Guidance

TechFirst Doctoral Support

Opening doors into technology research with financial support and training.

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Growth and innovation in technology depend on a strong research ecosystem. TechFirst is designed to make doctoral study a more attractive and financially

viable option for talented graduates, while also creating routes back into research for those already working in industry. In doing so, it helps strengthen the talent pipeline and build a more inclusive, high-impact research base across the UK.

TechFirst will support 1000 UK home doctoral students across 2 intakes, offering a stipend top-up of up to £10,000 per year alongside a package of wraparound support. This support is focused on home students to strengthen the UK's domestic research talent pipeline in priority technology areas. Students will be conducting research in frontier technology areas, including national cyber security, machine learning, quantum technologies and other critical fields.

For the 2026 intake, Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) and Doctoral Focal Awards were selected in line with the priorities set out in the UK's Industrial Strategy. Eligible PhDs were selected based on their relevance to the 6 frontier technologies in the Digital and Technologies Sector Plan, alongside a small number linked to technology applications within the Financial Services sector.

> Applications for the 2027/28 academic year will open from this autumn.

List of CDTs/Doctoral Focal Awards

The current list of participating CDTs and Doctoral Focal Awards is below.

CDT title	Universities	Website
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral	University of Cambridge	https://cdt.sensors.c

Training in Sensor Technologies and Applications in an Uncertain World		
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Compound Semiconductor Manufacturing	Cardiff University (Lead), The University of Manchester, University College London, University of Sheffield	www.cdt-compound-semiconductor.org
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Quantum Information Science and Technologies	University of Bristol (Lead), University of Sussex	www.qist-cdt.info
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Robotics and AI for Net Zero	The University of Manchester (Lead), University of Glasgow, University of Oxford	www.rainz-cdt.ac.uk
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Future Open SecuRe NeTworks	University of Surrey (Lead), Queen's University of Belfast	www.fort-cdt.ac.uk/a

(CDT-FORT)		
UKRI AI Centre for Doctoral Training in Lifelong Safety Assurance of AI-enabled Autonomous Systems (SAINTS)	University of York	www.saints-cdt.ai
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Machine Learning Systems	University of Edinburgh	https://informatics.ed
UKRI AI Centre for Doctoral Training in Decision Making for Complex Systems	The University of Manchester (Lead), University of Cambridge	www.ai-decisions-cd
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Autonomous Intelligent Machines and Systems	University of Oxford	https://aims.robots.o
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Cyber Secure Everywhere: Resilience in a World of	University of Bristol (Lead), University of Bath	EPSRC Centre for D Training in Cyber Se for Doctoral Trainin Bristol

Disappearing System Boundaries		
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Quantum Technology Engineering	University of Southampton	https://qte.ac.uk
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Quantum Computation and Quantum Communications (QC2)	University College London	https://www.ucl.ac.ul physical-sciences/quantum/s opportunities/quantu programmes
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Quantum Informatics	University of Edinburgh (Lead), Heriot-Watt University, University College London, University of Oxford, University of Strathclyde	www.quantuminform
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Chemical Biology: Empowering UK BioTech Innovation	Imperial College London	EPSRC CDT in Che Research groups, Ir London

EPSRC and MOD Centre for Doctoral Training in Complex Integrated Systems for Defence & Security	University of Southampton	https://cisdns-cdt.ac
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Use-Inspired Photonic Sensing and Metrology	Heriot-Watt University (Lead), National Physical Laboratory (NPL), University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Huddersfield, University of St Andrews, University of Strathclyde	https://cdtphotonics.
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Statistics and Operational Research in Partnership with Industry (STOR-i)	Lancaster University	www.lancaster.ac.uk
UKRI AI Centre	University of	UKRI Centre for Do

for Doctoral Training in AI for Digital Media Inclusion	Surrey (Lead), Royal Holloway University of London	in AI for Digital Medi University of Surrey
EPSRC and MOD Centre for Doctoral Training in Sensing, Processing, and AI for Defence and Security (SPADS)	University of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University	www.spads.ac.uk
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in the Mathematics for our Future Climate: Theory, Data and Simulation	Imperial College London (Lead), University of Reading, University of Southampton	www.mfccdt.ac.uk
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Photonic and Electronic Systems	University College London (Lead), University of Cambridge	www.pes-cdt.org
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Statistics and Machine Learning	Imperial College London (Lead), University of Oxford	https://statml.io
UKRI AI Centre	Northumbria	Artificial Intelligence

for Doctoral Training in Citizen-Centred Artificial Intelligence	University	Doctoral Training
EPSRC and BBSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Engineering Biology: EngBio CDT	University of Bristol (Lead), University of Oxford	https://engbio-cdt.or
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Applied Quantum Technologies	University of Strathclyde (Lead), Heriot-Watt University, University of Glasgow	www.aqt.ac.uk
UKRI AI Centre for Doctoral Training in Digital Healthcare	Imperial College London	No website link avail
UKRI AI Centre for Doctoral Training in AI for the Environment (Intelligent Earth)	University of Oxford	https://intelligent-ear
UKRI AI Centre for Doctoral Training in Practice-Oriented Artificial Intelligence	University of Bristol	UKRI Centre for Do in Practice-Oriented Intelligence , Centre Training, University

(PrO-AI)		
UKRI AI Centre for Doctoral Training in Sustainable Understandable agri-food Systems Transformed by Artificial INtelligence (SUSTAIN)	University of Lincoln (Lead), University of Aberdeen, University of Strathclyde, Queen's University Belfast	www.sustain-cdt.ai
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in 2D Materials of Tomorrow (2DMoT)	The University of Manchester (Lead), University of Cambridge	https://www.2d-mate cdt.manchester.ac.u
UKRI AI Centre for Doctoral Training in Responsible and Trustworthy in-the-world NLP	University of Edinburgh	www.responsiblenlp
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Cyber-physical Risk	University College London	EPSRC Centre for I Training in Cyber-Ph Faculty of Engineeri
EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in UK Semiconductor Industry Future Skills (UK-SIFS)	Swansea University (Lead), University of Leeds	No website link avail
EPSRC Centre	University of	www.agq-cdt.org

for Doctoral Training in Algebra, Geometry and Quantum Fields (AGQ)	Glasgow (Lead), Heriot-Watt University, University of Edinburgh	
CODE-M: Control and Design of Bioengineered Microbial Cells and Systems	The University of Manchester (Lead), University of Liverpool	www.bmh.manchest
DFA in Engineering Biology for Biomedicine	King's College London (Lead), University of Leeds, National Physical Laboratory	https://eb4bm.org/
Engineering Biology for Environmental Applications (EngBio4Env)	Cranfield University (Lead), Brunel University, Newcastle University, University of Glasgow	https://ebicentre.co.
Plant BioDesign: Designing Plant Systems for a Green Economy	University of York (Lead), John Innes Centre, University of Bristol, University of Cambridge	www.york.ac.uk

Training the next generation of Engineering Biologists to deliver green bio-based production (EngBio4GBP)	Royal Holloway University of London (Lead), Rothamsted Research, University of Reading	www.royalholloway.a

About TechFirst

TechFirst Doctoral Support is part of TechFirst, the government's flagship tech skills programme opening pathways into the UK's fast-growing tech sector.

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