COLLABORATORY
Research Hub

Guidance for Teams Submitting Research Placement Proposals

Collaboratory
Leicestershire & Rutland
ROUND 2
Project Co-Creation 2025-26

CONTENTS

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1. KEY INFORMATION

All project proposal submissions must be received [through our 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.
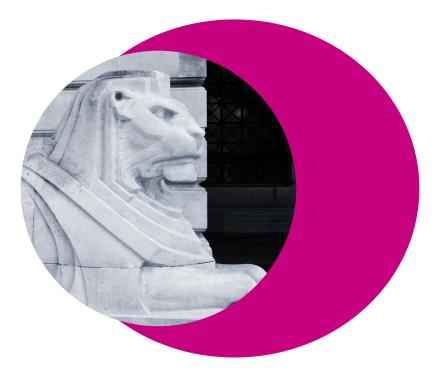
- While development of all Collaboratory project proposals should be a collaborative effort between academic and community partners, it is strongly recommended that an academic team member completes the proposal submission form. This is because we ask for some institutional specific information that 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 is available to download from our website. This is for planning purposes only.
- Please be aware of minimum and maximum word counts.
- All word limits include citations.
- Peer reviews are not required for Research Placement Proposals

DEADLINE:

Proposals must be submitted by 11:59pm Wednesday 10 September 2025

Submission forms will automatically close after the deadline.
All project teams will be notified of outcomes by 26 September 2025.

2. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PLACEMENTS SCHEME

Collaboratory'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 insight and development. Each placement project and candidate represents an investment of approximately £5,000 by Collaboratory.

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

Key Details
- Placements will last approximately 10-weeks (continuous).
- All candidates will start on 27 April 2026 and must complete no later than 10 July 2026.
- Projects are offered as part-time opportunities, with work based on 1.5-2 days per week.
- The minimum expected hours of work is 111hrs per placement.
- Candidates receive a full, mandatory induction and basic research and study skills training.

Conditions of Funding
- Proposals selected for funding will open to applications from prospective candidates in Autumn 2025, with successful candidates commencing on 27 April 2026.
- Funding/candidate start dates cannot be deferred.
- All supervisory team members are expected to engage fully with Collaboratory's inclusive recruitment approach.
- All candidates will be required to engage fully with Collaboratory's unique training and development programme, as a condition of funding.
- Collaboratory is more than just research funder. It is a specific programme that is developing a unique, inclusive, and community-engaged approach to postgraduate research. Supervisors will be required to encourage and support their candidate's full engagement with the Collaboratory programme throughout their Research Placement.
- Continued disengagement with the Collaboratory programme or refusal to cooperate with mandatory Collaboratory processes may result in the withdrawal of our funding offer.

Collaboratory Research Placement Offering
- Research Placement candidates will receive a bursary of £1,300 to support their participation in the scheme, paid in 2 parts, at week 5 and week 10.
- Each project will receive a resource budget of £200. This can be used to pay for candidate expenses such as travel to research sites, or for participant incentives. **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.
- 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 with UoL and receive the following for their time in placement:
    - A UoL visitor card with access to necessary buildings.
    - A university email account.
    - Borrowing access to UoL library facilities.
    - Similar access to DMU and LU facilities can be arranged as per project needs.
- On completion, candidates receive a certificate to formally recognise their participation in the Collaboratory Research Placements programme.

4. SUPERVISORY TEAM REQUIREMENTS

All Research Placement supervisory teams require the following named 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 supervisory team must have an academic lead and co-supervisor from any two different Leics universities.

- Community Supervisory partners must hold an active, formal position with a Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland organisation. This can be paid employment or a voluntary position.
- Community-focused organisations based/operating outside of Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland 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.
- 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?

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 Leicester, Leicestershire, and 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 Collaboratory team, academic researchers from UoL, DMU, and LU, 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 Leicester, Leicestershire, and 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 Leicester, Leicestershire, and 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.

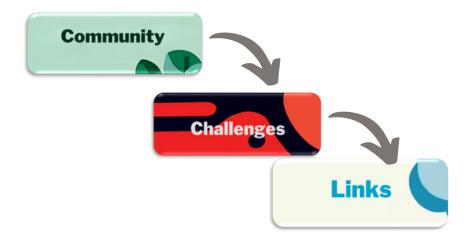| Time period	Activity
Week 1	- Introductory project team meeting - Collaboratory induction event - Introductory Research Skills training workshop
Weeks 2-3	- Getting to know the project background through reading relevant literature - Exploring new theories, methods, and concepts necessary to understand the project
Weeks 4-8	- Main period of research work - data collection, transcription, developing methodologies, data analysis, etc.
Weeks 9-10	- Attend Collaboratory Community Research Showcase - 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 academic co-supervisor(s) should have some level of prior supervisory experience.

6. LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR RESEARCH

An integral part of our engaged research process involves working with local community stakeholders to set our research agenda.

For the Leicestershire chapter of Collaboratory, we have developed the Leicester's Voice in Research initiative. Through this, we run a series of workshops each year with local community professionals and residents. Using their lived-experience and local knowledge, these attendees collectively identify specific priorities that our next research projects should look to address.

For our 2025-26 call, all proposals must demonstrate how the project addresses one or more of the research priorities identified by our Leicester's Voice in Research workshops. A full breakdown of the 2025-26 Community Priorities for Research will be made available, through our website, from Monday 12th May 2025.

To explore the community priorities identified through our Leicester's Voice in Research initiative, please see our webpage.

7. 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, Collaboratory has developed a specific, inclusive approach to the recruitment of placement candidates.

All project teams who are successful in securing Collaboratory funding are expected to engage fully with our approach to candidate recruitment. This is as an essential, mandatory condition of Collaboratory 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 Collaboratory before advertising. Suggested competencies which are unrealistic for this level of development opportunity will not be included in the final advert.

Recruitment Process

- The recruitment process is run centrally by the Collaboratory team.
- <u>Support from Community Supervisors is essential</u> to successful 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 online interview if shortlisted.

7. RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCH PLACEMENT CANDIDATES

continued...

Applicant Eligibility

- This scheme is only open to residents of Leicester, 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 their 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 27 April 2026.
- 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, similar informal employment etc., may still apply.
- Those who already hold a PhD qualification, or other doctoral degree, including any degree which awards the title of Doctor of Medicine, are not eligible.
- Applicants with previous postgraduate or other research experience beyond undergraduate level 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.
- Preferred candidates may be considered only where the candidate has previously expressed a strong interest in a relevant Collaboratory PhD research project (i.e., they have previously applied to a Collaboratory PhD project but were unsuccessful.).