

NEWTON-BHABHA FUND PHD PLACEMENT PROGRAMME 2019-20

CALL GUIDELINES 2019-20

Call opens: 19 July 2019

Call closes: 19 September 2019; 1700 UK time

www.britishcouncil.org

1. BACKGROUND

The Newton- Fund builds research and innovation partnerships with 17 active partner countries to support their economic development and social welfare, and to develop their research and innovation capacity for long-term sustainable growth. It has a total investment of £735 million from the United Kingdom (UK) Government until 2021, with matched resources from the partner countries.

The Newton-Fund is managed by the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and delivered through seven UK delivery partners, including UK Research and Innovation (comprising the seven research councils and Innovate UK), the UK Academies, the British Council and the Met Office.

Tackling global challenges such as extreme weather conditions, urbanisation, access to affordable health care, food and energy security, and meeting the social and economic needs of a growing population requires an integrated research and innovation approach, bringing together communities from different disciplines, sectors and countries in high-quality collaborations. The Newton- Fund builds research and innovation partnerships to support economic development and social welfare and develop research and innovation capacity for long-term sustainable growth. This is achieved by building the skills of doctoral scholars through cross-border research collaborations in higher education institutions.

In India, the Newton-Bhabha Fund is supported by the UK and Indian governments through a ministerial agreement and was launched to promote science and innovation partnerships between the two countries.

For further information visit www.newtonfund.ac.uk and follow on us Twitter [@NewtonFund](https://twitter.com/NewtonFund)

2. RELEVANCE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The Newton Bhabha Fund aims to contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that directly impacts socio-economic development for both India and UK to address global societal challenges. It will do so through strengthening science and innovation capacity.

It is an essential requirement that the proposed work to be funded by the Newton-Bhabha Fund be focused on applying the skills of the UK-India partnership to address global development challenges. These are challenges that are particularly relevant to developing countries, but also have wider effects. These challenges are referenced within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

3. PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Newton Bhabha Fund aims to develop individual capacity of PhD scholars by offering short-term (two to four months) placements at UK or Indian higher education or research institutions. It is jointly funded by the UK Government Newton-Fund and the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and public-funded Indian Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) that have expressed interest through British Council's 'Expression of Interest' process to collaborate as delivery partners.

PhD placements will be focused on research areas which have been identified at the country level as important for fulfilling the Newton-Bhabha Fund goals. For details, please refer to section 5. Priority sectors.

The approach of the programme will be scholar-centered to ensure that the best possible development experience is provided. International exchanges should add value through enabling scholars to:

- learn valuable new skills or techniques for research
- access facilities or resources not readily available in their home country
- build relationships with potential new collaborators, including industry partners where relevant

- advance complementary collaborative research.

DST, in collaboration with the British Council, will support up to 45 PhD scholars from India and UK in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) from the pool of INSPIRE Fellows.

DBT in collaboration with British Council will support up to 35 PhD scholars from India and UK in Life Sciences (other than INSPIRE Fellows).

Public-funded Indian HEI's in collaboration with British Council will support up to 90 PhD Scholars from India in any discipline working on themes mentioned in Section 5: Priority Sectors.

First grant instalment payments are expected to be disbursed by the end of February / March 2020 and placements can take place between March to December 2020. Grants are paid in two instalments and are made to institutions and not directly to students.

British Council reserves the right to not fill all positions depending on the quality of applications and assessment results.

4. OUTCOMES

The programme outcomes are to:

- develop individual capacity of students through international training and development opportunities
- create a cadre of highly trained researchers in the UK and India with international experience, able to contribute to the absorptive capacity for research and innovation and thus bring about economic and social benefits
- enable participation of UK scholars and Indian PhD scholars in international intellectual networks, building cultural understanding, and fostering long-term sustainable research collaborations
- create awareness of the research strengths of the UK and India

5. PRIORITY SECTORS

UK and India have identified the following six priority areas for the Newton-Bhabha Fund:

1. Sustainable cities and urbanisation
2. Public health and wellbeing
3. Energy-water-food nexus
4. Understanding oceans
5. High value manufacturing
6. Big data

Accordingly, applications are invited in STEM, Life Science subjects, which are:

- Biological and Medical sciences including Life Sciences, Biotechnology, Botany, Zoology, Microbiology, Biochemistry, Medicine, Pharma and Veterinary Sciences
- Engineering and Physical sciences including Physics, Chemistry, Engineering, Physical Mathematics, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Big Data and Manufacturing
- Environment, Food and Agriculture Sciences
- Public Health and Well-being

Public-funded Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can consider those disciplines that would align to the six priority areas of the Newton-Bhabha Fund. These may include Physical Sciences, Fundamental Sciences and Social Sciences.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

For UK national applicants: The scheme is open only for UK scholars pursuing their PhD at a UK home institution including applicants from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Applications will be considered from scholars from all institutions which are strong in research in the priority sectors described in the previous section.

