Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

Yorkshire MedTech
Place-Based Impact Accelerator

EPSRC Place Based Impact Acceleration Account

Innovating Medical Technologies Across the Yorkshire Region

Secondment Scheme Guidance Notes

1. Background

The Place Based Impact Acceleration Account (PBIAA) is an EPSRC scheme providing four years of funding to support a programme of impact activities within a research and innovation cluster. This PBIAA is based on the medical technologies (MedTech) cluster in the Yorkshire region and will support the translation of university research into new clinical products and services. The funding supports projects and training activities that accelerate impact from university research.

This document outlines the PBIAA Secondment scheme, including the scope of the funding and how to apply. Secondments will be allocated following an application and peer review process.

2. Aims of the Secondment Scheme

The aim of the secondment scheme is to support rapid knowledge exchange and develop the innovation skills of medical technology researchers in the Yorkshire region.

Applications to this scheme must address at least one of the following objectives:

1. To support knowledge exchange between academic and non-academic partners within the Yorkshire regional MedTech cluster
2. To develop specific innovation and translational skills
3. To progress technologies arising from University research towards commercialisation and clinical application

This scheme is not intended to support basic research.

3. Application Guidelines

Scope: All secondments must support activities relating to medical technologies. Medical technologies are defined as devices[1], tools and machines used for the diagnosis, prevention, monitoring, treatment or alleviation of disease, injury, or disability. The scope does not extend to biopharmaceuticals, or technologies used only for wellbeing/fitness. Computational methods including AI approaches may form part of a medical technology and secondments related to these technologies can be supported, however, they should not be for the purpose of data analysis or training of AI tools.

[1] Note: Medical devices are a subset of medical technologies. According to the Medical Devices Regulations 2002 (UK MDR 2002), medical devices are described as 'any instrument, apparatus, appliance, software, material or other article, whether used alone or in combination, together with any accessories, including the software intended by its manufacturer to be used specifically for diagnosis or therapeutic purposes or both and necessary for its proper application.' Further details are here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/medical-devices-how-to-comply-with-the-legal-requirements

Secondments must be aligned with the overall aim of the PBIAA to support MedTech innovation within the Yorkshire region. As such, both the secondee and host organisations would usually be based within the region. Applications will be considered where one party is outside the region if a case can be made that the skills developed or knowledge exchanged will benefit the Yorkshire regional MedTech sector.

Duration: Secondments can be full time or part time. A full-time equivalent (FTE) period of up to three months can be supported by the PBIAA, but longer secondments will be considered where the additional time is supported and funded by an external partner (e.g. the host company).

Outgoing secondments provide an opportunity for University-funded staff including academics, researchers, research and innovation support staff to broaden their experience, supporting:

- Knowledge transfer with external partners
- The acquisition of new knowledge and skills
- The development of new collaborations
- Access to unique laboratories and facilities
- Technology progression

Applications for outgoing secondments normally should be led and submitted by the proposed secondee, i.e. a University employee based at a Higher Education Institution within the Yorkshire Region. Where the secondee is not eligible to be a budget holder, then the application must be approved and submitted by a member of academic staff (e.g. the line manager or supervisor). The scheme can support teaching buy-out to allow researchers to spend time at the partner organisation.

For all outgoing personnel, it is critical that the secondment/placement does not impact on the delivery of their existing commitments, and this should be managed with any current sponsor (e.g., via a project extension) and agreed by the line manager and Head of Department or Service.

PhD Students and Post-doctoral Researchers

The funding cannot be used to support students (including PhD students) during their full-time study, but PhD students who have completed their funded period of study, or who wish to suspend their study for the period of the secondment, are eligible to apply. Post-doctoral researchers are eligible to apply, but must discuss and agree arrangements with their line manager prior to application.

Please note that international PhD students should ensure secondments align with the stipulations of their student visa with regard to number of hours worked per week.

Host organisations can include:

- Industrial companies and enterprises – providing an appreciation of commercial priorities, market drivers, health economics, manufacturing constraints
- Innovation teams – offering knowledge and expertise in progressing medical technology opportunities

- Technology intermediaries, including regulatory bodies
- Hospitals and other healthcare providers – supporting insight into clinical needs
- Civic partners including the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Incoming secondments enable individual academics or research teams within Higher Education Institutions within the Yorkshire region to host clinicians, industrialists or innovation specialists. The rationale for incoming secondments will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, but might include facilitating new collaborations with clinicians or industry to enhance knowledge and skills, or to work on a specific problem to progress a medical technology opportunity.

