

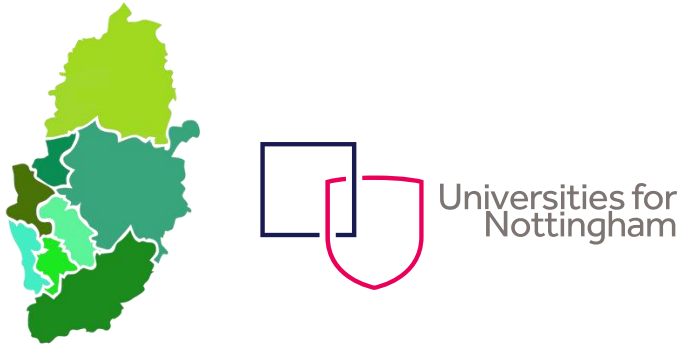


Collaboratory Research Hub

Project Co-Creation for Cohort 2027 Studentships

Two East Midlands Chapters

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (NN)



<https://universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk>

Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR)



<https://universitiespartnership.org/>



+ over 80 local civic and community partner organisations

The Challenges

Community perspectives in Research

- Research is often done TO communities, without their knowledge and experiences meaningfully embedded in the research.

Research that reflects the community

- Research communities are rarely representative of their surrounding local communities.

Broadening the definition of excellence in research

- Traditional concepts of what makes a good researcher are exclusionary, limiting who gets to do research.

Addressing locally-specific challenges

- The East Midlands faces complex, unique challenges that need dedicated, holistic approaches to address them.



Creating a community engaged research ecosystem



More than just a Researcher Training Programme

An 8-year, £7.7mill place-based, community focused research programme

Funded by:



77, 3-year PhD Studentships

- Cohort-based doctoral training programme centred on community-engaged research.
- Broader, inclusive PhD candidate training, support, and development.

37, 12-Week Research Placements

- Holistic experiential projects to empower more people to unlock their potential.

Training and Development

- Designing novel training for future champions of engaged research.
- Understanding what inclusive PhD supervision looks like.

Competency-Based Candidate Recruitment

- Trialling a radically inclusive, competency-based recruitment model.

Civic and Community Engagement Activity

- Developing mechanisms of civic engagement and community consultation.

Evaluation and Adaptation

- Implementing a “bottom-up” approach of evaluating and growing.

The Values that Drive Our Work

Inclusive

- We know that opportunity is essential for people to achieve their potential. We work to embed belonging and dignity for all through meaningful engagement, empowerment, and equality of opportunity.

Intersectional

- We aim to take the complexity of human experience into account in all that we do. We understand that everyone's mix of identities converge to define their unique experiences, challenges, and outcomes.

Transformative

- We endeavour to be bold, creative, and radical. We work to push ourselves to explore new ground and to challenge systems and structures as we strive for meaningful change.

Collaborative

- We understand the value and strength in bringing together diverse voices, knowledge and experience. We believe that effective, sustainable change can only come from working with those that need it.



PhD vs. Research Placement

PhD Research Project

3 Years | Deep Dive | Impactful Outcomes

- Full-time, in-depth exploration address a series of research questions through the production of an original body of work.
- Monthly stipend (£21,805 p/a) and all tuition fees covered in full.
- Research training and support grant of £1,500
- Full access to all partner universities.
- Developing researchers as future leaders in community-engaged research.

Research Placement

12 Weeks | Exploration and Development

- Part-time projects scoping and exploring potential new areas of community-based research.
- Academics and community partners test new collaborative partnerships.
- Underrepresented candidates develop research skills through hands-on experience
- Support bursary of £2,181
- Resource budget of £200
- Custom research skills training to prepare candidates for PhD study.



Collaborative supervisor teams

**Lead Academic
Supervisor**

**Academic Co-
Supervisor**

Community Supervisor

Member of a locally based civic
/ community organisation

Each project supervisory team includes academic researchers
from 2 different chapter universities

Research project supervisory teams are there to support and guide candidates, but all candidates will be expected to take proactive responsibility for managing and carrying out their project's research work.



