



[REDACTED]

26 August 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00596

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 15 July in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I request the following information relating to the AEROSOL Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT):

1. Any records showing the average amount of UKRI funding, expenditure, or support attributable per Aerosol CDT student.
2. Any records held comparing the average funding or support per student for:
 - (a) Aerosol CDT students;
 - (b) students in other Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs);
 - (c) students in Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs); and
 - (d) standard UKRI-funded PhD studentships.
3. Any documents, business cases, briefing papers, or evaluations explaining the reasons for providing Aerosol CDT students with additional opportunities, including placements, cohort activities, training, networking opportunities, or other forms of support beyond those typically available to other doctoral students.
4. Any assessments, reviews, or evidence held by UKRI concerning whether the additional support provided through the CDT model results in improved outcomes compared with other forms of doctoral training.

Our response

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) does hold some information relevant to your request. Please see the information below.

Questions 1 and 2a

UKRI holds some information relevant to your request, specifically:

- The expected number of students associated with a CDT, as set out in the grant application (where available);
- The number of students recorded by research organisations against the grant to date; and
- UKRI funding awarded and expenditure recorded against a grant.

UKRI does not routinely calculate or hold information on the average amount of UKRI funding per student. Nor does it hold information on expenditure or support attributable per individual student. This is because funding for studentships is awarded to institutions rather than to individual students. This funding is intended to be used flexibly by institutions in accordance with their own strategic priorities and may be distributed across multiple studentships. As a result, UKRI does not hold student-level documentation relating to how individual institutions allocate or use this funding for specific studentships.

UKRI does, however, hold information on the overall funding awarded to the two Aerosol CDTs, and some information on the number of students on each CDT:

- For the CDT funded in 2019, grant reference EP/S023593/1, the total value is £7,145,761.95 and the total number of students recorded against the grant is 92.
- For the CDT funded in 2024, grant reference EP/Y034821/1, the total value is £8,784,090.15. The total number of students recorded against the grant to date is 34 for the first two cohorts; the expected number of students across the grant lifetime is 91.

Please note:

- The total grant value includes funding for CDT delivery and management, which cannot easily be attributed to individual students.
- The 2024 CDT only started in April 2024 and is expected to run until September 2032, including 3 cohorts that have not yet started. The total grant value is to cover all 5 cohorts.
- The cost per student has risen over time due to, for example, increases in the minimum fee and stipend rates set by UKRI.
- Grant values include additional funding provided by UKRI to reflect increases in the minimum UKRI fee and stipend rates.
- If a research organisation failed to enter students on time, our records would show nothing even if the students had in fact started.

For more information about Aerosol CDT grant awards, please see the information published on UKRI's [Gateway to Research \(GtR\) website](#).¹

To find the relevant grants, search their grant reference numbers: EP/S023593/1 and EP/Y034821/1.

Questions 2b-d

UKRI does not centrally record whether a grant is a Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) or a Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT). However, we do hold information on whether a grant is classified as a landscape award or a focal award. While these broadly correspond to DTPs and CDTs respectively, the two are not identical. For example, EPSRC doctoral landscape awards include industrial CASE and industrial doctoral landscape awards as well as DTPs and their successor university doctoral landscape awards. Further information on [UKRI's doctoral training investment framework](#) is available on our website.²

We have provided the requested data on average UKRI spend per student on the next page in **Table 1**.

Please note:

- Expenditure figures (Spend) has been rounded to the nearest £100,000.
- While it is practically possible to calculate average spend per student, it is limited in its representativeness of average UKRI spend. The total grant value includes funding for CDT delivery and management, which cannot easily be attributed to individual students.
- In preparing this response we have considered the risks of identifying individuals, therefore, in line with standard statistical reporting practice and our suppression policy, student numbers have been rounded to the nearest multiple of five to prevent identification as defined the first Data Protection Principle as defined under Section 86 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 5 of UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) of lawfulness, fairness and transparency. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.
- Student counts are presented as full-year equivalents (FYE), which represent the active student population in a given year weighted according to the proportion of the year for which funding was received. For example, a student funded for half a year would contribute 0.5 to the total.
- The data is based on the January 2026 snapshot of the UKRI database. It may not align with what is published in the [UKRI Doctoral Studentships and Fellowships, financial years 2015 to 2025 report](#)³, but represents the latest information available at this level of detail.

