NDA PhD Bursary Call

Proposal Assessment Guide

Summary of the proposal sections and corresponding weightings:

Section	Heading	Weighting
1	Applicant Details	0%
2	Project Summary	0%
3	Support to the NDA Mission	35%
4	Skills and Capabilities	35%
5	Integration of Output with NDA Group	15%
6	Project Management	15%

The structure, format and process by which each section of the proposal is assessed is as follows:

Section 1: Applicant Details **This section does not contribute to the overall weighting**
Note: Primary applicant details are hidden from reviewers to mitigate unconscious bias.

Section 2: Project Summary **This section does not contribute to the overall weighting**	**Word count limit: 200 words**
An ideal response will	• Be accessible to a non-specialist audience. • Outline the call topic(s) the project will address. • Describe what the PhD researcher would do during the project. • Specify the intended outcomes and impact of the project. • (Optional) Include a graphical project summary to help visualise what the project involves – these need to be uploaded as a .JPG file AND as a .PDF file.
Note: This section may be published on public websites.	

Rating	Description	Section 3: Support to the NDA Mission This section contributes 35% of the overall weighting	Word count limit: 400 words
An Ideal response will		• Outline the call topics(s) the project will address. • Link the call topic(s) to a specific challenge on the NDA estate that exists now or is likely to exist in the future. • Demonstrate understanding of the challenge and the site(s)/process/technology it relates to. • State the aims of the project and detail the methodology that will be employed, evidencing its appropriateness. • Demonstrate the technical credibility of the research and outline how the work is novel and/or builds on previous work. • State the intended outcomes and impact of the project, detailing how the project will help NDA to achieve its mission.	
4	Excellent	• The link the project has with an existing or future challenge is clearly understood and shows insight that goes beyond that purely communicated in published materials from NDA. • The aims of the project are clearly defined, and the appropriateness of the methodology is evidenced. • The response demonstrates the technical credibility of the research. • The intended outcomes/impact are ambitious, appropriate, and deliverability is realistic.	
3	Good	• The project clearly links to an existing or future challenge, building on prior research where appropriate. • The aims of the project are defined, and the methodology is appropriate. • The research has technical credibility, the intended outcomes/impact are appropriate, and deliverability may be realistic.	
2	Acceptable	• The project clearly links to an existing or future challenge. • The aims of the project are defined. The methodology is included, but it may be lacking definition as to why it is appropriate. • The research has technical credibility, the intended outcomes/impact are outlined, but deliverability is questionable.	
1	Poor	• The link the project has with an existing or future challenge is not clear. • The aims of the project may be unclear, or the methodology may be inappropriate. • The research lacks technical credibility, or the intended outcomes/impact are unclear, or deliverability is entirely unrealistic.	
0	No evidence or very poor	• The project does not link to an existing or future challenge on the NDA estate.	
Note: It is expected that applicants engage with industry experts.			

Rating	Description	Section 4: Skills and Capabilities **This section contributes 35% of the overall weighting**	Word count limit: 400 words
An Ideal response will		• Identify the skills and capabilities that will be developed by the student and the wider supervisory team. • Link these skills and capabilities to existing or future skills and capability requirements across the NDA estate. • Explain why a PhD research project is the best way to fill these skills and capability requirements. • Consider how follow-on work could increase the embedding of these skills and capabilities across the NDA estate.	
4	Excellent	• The specific skills and capabilities (including peripheral skills and capabilities, such as communication skills and exposure to the nuclear industry sector) that will be developed by the student and the wider supervisory team are clearly outlined. • The skills and capabilities are linked, with credible supporting evidence, to specific existing/future skills gaps across the NDA estate. The response may go beyond published information to define as-yet unidentified but credible skill and capability needs. • The response clearly defines why a PhD research project is the appropriate method for developing the skills and capabilities. • Follow-up work is considered at a high level, which could increase the embedding of skills across the NDA estate (e.g. through opportunities for commercial investment, innovation funding or SLC investment).	
3	Good	• The skills and capabilities that will be developed or maintained by the student and the wider supervisory team are defined and are linked to specific existing/future skills gaps across the NDA estate. • The response clearly outlines why a PhD research project is the appropriate method for developing the skills and capabilities.	
2	Acceptable	• The skills and capabilities that will be developed by the student are outlined but may lack detail of relevance to specific existing/future skills gaps across the NDA estate. • The response outlines why a PhD research project may be appropriate for developing the skills and capabilities.	
1	Poor	• The skills and capabilities that will be developed by the student are outlined. • It is unclear as to why a PhD research project is the appropriate method for developing the skills and capabilities.	
0	No evidence or very poor	• It is unclear what skills and capabilities will be developed by the student.	
Note: It is expected that applicants engage with industry experts.			