Applications for incoming secondments should be led and submitted by the proposed host, i.e. the staff member based at one of the HEIs within the Yorkshire region. For incoming personnel, applicants must discuss secondment/placement preparations with their local administrative and HR teams to ensure correct arrangements are put in place prior to the start of the project, e.g., access to buildings/systems necessary to carry out the project.

4. Costs

The maximum funding that can be requested for the secondment is £12,000 apart from in exceptional circumstances that must be discussed and agreed in advance of the application process. Applicants should provide a costing with their proposal that must be prepared in conjunction with the relevant research finance office at their university. Successful projects will have an account set up for these costs. You will need to provide full financial details and justification for all the costs, including salary costs, travel and subsistence costs, and any additional consumables or fees associated with the secondment.

Awards will only cover the direct costs associated with the secondment. VAT must be included in the figures as the University cannot reclaim VAT from this project.

Eligible costs:

Outgoing secondments: Funding can be used to support salary costs of the secondee, provided the secondee is not a permanent member of academic staff. The scheme can also be used to support teaching or administrative buy-out (i.e. through the provision of replacement cover for these duties) to allow academic staff to spend time at the partner organisation.

Incoming secondments: For incoming secondments, the PBIAA would not normally support salary costs, but can provide support for additional costs incurred by the host or secondee to facilitate the secondment (e.g. travel costs).

***All secondments*:** Funding can be used for additional costs incurred by the secondee such as travel and consumables where the case can be made that they are necessary for the delivery of the secondment and cannot be provided by the host.

Ineligible costs:

The following costs are not eligible to be funded through the PBIAA (but could be funded by the external collaborator or an internal fund if appropriate):

- × Support for new, fundamental research, or to top-up funding for pre-existing projects.
- × Non-specific public engagement activities and science communication.
- × Any costs relating to intellectual property protection including but not limited to registering, maintaining, or supporting patents or property rights
- × Items of equipment
- × Laptops, i-pads etc. unless robust justification is provided
- × Undergraduate or masters level activities, or core PhD costs including stipend, training, tuition or bench fees
- × Any costs relating to Intellectual Property protection including but not limited to registering, maintaining, or supporting patents or property rights.
- × Indirect costs, estates, or infrastructure

Costs associated with attendance at workshops / conferences will be considered but must be detailed in the justification of resources section of the application and be directly related to the aims of the secondment.

5. Example scenarios

A PhD student who has completed their period of study and is in the final stage of their thesis submission wishes to second to a local MedTech SME who are in the process of gaining regulatory approval for one of their products. The student will learn more about the regulatory process and the evidence needed for a submission, building their expertise and future employability. In turn, the student will be able to provide technical support for the company based on their PhD research that is not currently available within the SME. The funding would be used to pay the salary of the student for the duration of the secondment.

A post-doctoral research associate employed on a fixed-term government-funded project wishes to second to a regional hospital to shadow clinical practitioners. The PDRA is working on a computational modelling technique that has potential applications in surgical planning. The secondment will help identify the specific requirements for the application as well as gain greater insight of clinical need to help shape their future research activities. The funding will pay for part of the PDRA's time over a period of six months, enabling their current contract to be extended to ensure they are still able to deliver on their current project.

A researcher with a permanent contract at the university seeks to second out to the NHS to learn more about the current standard of care in the stroke rehabilitation patient pathway. This will help them to further refine the use case and user acceptability of their assistive technology solution. The secondment can fund a buy-out of their teaching or administrative related responsibilities for the period of the secondment to more readily create time in their schedule to undertake the placement.

A clinician is looking to overcome the limitations of current methods to detect and treat post-surgical acquired infections and has started work on their own prototype wound dressing which could form a future spinout. To improve the innovation they would like to learn more about novel techniques for developing advanced wound dressings and applies to spend a 3 month secondment at a Yorkshire university. The funding will be used for their travel and subsistence as well as consumables used in the laboratory during their placement.

A company that manufactures endoscopes is seeking a secondment for one of its employees to a Yorkshire based university to learn more about soft robotic assembly which could increase the flexibility of their product. The lead academic at the institution hosting the secondment applies via the PBIAA. The placement will support knowledge exchange in the form of expertise sharing with the company, they plan to follow on the placement with a KTP to further embed knowhow into the company. The funding will be used for the travel and subsistence of the secondee as well as consumables that are needed for the lab work, which will be fully justified in the application.

