



Co(l)laboratory

Universities for
Nottingham

Guidance for Research Placement Project Teams

Research Project Co-Creation 2024-25



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1. KEY INFORMATION

All project proposal submissions must be received through our new online submission form. There is one form for Research Placement projects and one for PhD projects.

We cannot accept any submissions by email or any other format. Any proposals sent by email will not be considered.

- While development of all Co(l)laboratory project proposals should be a collaborative effort between academic and community partners, it is strongly recommended that an academic team member completes the proposal submission form. This is because we ask for some institutional specific information that community partners will not know.
- The online form allows you to save your progress and return at a later date.
- An offline copy of the proposal form questions is available to download [HERE](#). This is only to support your team's preparation and we will not accept any proposals that are not submitted through the online form.
- Please be aware of minimum and maximum word counts.
- All word limits include citations.

DEADLINE:

Proposals must be submitted by 12pm on Monday 23rd September 2024

Submission forms will automatically close at the deadline.

All project teams will be notified of outcomes by 17th October 2024.



2. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PLACEMENTS SCHEME

Co(I)laboratory's Research Placement projects are an integral part of our work to create a comprehensive cycle of community engaged research. They provide an opportunity for exploration into emerging community centred research projects, as well as a vital development opportunity for promising candidate for whom more traditional routes into research are not accessible.

A significant barrier to entering research for people who don't fit the more stereotypical and narrow PhD candidate mould is commonly not a lack of skill, motivation or potential, but a lack of accessible and inclusive opportunities. For most people, unless you have the good fortune to have the resources of time, money or connections, opportunities to gain experience of the complex worlds of research and academia can be limited.

Additionally, within the academic sector, there are limited opportunities to explore nascent project ideas with new collaborative partners which can limit the development of researchers, and prevent community partners from being able to find effective and meaningful ways to be a part of collaborative research.

Our Research Placements are a novel opportunity, collaboratively developed with many hours of specialist development work. Each placement project represents an investment of approx. £5,000 by Co(I)laboratory.

For Project Teams

For teams of university researchers and community partners, a Research Placement is an opportunity to build upon new research project ideas by gather preliminary data, carry out initial scoping work, and putting together a clearer picture of the local community context.

For Candidates

Research Placements are only open to candidates without previous postgraduate or professional research experience. It is an opportunity for them to gain direct experience of research, to develop their skills in an academic setting, and for some, to prepare for a future PhD studentship application.

3. HOW RESEARCH PLACEMENTS WORK

Structure

- Placements will last 10-weeks (continuous).
- All candidates will start on 14th April 2025 and must complete by 27th June 2025.
- Projects are offered as part-time opportunities, with work based on 1.5-2 days per week.
- The minimum expected hours of work for each placement has been calculated at 111hrs per placement.
- Candidates receive a full, mandatory induction and basic research and study skills training at the start of their placements.

Funding

- Each placement will receive a resource budget of £150. This can be used to pay for candidate expenses such as travel to research sites, or for research costs such as participant payments.
- Any project costs in excess of this must be sourced by the project team.
- Up to 3 support payments are available to claim by Community partners to support their participation in the project. Each payment is £50 and can be claimed against project meetings or other work necessary for the Research Placement project.

Candidate Package

- All Research Placement candidates will receive a bursary of £1,269.84 to support their participation in the scheme. This amount is based on the current national minimum wage and the minimum expected hours of work (111hrs per placement).
- Candidates are paid in 2 instalments, in weeks 5 and 10 of their placements.
- Flexible working is a priority. Candidates are expected agree working arrangements with their supervisory team prior to commencing the placement to ensure they can complete the project work around their existing commitments.
- Candidates are registered as temporary staff with NTU and will receive the following for the duration of their placement:
 - An NTU visitor card with access to necessary buildings.
 - A university email account.
 - Borrowing access to NTU library facilities.
 - Similar access to UoN facilities can be arranged as per project needs.
- On completion, candidates receive a certificate to formally recognise their participation in the UfN Co(l)laboratory Research Placements programme.

4. SUPERVISORY TEAM REQUIREMENTS

All Research Placement project supervisory teams require the following named partners, as a minimum:

Nottingham Trent University Supervisor

At least 1 academic researcher or similar staff member.

University of Nottingham Supervisor

At least 1 academic researcher or similar staff member.

Community Partner

At least 1 member of a Nottingham(shire)-based organisation which works with 1 or more Nottingham(shire) communities.