Rating	Description	Section 5: Integration of Output with NDA Group This section contributes 15% of the overall weighting	Word count limit: 300 words
An Ideal response will		• Detail how a description of the project, project progress and project outputs will be communicated and made accessible to interested parties within NDA group (such as the NWDRF), academia, the supply chain and wider nuclear industry. • Describe how learning from the project could be applied by those working within the NDA group or the supply chain.	
4	Excellent	• There is a well-thought-out plan as to how a description of the project, project progress and project outputs will be communicated and made accessible to interested parties within NDA group, academia, the supply chain and wider nuclear industry. • Any secondment opportunity to a relevant NDA group company or supply chain organisation has been agreed (in principle) and a credible implementation plan is provided. • Strong industry engagement is demonstrated. This includes a high-level plan to engage with industry on follow-up work to embed the research across the NDA estate (e.g. through industry-supported innovation funding, training, engagement events etc.).	
3	Good	• Specific and credible examples of how a description of the project, project progress and project outputs will be communicated and made accessible to interested parties within NDA group, academia, and the supply chain are given. • Any secondment opportunity to a relevant NDA group company or supply chain organisation has been agreed (in principle). • Consideration is given to how learning from the project could be applied by those working within NDA group or the supply chain.	
2	Acceptable	• Specific examples of how project outputs will be communicated and made accessible to interested parties within NDA group, academia, and the supply are given. • A credible description is given as to how industrial links (beyond links with the industrial supervisor) could be instigated.	
1	Poor	• It is unclear how project outputs will be communicated and made accessible to interested parties within NDA group.	
0	No evidence or very poor	• It is unclear whether any project outputs will be communicated and made accessible.	
Note: It is expected that applicants engage with industry experts.			

Rating	Description	Section 6: Project Management This section contributes 15% of the overall weighting	Word count limit: 800 words
An Ideal response will		• Include a breakdown of requested funds, with justification. Itemise any leverage. • Detail the project plan and provide a supporting Gannt chart (this needs to be uploaded as a .JPG file AND as a .PDF file). • Identify any additional input required from industry to support or enable the project, excluding industrial supervision. • Identify project risks and corresponding mitigation. • Ensure any active work proposed has been discussed with the relevant facility owners/operators and is feasible within the bounds of the project. Associated costs should be detailed separately and would not contribute to the project limit.	
4	Excellent	• A clear and appropriate breakdown of requested funds is provided with thorough justification. Any leverage is clearly itemised. • Project phases/milestones/deliverables are identified, logical, deliverable and supported with a Gantt chart. Opportunities are linked to specific milestones in the Gantt chart. • Any additional input required from industry has already been enabled following up-front discussions with appropriate contacts. • Key risks are identified and linked to relevant phases/milestones/deliverables, with credible mitigation given.	
3	Good	• A clear and appropriate breakdown of requested funds is provided with reasonable justification. Any leverage is itemised. • Project phases/milestones/deliverables are identified, logical, deliverable and are supported with a Gantt chart. • Any additional input required from industry has been considered. • Key risks are identified, with credible mitigation given.	
2	Acceptable	• A basic breakdown of requested funds is provided with some justification. Any leverage is itemised. • Project phases/milestones/deliverables are identified, logical, and supported with a Gantt chart, but may not be fully deliverable. • Any additional input required from industry has been considered but may lack detail or understanding. • Some key risks are identified, with some credible mitigation given.	
1	Poor	• A basic breakdown of requested funds is provided with no justification. Any leverage may be summarised but is not itemised. • Project phases/milestones/deliverables may be identified but deliverability is unrealistic and the risk analysis is inadequate. • Any additional input required from industry may lack detail or understanding.	
0	No evidence or very poor	• No cost breakdown is provided, or no project plan is provided, or no risks are considered.	

Requested Funds	
Stipend	**Mandatory information**: students funded through the NDA PhD bursary call must receive a stipend that is at least equivalent to that paid by UKRI (Support for UKRI-funded students – UKRI). Applicants should specify the stipend used for each academic year in their budget calculation.
Fees	• Tuition Fees • Permanent staff costs (industrial supervision costs are not to be included) • Estate costs • Any other overheads
Research training support	• Travel and subsistence • Conference registration fees • Training courses/summer schools • Security clearance to handle sensitive information **Mandatory information**: NDA-sponsored students, including those who are part of other research programmes such as CDTs, are expected to participate in the annual NDA seminar. They are also expected to attend an annual visit to an NDA site. Travel and subsistence costs associated with attending NDA seminars and site visits must be budgeted for under research training support. For the annual NDA seminar, assume a 3-day event at a central England location. For the annual NDA site visit, assume a 1-day visit to Sellafield.
Equipment and consumables	**Mandatory information**: equipment >£1K must be itemised.
Leverage	
Direct (cash) contributions	Cash-equivalent contributions, including but not limited to: • Studentship match funding or top-up funding
Indirect (in-kind) contributions	Non-monetary goods/services, including but not limited to: • Use of equipment/facilities (such as NNUF) • Permanent staff costs • Additional training • Provision of data or materials