For community partners

What's required of community partners?

- Contribute to co-creation research projects
- As part of an active research project team
 - Candidate shortlisting and interviews
 - 1 day induction
 - X3 meetings per year plus regular correspondence

What do you get from being a partner?

- Data and insights from the candidate's research.
- Support payments (£50 per half day) for supervisory meeting.
- Join a community of like-minded professionals, dedicated support, access to networking and development opportunities.
- Access to university resources and training



Interested? What to start thinking about NOW

- Who could be your academic and/or community partner?
- What is the local basis and justification that underpins your proposal?
- What local priority themes could your
- ACADEMICS: Start having conversations with potential local community organisations and encourage them to attend a webinar.
- COMMUNITY PARTNERS: Attend a webinar and get in touch with the Collab team to find out more or get support.

Post on our “find a collaborator” board:

https://padlet.com/mjyoung_ntu/find-a-collaborator-collaboratory-project-co-creation-for-co-lc9absuj2m43d566



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PhD Studentships



PhD Training Programme

Component	Details
Collab Core Training	• First year inductions • First year Summer Training Series • Championing Engaged Research module • Regular cohort check-ins
Candidate-Led Development	• Development needs analysis conducted with your supervisory team focusing on: • Academic identity and career building • Conceptualising and managing your doctorate • Research skills, methods, and analysis • Scholarly writing and knowledge sharing • Bespoke training sessions
Experiential Activities	• Annual Collaboratory Research Showcase • Second year research consultancy group projects • Symposium of community engaged-research



Includes mentoring support and guidance from your supervisors and the Collaboratory team.

Championing Engaged Research module

Component	Days (Per PhD)	Details
Year 1	1.5	- Understand the fundamental concepts of public and civic engagement in research. - Develop strong relationships with supervisors and members of partner organisations. - Develop understanding of how to undertake good quality engagement in and with research - Recognise the role of civic engagement with research in the wider research eco-system - Recognise and value the knowledge, skills and lived experience individuals bring into the PhD
Year 2	1	- Reflect on values and motivations and how this can be integrated into engaged research - Explore theories of change and the role of research in impact. - Develop a theory of change, integrating research and evidence into mechanisms to facilitate change
Year 3	1	- Develop a range of strategies for driving civic change, from activism to negotiation. - Reflect on styles of leadership and influencing to champion engaged research
Experiential activities	2.5	- Annual research showcase with local community and civic audiences 2nd Year group projects – Research consultancy style projects with community organisations





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Research Placement Studentships



Research Placement Structure

Year	Activity
4 weeks before	- Candidate 3-month work plan is developed with project outcomes defined. - x1 academic-style written report (Approx 3,500-8,000 words, any format) - x1 summary presentation that highlights learnings & recommendations, etc. Academic supervisors apply for ethical approval, where necessary. - All supervisors develop initial list of resources that candidates will engage with when starting to develop their background knowledge of the project.
Week 1	- Mandatory Collaboratory-led candidate inductions - Half day, full cohort induction to the programme - Research skills training crash course - Candidate has Inception Meeting with the project supervisory team - Candidate begins background reading and conversations to grow their understanding of the project, relevant academic theory and practical concepts.
Week 2-3	- Candidate reviews academic literature to identify gaps and opportunities. - Finalising plans for research activities.
Week 4-9	- Carrying out data collection through relevant research methods. - Beginning data analysis. - Beginning work on the final outputs.
Week 10-12	- Writing of final outputs, as defined at the start of the project. - Candidate has Debrief Meeting with supervisory team to discuss findings and potential further opportunities for themselves and the research.
1 week after	- Full cohort of candidates present deliver 5-min presentations of findings to wider local authority and community colleagues as part of an online completion event. - Final written reports may be submitted up to 4 weeks after formal placement completion date.

