**CENTA Studentship Application for 2026 Intake**

**Guidance to applicants**

**This form must be submitted along with your CV and any local application form to the university hosting your chosen project.**

**Please note, although you might need to duplicate some of the information requested on this form on your host university’s application portal, it is the information in *this* form which is used to assess the success of your application. Therefore, please ensure you put your effort into the completion of this form, rather than the personal statement etc fields on the host university application portal. Please complete this form in full and do not skip any sections.**

CENTA Studentship Application forms are submitted to the host institution via their application portal but are then shared with the CENTA Admin Team, in order to facilitate processing of candidates through the selection and offer process and processing of EDI data for reporting purposes.

CENTA studentships are open to all, and this means we want to do our best to ensure that CENTA students reflect our society. CENTA are therefore committed to widening the diversity of our PhD student cohorts.

**Personal details**

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| **EDI Survey Completion Receipt Number**  This can be obtained by going to:  [**https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/bham/centa-edi-survey-2026**](https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/bham/centa-edi-survey-2026) | **Application forms without this number will automatically be rejected.** |
| **Forename** |  |
| **Surname** |  |
| **Email address** |  |
| **Please tick to confirm that you have not had assistance / coaching from the project supervisor in completing this form**  Whilst we encourage you to discuss the project with the project supervisors in advance, the answers on this form should be entirely in your own words with no help from project supervisors, supervisor(s) in current institute or other academics in the preparation, writing and editing of answers to each question. | |
| **Please state if you have used Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in preparing your application, and if so, how, and for which section(s) of the form.**  We recognise that some applicants will find it helpful to use AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT) when drafting their answers. However, we do not want you to use AI to create generic responses to be copied into your application: such answers are likely to receive low scores. We want your answers to tell us about your own experiences and reflections in your own words. | |
| **In the 2026 recruitment round we have an additional limited number of studentships available which must commence no later than the start of July 2026. If you are interested in and available to commence a PhD by July 2026 please tick this box**  Please note that all applicants, regardless of whether you tick this box or not, will be considered for our studentship opportunities commencing in autumn 2026. Therefore if you tick this box and we are able to offer you a studentship, this may be for either a July 2026 start or an autumn 2026 start. You may apply for any of our projects for a July 2026 start. | |
| **Home/ International** | Please indicate which category applies to you:  **Home Student:  International Student:**  To be classed as a **home** student, candidates must meet the following criteria:   * Be a UK National, or * Have settled status, or * Have pre-settled status, or * Have indefinite leave to remain or enter * Be an Irish National   If a candidate does not meet the criteria above, they would be classed as an *International* student.  The full eligibility criteria can be found in Annex B of this document from UKRI: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/terms-and-conditions-for-training-funding/ukri-training-grant-guidance/>  **For international applicants**:  UKRI allows international students to be eligible for studentships but only for a maximum of 30% of the cohort (please cf.: <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/UKRI-030221-Guidance-International-Eligibility-Implementation-training-grant-holders-V2.pdf>). Please consider the potential gap between the home and international fee rate and contact the named supervisor of the project you apply for to discuss any support the hosting University may offer you (e.g., self-funded difference, or - if available - an international fee waiver). |

**Widening Participation (Home applicants only)**

In order to address a historical imbalance, we offer a preferred interview scheme for certain under-represented groups of Home-award-eligible students who meet the academic and fit to project requirements, representing up to half of the available interview numbers.

The academic requirements are at least a 2:1 at UK BSc level or at least a pass at UK MSc level or equivalent **(*see Q1 and Q2 below*)** and your skills and experience must also show at least an appropriate fit with the selected PhD project **(*see Q5 below*).**

In order to qualify for the preferred interview scheme you must:

1. identify as BAME & be eligible for a Home award;
2. OR the postcode where you went to school or grew up must be classified as Quintile 1 in the POLAR4 category of the following website:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/young-participation-by-area/search-by-postcode/>

*If the online tool does not bring up the results the first time you click the View Results button please click it again, or try again in a different browser.*

Please note that only Home-award-eligible students (not International students) will qualify for this scheme.