For Indian national applicants: The scheme is open only for Indian scholars enrolled at Indian HEIs with the following criteria:

1. INSPIRE PhD Senior Research Fellows (SRFs) of Batch 2016 are eligible to apply for a STEM and Life Sciences subject
2. PhD Scholars (other than INSPIRE Fellows) who have qualified through national level test and are pursuing PhD in mid second or third year of Life Sciences are eligible to apply. They

also need to clear one of the following national level tests: CSIR/UGC-NET, GATE, BET, ICMR-NET, ICAR-NET. Please upload a certificate of the national level test passed as a supporting document.

3. PhD scholars pursuing PhD in second or third year from public funded Indian HEIs (other than INSPIRE and those pursuing Life Sciences) in above mentioned priority areas are eligible to apply.
4. Women scholars pursuing PhD in public funded HEIs are strongly encouraged to apply.

For both Indian and UK scholars:

- Applicants should have a valid passport before applying.
- Applicants are required to submit their PhD thesis only after completion of the placement.

Please refer to the detailed eligibility criteria in Annex 1.

7. APPLICATION GUIDELINES, PROCESS & FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

7.1. Application guidelines

Applications should be accompanied with endorsement letters from both the sending and receiving institutes, signed by Head of Department (or equivalent). The letter from the host institution must confirm that they will host the PhD scholar and provide details of all academic and countrified support, the duration of the stay and the level of bench fees they will charge.

Endorsement letters from UK universities should outline bench fees, if any, that will be charged. In addition, if any registration or other fees are charged, these should be disclosed to the applicant in advance.

Please note applications without the endorsement letters will not be considered for funding.

7.2. Application process

Indian applicants should submit the form online by clicking [here](#)

UK applicants should submit the form online by clicking [here](#)

The deadline for receipt of applications is 8 October 2019. Results are expected to be announced in December 2019.

7.3. Funding arrangements for UK scholars

The **British Council** will fund the travel grant maximum up to GBP 900 to cover the following items as part of Newton-Bhabha Fund:

- UK scholars' travel - international return airfare (economy class)
- visa fees to India
- travel insurance (if required)

DST / DBT will cover the following items:

- UK scholars' arrival allowance in India – INR 10,000

- UK scholars' stipend in India - INR 31,000
- Basic one-time medical insurance of INR 9000
- For their own convenience, UK scholars need to arrange their accommodation either in the host institution or off-site before departing to India. DST/DBT will release accommodation allowance @ 8 %, 16 % or 24 % of stipend (INR 31000) based on the class of city as per Government of India norms.
- UK scholars will be exempt from tuition fees, experiment fees and basic teaching material costs. Costs beyond the above arrangements will be borne by the scholars themselves.

7.4. Funding arrangements for Indian scholars

The **British Council** will cover the following items:

- Indian scholars' bench fees in the UK : Maximum GBP 5000, where the UK host university cannot waive the bench fees (or consumables costs). The UK host supervisor can apply for this bench fees by stating the amount in the endorsement letter. In addition, applicant has to enter this amount in his/her application form. Amount stated in the application form will be considered for funding.
- Indian scholars' stipend in the UK – GBP 1300 per month to cover meals, accommodation, domestic travel, etc.

DST / DBT/ Indian HEIs to cover the following items:

- Indian scholars' visa fees
- Indian scholars' international return airfares (economy class) as per Government of India (GOI) norms
- Indian scholars' travel insurance as per Government of India norms

7.5. Evaluation criteria

Scholars should ensure their applications meet the following criteria which are the principles underlying candidate assessment:

- all questions on the application form are answered
- the activities are planned to deliver the outcomes in the most effective manner

- the application articulates a plausible pathway showing how the research may lead to positive impact and contribute in to the economic development and social welfare of India
- the placement will add value to the PhD research and to the activities of the two research groups
- the support offered to the researcher will ensure that the placement is as productive as possible and facilitates cascading of learning gained through the placement
- the research is relevant to the priority sectors (mentioned above) of the Newton-Bhabha Programme
- the mobility programme will contribute towards developing a long term sustainable partnership between UK and Indian universities
- the scholar will return to complete their PhD at their home university

7.6. Evaluation process

The British Council, DST and DBT will conduct the first level of assessment independently and shortlist scholars. Following this, a joint panel between the agencies will be organised to take a final decision.