ETHICS

Ethics applications for Placement research have always been given approval due to their smaller scope, but it is essential this is started ASAP. Unlike PhD candidates, Research Placement candidates are NOT responsible for gaining ethical approval.



Placement Outputs

Output Type	Details
Academic-Style Written Report	• Approx 3,500-8,00 words. • Any format, as appropriate for the project. • To be sent to Collaboratory on completion. • Latest Submission Deadline: 1 month after end of placement
Summary Presentation	• This will be delivered by the candidate at a final online showcase event which will take place 1 week after the end of the placements. • Presentation should be concise, written in accessible language for a non-specialist audience. • Each presentation will be short, only 5-mins long, and should briefly give an overview of the project and what the key learnings have been. • Deadline for amended presentation: 1 month after end of placement



Minimum supervision requirements

Type	Who?	Purpose
Inception meeting	• Full supervisory team	• Meet the candidate. • Help them understand necessary background and context to the project and what they'll be doing.
Regular contact and support	• Lead supervisor	• Ensure candidate is progressing and has the support they need. • Provide necessary signposting to support, training and development.
Ad-hoc contact and support	• Academic co-supervisor • Local authority supervisor • Community supervisor	• Provide specific signposting to support, training and development, and relevant resources • Introduce candidate to relevant networks, communities and resources. • Where relevant, arrange opportunities for the candidate to come into the community/local authority offices to meet relevant colleagues.
Debrief meeting	• Full supervisory team	• Discuss the research findings and how the placement went – what went well? How can the candidate continue to develop? • Discuss next steps and future options – how might the research be used for academic or community supervisors? What opportunities might the candidate pursue next and how could you support them?



Training & Development Programme

Type	Date	Details
Core Programme Mandatory activity, delivered by Collaboratory Team	Week 1	- In-person half day, full cohort induction to the programme - Essential Research skills training covering: - Introduction to Research - Critical evaluation – how to read papers and critique evidence. - Philosophy of research and research ethics. - Managing your research.
	Week 4	- Full cohort online check-in 1 (1hr) - Identify any academic or pastoral challenges - Facilitate peer support within the cohort
	Week 7	- In-person "works in progress" seminar - Essential academic writing skills - Candidates discuss successes and challenges of their research to-date - Facilitated peer critique supports ongoing skills development
	Week 10	Full cohort online check-in 2 (1hr)
	Week 13	Online Research Showcase event where candidates present and discuss findings to local authority and community partner audiences.
Candidate-Led Development	Weeks 1-12	- Candidate works with academic supervisor(s) to identify further areas of focus for training and development. Training is provided by supervisors, or candidates are signposted to existing, institution-wide post-graduate research training. Areas of focus will vary depending on project and candidate needs, but may include: - Conceptualising and managing the research project - Specific research skills, methods, and analysis techniques - Scholarly writing and knowledge sharing





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Candidate Recruitment



Inclusive candidate recruitment

Developing, implementing and testing new, inclusive approaches to research candidate recruitment is a core purpose of our funding from Research England.

- It is mandatory for all academic and community supervisors, whose proposal is selected for funding, engage fully with Collaboratory's recruitment processes.
- We cannot support named candidates for PhD projects – all projects will be advertised through open recruitment.
- Collaboratory is intentionally targeting underrepresented and “non-traditional” candidates for the projects it funds.



Explore the profiles of our current research candidates to better understand who Collaboratory aims to recruit:

https://ufncollaboratory.ac.uk/research_candidates/

Our work on inclusive recruitment

Our Recruitment Aims

- To support promising local candidates with strong potential to succeed in PhD research to get onto and succeed in a PhD degree. Especially those classed as “non-traditional” candidates by the HE sector.
- To develop and trial a novel, inclusive approach to PhD candidate recruitment which enables anyone to apply and showcase their suitability for a PhD, regardless of how they acquired their skills and experience.

