

**MRC DTP CASE Studentships 2024 – Second Call**

**Criteria, Approval Process and Timeline**

Projects for MRC CASE studentships must be submitted to the FBMH Doctoral Academy by **5pm on Thursday 28 March 2024** (see the timeline below). The Doctoral Academy will seek approvals on behalf of the Primary Supervisor following submission.

All Projects are expected to meet the University’s requirements for PhD supervision, summarised as:

*Members of the supervisory team will have a proven track record of researching at internationally recognised levels of excellence and regularly publish the results in leading outlets, in addition to supervising research students through to timely and successful completion of their degrees.*

If you did not recruit a candidate in the first round, you can readvertise your project again, however you cannot nominate/interview the same candidate. We would also encourage new projects to be submitted.

Primary Supervisors awarded a BBSRC/MRC CASE studentship starting in September 2023 can apply to either MRC/BBSRC DTP standard or CASE this year; there are no restrictions in order to promote collaborations with industrial partners.

For this second round, we will open to home students only as we have now met our overseas candidate quota.

**Approval Process**

(Following submission of a project)

**Stage One approval**

Sign-off by appropriate School PGR Director and Head of Division (FBMH) or PGR Services Teams (FSE/HUMS). Criteria for approval will include checking that:

Primary supervisor

* has submission rates exceeding 90% of previously completed PGR students, after accounting for any late submissions due to covid / ill health / maternity / insufficient academic progression etc.
* has a good track record of eProg engagement
* meets the eligibility criteria as set out in section 3 of the [Supervision Policy](http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/graduate/code/supervision/)
  + including where an honorary member of staff who is also a member of an NHS trust is selected as the main supervisor, a co-supervisor must hold a substantive role at The University of Manchester
  + including where an Early-Career Researcher (ECR) is the main supervisor, they must hold a contract beyond the end date of the PGR (or with approval from HoD/line manager to confirm their post is underwritten/in budget), and an experienced co-supervisor must be included
* can provide a vibrant research environment and has evidence of significant publications
* has overall responsibility for leading on the project
* currently holds an externally-funded studentship awarded in open competition (e.g. from charitable/industrial sources) ***or*** is actively seeking external/self-funded students via self-funded project advert(s)
* has overall responsibility for leading on the project
* FSE and HUMS applicants must also have the Head of Department agreement to a 50% funding match

Supervisory Team

* At least one member of the supervisory team has active research grant support
* All members of the supervisory team must have relevant expertise and details of their contribution to the project must be included on the form. All supervisors are expected to hold a minimum 20% share of the supervisory load

**Stage Two approval**

Management Board final review and approval. This will ensure that each project:

* fits the relevant remit and skills agenda for MRC
* includes an interdisciplinary supervisory team, plus training in another priority skills area
* relates to at least two of the three MRC DTP themes
* provides clear justification for any exceptional RTSG support costs (above £5k per annum), if requested

CASE projects will be reviewed by an independent panel with extensive experience in securing CASE funding, which will report back to the DTP Board.

All approved projects will be progressed according to the timeline set out below; the Primary Supervisor will receive detailed communication about the status of their project throughout the recruitment process.

**Student quality and shortlisting**

For CASE, applicants should be assessed by the supervisory team who will be responsible for nominating their best candidate for a formal panel interview. The academic excellence and potential to excel in postgraduate research is paramount.

The expectation is that only the very best quality students are put forward by the supervisory teams. We therefore encourage as much interaction as possible with prospective nominees. Advice and guidance on assessing candidates and formulating a strong nomination will be circulated to supervisors once projects are approved for advertising. **Please note that we require supervisors to request a short written piece of work (2-3 pages in length) relevant to the project or subject area from all eligible candidates, with that for the selected student to be submitted with the nomination form**. The purpose of this requirement is to assess the commitment of candidates and to allow those with less research experience the opportunity to demonstrate relevant skills and knowledge**.**

Formal DTP panel interviews will then be conducted, consisting of 3-4 independent academic members of staff, arranged to represent a spread across Faculties or Themes. Offers of studentships will be made by the Board following interview days. EDI/WP considerations, supervisor status (e.g. ECR), funding status of the supervisory team and priority research areas (as defined in Faculty Research Strategy) may be used to prioritise candidates if there are more highly-ranked students than places available.

**Timeline**

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| Deadline for submission of **supervisor led** & **CASE** projects | 28 March 2024 (by 5pm) |
| DTP Committee shortlisting of projects | 8 April 2024 |
| Advertising of shortlisted projects | 15 April 2024 |
| Closing date for student applications | 13 May 2024 |
| Deadline for primary supervisor to nominate their preferred candidate for interview | 27 May 2024 (by 5pm) |
| DTP Committee interview shortlisting for all candidates. | 3 June 2024 |
| Formal panel interviews held | w/c 17 June 2024 |
| DTP offers confirmed by Management Board | w/c 24 June 2024 |