



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

# Call for Queen's Collaborative Studentship Applications



## Background

Queen's has an excellent track-record of collaborating with industry, public organisations, and the third sector to successfully deliver impactful, user-informed research. To support the development of these collaborations, the University will commit **up to 23 studentships** (20 funded by the Department for the Economy NI, 3 funded by the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council Doctoral Training Programme), **commencing in October 2020**, for projects across the Institution that will significantly involve working with a non-academic partner.

The projects **require** engagement with a non-academic **collaborating body**. The collaborating body should be jointly involved in devising the research programme. Additionally, each project requires:

- The student to be jointly supervised by a named person from the collaborating body;
- The student to spend at least three months with the collaborating partner who should pay any associated travel, accommodation or subsistence costs; and
- The external partner to demonstrate their commitment to the project through a matched cash or in-kind contribution. **NB:** For-profit partners must contribute direct funding to the project of **at least £27k** over the course of the project.

Partnerships with private sector industry, government departments, agencies and voluntary sector organisations that meet the above criteria will all be considered.

Clarification on any aspect of the eligibility of a partnership should be sought from the appropriate Business Alliance team member below.

## Duration and funding

The studentships will have the normal conditions for Department for the Economy awards. DfE studentships are for 3 years. EPSRC DTP studentships within QUB provide funding for 3.5 years. Studentships include a Research, Training and Support Grant.

## Applicant Eligibility

Any member of academic staff that is eligible to be principal supervisor for a PhD studentship may apply. Multidisciplinary applications are welcome.

## Student Eligibility

Student eligibility criteria for DfE-funded studentships can be accessed [here](#).

Student eligibility criteria for EPSRC DTP studentships can be accessed [here](#).

In each case, a full award of stipend and fees is available to EU/UK citizens that satisfy a requirement of three years' residency in the UK prior to the commencement of the studentship.

## Commencement

All studentships are expected to start by **October 2020**. A successful award not commenced by December 2020 will be re-allocated.

## Further Funding

Successful investigators will be expected to pursue further collaborative funding opportunities with the collaborating body to maximise the benefit of the award.

## Allocation Process

The current call will be used to allocate studentships across the University, with assessment overseen by a senior academic judging panel with cross-Faculty representation. EPSRC-relevant applications will be allocated to EPSRC studentships in the first instance, until these places are filled, and then will compete for the DfE funded positions. Applicants should apply using the application form below and within the following timeline.

Competition Opens	18 October 2019
<b>Competition Closes</b>	<b>20 December 2019</b>
Decision to Applicants	w/c 20 January 2020

Please send applications to [businessalliance@qub.ac.uk](mailto:businessalliance@qub.ac.uk) with subject line “2020 Collaborative Studentship Competition”.

Applications will be reviewed and ranked using the following criteria:

- Quality of the proposed project;
- Benefits to the student experience;
- Alignment with institutional (Queen’s) and funder research priorities;
- Potential for studentship to enhance the relationship with the partner;
- Potential for impact on the partner’s business / organisation.

Depending on level response to this call, we may make a further call for collaborative studentships in January 2020, in order to be responsive to developing collaboration opportunities.

## Evidence of Partner Commitment

Letters of support confirming the commitment from prospective partners are **mandatory, and should be submitted along with the application.**

Discussions with prospective partners should set appropriate expectations with respect to partner contribution to project costs, the ownership of any foreground Intellectual Property Rights (retained by the University) and reserved rights for publication and academic activity.

Letters of support should indicate:

- The relevance of the research to the partner, and their commitment to the project;
- Their commitment to both the financial contribution and the additional costs of hosting the student during periods of placement;
- Their acceptance that the project will require a collaboration agreement covering intellectual property rights and publications, which will be provided by Queen’s.

## Collaboration Agreement

A collaboration agreement is not required at the application stage but will be required for successful projects, and should be completed by 31st March 2020. Queen’s has developed a template collaborative

studentship agreement that is in line with funder guidelines on ownership of any foreground Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and reserved rights for publication and academic activity. To avoid delay in commencing the project, it is expected that this template will be used for the awarded studentships, and negotiation of the terms will only happen in exceptional circumstances. Information on the template is available from the Business Alliance Team.

**Where the collaborating partner has not signed a collaboration agreement by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the studentship may be withdrawn.**

### **Business Alliance Support**

The Business Alliance Team is available to facilitate discussions with prospective partners, securing partner commitment and to assist in agreeing an appropriate collaboration agreement. For assistance in any aspect of this competition please contact:

Agri-food and Nutrition	Dr Ann McMahon	T: x2579; E: <a href="mailto:ann.mcmahon@qub.ac.uk">ann.mcmahon@qub.ac.uk</a>
AHSS	Mr Kevin Fearon	T: x2589; E: <a href="mailto:k.fearon@qub.ac.uk">k.fearon@qub.ac.uk</a>
EPS	Dr Stephen McCabe	T: x1442; E: <a href="mailto:stephen.mccabe@qub.ac.uk">stephen.mccabe@qub.ac.uk</a>
Medicine and Health	Dr Marie-Louise Cairns	T: x1397; E: <a href="mailto:m.cairns@qub.ac.uk">m.cairns@qub.ac.uk</a>
Head of Business Alliance	Dr Dermot Leonard	T: x3990; E: <a href="mailto:dermot.leonard@qub.ac.uk">dermot.leonard@qub.ac.uk</a>

