

## **Flexible Mobility Awards – Impact Report Guidance**

### **1. What are BBSRC Flexible Mobility Awards - Placements?**

Flexible Mobility Awards – Placements are to encourage and support collaborations between academics and industrialists within the remit of the [INFORM Hub](#). The INFORM Hub is one of six Hubs funded by BBSRC in 2022 as part of the Open Innovation Research Club ([OIRC](#)) on diet and health.

The awards aim to promote the movement of researchers and technicians between different research settings. Beneficiaries of FMAs can be either [Early Career Researchers](#) (ECR) or technical staff from academia wishing to explore work in a company or a private organisation, or staff from industry (including technicians, specialists, engineers, researchers, etc.) wanting to further their career progression through work experience in a public research organisation.

### **2. How much funding is available?**

Up to £40,000 is available for a six-month placement. Shorter placement durations are also encouraged so multiple awards can be made.

### **3. Who is eligible to apply for the funding?**

Awards are available to Applicants who are [eligible to receive BBSRC funding](#).

Priority will be given to Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and technical staff from academia and technicians, specialists, engineers, and researchers from industry. FMAs will prioritise UK-based organisations (academic or industry) but will also consider placements at overseas partners of a UK-based company.

Industrial partners should follow current Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), including the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), as FMAs represent small subsidy amounts. Guidance on state subsidy rules, value thresholds, and recording can be found [here](#).

FMA Placements should focus attention on UK-based partners where there is a benefit to the UK research base and the UK economy. In exceptional circumstances, where there is not a UK company to exploit the research, FMA Placements may be awarded to work with an overseas partner company where the Project provides a clear justification for working with an overseas partner and will lead to building international collaborations and will be taken forward leading to inward investment and benefit the UK.

#### 4. What activities will the funding support?

FMA Placement funding can be used for Directly Incurred costs, including salary, reasonable travel, and subsistence. The award can also be used to support the consumables and expenses of the host institute.

Researcher time can be bought out and funds can be used to support a researcher to work on an industry-relevant project.

New collaborations will be prioritised as well as existing collaborations when it will aid in increasing the technology readiness level (TRL). The work must be relevant to [the focus of INFORM Hub](#).

#### 5. Costs which will not be funded

- indirect or estate costs at the research organisation
- any costs relating to intellectual property protection, including but not limited to registering, maintaining, or supporting patents or property rights
- equipment with a value of £10,000 or more
- undergraduate or postgraduate activities, training, or core PhD training, including tuition or bench fees.

#### 6. What is the application process?

The applicant should complete an online application form on the [INFORM Hub](#) website.

Briefly, the application form asks for the following details:

1. Applicant details
2. Placement partner details
3. Placement details (including aims and objectives)
4. Project Financial details (including completion of financial overview template)
5. A letter of support from the applicant's University
6. A letter of support from the collaborating partner.

Applications will be checked for completeness and acknowledged within five working days.

#### 7. What is the review process?

A Panel of four INFORM Hub Steering Committee (SC) members will review and evaluate each application. Panels will comprise one INFORM Hub Management team member, one from Industry and two from Academia.

Panel Evaluation Reports will be reviewed by the Hub Management Committee, which will make the final proposal recommendations to BBSRC for funding approval.

Criteria for assessment will include:

- Eligibility
- Relevance of application to the [remit of the INFORM Hub](#)
- Status of candidates
- Quality of project
- Potential outcomes (benefit to ECR, long-term collaboration, advancing research in the field)

## 8. How and when will the award be paid?

The successful academic and placement organisation will **join the INFORM Hub** ([apply for Hub Membership](#)). They will agree on a start date and need a signed agreement before the Project commences.

The successful applicant and placement organisation will agree on a start date and need to have a signed Collaboration Agreement and, when applicable, a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) in place before the placement commences. The Hub Manager will require evidence that these are in place before releasing funds.

The University of Reading Contract teams will draft and issue a formal offer letter (including award 'Terms and Conditions and Financial Arrangements') will be issued to the successful applicant. Applicants must sign and return the formal offer letter to the INFORM Hub Manager before the placement commences.

The Award Holder shall invoice the University of Reading (UoR) quarterly in arrears based on actual expenditure against specified budget headings. UoR shall pay the awardee within thirty (30) days of a valid invoice, subject always to receipt of funds and subject to the satisfactory completion by the awardee of any due diligence checks as may be reasonably required by the Awarding Institution or BBSRC.

The final invoice should be sent to Reading within one (1) month of the end of the Placement with the addition of a cost statement (a template will be provided). The cost statement should include the breakdown of the indexed fEC figures and the actual sums claimed.

The awardee should submit a final expenditure claim within **one month of the Placement ending** as part of the Placement Completion Report.

## 9. What reporting will be required?

The awardee should submit a Placement Completion report (authorised by the placement organisation for use in the public domain), including a final expenditure statement (authorised by the academic organisation), within **one month of the placement end**. All reporting documentation should be sent to the INFORM Hub Manager ([INFORMHub@reading.ac.uk](mailto:INFORMHub@reading.ac.uk)).

Briefly, the Placement Completion report includes:

1. Summary of placement objectives
2. Overview of skills developed and or/personal development
3. Testimonial(s) from placement organisation
4. Future plans
5. Financial expenditure statement and evidence (a template will be provided).

The report will create a case study in the public domain (e.g., INFORM Hub website and BBSRC publications).

The awardee should acknowledge the support of the BBSRC award on papers and other forms of media communications, including press releases, conferences and media appearances.

The awardee will act as an ambassador for the science area represented by the INFORM Hub and the wider UK Industrial Biotechnology and Bioenergy sector by attending and contributing to events within relevant areas at the request of BBSRC.

A full audit trail must be in place for all incurred expenditures on the Project. BBSRC will not expect to see this evidence, but it should be in place and can be checked if the Research Organisation is subject to a funding assurance visit.

## 10. What data protection and data sharing policies are in place?

Please read the INFORM Hub [Privacy Notice](#) before completing an application form.

Contact the Network Manager: [INFORMHub@reading.ac.uk](mailto:INFORMHub@reading.ac.uk) if you have any questions.

Copies of proposals will be made available to the INFORM Hub Management Committee in confidence.

The administrative staff of the University of Reading will use the information provided in the application for processing the proposal, the award of any consequential funding, and the payment, maintenance and review of the FMAs.

To meet BBSRC obligations for public accountability and dissemination of information, details of grants (including successful FMA awards) may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases and in reports, documents and mailing lists. BBSRC will use this information for research-related activities, including but not limited to the transfer of funds, statistical analysis about the evaluation of BBSRC OIRC Hubs, and study of trends and policy and strategy studies.

## 11. Who do I contact if I have any questions?

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please get in touch with Fiona Lee, the Hub Manager:

[f.l.lee@reading.ac.uk](mailto:f.l.lee@reading.ac.uk) or [INFORMHub@Reading.ac.uk](mailto:INFORMHub@Reading.ac.uk)

