

Engineering and Physical Sciences
Research Council


A blurred, high-angle photograph of a modern office interior. Several business professionals in business attire are visible, some holding documents and others in conversation. The scene is brightly lit, creating a sense of motion and activity. The background is out of focus, emphasizing the foreground figures.

CONNECTING WITH BUSINESS

EPSRC

Pioneering research
and skills

Connecting with business



EPSRC is the main UK government agency for funding research and training in engineering and the physical sciences within universities. We invest around £850 million a year in long-term research and postgraduate training in a broad range of subjects relating to a wide number of applications, including aerospace, defence, creative industries, electronics and IT, energy, infrastructure and environment, manufacturing, medicines and healthcare and transport.

Improving the level of interactions between business and the research base and increasing the uptake and exploitation of our investments is very important to us. Our vision is for the UK to be as renowned for knowledge transfer and innovation as it is for research discovery. We're working with universities, businesses, charities and a range of government departments and public sector organisations on joint initiatives and activities, to understand their needs and challenges and use this information in identifying our strategic priorities and investment plans.

EPSRC funds a huge range of research projects that are relevant to many different organisations – some 40 per cent of our research and training portfolio includes collaborations with external organisations. Your organisation can get involved through a number of different routes, including some managed by other organisations such as the Technology Strategy Board and the Energy Technologies Institute.

Why does EPSRC want to connect with business?

EPSRC wants to understand the research and training needs of business in order to feed these into our own strategy and decision making, and to connect business with academia to ensure that the outputs of the research and training that we fund are fully exploited.

Why should business connect with EPSRC?

Facilitating collaboration

EPSRC has in-depth knowledge of the people and the research that is taking place within the academic community and can help you find potential partners.

Our rigorous method of assessing funding proposals sets a benchmark for research quality. We currently support around 6,000 projects totalling in the region of £3 billion, and so there is a wealth of information available to help you select the most appropriate partners.

Our flexible funding arrangements provide many opportunities for businesses and other organisations to interact with internationally-leading UK universities:

Knowledge Transfer Accounts – are grants that have been awarded to 12 universities to ensure that, where it produces results which might benefit the UK economy and society, the research EPSRC funds is exploited to maximum effect. By making resources available where necessary to overcome existing barriers to exploitation, we hope to create an environment in which knowledge transfer is valued and encouraged just as much as the generation of original results.



Knowledge Transfer Secondments – are grants that have been awarded to universities to support secondments of EPSRC-funded staff into organisations which can exploit their research results. KTS funding can also be used to host researchers from industry.

Industrial Doctorate Centres – operate at 18 centres across the remit of EPSRC and provide an industry-focussed alternative to the PhD for research engineers. Students spend around 75 per cent of their time working directly with the collaborating company.

Doctoral Training Grants – are held by UK universities to fund postgraduate training, with around ten per cent of the awards converted into Industrial CASE by working with user organisations.

Industrial CASE Awards – provide funding for PhD studentships where businesses take the lead in arranging projects with an academic partner of their choice. The student spends at least three months at the company.

Innovation and Knowledge Centres – are centres of excellence which aim to accelerate and promote the business exploitation of emerging research and technology.

Interdisciplinary Research Collaborations – are centres of internationally-acknowledged scientific and technological excellence, generally involving several universities together with industrial partners.

EPSRC Centres for Innovative Manufacturing – are centres of research excellence working with industry in different areas of manufacturing.

Networks – are grants made available to create new interdisciplinary research communities and topics to develop interaction between the research community and appropriate science, technology and industrial groups.

Industry Fellowships – give industrial researchers the chance to carry out research or course-development in a UK university, or academic researchers to work in a UK business. Projects can be at any stage from fundamental science to industrial innovation.

Collaboration Fund – provides support for researchers to take forward business opportunities generated from EPSRC-funded research with a business partner, in the form of grant funding, project mentoring and business planning advice.



Other ways for business to engage with EPSRC

Peer review – our College of peer reviewers includes business experts as well as academic experts.

Strategy development – we use strategic advisory teams and groups to help develop our strategy and again these include business experts as well as academic experts.

Collaborative research projects – we have over 2000 research user organisations as partners in our research grants, including large companies, SMEs, charities and the public sector.

Resources

The EPSRC website has a wealth of information which is publicly available and accessible, including a quick guide for business and Grants on the Web, and our business sector managers are always happy to talk directly. EPSRC website – www.epsrc.ac.uk

Grants on the Web – provides abstracts from each project together with its value, duration and details of who is involved. You can search this portfolio by research topic, sector or using free text search to find out more about an organisation that you are interested in partnering with, or a project that you would like to be involved with.

Programme landscapes – provide an overview and analysis of the entire £3.7 billion EPSRC portfolio. The document identifies key features in the shape and nature of the portfolio, articulates trends and outlines some of the challenges the UK faces in maintaining its position as a major force in international science and technology.

Business sector contacts – are the people to speak to you if you want information relevant to your sector, such as which research groups we are funding, advice on our processes and how we work, and information about our funding opportunities and other activities.

Strategic partnerships

A strategic partnership is a formal arrangement between EPSRC and one or more organisations (including companies, charities, representative bodies, other government departments) in which the various parties share information and strategy, work together to support each other's objectives, and jointly fund and support research, training and other activities in UK universities in strategically important gap areas.

We are seeking to deepen our existing partnerships, to broaden to sector-wide and cross-sector partnerships where appropriate, to build a small number of new partnerships in strategically important gap areas, and to create a manageable portfolio.

Strategic Partners

Airbus UK Ltd/EADS

Arup

AstraZeneca Plc

AWE

BAE Systems

British Energy

Cancer Research UK

Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI)

Department for Transport

DSTL

EDF Energy

E.ON UK

GE Aviation

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)

Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET)

Jaguar Land Rover

Ministry of Defence (MoD)

Mobile VCE

National Nuclear Laboratory

National Physical Laboratory

NDEvR

Pfizer

P&G

Rail Safety and Standards Board

Rolls-Royce

Sustrans

Technology Strategy Board

The Wellcome Trust

Contact us

If you would like to talk to us, contacting our sector teams is the best way to get in touch. They can provide EPSRC information relevant to your sector — for example, which research groups we are funding, advice on our processes and how we work, and information about our funding opportunities and other activities.

If you can't find a sector relevant to you, please email: sectors@epsrc.ac.uk

Aerospace, Defence and Marine

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