## 2020 Collaborative Studentship Application Form

### **Section 1: Project Title**

**Please provide a brief, descriptive, title for your project:**

**Embedding spatial data in local government using web-based geoportals: a case study of Belfast City Council**

### **Section 2: Principal Investigator Details:**

**Name: Chris Lloyd**

**School: Natural and Built Environment**

**E-mail: c.lloyd@qub.ac.uk**

**Phone: x5283**

### **Section 3: Project Description**

**Please describe the objectives of the project and how it aligns with your research and any relevant institutional priorities (limit of 500 words):**

Spatial data have a crucial role to play in service delivery and in assessing challenges faced by people living in particular neighbourhoods. In local government in the UK, levels of expertise in working with such data vary markedly. In most local authorities (LAs) there are Geographical Information Systems (GIS) experts who undertake work for policy teams using spatial data, but the use of GIS and spatial data is not fully embedded into the large majority of LAs. A crucial step in opening up the use of spatial data across LAs is the provision of easy-to-use tools for the interrogation of spatial data which, where appropriate, are linked to key policy or strategy areas. The project is closely aligned with an existing programme of work being undertaken by QUB and Belfast City Council (BCC) under the banner of the Geospatial Analysis Area Working Group (AWG). This work includes (1) development of a prototype spatial data portal which acts as a repository for data used by BCC staff, and (2) a series of 'insight pieces' which act as case studies where spatial data are used to answer key questions linked to core policy and strategy areas. The outputs from these case studies provide findings of direct relevance for monitoring and developing service delivery, but they also serve as exemplars to highlight the potential of spatial data in shaping decision making. The spatial data portal has been developed using an open source software environment called GeoNode; this enables registered users to upload spatial data, while anyone can view, query and download the data and make maps. This is appropriate for occasional users and those who require only simple visualisations. For many users a much greater degree of interactivity would be desirable, and for non-expert users for whom spatial data could play a key role, it is vital that available tools and the interface used are designed with specific decision making frameworks in mind. The proposed project will explore technical solutions to addressing this challenge – it will develop guidance and tools which can be used by staff across BCC to aid them in making best use of spatial data in decision making. The main objectives of the project are to: (i) undertake a systematic review of major web-based mapping platforms, (ii) identify one or more platforms which could meet the diverse needs of users in BCC, (iii) identify a small set of well-defined case studies which could serve as demonstrators, (iv) using the selected platform and case studies, construct a prototype BCC spatial data platform, (v) undertake user testing within BCC to refine the platform, and (vi) use the platform to undertake a set of exemplar studies which can be used to develop guidance for BCC staff. The project aligns with QUB priorities on working with the local community and this programme of work is strongly supported by Public Engagement in QUB.

## 2020 Collaborative Studentship Application Form

### **Section 4: Project Partner**

**Organisation name: Belfast City Council      Contact name: Gareth Downey**  
**Contact e-mail: DowneyG@belfastcity.gov.uk      Contact phone: 028 9091 8773**

### **Relationship with Partner Organisation**

**Please detail the nature and extent of the relationship with the Project Partner (limit of 200 words):**

There is a well-developed and strengthening link between QUB and Belfast City Council (BCC). Four members of staff within the Centre for GIS and Geomatics are members of the QUB-BCC Geospatial Analysis Area Working Group (AWG). The group is working with BCC policy staff to produce case studies which demonstrate the value of spatial data and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in managing Council facilities and targeting resources. The value of this work is recognised at the highest levels of the Council. Research findings and plans have been presented to multiple groups within the Council and at a Joint Management Meeting of BCC and QUB, with the Chief Executive of BCC and the VC present. BCC have already committed £40,000 to the associated programme of work over the coming year and a further sum (likely £75,000) over the following year. The proposed project would become a major part of this programme of work and would go some way to matching the financial commitments made by BCC. The student will have an office space in BCC and they will regularly work in this space so as to develop a close working relationship with technical and policy staff in BCC.

### **Benefits to the Partnership from the Project**

**Please detail how the Project will (1) Benefit the Partner's business (2) Generate further collaboration with the Partner (limit of 200 words):**

- (1) The project will make a major contribution to Belfast City Council's joint programme of work with QUB which seeks to fully embed spatial data and GIS within the functions of the Council. The potential impact of the project is considerable – the platform developed could, in conjunction with the existing joint QUB-BCC work, become the technical basis for monitoring interventions and for decision making across much of the council.
- (2) The project would open up the possibility for further collaboration with the Council by offering new approaches to making the best use of data in shaping strategy and informing decision making. In particular, the project could be a key component in a future bid for research funding (likely via the ESRC). Outputs from a project focused specifically on spatial data portals and links to strategy/policy would be a core component in any future larger project, and a PhD offers the ideal setting for this element of the work.

## 2020 Collaborative Studentship Application Form

### **Section 5: Student training and experience**

**Please describe how the student will benefit from an enhanced and integrated training experience. What facilities, training and expertise will be made available over and above the academic setting alone? (Limit of 200 words).**

The student will become a member of the Centre for GIS and Geomatics in the School of Natural and Built Environment. As a member of the Centre, they will have access to an array of software packages and training facilities. They will also be included in the programme of GIS training being developed jointly between QUB and Belfast City Council. The student will also become a member of the QUB-BCC Geospatial Analysis Area Working Group and they will benefit from the expertise of the group members (comprising QUB academic and technical staff and BCC analysts).

Please send applications, **along with the Letter of Support** from the partner organisation, to:

[businessalliance@qub.ac.uk](mailto:businessalliance@qub.ac.uk)

Subject line: "2020 Collaborative Studentship Competition"

By: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019