For HEIs, the British Council will form a joint selection panel of external and internal experts to assess all the applications. Results proposed by the panel will be considered final.

Applications will be screened for their relevance to the six priority sectors of the Newton-Bhabha Fund (mentioned above) and to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals including socio-economic development.

8. CONTRACTING AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

8.1. For UK PhD scholars

The **British Council** will sign a Grant Agreement with the UK home institution to disburse the UK scholar's airfare, visa fees and insurance. The UK home institution will be responsible for disbursing the grant to the respective scholar.

The British Council will disburse grant to the UK home institution after receiving the signed Grant Agreement from the UK home institution within the specified timeline which will be notified as a part of the Grant Agreement. The home institution / scholar is responsible for submitting receipts for the cost of visa, airfare and insurance along with the final report to the British Council.

DST or DBT (as relevant per subject area) will inform Indian host institutions of the final selection of UK scholars and will release funds towards scholars per month stipend, accommodation, one-time travel allowance to the Indian institution followed by sending a sanction letter. Indian host institution will be responsible for disbursing the grant to the respective scholar.

8.2. For Indian PhD Scholars

The **British Council** will sign a Grant Agreement with UK host Institution to disburse stipend and bench fees (if any) for the Indian scholar. The grant will only be released once the British Council receives a signed Grant Agreement from the UK host institution within the specified timeline which will be notified as a part of the grant agreement. The UK host institution will be responsible for disbursing the stipend to the respective Indian scholar.

DST or DBT will release funds for the Indian PhD scholar to his/her respective Indian home institutions followed by sending the sanction letter. Indian home institutions will disburse fund for their visa, airfare and insurance as per Government of India norms to the scholar. (This will also be mentioned in the sanction order).

Indian HEIs that expressed an interest in collaborating and whose scholars get shortlisted will share a signed Operational Alliance Agreement with British Council and agree to a specified timeline which will be notified as part of the agreement. HEIs will then release fund to for their selected scholars to cover their airfare, visa and insurance as per agreed timelines.

8.3. Grant disbursement for both Indian and UK Scholars

Ninety per cent of the total grant will be disbursed to the home / host institution (whichever applicable) before the placement begins. The remaining 10 per cent will be disbursed after completing the placement and submitting the financial and narrative reports to both British Council and DST / DBT provided that the final report demonstrates that the placement has been completed as planned. If this is not the case, the British Council may recover a portion of the grant.

The UK and Indian institute receiving the grant will be responsible for:

- managing the grant, including paying the same to scholars
- provision of financial accounts to detail how the British Council / DST or DBT funds have been spent on each PhD scholar over the reporting periods
- alerting the British Council / DST or DBT (as relevant per subject area) on any substantive changes that will impact on project outcomes.

8.4 Grant Management for Indian HEIs

Indian HEIs receiving the grant will be responsible for:

- managing the grant, including paying the same to scholars.
- provision of financial accounts to detail how the British Council and HEIs funds have been spent on over the reporting periods alerting the British Council on any substantive changes that will impact on project outcomes

See section 12 for further information regarding contracting.

9. SUPPORT TO PHD SCHOLARS

The Newton-Bhabha PhD Placements programme expects that host institutions offer high standards of supervision, management and mentoring to placement scholars. Applicants must consider the following in their proposals:

- The standards of supervision, management and mentoring provided by the host institution
- Experience of the supervisors to train and mentor doctoral scholars to provide the highest quality supervisory support for their doctoral scholars
- Mechanisms that are in place to assess, provide for and monitor individual doctoral student needs and offer the student appropriate development opportunities
- Professional and transferable skills training offered to doctoral scholars, including training in the principles of good research conduct in their discipline and in the relevant ethical, legal and professional frameworks
- Learning and training opportunities available to doctoral scholars to raise awareness of the broader context of their research area, particularly in reference to societal and ethical issues, and the importance of engaging the public with research.
- UK scholars may explore a list of Indian institutes ranked by Ministry of Human Resource Development here: <https://www.nirfindia.org/2019/Ranking2019.html>. However, this source does the exploration of other relevant institutions. For support in identifying Indian institutes for the aforementioned priority sectors please contact Purti Kohli (see section 13).
- Indian scholars may contact [Universities UK International](#) (UUKi) who is offering a match-making service to help connect Newton-Bhabha-funded partner country researchers to potential UK partners. Applicants wishing to use this service should complete UUKi's [Partner Request Form](#). Their partnership request will also be included in UUKi's [Opportunities for Collaboration webpage](#)

