



BBSRC ICURE EXPLORE Programme

## Guidance Notes

BBSRC ICURE trains, funds, and supports research teams to determine whether there is a market for products or services that utilise their bioscience-based ideas, research, science, and technologies. Up to £35k of funding is available to 'get out of the lab' and validate commercially promising ideas in the marketplace. Over a 3-month period, the majority of the training and support activities will be carried out online, providing accessibility to a wide range of applicants. However, there may be some opportunities for face-to-face interaction during the programme.

### How does it work?

BBSRC ICURE takes the scientific method (hypothesise, test, evaluate) and applies it to commercialisation. You will learn how to use this approach to test what your potential customers think about your idea, product, or service. In addition, you will receive training and interview practice, carrying out over 100 interviews across the marketplace and acquiring transferrable business and social skills. Past participants say that having ICURE support, training, and funding to spend on customer discovery has dramatically changed their perspective on their innovation.

### What does it include?

- Funding support of up to £20,000 for market discovery activities and business advisor support.
- Support to cover up to 3 months of entrepreneurial leads salary to have fully committed time for customer discovery activities whilst participating in the programme. Please note there is a salary cover cap of £15,000).
- Selected teams will have the opportunity to access further financial support and apply for various follow-on funding pathways from UKRI.
- Access to experts in bringing research to market.
- Access to our team of experts and proactive connections to our network of entrepreneurs, investors, and funders.
- Game changing online delivery with the potential for some face-to-face interaction.
- 4-day intensive bootcamp where you will learn how to talk about your technology to customers, develop a hypothetical business model and



identify your customers' pain points. You will also create a detailed plan of your customer discovery journey.

- 3 months of market validation against the customer discovery plan for your research using online software platforms, video conferencing and marketing tools and face-to-face meetings where possible. This will involve targeting direct engagements with over 100 business leaders. You will receive weekly 1-hour coaching clinics from experts in taking research ideas to market.
- 1-day online pitch training to teach you how to pitch your research to potential customers and investors.
- The opportunity to pitch to an experienced panel of funders, mentors, and investors and other stakeholders to help accelerate the impact from your research. The panel will give feedback on commercialisation pathways which can include carrying out further public or private sponsored research and exploring licensing opportunities or seeking public or private funding for spin-out for those projects that have demonstrated strong market potential by the end of the market validation. Teams eligible for spin-out support will be required to identify their roles in the future company; any personnel change will need to be assessed for suitability by BBSRC and their delivery partners, NxNW.

NB: This funding is not a grant, and there is no money paid upfront. Expenditure will go through the appropriate finance office at your university and would then reclaim after the programme finishes.

### Who is eligible?

BBSRC ICURE is open to research teams in all UK universities, BBSRC-funded institutes and approved public sector research enterprises (PSREs). BBSRC ICURE teams are composed of four individuals:

- Entrepreneurial lead: Any research staff or technical research staff member that receives their salary or stipend from an eligible university, PSRE or institute (including, but not limited to, PhD, technician, PDRA, fellowship and group leader positions). This individual must be able to commit full-



time for the duration of the programme starting the week of the bootcamp and have approval of their institute, organisation, or funder.

- Associated science advisor: A researcher who can provide intellectual support to the entrepreneurial lead throughout the course of the programme. For example, an interdisciplinary project may require input from outside the research group.
- Technology transfer representative/professional: An individual from the team, either from, or contracted to, the research organisation leading on the commercialisation of the intellectual asset with appropriate technology transfer expertise. This individual Officer must be able to attend essential bootcamp sessions as well as the options roundabout. In addition, they must provide support for the entrepreneurial lead and team during the programme and continued support for further commercialisation activity following the programmes conclusion.
- Business adviser: A motivated individual from a relevant industrial sector to offer expert guidance and support. Teams are strongly encouraged to name an adviser in their application. Please contact the ICURe administration team if identifying a suitable advisor is a barrier. Teams are responsible for any agreements or financial arrangements that may be needed with their business advisers.

We are committed to improving diversity across our programmes and are actively seeking applications from under-represented groups and non-Russell Group Universities. The spread across different target market sectors will also be considered when selecting applications to ensure broad portfolio coverage.

We actively encourage applications led by those from under-represented groups including women, people of colour, those living with disabilities and those from the LGBTQI+ communities.

We cannot accept applications based upon a research project that has previously been through the ICURe programme.



## Scope

The research underpinning the products or services being carried forward by the research team must be building on a previous BBSRC or other UKRI grant that is taking forward a bioscience innovation to address a market opportunity.

The technology must be either biological in nature, interact with a biological entity, involve a biological process, or address a biological challenge.

Applications based on medical/clinical devices and therapeutics being developed solely for a specific end-point clinical utility (including diagnostics) will not be accepted. Applicants are strongly advised to contact us if they are unsure whether their application would fit the scope of the call.

## How do I apply?

The application form may be accessed from the links on this website. All applications will go through a competitive selection process and the Entrepreneurial Lead and associated science advisor will be required to participate in individual scheduled video interviews as part of that process. Your application must have been agreed with your organisation prior to applying, including that you can commit to the programme fulltime.