- Community Supervisory partners must hold an active, formal position with a Nottingham(shire) organisation. This can be paid employment or a voluntary position.
- Community-focused organisations based/operating outside of Nottingham(shire) may be involved as named as additional supporting partners but cannot be named as a primary Community Supervisor.
- The role of a Community Supervisor is to provide insight and guidance to the candidate based on their real-world, professional expertise and experience working with relevant communities. They can also provide access to defined communities, data, resources, etc., where relevant.
- Up to 1 additional Community Supervisor may be named on the proposal, if relevant to the needs of the project.
- Up to 1 additional Academic Co-Supervisor may be named on the proposal, if relevant to the needs of the project.
- Early career researchers and university staff in research related roles are eligible to be named as a Academic Supervisors on Research Placement proposals.
- Any early career researchers named as supervisory partners must receive approval from their line manager to take on a Research Placement project.



5. WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR IN A RESEARCH PLACEMENT PROPOSAL?

Project Focus

- Proposals can be based in any academic discipline. The core requirement is that every project must seek to address one or more defined local challenges relevant to one or more defined Nottingham(shire) communities.
- The scope of each project must be achievable within a 10 week timeframe.
- Projects must have a legitimate academic and community basis and should be structured in a way that will provide the successful candidate with the opportunity to carry out genuine research activities.

We strongly recommend that teams interested in submitting a project proposal explore the profiles of our previous and current Research Placement projects to understand the nature and scope of the work we will fund.

[Explore Our Research Placement Project Profiles](#)

How will proposals be assessed?

All proposals will be assessed by a panel comprising members of the Co(l)laboratory team, academic researchers from UoN and NTU, as well as members of local Community-focused organisations. All proposed will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Community Basis
- Academic Basis
- Feasibility and Potential
- Supervisory Team

Community Basis

- Proposals must have a clear and well-informed grounding in the needs and challenges of one or more defined Nottingham(shire) communities.
- The local challenge(s) which the project seeks to address should be informed by the experience of local communities and/or the practice and experience of the community partner.
- The community context underpinning the proposal should be made explicit. In the interest of fairness, proposals where the connections to community need are assumed or implicit will not be considered.

Academic Basis

- Proposals must demonstrate a genuine academic basis, making it clear how the work will support the development of an academic basis for future engaged research.
- Sufficient detail about the proposed methods and any community-engaged approaches must be provided for their suitability to be judged in relation to the project's rationale, aims, and make-up of the supervisory team.

Feasibility and Potential

- Proposals should make explicit the potential for the project to deliver genuine, and meaningful impact for Nottingham(shire) communities. This can be directly or indirectly, such as by supporting evidence-based change through the community partner organisation's work.
- Proposals should make it clear how the described work will support the development of future collaborative, community engaged research.
- All proposals must be realistically achievable in a 10-week timeframe, and considering the type of candidate that this scheme will be targeting. To assess this, we ask all proposals to include a work plan.
 - To support you in structuring your work plan, please see the outline below which is provided as guidance to Research Placement Candidates. This timeline includes the core induction and training opportunities candidates will be expected to undertake.

Time period	Activity
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory project team meeting • Co(l)laboratory induction event • Introductory Research Skills training workshop
Weeks 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know the project background through reading relevant literature • Exploring new theories, methods, and concepts necessary to understand the project
Weeks 4-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main period of research work - data collection, transcription, developing methodologies, data analysis, etc. • Optional events to attend: Co(l)laboratory Research Showcase and NTU Doctoral Research Festival
Weeks 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing of final project report • Updating project summary page

Supervisory Team

- Each project supervisory team must have an appropriate combination of relevant knowledge, skills, and expertise to support a Placement Candidate in the defined research activities, to ensure the project is successful.
- While early career researchers or other research-adjacent university staff are eligible to be lead supervisors on a Research Placement, in such cases, the co-supervisor(s) should have some level of prior supervisory experience.

5. RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCH PLACEMENT CANDIDATES

The Research Placements scheme been designed as an experiential development opportunity for promising candidates who would otherwise face significant barriers to participating in typical research-related opportunities. The scheme is intended to give practical research experience to local candidates who possess strong community experience/understanding and who exhibit a strong motivation to make a difference through research. To support these aims, Co(l)laboratory has developed a specific, inclusive approach to the recruitment of placement candidates.

Applicant Eligibility

- This scheme is only open to residents of Nottingham/Nottinghamshire.
- Candidates must NOT be actively enrolled in study at any university or research institution.
- Candidates with previous postgraduate or other research experience beyond undergraduate are NOT eligible. This includes previous formal employment as a research assistant, research technician, or similar.
- Preferred candidates may be considered only where the candidate has previously expressed a strong interest in a relevant Co(l)laboratory PhD research project (i.e., they have previously applied to a Co(l)laboratory PhD project but were unsuccessful.)

Recruitment Process

- The recruitment process is run centrally by the Co(l)laboratory team, however, support from Community Partners to make use of their professional networks has been found to be essential to attracting strong candidates to this scheme.
- Placements are advertised in a job advert-style format. Prospective candidates will complete a short context-based application form and are invited to an informal 20-min interview if shortlisted.