

ICURE Explore Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

Who is eligible for ICURE Explore?

ICURE Explore is open to all research students and technicians from any discipline. This includes any research staff or technical research staff member who receives their salary or stipend from an eligible university, PSRE, research institute, or organization (including, but not limited to, Ph.D., technician, PDRA, fellowship, and group leader positions).

Do I need to attend ICURE Engage or ICURE Discover to be eligible for ICURE Explore?

There isn't any prerequisite to join ICURE Explore; however, past Entrepreneurial Leads (EL) who have gone through ICURE Discover tend to make stronger applications to ICURE Explore.

I am a Ph.D. student, am I eligible?

To be eligible as an Entrepreneurial Lead you must have written up and submitted your Ph.D. for examination before being able to apply.

I have previously completed ICURE Explore, am I eligible?

All applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. You are eligible to apply if you wish to test the market for IP that does not originate in an incorporated company.

I am an individual in a start-up/company interested in ICURE Explore, am I eligible?

If you are from an incorporated UK business and want commercialisation support you are ineligible for the ICURE suite of programmes, but you are eligible for

Scaling the Edge (STE). Link: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/Business/Support-for-business/Innovation-smes/>

I am a non-UK national, can I participate in ICURE Explore?

Yes, provided you have the necessary visas allowing you to travel and work in the UK. NOTE: To be eligible for an Innovate UK business grant to spin out (if recommended), all recipients

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of funding must be resident in the UK for tax purposes and have the appropriate permissions to work in the UK.

Would teams be accepted that have participated in multiple business support/spin-out/accelerator programmes?

No, we would expect teams to have participated in ICURE before these types of programmes as ICURE Explore helps to identify the appropriate exit vehicle. You should consider Scaling the Edge programme. Link: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/Business/Support-for-business/Innovation-smes/>

As a PhD student who is currently registering a company and awaiting information from our Tech Transfer Office, am I eligible for ICURE Explore?

Most ICURE teams are at the exploratory stage, where the ICURE Programmes help them identify the most appropriate commercialisation vehicle for their research.

If you have already decided to spin-out, it means you have already chosen your route to commercialisation and would, therefore, not be appropriate to participate in the ICURE programmes.

However, if the company has been created in name only, and you have not yet decided on your market route, please discuss it with us, as we assess this on a case-by-case basis.

Can we apply for ICURE Explore if the Entrepreneurial Lead is from another university?

This is allowed for ICURE Explore, but there needs to be a formal IP agreement in place between the institutions before an Entrepreneurial Lead from a different institution is eligible.

Who is eligible for ICURE Sector-Specific Explore programmes?

To be eligible for ICURE Sector-Specific Explore, you will need to have research in the stated sector for which the cohort is recruiting. If you are unsure whether you are in the sector, please contact us.

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Where can I find the interview dates for the ICURE Explore cohort I applied to?

The interview dates are usually provided on the application form. When possible, you will be given a range of interview dates, and these are likely to occur after the application deadline.

How many applications can we apply for ICURE Explore?

Each team is only allowed to apply one project once for each cohort.

Will I be able to continue doing research and/or teaching while participating in ICURE Explore?

As an Entrepreneurial Lead, you are required to participate full-time during the period of ICURE Explore, and you will not be allowed to continue research and/or teaching. If you have existing commitments, please delegate them to another appropriate staff member or consider other ICURE programs (e.g., Engage or Discover).

Can anyone be an Entrepreneurial Lead?

Yes, anyone can be an Entrepreneurial Lead. This can include but is not limited to, Ph.D., technician, PDRA, fellowship, and group leader positions. However, please note that ICURE Explore is a full-time commitment for three months and if recommended for ICURE Exploit, you will be expected to commit full time for a minimum of a further 15 months. The Entrepreneurial Lead is expected to be on the payroll of the new company funded through the IUK business grant.

I am an Early Career Researcher (ECR) and want to be an Entrepreneurial Lead, who should my team consist of?

If you are Early Career Researcher (ECR) and want to be an Entrepreneurial Lead, your team should consist of:

- Entrepreneurial Lead – You as the ECR
- Principal Scientific Advisor – Senior Researcher/Principal Investigator

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- Business Adviser (independent of your host institution)
- Technology Transfer Officer (TTO) or institutional equivalent

I want to be an Entrepreneurial Lead, but my salary is beyond the support provided to participate full-time over the 12 weeks. Will you cover them based on my actual salary?