What do we mean by “non-traditional” candidates?

- Those with a non-linear career and/or education paths.
- Those who do not have “standard entry” qualifications, i.e., 2.1 at Undergraduate or 2.2 at Undergraduate with a Masters
- Those with strong, equivalent, or better, professional experience than an undergraduate degree.
- Those who would otherwise not have the opportunity to access PhD study, i.e., due to socio-economic status, family/caring responsibilities, other minoritised identity, etc.



To achieve these aims, our work focuses areas such as:

- Practical barriers within university systems and structures.
- Marketing, profile raising and communications related to candidate recruitment.
- Traditional and “business as usual” attitudes and approaches amongst supervisory teams.
- Pre-application support and education for prospective applicants.
- New approaches to applications, applicant assessment, and interviews.



Candidate competencies

All projects are advertised with a full, transparent competency framework against which applicants will be expected to apply.

Core Competencies

- Independent and highly self-motivated
- Curiosity and a passion for learning
- Analytical, researcher mindset with keen attention to detail
- Strong organisational and time-management skills
- Ability to collaborate effectively with varied stakeholders
- Perseverance and resilience in the face of challenge and failure
- Genuine desire to undertake community-engaged research
- Handle complex concepts and data/information, confidently

Project Specific Competencies

Combination of essential and desirable competencies set by the supervisory team/



Inclusive applicant assessment

Category	Qualifications OR Professional Equivalency	Socio-emotional competencies	Comprehension & evaluation	Understanding of project and related context	Alignment with Collaboratory values	Project-specific competencies
Weighting	10%	20%	20%	20%	20%	10%
Competencies	Project-specific knowledge and skills attained either through qualifications or equivalent professional experience.	Motivation, curiosity, resilience, ability to work independently and with others.	Analytical, evaluation & communication skills (indicating potential for success)	Understanding of the research project and context, ability to identify key stakeholders and respond to potential research-related challenges	Understanding of community context, experience of relevant community-focused work and appreciation of community-engaged research	Specifics to be determined by the project team.



2.1 at UG, or 2.2 at UG with Masters, or more



Standard Application Route

2.2 at UG, alternative qualification or equivalent experience.

