

**University of Cambridge and Wellcome Sanger Institute**  
**BBSRC Flexible Talent Mobility Award: Placement Call 2025**  
**Guidance for Cambridge Lead Applicants**

**Call opens: 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2025**

**Call closes: 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2026**

**Awards: up to £12,000 per application**

**Project start date: 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2026 - 30<sup>th</sup> of June**

**Duration: from 1 day up to 6 months (part time or full time)**

## **Background**

The University of Cambridge in partnership with Wellcome Sanger Institute has been awarded a BBSRC Flexible Talent Mobility Account (FTMA) to enable cross-sector and interdisciplinary knowledge exchange within the biosciences by facilitating mobility between academic, business, public sector and third sector organisations, in the UK or internationally. The ambition of these awards is to enhance sector porosity, allow movement between fields and provide professional development opportunities for bioscience researchers and research technical professionals.

This document sets out the guidance for the BBSRC Flexible Talent Mobility Award: Placement Call (2025). We **strongly encourage** applicants from the University of Cambridge or the Wellcome Sanger Institute to reach out to Dr Carmen Fernandez-Posada and Dr Emma Brock ([iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk)) to discuss their idea in advance of submitting an application so that we can provide tailored support and advice to maximise the strength of your application.

For eligibility or general queries please contact your respective organisations:

- **University of Cambridge:** [iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk).
- **Wellcome Sanger Institute:** [grantsoffice@sanger.ac.uk](mailto:grantsoffice@sanger.ac.uk). Wellcome Sanger Institute specific guidance can be found [here](#) .

## **Who can apply?**

Applications are welcome from researchers (including ECRs\*) or technicians\*\* (including technology and skills specialists), **employed by the collegiate University of Cambridge with a department affiliation (or by the Wellcome Sanger Institute – see guidance link above)**. Applications from researchers and technicians will be assessed separately. All applications must be supported by a group leader/line manager, either as a co-applicant or a lead applicant. Lead applicants must be employed for the duration of the entire project. Students (including PhD students) cannot be applicants.

Proposals must focus on **Data Intensive Bioscience\*\*\*** and be in **Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) remit**. Please note that previous/current BBSRC funding is NOT a requirement.

Previously unsuccessful applicants are welcome to revise their applications and re-apply, however, FTMA 2024-2025 awardees are ineligible.

\* An ECR is defined as an individual who has not yet achieved academic independence (i.e. not established their own research group), but is working at a postdoctoral level.

**\*\* Technicians:** Research Technicians and technology and skills specialists (RTPs) have expert knowledge and technical competence in their field. Across all disciplines this may include, but is not limited to:

- data scientists
- data engineers
- archivists
- informaticians
- statisticians
- software developers
- audio-visual technologists
- technical professional staff
- individuals staffing core facilities.

Research assistants may be considered RTPs if their work fits within the technical aspect (e.g. if the research assistant works in a facility or being responsible for equipment) or have a supporting role in the development of the research projects.

**\*\*\*Data Intensive Bioscience** is defined as: computational technologies and analytical approaches for large-scale bioscience data, for example, application of AI to bioimaging, -omics and multimodal data, complex systems modelling, training in emerging methods, software engineering or data stewardship including the FAIR data principles. *If you are unsure whether your project fits within this remit, please contact us ([jaa@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:jaa@admin.cam.ac.uk))*

### **What activities can be funded?**

Funding is available for incoming/outgoing placements of up to £12,000.

Funds can be used for a wide range of placement types, including but not limited to:

- Spending time at a partner's location (UK or international) for knowledge exchange (e.g. embedding research findings, understanding partner/user challenges or priorities), skills development or relationship building.
- Hosting a partner in a research group/facility at University of Cambridge or Wellcome Sanger Institute.
- Short term (day releases) or longer term (up to 6 months). This may include **flexible or remote working** if appropriate.
- Part-time or full-time placements.
- Interdisciplinary placements are also welcome.

Funds can be used to support a wide range of activities, including but not limited to:

- Exploring new projects or expanding on existing ones which aim to create impact outside academia.
- Incoming and outgoing visits for knowledge exchange, relationship building or skills development, including with partners in policy, industry and third sector. For example:
  - Learning an industry technique or practice for use in your own work, or teaching an established technique for use in industry.
  - Understanding relevant priority areas of a particular sector (i.e. policy, industry etc.) to align your work with.
- Providing academic insight to a challenge in a non-academic institution.

This funding cannot support placements in organisations which the applicant is already a part of (e.g. company ownership, scientific board membership, etc.).

### Advice for this call

Through the FTMA, the University of Cambridge and the Wellcome Sanger Institute want to invest in placements to support professional development opportunities for bioscience research staff at all career stages to enhance sector porosity and enable collaboration between fields. Applications should:

- Explain any background in terms which can be understood by a diverse panel that has no specialist knowledge in your technical field.
- Focus on knowledge exchange/skills exchange/relationship building not on research.
- Be written specifically for FTMA purposes (applications which read like re-drafted research grant proposals are less likely to be successful than projects which clearly comprise of development and other activities directed towards knowledge exchange and impact).
- Be realistic about what will be achieved in the project.
- Detail how progress against objectives will be measured or evidenced.