¹ <https://gtr.ukri.org/>

² [Doctoral training investment framework – UKRI](#)

³ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-doctoral-studentships-and-fellowships-financial-years-2015-to-2025/>

- These numbers represent students registered against these UKRI training grants. These numbers include co-funded students and are not weighted for co-funding. This means any average is the average UKRI contribution not the true average funding received per studentship.
- The table excludes students on other modes of funding where, for example, studentships are not the main focus of the grant.
- This dataset reflects UKRI's contribution through the training grant only. Therefore, the average shown is likely to be lower than the full economic cost of supporting a student at a research organisation. This is because many studentships receive additional funding from universities and other partners. The contribution of other UKRI funding, such as quality-related research funding in England for example, is also not available or included in the figures below. Consequently, the figures provided represent the full number of students supported by UKRI (including co-funded students), but only the training grant-funded element of that support.
- Figures for EPSRC exclude some awards administered by EPSRC from non-EPSRC funding, such as UKRI artificial intelligence CDTs.

Table 1: UKRI Net Spend for Focal and Landscape Awards

	Focal		Landscape	
	Net Spend	Active students (full year equivalent)	Net Spend	Active students (full year equivalent)
All UKRI				
2020-21	£106,700,000	6,195	£297,700,000	18,340
2021-22	£91,200,000	5,865	£283,800,000	18,175
2022-23	£96,700,000	5,485	£311,200,000	17,315
2023-24	£93,800,000	5,280	£329,100,000	16,865
2024-25	£107,900,000	5,190	£331,000,000	16,390
EPSRC				
2020-21	£92,100,000	4,995	£97,100,000	5,730
2021-22	£78,100,000	4,570	£101,500,000	5,865
2022-23	£83,200,000	4,175	£120,000,000	5,735
2023-24	£80,400,000	3,835	£120,200,000	5,445
2024-25	£94,400,000	3,665	£130,300,000	5,235

Question 3

UKRI does not hold any information in scope of this part of your request. Whilst Aerosol CDT may have provided some prospects such as cohort training as part of the opportunity, this information is not routinely recorded or collected by UKRI or EPSRC.

All UKRI-funded studentships are subject to the UKRI Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training, please [see here](#).⁴ This includes several of the activities you reference and are expected of any studentship irrespective of the specific training model or investment. The EPSRC CDT opportunity set up is unique in UKRI's portfolio in that the funding structure is different, but not necessarily the expectations.

⁴ [Statement of expectations for doctoral training – UKRI](#)

For more information about EPSRC Centres for Doctoral Training, please see:

- [EPSRC Centres for Doctoral Training – UKRI](#)⁵
- [Review of EPSRC-funded doctoral education – UKRI](#)⁶

For more information about UKRI evaluation reports, please see: [Evaluation reports – UKRI](#).⁷

Question 4

UKRI does not hold any information relating to assessments, reviews, or evidence concerning whether the additional support provided through the CDT model results in improved outcomes compared with other forms of doctoral training as this information is not routinely recorded or collected.

While it is possible that other research councils that are part of UKRI may have undertaken comparative activity, studentships on different grant types are not considered to be comparable. Universities may choose to organise training in cohorts even when funding was not formally issued for a cohort-based training programme and students funded by non-CDT grants may have access to the training and experiences provided by a CDT programme.

As advised earlier in our response, UKRI has published a [statement of expectations for doctoral training](#)⁸, which may be of interest. However, no further information is held in relation to policy guidelines or frameworks to advise institutions on mitigating social, physical or resource disparities between CDT-funded students and students that are not part of CDTs.

Your rights

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance
Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see [UKRI's complaints procedure](#)⁹.

Yours sincerely,

Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org

⁵ [EPSRC Centres for Doctoral Training – UKRI](#)

⁶ [Review of EPSRC-funded doctoral education – UKRI](#)

⁷ [Evaluation reports – UKRI](#)

⁸ [Statement of expectations for doctoral training – UKRI](#)

⁹ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>