# **Peer Reviewer Guidance and Questions**

# Collaboratory PhD Project Proposals 2025-26

## **Notes for Peer Reviewers**

Dear colleague,

Thank you for taking the time to review this research proposal. Collaboratory aims to fund strong, community-engaged research project, regardless of subject specialism, Given the variety of proposals our programme receives, your expertise is crucial in helping us to thoroughly assess and develop these proposals.

This peer review form includes 3 short questions asking you to evaluate the quality of the proposed project. We kindly ask that you return your answers to the relevant member of the project team as soon as possible to aid in their timely submission.

The deadline for proposal submissions is 11:59pm Wednesday 10 September 2025.

If you have any questions about the Collaboratory Research Hub or this peer review process, please contact the team at [collaboratory@universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk](mailto:collaboratory@universitiesfornottingham.ac.uk)

## **What is Collaboratory?**

[Collaboratory](https://ufncollaboratory.ac.uk/) is pioneering new £5.1mill programme supported by Research England, University of Leicester, De Montfort University, Loughborough University, and the [Universities Partnership](https://universitiespartnership.org/). The programme aims to bring together researchers, community-focused organisations, and local citizens to deliver meaningful change for the people of Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland through research. All research proposals submitted to this scheme will have been developed through collaborations between Leicestershire academics and local, community-focused organisations and shaped around the priorities of local communities.

The overarching aim of Collaboratory is to deliver a programme of research built upon the needs of Leicestershire & Rutland’s communities, and which trains a cohort of non-traditional PhD students as future civic leaders who can ensure that their research can lead to meaningful change for our communities.

Each research project is lead by 3 main supervisory partner: Two academics supervisors from any two different Leicestershire partner university, and one person from a local community-focused organisation. While academic supervisory partners will provide academic rigour and research expertise and guidance, community supervisory partners will provide a crucial link to relevant communities, external organisations, and insight from professional and community perspectives.

## **What are we looking for in PhD research proposals?**

Research proposals will be assessed based on the following criteria:

### Community Basis

### Proposals must have a clear and well-informed grounding in the needs and challenges of one or more defined Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland communities. We are looking to fund research centred around the nuances of local people and challenges, rather than research that could be carried out anyway and just happens to be set in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.

### 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.

### Proposals must address one or more 2025-26 Community Priorities for Research (see <https://ufncollaboratory.ac.uk/leics-project-proposals-25-26/> ).

### 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 strong academic basis for the proposed research project, making it clear how the work intends to make a novel contribution to one or more academic fields.

### Projects must provide an academically robust justification for the proposed methods, and approaches.

### 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.

### Potential for Impact

### Projects must explicitly demonstrate a strong potential for the proposed research to deliver genuine, relevant, and meaningful impact to one or more defined Leicester, Leicestershire and/or Rutland communities.

### The potential impact of a project should be realistic and achievable given the scope of the work and funding available. The panel will be looking for evidence of the named Community Supervisor’s input in exploring potential impacts.

### Sufficient detail should be provided to rationalise how such impact would be achieved through the proposed project, highlighting aims for potential outcomes, where relevant.

### Supervisory Team

* Each project supervisory team must have an 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.
* The balance of expertise from academic and community supervisors should be appropriate for the area of focus of the proposed research.
* Each project supervisory team must demonstrate how each member (including any additional named members) has the experience and expertise necessary for the project’s success.

## **REVIEWER RESPONSES**

Please provide your responses to the questions below, based on your professional assessment of the proposal provided to you. Please use the assessment criteria detailed above as a guide to assessing the quality of this research proposal.

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| **Reviewer Details** | |
| **Reviewer Name** |  |
| **Reviewer Job Role** |  |
| **Reviewer Email** |  |
| 1. **To what extent does this PhD research project meet the academic standards expected of PhD level research project?**   Please consider the project’s rationale, aims and methods, as well as the suitability of the supervisory partners’ expertise. Please refer to the list above.  **(300 words MAX)** | |
|  | |
| 1. **Do you have any comments or recommendations that you feel may improve the quality of this research proposal?**   **(200 words MAX)** | |
|  | |
| 1. **Based on the details provided in this proposal, would you recommend that this project be funded?** | |
| Yes  Yes, so long as the comments above are addressed.  No | |