

# Guidance document: CREDS interdisciplinary energy demand studentships – call for supervisors

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## Overview

**Call type:** full application for prospective supervisors of doctoral students

**Closing date:** 4pm, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**Positions available:** Up to six fully-funded home student, doctoral studentships.

**How to apply:** This is a single stage process, open to applicants who propose to supervise doctoral students on inter-disciplinary, energy demand topics at UK universities that form part of the consortium of the Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions (CREDS).

**Assessment process:** Full proposals will be reviewed by independent, experienced supervisors of doctoral students in fields related to the proposed topic, and final decisions made by an independent panel. This process for CREDS funding support is separate from, and additional to, the process for student admission to the proposed host university.

## Timeline

Dates	Activity
18 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	Open Call
9 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	Webinar at 4pm (check website for details)
4 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	Applications close at 4pm
11 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	Proposals to assessors
9 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Assessment deadline
18 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Panel meeting
6 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	Applicants notified

## Contacts

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Sarah Higginson, Research Knowledge Exchange Manager, CREDS ([sarah.higginson@ouce.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.higginson@ouce.ox.ac.uk))

## Background

Energy demand reduction has been a key factor in the reduction of UK carbon dioxide emissions since 2004. Major further reductions are possible and will be needed, as part of a transformation of the energy system in a net-zero carbon society, to deliver the goals of the Paris Agreement and UK carbon budgets. Moreover, a low carbon energy system will be increasingly reliant upon inflexible and variable electricity generation, and therefore demand will need to become more flexible. Reducing demand will also form a critical part of responses to the affordability and security challenges.

These challenges have far-reaching implications for technology, business models, social practices and policy. UK Research and Innovation and its constituent Research Councils recognise the value and importance of continued inter-disciplinary research in this area. Through the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the UKRI Energy Programme has funded [the Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions \(CREDS\)](#) for the period April 2018 to December 2023 and plans a similar investment for the following 5 years.

CREDS is a large inter-disciplinary research programme and acts as the hub for energy demand research in UK universities. The consortium extends across more than 20 universities and has headquarters at the University of Oxford. It leads whole systems work on energy demand, collaborating with a wider community both at home and internationally. It aims to:

- deliver globally-leading research on energy demand,
- secure much greater impact for energy demand research and
- champion the importance of energy demand for delivering environmental, social and economic goals.

EPSRC, as part of supporting doctoral research in the UK, provides funding to Doctoral Training Partnerships in UK universities. Where research income relates to large, multi-institutional awards, such as CREDS, studentships are ring-fenced for that award and may be held in any of the award's partner universities.

Through this process the EPSRC Doctoral Training Partnership award to the University of Oxford (grant reference EP/T517811/1 and EP/W524311/1), has funding for up to six home doctoral studentships linked to CREDS, and this number may be increased if additional funding is awarded by EPSRC. These awards may be held in any CREDS institution (see [Annex](#) for list).

## The Competition

Through this call, CREDS invites applications for suitable topics for inter-disciplinary doctoral energy demand research studentships. Applications should be from a prospective primary

supervisor employed in a university that is a participant in the CREDS consortium. The current list of CREDS universities is in the Annex.

Applications will include a four-page research proposal.

Successful applicants will be expected to recruit a suitable student through their universities' own procedures for doctoral student admission.

CREDS will operate the application process for the selection of topics. Applicants may propose support for research on any topic relevant to [End Use Energy Demand as defined by UKRI](#). The research should be interdisciplinary.

CREDS defines 'energy demand' broadly, to include any driver of demand for energy services, the efficiency of delivery of those services, the temporal or spatial patterns of energy use and/or the fuels used, as well as the technical, behavioural, social, economic and/or policy issues associated with energy demand. It includes research into the practices and behaviours that produce the demand for energy services, energy efficiency technologies deployed at the point of energy use, non-technical measures to reduce demand, technologies and other measures to increase the flexibility of energy demand, and measures taken to implement the use of low and zero carbon energy fuels and energy vectors. It includes research in all energy using sectors including the built environment, transport and industry.

The proposed research may therefore potentially interact with parts of the existing CREDS research programme that is described on the [CREDS website](#). Applicants are encouraged to seek and explain synergies with that programme.

Successful applicants will recruit a suitable student to start doctoral studies in the academic year 2023/24. The student will be encouraged to participate in networking activities of the successor consortium to CREDS funded by UKRI for the period from July 2023.

## Funding eligibility

Funded students will be supervised by successful applicants to this call and will have been accepted as a student at the applicant's university. The timescales of this application process are intended to allow student recruitment for a 2023/24 academic year start date.

The awards are subject to the UKRI rules. Due to the outcome of last year's call, students funded under this call will be restricted to those eligible for home studentships.

