

Co(l)laboratory Leics  
Cohort 1  
March-May 2025

**Guidance for Teams  
Submitting Research  
Placement Project  
Proposals**



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# 1. KEY INFORMATION

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All project proposal submissions must be received through our [online Research Placement proposal 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 institutionally 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.

## **SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**

Proposals must be submitted by 11:59pm on Sunday 18 May 2025

Submission forms will automatically close at the deadline.

All project teams will be notified of outcomes by 30th May 2025.



## 2. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PLACEMENTS SCHEME

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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 often not a lack of skill, motivation or potential, but rather 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

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## Structure

- Placements will last 10-weeks (continuous).
- All candidates will start on Monday 29th September 2025 and must complete by Friday 5th December 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 £200. 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 £1,300 to support their participation in the scheme.
- 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 will be registered with temporary sponsored accounts at either De Montford University, University of Loughborough, or the University of Leicester and will receive the following for the duration of their placement:
  - An visitor card with access to necessary buildings.
  - A university email account.
  - Borrowing access to local library facilities.
  - Similar access to additional institutions can be arranged as needed.
- On completion, candidates receive a certificate to formally recognise their participation in the Co(l)laboratory Research Placements programme.

## 4. SUPERVISORY TEAM REQUIREMENTS

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

**A lead Academic Supervisor**

**An Academic Co-supervisor**

**Community Supervisor**

At least 1 member of a Leicestershire or Rutland based organisation which works with one or more, defined, Leicestershire or Rutland communities.

As a minimum, each project supervisory team must an academic lead and co-supervisor from any two different Leics universities.

- Community Supervisory partners must hold an active, formal position with a Leicestershire or Rutland organisation. This can be paid employment or a long-term voluntary position.
- Community-focused organisations base in/operating outside of Leicestershire or Rutland may be 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.
- The lead academic supervisor and academic co-supervisor must be based at different institutions. We will accept any combination of academic supervisors from any of the three partner universities; De Montford University, University of Loughborough, or the University of Leicester.
- Up to 1 additional Academic Co-Supervisor from either De Montford University, Loughborough University, or the University of Leicester may be named on the proposal, if relevant to the needs of the project.
- Unlike PhD projects, early career researchers and university staff in research related professional services 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?

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## 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 Leicestershire or Rutland 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 proposals 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 Leicestershire or Rutland 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 Leicestershire or Rutland 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"> <li>• Introductory project team meeting</li> <li>• Co(l)laboratory induction event</li> <li>• Introductory Research Skills training workshop</li> </ul>
Weeks 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know the project background through reading relevant literature</li> <li>• Exploring new theories, methods, and concepts necessary to understand the project</li> </ul>
Weeks 4-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main period of research work - data collection, transcription, developing methodologies, data analysis, etc.</li> </ul>
Weeks 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing of final project report</li> <li>• Updating project summary page</li> </ul>



## 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

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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.

All project teams who are successful in securing Co(l)laboratory funding are expected to engage fully with our approach to candidate recruitment. **This is as an essential, mandatory condition of Co(l)laboratory funding.**

## Project Summaries and Competencies

To help you write an effective project summary and to define appropriate essential and desirable competencies, please see the examples of Research Placement project adverts below.

### Example Research Placement Project adverts

#### Example 1

#### Example 2

Final competencies may be edited by Co(l)laboratory before advertising. Suggested competencies which are unrealistic for this level of development opportunity will not be included in the final advert.

# 5. RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCH PLACEMENT CANDIDATES

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## Applicant Eligibility

- This scheme is only open to residents of Leicestershire and Rutland or the immediately surrounding counties.
- Applicants must be at least 18 years of age or older at the time of application.
- Applicants must live in the UK as your country of permanent residence. Those whose primary residence is not the UK will not be considered.
- Applicants must NOT be actively enrolled in study at any university or research institution by the start date of 28th September 2025.
- Applicants must NOT be employed in a current, research-affiliated role at any of the partner universities. Those working for the universities in roles not affiliated with research, such as general administration, estates, catering, etc., may still apply.
- 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. The only research experience we will accept is that obtained as part of a single undergraduate degree, excluding Bachelors degrees which award the title of Doctor of Medicine.
- 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.
- Support from Community Supervisors is essential to successfully attract strong candidates with relevant skills. Community Supervisors of successful projects will be asked to support in disseminating details of the opportunity through their professional networks.
- 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.