6. Calls and evaluation processes

The call for secondments is a rolling call, but please note final submissions need to be made no later than June 2027 for secondments lasting 3 months full time. Those wishing to spread their secondment across a longer period are advised to consider applying by December 2026. Applications will be considered either at the next PBIAA Impact Project panel or by the PBIAA Executive. If necessary, the panel/Executive can request further clarification from the applicant prior to making a decision.

To apply:

- Submit the short 'intention to submit' form available on the PBIAA website. This will be reviewed by the PBIAA team, who may wish to discuss the proposed secondment before proceeding. The team will then provide you with the relevant full application form.
- Submit the signed electronic copy of the completed application form as a pdf to pbiaa@leeds.ac.uk .

7. Funding Conditions

All successful secondment applicants agree to submit a report on completion of the project (as described in Reporting Requirements) and will be expected to participate in future capacity building events and public engagement activities to share their experience and develop expertise.

An appropriate collaboration agreement must be in place between collaborating partners. External collaborators must have been vetted by the host university through a Risk Review Process before the project commences and funding is released.

For secondments requiring the deployment of a researcher during the lifetime of a pre-existing grant, the consequence of any delays to the delivery of that grant should be managed and mitigated against before the project starts. Any extension to the pre-existing grant must be discussed and agreed with

the funder before the PBIAA-funded project takes place. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to liaise with the funder of any pre-existing grant regarding any extension arrangements.

If a no cost extension is required for the secondment, a request should be made to the PBIAA Portfolio team, pbiaa@leeds.ac.uk , accompanied by appropriate justification. Requests for extensions beyond the end of the PBIAA funding period (31st July 2028) will not be permitted.

Successful applicants must inform the PBIAA Portfolio team pbiaa@leeds.ac.uk if they are awarded funding from other schemes to support the same or similar activities.

8. Reporting Requirements

Report templates will be provided to successful applicants, comprising a final report and a rolling record annually thereafter. The reports required for the secondment are:

- **A Completion Report** within 2 months of the secondment completion date, outlining how the objectives of the secondment and the relevant KPIs have been met, and future plans.
- **Annual Reports** will be required for three years following completion, tracking how the objectives of the secondment and KPIs are progressing alongside any new or unexpected developments since completion.
- Applicants will also be required to support the annual tracking of outcomes and impacts from PBIAA-funded activities through **Researchfish®**.

For information the outputs, outcomes, and impact measures that UKRI ask us to report on are detailed in Appendix 2. By accepting the award, the applicants agree to engage with the Innovation and Business Development team to monitor project progress both during the life of the project and post project to allow the reporting of outcomes and capture of impact. This will include making non-confidential aspects available to assist with the development of case studies.

Appendix 2: Key Performance indicators for the PBIAA Award and targets set out in the proposal

Activities	
Translational projects	135 projects (40 proof of concept, 45 proof of feasibility, 50 proof of market/due diligence of which: all with clinical partner, 50 with industrial partner (40 with SMEs); 25 with >1 academic group; 30 with non-consortia HEIs
Events and training	12 events (annual showcase and co-delivered workshops), and 16 training activities to facilitate knowledge exchange and impact
Secondments	20 outward or inward secondments to support knowledge exchange
Public/patient	30 discrete PPIEP activities of which 20 targeted at patients
Collaborations	50 new collaborations (academic-academic, academic-industry, academic-clinical)
Additional funding	
Contributions to PBIAA	Total support from industry (£500k cash, £500k in kind), HEIs (£900k staff), civic partners [combined authorities and NHS organisations] (£400k staff)
Follow-on	£10m further public sector support secured
Outputs outcomes and impact	
During PBIAA	200 publications, 30 new prototypes or pilots developed; 15 products advanced to higher TRLs through licencing or spinout companies.
Follow-on	£10m of secured downstream private sector investment
By 2035	By 2035 this will result in 10 new MedTech products or services on the market (additional £200m revenue) that go on to benefit 2m patients
People trained	
	600 people trained through PBIAA-supported knowledge exchange and training events; 200 staff actively involved in the delivery of PBIAA supported activities including 100 early career researchers.
Partnerships and support	
Support	200 research concepts supported through advice from the PBIAA team, including facilitation of 50 face-to-face discussions with companies and investors
Partnerships	30 new partners participating in collaborative proposals leading to 20 continuing after initial PBIAA supported activity and £1m of additional commercial investment in HEIs (e.g. through studentships or facilities)