## Application content

Applications should contain the following sections:

- a completed application form

- a research proposal (up to four pages) which sets out the research topic, the aims of the research, the background to it, its novelty and the research methods;
- a statement (up to 2 pages) from the prospective host university about supervisory and training arrangements and any other information relevant to assessing the quality of the academic environment;

Submissions should be in 'Arial' or other San Serif font of size 11 or higher, and margin size of at least 2cm. All of the sections should be combined into a single PDF file for submission.

Applications should be sent by email to [credsadmin@ouce.ox.ac.uk](mailto:credsadmin@ouce.ox.ac.uk), including 'EPSRC Studentship Supervisor application' in the email header, to arrive by **4pm on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022**.

## Information for host institutions and supervisors

Supervisory arrangements should conform to the normal standards of the host institution. Joint supervision arrangements are welcome, including joint or secondary supervisors from other institutions if appropriate. Supervisory arrangements should be robust against changes expected with the full 3.5 years of the studentship. Applications are limited to one per primary supervisor. Studentships will outlive the current CREDS award (which ends in December 2023), and therefore there is no requirement for any supervisor to be an investigator or researcher in CREDS or a successor consortium. However, proposed supervisors should be engaged in energy demand research and encourage successful applicants to be active in events of any successor consortium funded by UKRI.

As set out above, the application should include a statement from the prospective primary supervisor about supervisory and training arrangements and any other information relevant to assessing the quality of the academic environment. Prospective supervisors should bear in mind that this will form part of the application to be assessed in a competitive process.

Funding is subject to EPSRC rules for Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTP). Studentship values are calculated on the basis of current costs of a UKRI studentship in the Oxford EPSRC DTP. The value of the award will be confirmed following selection, but will be sufficient to cover 3.5 years of fees and stipend at the UKRI level (not less than £17,668 p.a.). We expect that this will constitute full funding in most institutions. However, fee levels and charging practices differ across institutions and higher stipends are payable in London. We therefore cannot guarantee that the award will cover the full costs in all cases. To the extent the award does not cover the actual fees, the relevant UKRI stipend for 3.5 years and reasonable research costs, UKRI requires that the host university, not the student, will be expected to meet these additional costs.

The studentship will be conditional on the host university accepting the student and paying the minimum UKRI stipend for that institution, as well as reasonable research costs.

Arrangements will be made for financial transfers from the Oxford DTP to host universities. The host university will be responsible for creating and maintaining a Je-S studentship details record for the student and access to this record will need to be given to the University of Oxford as grant holder.

## Assessing the Applications

Applications will be judged against the following criteria:

- academic quality of the research proposal;
- relevance of the research proposed to UK energy demand priorities;
- the extent of inter-disciplinarity; and
- the quality of the academic environment in which the research would be conducted, including the quality and scope of supervision offered and opportunities for training.

The applications will be assessed against the criteria above by a panel appointed by the CREDS Executive Committee. Each application will be assessed by a pair of assessors selected according to the disciplinary mix in the proposal. In the event of a large number of applicants, additional assessors may be appointed. The final ranking will be decided by the assessment panel as a whole.

Subject to the volume of applications, decisions will be reached by 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The studentship will be conditional on the host university accepting the student.

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The long-term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing available talent and UKRI has developed ambitious goals for [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\)](#). In line with the UK Research and Innovation Diversity Principles, CREDS has adopted an [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Plan](#). Applications are particularly encouraged from members of groups under-represented in supervisor roles the UK energy research community.

CREDS is committed to supporting the research community, including students, in the diverse ways a research career can be built. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcome applications that envisage shared supervision and/or studentships undertaken part-time and/or through flexible working arrangements.

## Additional information

To assist potential applicants, CREDS will hold a webinar on the application process at **4pm on 9th November**. Details will be provided on the CREDS website in advance.

## How to apply

Applications should be sent by email to [credsadmin@ouce.ox.ac.uk](mailto:credsadmin@ouce.ox.ac.uk), including 'EPSRC Studentship application' in the header. Applications should be received by **4pm on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022**.

The sections should be combined into a single PDF file. Submissions should be in 'Arial' or other San Serif font of size 11 or higher, and margin size of at least 2cm.

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- Sarah Higginson, Research Knowledge Exchange Officer, CREDS ([sarah.higginson@ouce.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.higginson@ouce.ox.ac.uk))

## Documentation check list

A single PDF file of the application, containing the following:

- a completed application form;
- a research proposal (4 pages maximum);
- a statement (up to 2 pages) from the prospective host university about supervisory and training arrangements and any other information relevant to assessing the quality of the academic environment;

## Annex

### The CREDS Consortium

The CREDS consortium consists of the universities active in CREDS research, which have collectively agreed to implement the CREDS research programme. The list changes from time to time. Eligibility for this call will depend on the list on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022. The current list is below.

- Coventry University
- King's College London
- Lancaster University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- London School of Economics
- Loughborough University
- Ulster University
- University College London
- University of Birmingham
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Leeds
- University of Manchester
- University of Oxford
- University of Plymouth
- University of Reading
- University of Sheffield
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Surrey
- University of Sussex
- University of York