### Eligible costs

The costs awarded for each project may vary depending on the work proposed but should not exceed **£12,000 (direct costs only)**. The assessment panel may decide to part-fund any application at their discretion.

FTMA funding may be used to fund directly incurred costs such as:

- Directly incurred staff costs for individuals undertaking a placement.
- Pooled labour, where applicable.
- Travel/[accommodation/subsistence](#), in line with University of Cambridge policy [Travel policy | Finance Division](#).
- Materials and consumables.
- Equipment access/facilities access.
- Equipment purchases (capped at £10,000 and must be justified against the duration of the project).
- Procurement of an external consultant e.g. for market research or business planning, to include VAT as applicable.
- Workshops.
- Other engagement, knowledge exchange and training activities can also be supported.

FTMA funding is **not** available to support:

- The salary of external partners/collaborators.
- Indirect or estates costs.
- 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.
- TES (temporary employment service) workers and student (including PhD student) placements.
- Contributions to Innovate UK Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.

## Application process

Applicants for FTMA funding are required to present a case for support that includes a clear explanation of the need or skill gap to be addressed, the objectives of the proposed placement, and how the placement will support future plans. Applicants must ensure they are aware of any internal departmental deadlines for approval by Heads of Department/Line Managers before submission.

Application is via the online application system of the lead applicant's institution. Please provide:

- Outline details of the project in the [University of Cambridge FTMA Application System](#).
- A completed [BBSRC FTMA: Placement Call 2025 application form](#), including Head of Department signature and budget (University of Cambridge applicants).
- **Letters/emails of support** from the project partner(s).
- Any additional documents as appropriate, such as quotes, a Gantt chart showing the intended project timeline etc. (max. 4 pages excluding letters of support).

**Please note the application system only accepts .pdf documents**

## **For applicants employed by the University of Cambridge only:**

### **Terms & Conditions**

This guidance document should be read in conjunction with the [FTMA summary of terms and conditions](#).

### **Costs**

Please justify all costs within your application. Contact your department finance team for support with costings using an appropriate University costing tool (e.g. Worktribe, X5 or [staff costing tool](#)). Applications do not require approval by the Research Operations Office and should not be submitted into the Research Operations Office workstream. This could delay the review of your application by the panel. This is because FTMA funds have already been awarded to the University and submission for approval would result in double-counting of funds. Costings will be scrutinised by the panel as part of the assessment process. Any changes to an approved project budget will need to be cleared with the Impact and Knowledge Exchange team.

For further details on eligible/ineligible costs and other costing considerations, please refer to the [summary of terms and conditions](#).

### **Ethics**

Project holders must ensure that their research is compliant with the [University's Policy on the Ethics of Research Involving Human Participants and Personal Data](#) and that any ethical issues are identified and brought to the attention of the relevant approval or regulatory body. Where ethical approval is required this must have been granted before the work begins. See the [University's Research Ethics pages](#) for further details.

### **Working with external partners**

Where a project involves a Third Party, applicants should consider what types of agreements may be required (for example collaboration agreements, non-disclosure agreements, material/data transfer agreements and/or other types of contract). Applicants should consider the time required to put these agreements in place when planning their project. More details of what you should consider and template agreements can be found on the [IAA website](#) or contact [iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk) for further support.

## Assessment process

Applications will be reviewed by a cross-disciplinary panel with membership drawn from the Wellcome Sanger Institute and the University of Cambridge and industry/policy/impact experts (as appropriate). Applications from researchers and technicians will be assessed separately.

Criteria	Guidance
<b>Articulation of need</b>	Clarity of description of the research or skills base on which the project builds, the need being addressed and/or justification of why skills/knowledge exchange objectives have been identified.
<b>Clarity of objectives and plan</b>	Clarity of objectives and clarity and coherence of the plan to achieve skills/knowledge exchange objectives, including, management, timeframe and milestones.
<b>Project partner involvement</b>	The suitability, level of engagement, and degree of support offered by the partner organisation(s), where applicable. Letters of support may enhance application strength.
<b>Value for money</b>	The extent to which the proposal makes the best use of resources.
<b>Sustainability</b>	The extent to which the project outlines plans for potential next stages (including further sources of funding) and/or explains how the project fits within a larger programme of work.

## Timeline

The funding can support short-term projects of up to 6 months. The funding dates for this call are:

Call opens	Call closes	Application outcomes	Project start	Final report
6 <sup>th</sup> of November 2025	12 <sup>th</sup> of February 2026	Early April 2026	From 20 <sup>th</sup> of April – 30 <sup>th</sup> of June 2026	Within 1 month of project completion

Proposed projects should not start any earlier than 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2026 to allow sufficient time for fund allocation and activation. Project start dates are subject to appropriate agreements with any external partners being in place.

## Monitoring and reporting

Expenditure should be posted on a monthly basis against the grant. Project holders and their departmental grants/finance officers must ensure that all expenditure is posted against projects by within 2 weeks of the end of the project. Further financial reporting will be requested at project close.

All award holders will be required to complete a project report at the end of their funded period. We may also request images of the projects to use in reporting outcomes of the BBSRC FTMA to the BBSRC and to highlight successful placements. We also welcome key updates via email on funded projects beyond the final report. This enables us to sign post you to any relevant support as well as to strengthen our future applications for institutional FTMA funding.