No. The maximum support that we will provide is £35,000 which covers the salary of the Entrepreneurial Lead to participate full-time over the 12 weeks and expenses associated with testing key market assumptions and market exploration. Anything beyond that will have to be covered by yourself.

How much funding am I eligible for in ICURE Explore?

You will be provided with a total of £35,000 in support, which covers both the salary of the Entrepreneurial Lead (EL) to participate full-time over 12 weeks and the expenses associated with testing key market assumptions and market exploration. Please note that the salary is inclusive of pension and N.I. contributions.

If the Entrepreneurial Lead is a PhD candidate, their funded scholarship may be paused for the duration of ICURE Explore (i.e., 3 months) to allow them to be 100% committed to ICURE Explore. If the EL is from a university, the university needs to create a post for the duration of the ICURE project and set up a project cost to charge any salary costs to the ICURE project code.

Can I have multiple Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) involved in ICURE Explore?

Yes, you are allowed to have multiple PSAs involved in the project participating in ICURE Explore. However, please note that only one PSA is funded for any travel and subsistence costs when the team needs to attend ICURE events (e.g., boot camps, Options Roundabout, and training days) if they are delivered in person.

If two universities apply for the ICURE Explore programme for a technology jointly developed, do we need to provide one or two Technology Transfer Officers (TTOs)?

A university has to take the lead, and the lead university's Technology Transfer Officer (TTO) should be on the application form. It is recommended that the university where the Entrepreneurial Lead (EL) is employed takes the lead.

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What if I can't find a Business Advisor?

If you are unable to find an appropriate business advisor prior to application, we can help with recruiting an appropriate individual from a relevant industrial sector.

Do I need to nominate a Business Advisor in my ICURE Explore application and if the absent of it will impact my application score?

It is not compulsory to have a Business Advisor in your ICURE Explore application, but please state if you have one available. If you do not have one available, you will be assisted in finding an appropriate Business Advisor if you are accepted onto ICURE Explore. The absence of a Business Advisor does not impact your application score.

How is the budget handled for ICURE Explore?

The university will likely set up a project code to receive ICURE funds under an existing cost centre code. A new procedure is now in place to assist Universities and PSREs in managing their digital testing and business advisor payments. Universities and PSREs can have partial or full control of their budgets. You will be given more information by your delivery partner once you have onboarded ICURE.

Are in-person events mandatory for ICURE Explore?

Depending on the delivery partner, you will be provided with information on which team members are required to attend the in-person events at boot camp and options roundabout, respectively. You will be covered for travel and subsistence costs incurred, but only up to the four team members (i.e., EL, PSA, BA, & TTO).

How much commitment is required from the Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) and Technology Transfer Officer (TTO) on ICURE Explore?

The PSA and TTO are expected to be available throughout ICURE Explore to support the Entrepreneurial Lead (EL). Specific commitments regarding which ICURE events they are required to attend will be provided by the delivery partner.

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How much do the categories listed in the “looking for companies” section of the application impact on the programme?

Not at all. There is no need to wait for this.

When are the other ICURE programmes running?

You may find cohorts that are open for application and upcoming cohorts of different ICURE offerings at <https://www.icureprogramme.com/upcoming-programmes/>

IP-related questions

Are there any implications for IP ownership and revenue distribution if the academic takes part?

The ICURE programme does not take any equity or revenue from any teams or companies. It is a fully paid-for programme funded by Innovate UK to help UK researchers explore the commercial potential and application of their research.

What happens if my Senior Researcher owns all the IP?

If the Senior Researcher is employed by the University, the IP is owned by the University. Hence, it is recommended that your TTO is aware that you are applying to ICURE programs.

In exceptional cases, some academics may own their own IP. Please reach out to us to discuss this further.

Am I eligible for ICURE Explore if I own the IP or if it is shared with a university/research organisation?

You are eligible to apply but will need to demonstrate that you have an appropriate team to support the commercialisation process.

Would combined student and University IP be considered?

Yes, but only with the full support of the host University TTO and research team.

Would IP that is being developed between a university and company be eligible?

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Yes, if the new IP is wholly owned by the University and not in the business environment.

Would IP that is due to be licensed to an external company be considered?

No, as the company is already established but could consider Scaling The Edge Programme

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