



NDA PhD Bursary Call: Additional Information

The PhD bursary falls within Lot A – University interactions, of the Direct Research Portfolio (DRP). The principal guidance document is the “NDA 5-year R&D Plan 2019 to 2024”, published in April 2019 and available from the following web link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nda-5-year-research-and-development-plan-2019-to-2024/nda-5-year-rd-plan-2019-to-2024#need-for-rd>

Specifically, the focus of NDA’s strategic R&D portfolio is on:

- helping to shape and underpin NDA’s overall decommissioning strategy for the UK
- delivering innovation across multiple sites
- developing vital technical expertise for the future

For description of site end state strategy development see the NDA Strategy:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-decommissioning-authority-strategy-effective-from-march-2021>

Support for writing a proposal

National Nuclear Laboratory have partnered with NDA to provide both industrial supervision and technical support to applicants applying to the PhD bursary scheme. Applicants may contact the scheme administrator (contact details at the end of this document) during the call and if required, connections can be made with NNL experts that can assist with your application.

Further background information can be found on the websites of the Site Licence Companies (SLCs). The following links provide a starting point for obtaining relevant guidance on NDA group issues (other relevant documents are available for the respective SLC organisations):

- Sellafield Research Needs:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752392/Sellafield_Medium_and_Long_Term_Research_Needs_2018.pdf
- Sellafield Corporate Plan:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627566/SEL1109_8_corporate-plan_web.pdf
- NDA owned sites including; Low Level Waste Repository Ltd. (LLWR), Dounreay, Winfrith & Magnox sites, please consult the relevant sections of the NDA business plan:



- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/970389/NDA_Business_Plan_2021-2024_170321.pdf Radioactive Waste Management Ltd. (RWM) published Science and Technology Plan
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/radioactive-waste-management/about/research>
- Publications from other non-NDA organisations may also have relevant background information:
- Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Sustainability Plan (2012-2030):
<http://www.awe.co.uk/app/uploads/2014/07/SustainabilityPlan-2012-2030.pdf>
- EDF Strategy:
<https://www.edfenergy.com/about/sustainability-the-better-plan/ambitions/nuclear>

Assessment Criteria

A separate guidance note document has been prepared to help you complete your application. It is important that you study these notes carefully and follow the instructions as they provide detailed descriptions of what NDA's expectations are with respect to the call.

International R&D collaboration

NDA is keen to work with international organisations to share knowledge and experience to help it achieve its mission. NDA will welcome proposals for collaborative R&D that are complementary to the bursary call. For examples of international collaboration projects supported by NDA, please follow this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nda-5-year-research-and-development-plan-2019-to-2024/nda-5-year-rd-plan-2019-to-2024#international-collaboration>

Facilities access

Facilities access is a key part of NDA research strategy (2019-2024). As indicated in the call, NDA will welcome complementary proposals to access specialist national facilities (such as facilities capable of handling radioactive materials) for nuclear R&D. This is discussed in the NDA strategy, see here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nda-5-year-research-and-development-plan-2019-to-2024/nda-5-year-rd-plan-2019-to-2024#university-interactions-lot-a>

Integration of output with NDA group

Integration of the research outputs within the NDA group is important to ensure that the benefits from a research project are realised. Several possible routes are open to applicants, including:

- The NDA holds an annual research seminar that brings together industry experts and PhD students from the PhD bursary scheme. Research seminars are also held from within each of the research themes covered under the PhD bursary call.
- The NDA Nuclear Waste Decommissioning Research Forum regularly hosts meetings which accept invitees from academia to present on their research outputs.
- The NDA hosts several open supply chain events annually, these are typically advertised on the NDA web site and are good opportunities to build networks of collaborators and to better understand the technical challenges and opportunities of the NDA mission.



- Applicants may wish to propose placements within the NDA group itself, or within its supply chain. Whilst these are not guaranteed and may be subject to changing business priorities, many supply chain organisations provide opportunities for short and long-term placements as part of their corporate activities. For placements within NNL, the nominated industrial supervision will be able to advise on opportunities. For opportunities within other supply chain or tier-1 organisations, applicants may wish to contact the relevant university leads for guidance.

For further information and guidance, please contact the PhD bursary scheme administrator, Dr Mark Bankhead directly (mark.bankhead@uknnl.com).

Selection Process

The following process will be used to assess proposals:

1. All valid proposals must be submitted using the application form available from the NNL website, www.nnl.co.uk. All fields in the application form must be completed according to the instructions.
2. Proposals should indicate **one** of the thematic areas (A-E) that best identifies the area of greatest potential impact for the research. Proposals that fall outside of these five themes should be submitted against the open theme (F).
3. All proposals must be submitted online by 15:00 on **the date highlighted in the call**. Proposals submitted after this time will not be accepted.
4. Further information on the scheme, the assessment criteria and selection process are also available by contacting the scheme administrator, Dr Mark Bankhead directly (mark.bankhead@uknnl.com).
5. Proposals will be assessed by a group of nuclear industry specialists, who will make a recommendation to the NDA. The assessment will be based on the technical merits of the proposal using the criteria outlined above and the cost and evidence of leverage stated on the application form.
6. It is expected that at least one proposal will be supported from within each of the thematic areas.
7. All applicants will receive a letter stating whether the proposal:
 - a. was successful and will be funded,
 - b. was thought to be of value by the reviewers but may be more appropriate for specific SLC funding than the NDA bursary scheme,
 - c. was thought to be of value but could not be funded due to the limited funds available,
 - d. failed to provide sufficient justification against one or more of the criteria,

Detailed feedback on unsuccessful proposals will be provided on request.



Practical information

NDA has contracted NNL to be industrial supervisors of the Bursary and Case Award students they are funding. For each student:

- A project supervisor will be appointed from within NNL. This supervisor will be expected to make a number of visits to the student annually (at least 1 per-year) to check on progress. The NNL supervisor will report progress to the NDA. In addition, the NNL industrial supervisor will be on call to answer any student queries.
- Progress reports must be submitted to NNL in accordance with the contractual terms and conditions.
- A seminar will be held annually, where all of the NDA-funded students will have an obligation to present their projects to the NDA and industrial stakeholders. The academic supervisor will also be invited to attend. The seminar is an excellent opportunity for the students to raise the profile of their work and to create contacts who may both assist in giving focus/direction and in offering employment in the future.
- An invite will be sent for a group visit, with other students studying in a similar topic area, either to a nuclear site or a suitable location, to see something of interest and/or meet with industrial stakeholders, this will typically happen around Aug - Oct.
- A 1:1 meeting will be held annually with the NNL industrial supervisor at a nuclear site to see something of interest and/or meet with industrial stakeholders, this will typically happen around Sept - Dec. Alternatively, annually a group meeting may be arranged involving industrial supervisors and PhD students within a specific programme theme.

Additional travel and subsistence costs for students attending these sessions will not be provided by either NDA or NNL and should be accounted for within the budget estimate of the proposal submission.

Applicants should be aware that the NDA may wish to publish the summaries of successful bursary projects (either on the NDA web site or in NDA publications or reports as applicable).

Contractual requirements and Terms and Conditions

A copy of this contract is available on the call submission web site.

Please contact mark.bankhead@uknnl.com for further information.