

BBSRC ICURe Discover Programme

Guidance Notes

BBSRC ICURe DISCOVER is a game-changing 8-week part-time online market discover programme, supporting bioscience researchers (including PhD student, technician, PDRA, fellowship and group leader positions) to discover more about their potential market, increase market awareness and gain deeper understanding of potential technology applications.

Our 8-week online market discover programme is designed using lean start-up methodology. BBSRC ICURe DISCOVER 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 bioscience-based idea, product, or service.

What's Included?

- Up to £2,500 to support market discovery activities
- Pathway towards a further £35,000 BBSRC ICURe Explore follow on funding
- 2-day online training bootcamp with commercialisation to develop a hypothetical business model, learn how to talk about technology to potential customers, and identify customer pain points
- Plan and execute 8 weeks of tailored market discovery for your bioscience-based idea, product or service using online software, video conferencing and marketing tools
- Access to our team of experts and proactive connections to our network of entrepreneurs, investors and funders
- Outline commercial viability using tools such as the Business Model Canvas (BMC)

- Develop an understanding of existing market offerings and competitive landscape for your sector.

Why Attend?

Past participants say that having 8 weeks of support and dedicated time to spend on customer discovery has dramatically changed their perspective on their innovation.

Who is eligible?

BBSRC ICURE DISCOVER is open to bioscience researchers (including PhD student, technician, PDRA, fellowship and group leader positions) in all UK universities, BBSRC-funded institutes and approved public sector research enterprises (PSREs).

The research underpinning the bioscience innovation, products or services being carried forward for market exploration by the team MUST be building on a previous BBSRC or other UKRI grant.

This programme offers a pathway towards further funding, with 30% of our teams securing a minimum of £35,000 Innovate UK ICURE funds.

The programme is open to all UK universities and approved public sector research enterprises, however, we are actively seeking applications from:

- Universities who have not participated in the 3-month ICURE programme.
- Universities who do not receive HEIF funding.
- Teams led by early career researchers and/or principal investigators who are from under-represented groups including women, people of colour, those living with disabilities and those from the LGBTQI+ communities.
- Teams from regional Universities.
- Approved public sector research enterprises (PSREs).

The technology, product or service must be either biological in nature, interact with a biological entity, involve a biological process, or address a biological challenge. We welcome applications from across the biosciences, including agriculture and food, healthy ageing, engineering biology, industrial biotechnology, and innovative tools and technologies underpinning biological research.

Applications based on medical/clinical devices and therapeutics being developed solely for a specific end-point clinical utility (including diagnostics) will not be accepted. For example, if an applicant is developing a technology specifically for diagnosing or treating a specific disease, they would not be eligible for BBSRC ICURE. However, if the applicant also aims to investigate other market opportunities for this technology outside of the health sector, e.g. for livestock, or if this technology can be pivoted and used as a platform technology then they would be eligible for BBSRC ICURE.

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 online application form will ask you a series of questions about you, your team and your project. It will be a competitive process. You will need to have engaged with your University Technology Transfer Office (TTO) and your Principal Investigator prior to applying.