For further information on UK standards for doctoral training, please refer to the Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training at www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/skills/statementofexpectation-pdf/

10. REPORTING AND MONITORING

- Selected scholars will be asked to complete an online baseline survey before the placement begins and a follow-up survey after six months of the placement.
- Beneficiary and host institutions must submit both financial and narrative reports to the British Council and DST/DBT/ Indian HEIs respectively within 30 days of completion of their placement. Details will be shared with the selected scholars.
- If the PhD scholar withdraws from studies or is unable to complete the period of the placement, they must immediately inform the British Council, DBT or DST or Indian HEI as relevant explaining their decision, and submitting a letter showing the agreement of their supervisor.
- If the scholar is unable to complete full tenure of the placement at the host institute, their final report should demonstrate that the objectives of the placement are met, and placement has been completed as planned.

Key dates:

Activity detail	Dates
Call announcement	8 August 2019
Call closes	8 October 2019
Announcement of results	December 2019
Placements to be undertaken	March to December 2020
Report submission	Within 30 days of the completion of the placement

11. DIVERSITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Diversity

The British Council is committed to equal opportunities and diversity in all our activities. This includes avoidance of bias due to gender, disability, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or religious belief.

Data protection

The British Council will use the information that you are providing for the purposes of processing your application, making any awards, monitoring and review of any award.

We shall share any necessary data on your application with the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and with our funding partners in your country in order to assist with management of the application process; any decisions on grants will be made in collaboration with them.

Organisation details, where collected, are used for monitoring and evaluation and statistical purposes. Gender information, where collected, is used solely in preparing statistical reports.

The British Council collects country of origin for reporting and statistical purposes and to contact you within your own country.

Under UK Data Protection law, you have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you, and the right to ask us to correct any inaccuracies in that information. If you want more information about this please contact your local British Council office or the Data Protection Team at infogovernance@britishcouncil.org or see our website: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/privacy-cookies/data-protection>.

12. CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS

- The contracting authority is the British Council which includes any subsidiary companies and other organisations that control or are controlled by the British Council from time to time (see: www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/structure/status).
- Successful Indian applicants will be expected to undertake activities in the UK and successful UK applicants will be expected to undertake activities in India.
- The British Council's contractual approach in respect of the grant (Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement) ("Grant Agreement") is captured in the Downloads section of this call announcement. By submitting a response to this call for applications, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of these guidelines and the Grant Agreement without further negotiation or amendment.
- In the event of any concerns or queries in relation to the Grant Agreement, submit a clarification request to **Purti Kohli** (see section 13) in accordance with the provisions of this call for applications by the application deadline. The British Council reserves the right not to make any changes to the Grant Agreement.
- The British Council is under no obligation to consider any clarifications / amendments to the Grant Agreement requested following the application deadline.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

British Council – India

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Annexure 1: Eligibility Criteria Checklist

For UK Scholars - The UK Host Institution must be an eligible research institution or recognised higher education institution (list of eligible research institutes is provided under call announcement documents)	
For UK Scholars - Applicants are undertaking their PhD at an eligible research institution or recognised higher education institution (list of eligible research institutes is provided under call announcement documents)	
If applying for Life Sciences (other than INSPIRE Fellows), applicants should be in second or third year of your PhD at an Indian institution and meet eligibility criteria	
If an INSPIRE PhD Senior Research Fellow applying for STEM and Life Sciences subjects, applicants should be of batch 2016 and shall upload up to date progress report approved by supervisor at supporting information in online application format	
Scholar is in second or third year of PhD research.	
The application has been submitted by the applicant within the published deadline.	
The application has been submitted using the correct online application form.	
The applicant has enclosed the supplementary documents required, including confirmation from the host university that they will accept the scholar and support them with their research.	
The application form is completed in full and complies with instructions given.	
The application form and supporting documents have been completed in English.	
The applicant has submitted only one application under this call.	
The home institution is based either in India or UK.	
The mobility will take place as per details captured under 'Key Dates 'of Section 10.	

The applicant will return to their home institution to complete their PhD after the end of the visit (demonstrated via the supporting letter from the institution).	
The home institution is a recognised publicly funded research establishment or Higher Education Institution (can include private universities).	
The host institution is a recognised publicly funded research establishment or Higher Education Institution (can include private Universities).	
The applicant has not received a Newton-Bhabha PhD placement grant in previous rounds.	