



Capacity building competitions

This competition is now closed for applications and is only available for reference purposes. A list of research organisations which were awarded studentships when the competition was last run can be found [here](#).

The Capacity Building Studentship Scheme aims to assist UK Research Organisations to make a significant impact on unmet national needs for advanced biomedical and health research skills by funding targeted 3, 4 or 1+3 Year PhD courses. These are skills that have been identified by MRC and other partners as critical to the success of the UK if it is to meet national goals for better healthcare and improved human, social and economic health.

Priority areas

Supplementary funding

Application process

5.1 million has been committed to the Capacity Building Scheme to offer up to 60 studentships to start in October 2009 and 2010, an increase of 25 per cent on the 2006 scheme's budget.

In a change from the last round of the competition, a research organisation (defined as either a UK HEI, IRO or RC Institute) may apply for up to a total of fifteen studentships per year but may not submit more than three applications.

One application may be submitted per priority area. As these areas may lie across departments, potential applicants are advised to liaise with the appropriate administrative office at their institution (for example post-graduate training coordinator, grants office) to collate proposals.

Priority areas

This year's priorities for the capacity building competition are skills-based, responding to the priorities of MRC's research boards and training panels, advisory groups and partner organisations.

***In vivo* science**

- Basic and/or translational research with a significant component of advanced *in vivo* whole animal methods and models.

Stem cell science

- Basic and/or translational stem cell science in the context of regenerative medicine.

Biological and medical imaging

- Basic and/or translational research involving development, characterisation or application of advanced imaging methods to human health and disease.

Mathematical and statistical research

- Research involving the development, characterisation and application of advanced mathematical and statistical research methods relevant to physiology, pharmacology and biomarker research, genetic epidemiology, or population health sciences.

Although MRC is focusing on only four priorities this year, it is not intended that other skills or a broader experience is excluded. To the contrary, for instance, a university proposal centred on *in vivo* whole animal skills may include training of *in vitro* skills and “whole human” skills such as human pharmacology, physiology and immunology. A specific clinical, social or physical sciences theme or component may be proposed.

A proposal may integrate two or more of the four priority areas. In doing so universities will want to ensure that the training content remains coherent across its breadth and remains focused on delivering a specific set of research skills.

Supplementary funding

Additional funds from the British Pharmacological Society's Integrative Pharmacology Fund may be available to studentships in the priority area of *in vivo* sciences in recognition of the high cost of research involving work with animals. This extra funding will be available to apply for once awards have been made and the MRC has been informed of the proposed project details. Successful applicants in the *in vivo* priority area will be contacted in early 2009.

Application process

We have amended the application form this year, to emphasise that universities are expected to respond to these priorities strategically, explaining how they will develop particular skill sets in relation to

- [MRC's Delivery Plan](#)
- The University's own research and training strategies
- Specific strategies and evidence of strategic needs articulated nationally (by MRC, other Research Councils, RCUK, the National Institute for Health Research, the medical charities, the research academies, other professional societies, the Biosciences Forum and industry bodies such as the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry and the Bioindustry Association).

Claiming relevance to high-level strategies is not sufficient. Proposals must be *specific* in *how* training will be delivered that is relevant to and will make impact on particular skills needs. They should also explain *how* the university will work with other partners to define and deliver the proposed training experience.

- [Capacity Building competition guidance notes](#)

- [Capacity Building competition application form](#)

Please read the guidance notes carefully before completing the form. All completed applications must be returned by e-mail to students@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk by Friday **26 September 2008**. Any application arriving after this date will not be accepted. Posted applications will not be considered.