NDA PhD Bursary Call 2017:

Additional Information

Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be assessed by a group of nuclear industry specialists using the following assessment criteria:

1. *Strategic fit* – how does the proposal complement life cycle plans across the NDA estate?
The proposal must show how the research will link into the lifetime plan or Technical Baseline and underpinning Research and Development (TBuRD) of more than one site in the NDA estate. If your proposal is primarily aimed at delivering a benefit to skills in one of the named areas, then you must show how that skill will be utilised by the NDA or it's Site Licence Companies (SLCs).

2. *Economic* – how does the proposal encourage cost reduction or add value across the estate?
If possible your proposal should indicate the cost savings, benefits or value of any new IP that the NDA or its SLCs will gain. Cost savings and benefits to lifetime plans could come from the reduction of the hazard potential or acceleration of plans to deal with materials and wastes within the NDA estate. Additionally, you can show how your proposal underpins strategic decision making either by the NDA, its SLCs or the regulators. Please ensure that you show the value of any additional research that will be linked into your proposal (e.g. from research councils).

3. *Skills and Capabilities* – how does the proposal complement the NDA people and skills strategy?
See the link (http://www.nda.gov.uk/publication/people-and-skills-strategy/?download). This call names five thematic areas that are necessary to meet the needs of the NDA and its SLCs. The proposal needs to show how the current level of skills and capability within the area that matches your research will be changed and how that change will benefit the NDA or its SLCs. For a list of the current NDA funded PhD research projects please see the following site: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nda-direct-research-portfolio-drp-projects-quarterly-update.

4. *Quality of research* – how is the proposal creative and innovative, addressing key research challenges?
The proposal must demonstrate that research of the highest quality will be undertaken by a world-leading team. The research programme should be ambitious, creative and innovative, addressing key research challenges and aiming to increase the fundamental understanding in your area. It should clearly state why the challenges are ambitious; applicants should set the proposed research in context in terms of the current state of knowledge and other work underway in the field.

5. *Impact of research* – how will you ensure that the maximum impact of the research is realised?
The proposal must demonstrate how the results of the research will be deployed within the NDA estate. Clearly state what involvement will be required from the NDA and its SLCs, or other industry partners, in order to apply the results.

Further background information (e.g TBuRD documents) can be found on the websites of the SLCs. The following links provide a starting point for obtaining relevant guidance on NDA estate issues (other relevant documents are available for the respective SLC organisations):

- Magnox Sites Integrated Decommissioning and Waste Strategy (IWS): https://magnoxsites.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/S-036-Issue-5-July-2014-published-version.pdf

- Sellafield Site Plan: http://www.sellafieldsites.com/publications/sellafieldplan/Sellafield_Plan.pdf

- Dounreay Lifetime Plan: http://www.dounreay.com/UserFiles/File/Lifetime%20Plan%20etc/2008_Dounreay_TBURD_free_release_issue_1_25_9_08.pdf

- Winfrith site time-line: https://magnoxsites.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/J5965-Magnox-Winfrith-Timeline-Brochure-Digital-V4-120315LR.pdf

- LLW Repository Ltd Plan: http://llwrsite.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/LLW9094_Plan.pdf

- AWE Sustainability Plan (2012-2030): http://www.awe.co.uk/app/uploads/2014/07/SustainabilityPlan-2012-2030.pdf

- EDF Policy on Decommissioning and Waste: https://www.edfenergy.com/sites/default/files/V2%20C06%20Spent%20Fuel%20and%20Radioactive%20Waste%20Management.pdf

- RWM published Science and Technology Plan (NDA/RWM/121)

- NDA has also produced a summary document highlighting current R&D needs, see https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/nuclear-decommissioning-authority/about/research . Also the 5-year roadmap to 2019: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nda-research-and-development-5-year-plan-2014-to-2019.

Additional information will be made available on the NNL web site at the following URL:
www.nnl.co.uk/ndabursary

This will include information from a planned series of on-line seminars that will be held across the late summer/ early autumn of 2015.

Selection Process

The following process will be used to assess proposals:

1. All valid proposals must be submitted using the application form available from the NNL website, www.nnl.co.uk. All fields in the application form must be completed according to the instructions.
2. Proposals should indicate **one** of the thematic areas (A-E) that best identifies the area of greatest potential impact for the research. Proposals that fall outside of these five themes should be submitted against the open theme (F).
3. All proposals must be sent to phdbursary@nnl.co.uk by 15:00 on **Friday 21st October 2016.** Proposals submitted after this time will not be accepted.
4. Further information on the scheme the assessment criteria and selection process is also available by contacting Dr Mark Bankhead directly (mark.bankhead@nnl.co.uk).
5. Proposals will be assessed by a group of nuclear industry specialists, who will make a recommendation to the NDA. The assessment will be based on the technical merits of the proposal using the criteria outlined above and the cost and evidence of leverage stated on the application form.
6. It is expected that at least one proposal will be supported from within each of the thematic areas.
7. All applicants will receive a letter stating whether the proposal:
   a. was successful and will be funded,
   b. was thought to be of value by the reviewers but may be more appropriate for specific SLC funding than the NDA bursary scheme,
   c. was thought to be of value but could not be funded due to the limited funds available
   d. failed to provide sufficient justification against one or more of the criteria,

Feedback on unsuccessful proposals will be provided on request.

It is expected that the outcome of the competition will be announced in early January 2017.

Contractual arrangements will then need to be made with NNL, who are acting on behalf of the NDA. The contract will need to be finalised promptly as the expectation will be for a student to be recruited to the project before the end of December 2017, and no later than 1st October 2018.

Additional information

Applicants should be aware that NDA may wish to publish the summaries of successful bursary projects (either on the NDA web site or in NDA publications or reports as applicable).

NDA has contracted NNL to be industrial supervisors of the Bursary and Case Award students they are funding. For each student:

- A project supervisor will be appointed from within the NNL. This supervisor will be expected to make a number of visits to the student annually (at least 1 per-year) to check on progress. The NNL supervisor will report progress to the NDA. In addition, the NNL industrial supervisor will be on call to answer any student queries.

- Progress reports must be submitted to NNL in accordance with the contractual terms and conditions.

- A seminar will be held annually, where all of the NDA funded students will have the opportunity to present their projects to the NDA and industrial stakeholders. The academic supervisor will also be invited to attend. The seminar is an excellent opportunity for the students to raise the profile of their work and to create contacts who may both assist in giving focus/direction and in offering employment in the future.

- An invite will be sent for a group visit, with other students studying in a similar topic area, either to a nuclear site or a suitable location, to see something of interest and/or meet with industrial stakeholders, this will typically happen around Aug - Oct.

- A 1:1 meeting will be held annually with the NNL industrial supervisor at a nuclear site to see something of interest and/or meet with industrial stakeholders, this will typically happen around Sept - Dec. Alternatively annually a group meeting may be arranged involving industrial supervisors and PhD students within a specific programme theme.

Additional travel and subsistence costs for students attending these sessions will not be provided by either NDA or NNL and should be accounted for within the budget estimate of the proposal submission.

Contractual requirements and Terms and Conditions

All PhD awards under the 2017 scheme are to be placed under the NNL standard university contract. A copy of this contract is available on request). Please contact phdbursary@nnl.co.uk for further information.