

Modular Training Partnerships (MTP) - Frequently Asked Questions

UPDATED 7 December 2012

Overview

I have heard this is a relaunch, does this mean the scheme is different?

Previously known as the Modular Training for Industry (MTI) programme, the refreshed Modular Training Partnerships (MTP) programme has been supporting up to date, industrially-relevant training at Masters level for graduates working in UK industry since 1998, funding well in excess of 100 modules, most of which are still in existence. The objectives of the programme remain essentially the same, with some minor updates to the programme aims and relatively significant changes to the associated call documentation and assessment process.

What advice has BBSRC drawn on in revamping the MTP scheme?

A light-touch review of the Modular Training for Industry programme was conducted in 2007 (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/organisation/policies/reviews/business-activities/0611-modular-training.aspx>) which was very supportive. Continued input from BBSRC's Bioscience Skills & Careers / Bioscience for Industry Panels has further endorsed this view and BBSRC therefore felt it was right to refine the programme at this time.

What is a MTP?

MTPs provide pump-prime funding for the development of individual training modules, preparation / marketing of course materials, and course launch. Training should be delivered using the most appropriate method for the target industry (e.g. distance learning, web-based learning packages or residential 2-3 day seminar and workshop sessions). Successful MTPs will have engaged with industrial partners at an early stage of development and have mechanisms in place to ensure continual advice throughout the lifetime of the programme.

Why "Partnerships"?

In line with BBSRC's related training programmes, such as Doctoral Training *Partnerships* (DTP) and Advanced Training *Partnerships* (ATP), the term "Partnerships" better reflects the mutually-beneficial relationship between academia, industry and indeed BBSRC required to develop and maintain effective training programmes such as those typified by MTP, hence the subtle name change.

In addition to MTP, what other funding does BBSRC provide to support collaborative training?

BBSRC supports collaborative training through a number of mechanisms detailed at <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/business/training/training-index.aspx>.

Funding

How many MTPs does BBSRC expect to support?

It is currently envisaged that in the region of 8-10 awards will be made per annum.

What is the average funding per module?

In the past, BBSRC suggested a nominal amount of up to around £20k per module, but this should only act as a guideline. Module costs should form an integral part of the requisite basic Business Plan which needs to be developed as part of the application, and so all justified and reasonable costs will be considered by the assessment committee.

Why do I need to prepare a basic Business Plan?

Over a decade's worth of experience in managing this programme has proved to BBSRC that spending some time preparing a robust (yet basic) Business Plan for the first three years of the module(s) life is invaluable. Whilst BBSRC funding can only be offset against the first year of the plan, a good application will have considered the relative costings, course fees, delegate numbers and have a good understanding of expected shortfalls or profits.

Does the host institution need to provide financial and / or in-kind support?

Whilst not mandatory, the assessment committee always looks favourably on this type of support, particularly where matched financial funding demonstrates a clear commitment to future sustainability of modules.

Are modules expected to make a profit?

It would be very unusual for the Business Plan to suggest that a significant profit was to be generated in year 1 (otherwise why would BBSRC pump-priming funding be required?). However, as with many previously-funded courses, BBSRC expects successful modules to become self-sustaining, relying on delegate fees for continued existence, and so some profit after the initial year is quite common.

Can MTP funding support modules for Masters degrees?

In line with other Research Councils, BBSRC no longer provides funding for stand-alone Masters training grants. However, it will support pump-priming of MTP modules at Masters *level* where it is possible for a number of modules to attract sufficient credits to be considered for a Masters-level award. MTPs support high-level skills development and exemplification of this forms an integral part of the application and assessment.

The Partners

Who can apply?

Each MTP proposal will have one lead academic applicant, and proposals are generally aligned to previously-awarded BBSRC research. The applicant for must satisfy the standard BBSRC eligibility criteria as laid out in the BBSRC Grants Guide (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/apply/grants-guide.aspx>). Lead applicants must be employed by an eligible Research Organisation (RO) details at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/Eligibilityforrcs.aspx> for further guidance. Co-applicants may be based in industry and their involvement is very much encouraged.

Can a MTP proposal be initiated by a non-academic applicant?

Whilst this is positively encouraged, the academic must apply (on behalf of the partnership) and be the recipient of the award. It would be quite unusual for a *single* industrial partner alone to benefit from specific module(s) and so this should be considered when formulating a proposal. Priority is always given to applications in subject areas of significant need identified by industry.

How should I demonstrate evidence of industrial support?

All successful MTPs need to demonstrate clear and evidenced industrial demand. While it is possible for academic audiences to also benefit from participation, the vast majority of participants *must* be from industry. It is therefore essential that a variety of industrial partners at the very least express - through the completion of *Evidence for Industrial Support* forms - an interest in attending modules

and/or helping to develop/deliver them. Any further evidence that can be provided to demonstrate industrial support always strengthens the case for support.

What is the purpose of the Advisory Group?

It is a requirement for all MTPs to have an associated Advisory Group in place. The group should consist of at least 50% industrial members and should advise the training providers on suitability of modules, delivery mechanisms, pricing etc. so that the training remains fit for purpose over its lifetime. The group can also act as a sounding board in the future where it is possible for further modules to be developed (each in turn applying for BBSRC MTP funding if appropriate).

Assessment

How will MTP proposals be assessed?

Applications are assessed by Committee E (see related links) and, where necessary, additional industrial community members. There are likely to be three nominal application deadlines per year and proposals are considered at the next available Committee E meeting.

What is the role of BBSRC's Committee E?

Committee E will, as one of its roles, undertake peer review of people movement schemes (including programmes such as MTP) according to BBSRC processes and best practice, and provide recommendations for awards to BBSRC Executive.

Are there any restrictions on the areas of science in which partnerships can be supported?

Must be aligned to BBSRC-funded research and related to BBSRC's objectives.

What assessment criteria are used in deciding which proposals to support?

A comprehensive list of assessment criteria can be found within the MTP *Information Pack*.

Competition process and timelines

When are MTP awards made?

Following Committee E meetings, awards (made in the form of a Training Grant for delivery of high-level skills training) should be made soon afterwards. Full funding and payment details will be sent in due course.

Post award monitoring and strategic engagement

What reports will be required and when?

A Final Expenditure Statement (FES) will be required at the end of the grant, to be completed through Je-S. Receipt and reconciliation of the FES will release the final MTP Training Grant payment.

A Progress Report will be required by BBSRC at the **end of year two** of the Business Plan; a template will be available on the MTP webpage which can be submitted to BBSRC via modular.training@bbsrc.ac.uk.

Additionally, MTP outcomes should be reported through the RCUK Research Outcomes System <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/researchoutcomes/pages/ROS.aspx>