GNOSIS PhD Studentship Application Guidance

This document provides guidance on completing the GNOSIS PhD Studentship application form.

Completed application forms should be returned to funding@gnosisnetwork.org by 23:00 UTC on 31st January 2021. Project awards will be announced within 4 weeks of the closing date. Late applications will not be considered.

Please note that GNOSIS receives funding via the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) and any awarded applications must therefore comply with the STFC's terms and conditions.

Section 1: Project Details

Project Title: Short title for the proposed project. This will be posted publicly on the GNOSIS website and other locations if the project is funded.

Public Summary: A concise summary for the project explained in terms that can be understood by the public. This will be posted publicly on the GNOSIS website and other locations if the project is funded.

Project Details: Outline the goals, methodology, and milestones for the project in sufficient technical detail to allow the reviewers to assess the scientific merit and feasibility of the proposal. Explain the timeliness and novelty of the project, highlighting any innovative or unique plans. Identify any key risks that might impact the project and explain how they will be mitigated.

Alignment to GNOSIS and STFC Objectives: Explain how the project translates science, technology, or expertise from the STFC science programme towards understanding and solve the problem of space debris and traffic management.

Impact Summary: Give details on the significance and potential for impact and list any beneficiaries of the research.

Section 2: Host Details

Academic Host: Provide contact details for the lead supervisor at the academic host institute.

The academic host is responsible for submission of the proposal and will enter into a contract with the University of Warwick to receive the SFTC funding from GNOSIS if the project is awarded. The host is responsible for all aspects of recruitment, supervision, training, and payments to the student.

Industrial/Commercial Partner: A core goal of GNOSIS is to bring together scientists and industry, so a non-academic partner is compulsory. The partner may provide financial or in-kind contributions towards the project but does not have to meet the 50% matched funding if this has already been provided by the academic host. A short biography can be given to provide context for the partner, for example the focus of the company, its age or number of employees. In line with the STFC terms and conditions, the Industrial/Commercial Partner will not be eligible to receive funding under this scheme.

Collaboration Details: Provide details of the relationship between the academic and partner and explain how this partnership benefits the project and the student. Include here any previous experience the partner may have with supervision of research students.

Funding Details: Under this scheme, the total costs of a studentship is £79,241. The applicant is expected to fund at least 60% of these studentship costs and, in line with STFC terms and conditions, GNOSIS will fund 40% of the studentship , with a maximum GNOSIS contribution of £31,696. The remaining contribution from the applicant (either the host, partner, or both) is compulsory. Provide details on the source and status of the remaining funding. Also describe any additional in-kind contributions that may be provided by the academic or partner institutes.

Section 3: Research Environment

Research environment, training and support: Provide details of the training and research environment at the host and partner institutions, and explain how this will benefit both the student and the project. Explain how the student's time will be split between the academic and partner institutes, and any specific facilities that may be related to the project.

You may wish to include information on integration with existing students; interaction with other researchers and staff; opportunities to participate in interdisciplinary teamwork; current infrastructure, expertise, facilities and technologies available within the collaboration; specific training courses or seminars; transferrable skills and employability.

Management and monitoring: Explain the roles of the academic department and the partner institution in the management and supervision of the student. Describe the procedures in place to ensure high-quality supervision and proper monitoring of the student progress.

You may wish to include information on secondary supervisors; frequency of supervisor/student contact; assessment arrangements; opportunity for student feedback; any potential conflicts of interest and mitigation strategies to protect against these.

Publications and Intellectual Property: Describe how Intellectual Property arising from the project will be managed, and the plans for publishing results in a reasonable time frame as per the RCUK open access policy.

Section 3: Project Costs

Complete the financial table as indicated. Costings should be based on current tuition fees and stipend rates from STFC. Itemise any specific training and support costs in the section provided below the cost entry.

The GNOSIS award will cover 40% of the costs of the studentship, up to a maximum value of £31,696. This will be the limit of GNOSIS's liability to the host University. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the external funding for the project is available to fund the remainder of the project.

The proposal should be costed based upon the UKRI rates for student fees and stipends, with funding across the following categories:

- UK PhD tuition fee: £4,502 in year 1, with annual inflation according to the UKRI rates
- PhD Stipend: £15,615 in year 1, with annual inflation according to the UKRI rates
- Training and Support: £2,000 per annum

The minimum total cost of the proposal is £79,241 for a period of 42 months. Whilst additional funding can be contributed from the Academic Host or Industrial/Commercial Partner, the funding from GNOSIS is limited to £31,966.

Any standard terms and conditions that STFC requires for studentship funding will be passed by Warwick to the host University. Any special post-Brexit arrangements will follow the guidance and funding rules of STFC.

Research environment, training and support: Provide details of the training and research environment at the host and partner institutions, and explain how this will benefit both the student and the project. Explain how the student's time will be split between the academic and partner institutes, and any specific facilities that may be related to the project.

Assessment criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the GNOSIS management board. An external observer will be present during the evaluation to ensure each proposal is given due attention and to mitigate any potential conflicts of interest.

The panel will consider the following questions during the review:

The project:
- How well aligned is the proposed research with the objectives of GNOSIS?
- Is the scope and quality of the research appropriate for a PhD project?
- What is innovative about the project?
- What STFC capabilities are being used in the project and how will they be integrated effectively?
- Is there an explanation of the project risks and how they will be mitigated?
- What is the level of matched funding, and is it confirmed?

Significance and Impact
- What is the significance of the project?
- What is the potential for impact?

Research environments, training and support
- What is the overall quality of the research environment and training programme to be made available to the student?
- Will the student have adequate opportunities interact with other students and researchers?
- What facilities do the applicants provide for research training? How relevant are these to the proposed project?

Management and monitoring
- Are there suitable arrangements in place for supervision of the student when working at both the academic and non-academic partners?
- Are there provisions in place for monitoring progress?

Collaboration

- Does the partner have prior experience with research students?
- How will the student benefit from the collaboration?
- Is there an opportunity for secondment by the student to the partner?
- How will the students time be divided between the host and partner?
- Are there suitable Intellectual Property management arrangements in place?

Terms and Conditions

GNOSIS is a Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) funded network, so the PhD Studentships will be subject to the standard STFC terms and conditions available from https://www.ukri.org/files/funding/ukri-fec-grant-terms-and-conditions-jun19-pdf/

In particular, the following guidelines must be met:
- The lead applicant must meet RCUK standard eligibility criteria https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/
- The lead organisation will be responsible for ensuring proper financial management of the grant, and will be accountable for the use of public funds.
- The applicant must fund the studentship to at least 60% of the total project costs (with a minimum contribution of £47,545) based on the total cost of a PhD studentship of 42 months duration.
- We will require interim and final reports to be submitted by the student at dates specified within the offer letters to each successful applicant.
- PhD positions must start by 1st October 2021, to allow the end date (and therefore all project-related activities and spend) to coincide with when the GNOSIS funding period ends.
- Appointment of a student to the funded position must be made by 31st May 2021.
- All project findings must be made freely available for academic research, and publications should be submitted to peer reviewed journals and presented at relevant conferences. Presentations should be made by the PhD student where feasible.