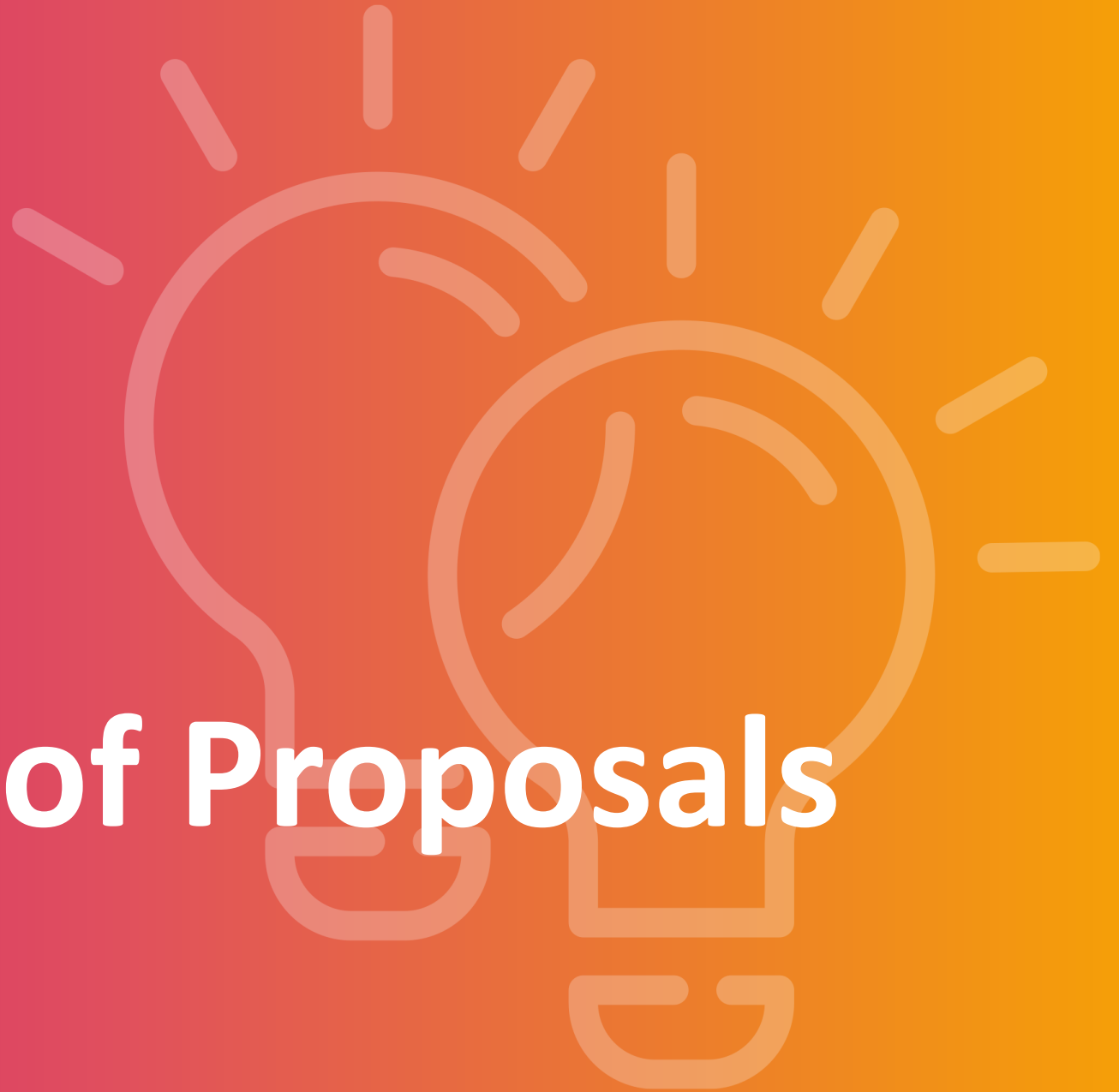


Professional Equivalency Route



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Assessment of Proposals



PhD proposal assessment criteria

Project Focus

- Projects must seek to address one or more defined local challenges relevant to one or more defined local communities.
- Proposals can take the approach of any combination of academic disciplines.
- Must be of appropriate scope for a full-time, PhD-level research project.

Community Basis

- A project rationale with a strong and well-evidenced grounding in the needs and challenges of one or more local communities.
- Proposals must be clearly shaped by community partner knowledge and input
- Proposals must clearly align with one or more Community Priorities for Research

Academic Rigour

- Robust academic basis with support for proposed ideas, methods and approaches based in literature and evidence. Intends to make a clear novel contribution to the field.
- Each proposal must be submitted with x2 complete peer reviews.

Potential for Impact

- Strong potential for outcomes of the research to deliver relevant and meaningful impact to defined local communities. Must be realistic and achievable given the scope of the work and funding available.
- The impact and benefit of the research for to the Community Supervisor's organisation must be made explicit.
- Sufficient detail should be provided to rationalise how such impact would be achieved.

Supervisory Team

- Project team must include appropriate combination of relevant knowledge, skills, and expertise to guide a PhD Candidate in the defined research activities, and to ensure the project is successful.
- Named academic supervisors must meet their local intuitional and departmental supervision regulations. Where they do not, proposals will be rejected.



Research Placement proposal assessment criteria

Project Focus

- Projects must seek to address one or more defined local challenges relevant to one or more defined local communities.
- Proposals can take the approach of any combination of academic disciplines.
- Must be of appropriate scope for a part-time, 12-week project.

