background, the key research question that the project aims to address and a breakdown of the specific objectives that the student will work towards over the course of the studentship. Please also indicate areas where the student will be able to take ownership and steer the project. (Maximum 800 words)

\*

Descriptions will be considered by the Theme Panel, which may include non-specialist members, and will be advertised on HEI websites to potential applicants, so must be written in a style/language understandable to both audiences.

46. Can this project be completed on a part-time basis (minimum 50%)? \*

Yes

No

47. Without reference to the characteristics of the supervisory team, please provide details as to whether equality, diversity and inclusion are considered within the design or scope of the project, or the intended training of the student.

\*

0/32,000 characters

48. Has this project received ethical approval? \*

Yes

No

Other

49. If you selected Other, please specify:

0/32,000 characters

## Training provision

50. Describe how you propose to support the student to tailor the project and take ownership of it, during the initial 3 month 'Prep' period (Maximum 500 words)

\*

51. Please state how you intend to use existing courses/resources across GW4 that can be accessed to provide specialist training (Maximum 500 words)

\*

## Project Funding

This section asks you to describe how the project costs will be met year by year. Please note that you do not need current or previous MRC funding to be eligible for these studentships. This section should be completed after reading our FAQ's document.

52. Would you consider the project to be wet-lab or dry-lab based?

\*

- Wet lab
- Dry lab
- Other

53. If you selected Other, please specify.

0/32,000 characters

54. We provide a **Research Support Training Grant (RTSG)** of £2,000 per year for dry lab projects and £5,000 per year for wet lab projects. Please describe how these funds will be used after reading the restrictions outlined in question 15 of our FAQ's document.

Please note that these costs are for training only, ongoing consumable costs are not covered by MRC funding.

\*

55. The MRC **does not provide high cost training costs** for DLA's, which is a change from our previous DTP funding structure. Depending on the funding that we receive, we **may** be able to support a small number of requests.

High-cost training not identified at this stage cannot be financially supported later in the studentship.

Would you like to request any high-cost training funding, as outlined in question 16 of the FAQ's document? (Maximum 120 words)

\*

If applicable, please provide a description and costing for each request.

56. What are the anticipated additional project costs per year (e.g. for consumables) not outlined in your answers above?

\*

Please provide an indication of the nature of the costs.

0/32,000 characters

57. Please indicate how you, as a project team, plan to fund these additional costs as they will not be covered by the studentship funding, including any high-cost training requirements outlined in your response to question 55.

\*

Please note that funds can come from any member of the supervisory team if it is relevant to their participation, but this should be indicated

0/32,000 characters

## Excellence of the Research and Training Environment

Please refer to selection criteria and FAQ document and consider publication record; PhD submission rates; and critical mass; both in terms of the named supervisors and their wider research group(s)/network(s), of relevance. Please limit to 4 supervisors only.

**58. Lead supervisor:** How many students are currently being supervised as 1st supervisor?

\*

0/32,000 characters

**59. Lead supervisor:** How many students have been supervised to completion (starting 2016/17 onwards).

\*

0/32,000 characters

**60. Lead supervisor:** Of those, how many completed within 4 years?

\*

0/32,000 characters

**61. Co-supervisor 1:** How many students are currently being supervised as 1st supervisor?

\*

0/32,000 characters

**62. Co-supervisor 1:** How many students have been supervised to completion (starting 2016/17 onwards)?

\*

63. **Co-supervisor 1:** Of those, how many completed within 4 years?

\*

0/32,000 characters

64. **Co-supervisor 2:** How many students are currently being supervised as 1st supervisor?

\*

0/32,000 characters

65. **Co-supervisor 2:** How many students have been supervised to completion (starting 2016/17 onwards)?

\*

0/32,000 characters

66. **Co-supervisor 2:** Of those, how many completed within 4 years?

\*

0/32,000 characters

67. **Co-supervisor 3:** How many students are currently being supervised as 1st supervisor?

\*

0/32,000 characters

68. **Co-supervisor 3:** How many students have been supervised to completion (starting 2016/17 onwards)?

\*

0/32,000 characters

**69. Co-supervisor 3:** Of those, how many completed within 4 years?

\*

0/32,000 characters

**70.** Comments on above (optional but explanation encouraged).

0/32,000 characters

## Excellence of the Research and Training Environment continued

71. Please provide evidence of the quality of the research and training environment, including how the training experience will contribute to the students' future career development. (Maximum 1000 words)

\*

This includes illustration of the research profiles of all members of the supervisory team which could include publications, funding, public engagement, other measures of research quality or impact.

72. As outlined in the 'Supervisor Expectations' document, the DTP requires Lead Supervisors and Co-Supervisors to contribute to the training environment of the DTP during the course of the studentship. Please tick the box/es to indicate that you agree with the following, \*

- The Supervisory team have read the 'Supervisor Expectations' document.
- We will complete a termly online student progression survey.
- We will attend at least one Supervisor training session each year.
- Supervisors and co-supervisors agree to have their engagement with the DTP monitored.

73. Supervisors are required to take part in at least one additional role during their allocated studentship. Please indicate the roles that you may be interested in (select all that apply). \*

- Participation in project shortlisting.
- Participation in student shortlisting.
- Delivering training at one of our events.
- Standing as a Deputy for theme or institutional lead.
- Participating as an online CORE training tutor.

74. Please suggest the title of an academic skills training seminar that you or a member of your Supervisory team could deliver to our students.

This should focus on transferrable skills applicable to PhD students across theme and university.

0/32,000 characters

## Alignment of the Project with Relevant Strategic Priorities

Please refer to selection criteria in the FAQ document (point 23), and describe how the project will address, as applicable: one or more of the DLA's strategic aims - data science & digital innovation, genetics and genomics and commercialisation and entrepreneurship across GW4 partner institutions. We also aim to increase diversity in our supervisory teams (including early career researchers, gender, ethnicity and other areas of diversity).

75. Please indicate by tick-box(es) which of the strategic skills areas will be developed through the project. \*

- Data science and digital innovation
- Genetics and genomics
- Commercialisation and entrepreneurship

76. Please indicate if there is an element of collaboration across the GW4 institutions. \*

- Yes
- No

77. If yes, please indicate which GW4 institutions will be involved. Please tick all that apply.

- Bath
- Bristol
- Cardiff
- Exeter

78. Please describe how the project will address the strategic skills as listed above, including collaboration within the GW4. (Maximum 600 words)

\*

## Approvals

79. I confirm that I have institutional approval, e.g. from Head of School/Faculty/Dept, to submit this project proposal.

Yes

No

- A GW4 BioMed Studentship includes a UKRI level stipend, fees, RTSG of up to £5k per annum (depending on nature of project) and a travel grant of £300 per annum.
- Studentships are funded for 4 years with the submission deadline at 4 years which includes a 3-month prep period and a 3-month Broadening Horizons placement.
- There are **NO** additional DLA funds for ongoing or incidental project costs.
- Note the RTSG is for research training and support and in line with UKRI and MRC policy and must be made available to the student for costs of, for example, training workshops, conference attendance and travel associated with attending development activities and placements.
  - It must not be used solely for the purchase of consumables and **MUST NOT** be used at all for the purchase of items which would reasonably be expected to be provided by the institution, including laptops.
  - Project costs must therefore be covered by laboratory or programme grants.
  - GW4 BioMed3 DLA funding must be used to support **ONLY** the student appointed to your submitted project.

**Please note:** this is the last question. Clicking "Finish" will submit your proposal and it cannot be undone.