Community Basis

- A project rationale with a strong and well-evidenced grounding in the needs and challenges of one or more local communities.
- Proposals must be clearly shaped by community partner knowledge and input
- Proposals must clearly align with one or more Community Priorities for Research

Academic Rigour

- Robust academic basis with support for proposed ideas, methods and approaches based in literature and evidence. Intends to make a clear novel contribution to the field.
- Peer reviews are NOT required.

Feasibility & Potential

- Strong potential for outcomes of the research to deliver relevant and meaningful impact to defined local communities.
- The impact and benefit of the research for to the Community Supervisor's organisation must be made explicit.
- Proposals should make it clear how the described work will support the development of future collaborative, community engaged research.

Supervisory Team

- Project team must include appropriate combination of relevant knowledge, skills, and expertise to guide a Research Placement Candidate in the defined research activities, and to ensure the project is successful.
- Supervisory teams must demonstrate how each named member has the experience and expertise necessary to ensure the project's success.



Exclusionary local systems and processes
Inclusion in and support for local economies
Antisocial behaviours, discrimination and hate crime
Homelessness and hidden homelessness
Young people, education and attainment
Barriers to benefits and formal support systems
Digital exclusion and access to services
Mental health challenges
Neurodiverse conditions in work and healthcare
Ageing communities
Domestic abuse and gendered violence
Impact and management of chronic illness
Issues of social and community isolation

Hidden populations of need
Capacity for community building and empowerment
Education that meets community needs
Economic hardship
Left behind communities
Cost, options and accessibility in public transport
Service fragmentation and disconnected hubs
Needs of men and boys in education, employment, and criminal justice
Adapting to limited and decreasing funding
Access to nature and green space deficits
Culturally sensitive services and resources

Community priorities for research

- Proposals must align with one or more local Community Priorities for Research.
- Those which demonstrate a closer, more explicit alignment to the Community Priorities for Research will be more highly ranked by the selection panel.

Useful Links

The following resources can all be [accessed form our proposals information webage](#) but have been included here as direct links for your convenience.

Detailed guidance for PhD proposals

<https://collaboratoryresearchhub.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/PhD-Proposal-Guidance-Cohort-2027.pdf>

Detailed guidance for Research Placement proposals

<https://collaboratoryresearchhub.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Research-Placement-Proposal-Guidance-Cohort-2027.pdf>

Offline copies of proposal submission forms

PhD Proposals

<https://collaboratoryresearchhub.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Cohort-2027-submit-a-phd-project-proposal--Jisc-Online-Surveys.pdf>

Research Placement Proposals

<https://collaboratoryresearchhub.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Cohort-2027-submit-a-research-placement-project-proposal--Jisc-Online-Surveys.pdf>

Being a Community Supervisor with Collab

<https://collaboratoryresearchhub.ac.uk/being-a-community-supervisor-2025/>



Key Dates

Information Webinars

- Weds 20 May, 12pm-1pm
- Weds 27 June, 12pm-1pm
- Thurs 04 June, 12pm-1pm

Co-Creation Workshops

- Nottingham: Weds 24 June, 1pm-4pm
- Leicester: Fri 26 June, 1pm-4pm

Deadline for proposal submissions

11:59pm, Mon 07 Sept 2026

PhDs

Candidate applications open

05 Oct – 28 Nov 2026

Applicant interviews

04 Jan – 05 Feb 2027

Projects begin

Thursday 01 April 2027

Research Placements

Candidate applications open

04 Jan – 12 Feb 2027

Applicant interviews

15-24 March 2027

Projects begin

Monday 19 April 2027





COLLABORATORY

 Universities Partnership

Sign up to the Collaboratory newsletter

Stay up to date with us and find out more about future events and opportunities.



Full details:

All information for teams submitting proposals can be found at:

<https://collaboratoryresearchhub.ac.uk/proposal-submission-cohort27/>

Social media

@CollaboratoryResearchHub

Email us

info@collaboratoryresearchhub.ac.uk