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| **Do you identify as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME?)** | **YES/NO** |
| **Postcode of area you grew up in or went to school in** | e.g. MK41 9LE |
| **POLAR4 quintile score of that postcode** | e.g. 2 |

**Project details**

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| **Project title** |  |
| **Host institution** |  |
| **Where did you hear about this project?** |  |
| **Have you been in touch with any of the project supervisors to discuss this project?** | **YES/NO**  Experience shows that students who are engaged in early discussions about the project with the supervisors are more likely to be successful in their application. We therefore encourage you to contact your potential supervisors and ask any questions you may have about the project and CENTA. Your application will be assessed regardless of your answer. |

**Q1. Bachelors-level degrees awarded and grade/classification**

For 4 year integrated masters (MSci, MGeol etc.) please report your *third* year mark here and the final “M” grade in Q2.

Where a final grade is not yet known, please provide a predicted grade justified from your academic transcript. Please ensure that your academic referee is aware that they should also provide a predicted grade in their reference letter.

If you gained your Bachelor’s degree at a non-UK institution, please check the international student webpages at the host institution for your project for guidance on the UK equivalent of your grades.

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| **Start date** | **End date** | **University** | **Subject** | **Qualification awarded**  **(e.g., BSc)** | **Class/grade awarded**  **(local and UK equivalent)** |
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**Q2. Masters-Level degrees and grade/classification or equivalent experience**

Where a final grade is not yet known, please provide a predicted grade justified from your academic transcript or indicate whether only a pass/fail is awarded. Please ensure that your academic referee is aware that they should also provide a predicted grade in their reference letter.

If you gained your MSc (or are working towards one) at a non-UK institution, please check the international student webpages at the host institution for your project for guidance on the UK equivalent of your grades.

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| **Start date** | **End date** | **University** | **Subject** | **Qualification awarded or predicted**  **(e.g., MSc, MSci, etc.)** | **Class/grade awarded or predicted**  **(local and UK equivalent)** |
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| **Q3. Why do you want to do a PhD?**  A PhD is a 3.5-4-year commitment that requires high personal motivation. Please explain in **up to 150 words** your personal motivation for doing a PhD. Why are you interested in research? How did you develop that interest? |
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| **Q4. What interests you about this project in particular?**  Interest in a project will significantly underpin your motivation during your studies. Please provide **up to 150 words** to explain/describe the key aspects or points that drew you to apply for this project. |
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| **Q5. What project-specific skills, aptitude and experience do you bring to this particular PhD project?**  In up to **200** words please tell us how your skills fit with this PhD. You can use examples from a wide variety of life experience including work, academic study, research, presentations or public engagement activities, wider reading, extra-curricular activities such as sports, volunteering or other community activities etc. |
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| **Q6. What do you think is one of the key research issues in the field of the PhD project you are applying for, and how would you approach it?**  You may use **up to 350 words** for your answer, showing evidence of information found from a wide range of academic or non-academic sources. Your answer should be understandable for a scientist from outside your specific discipline.  Please provide in-text citations (which will be included in the word count) and a separate reference list at the end of your answer (which will not be included in the word count). |
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| **Q7.**  **Give an example of a long-term project or task you managed. How did you plan it, and how did you manage time and resources?**  Good project and time management skills are key to the successful completion of a PhD, so here is the opportunity to show us how you approach planning and carrying out projects or tasks, in **up to 150 words.** Your chosen example can come from your academic, work or life experience. |
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| **Q8. Give an example of a problem you have encountered and how you solved it.**  Experience shows that you will have to solve many problems during your PhD research, so here is the opportunity to show us how you approach problem solving. In **up to 150 words** please describe a problem you have had to solve during your studies, at work, at home or elsewhere. Please describe how you solved the problem and how you might respond differently if you were faced with that problem again. |
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| **Q9. OPTIONAL Individual Circumstances:**  CENTA is committed to widening participation and opportunity for PhD studentships to a diverse community of applicants. To help provide further context to your application, here is an **optional** opportunity to provide information or context that may be relevant to assessing your academic career path thus far. This may include (but is not limited to) caring responsibilities, disabilities, ill health and/or financial pressures. Personal details are NOT needed, but a note about the *effect* of the circumstance on time available for study/extra-curricular experience and the *timescale* over which the event(s) took place would be helpful for appropriately evaluating your application relative to opportunity. |
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**Consent Statement:**

**Use of Your Application Materials for EDI Monitoring and Research**

CENTA Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) is a pioneer in widening access to doctoral study in the Environmental and Earth Sciences. We are committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) throughout our recruitment processes.

For monitoring purposes, anonymised statistics from the CENTA EDI survey are reviewed internally and shared with our funder, NERC/UKRI, as required.

In addition, all application materials submitted during this admissions cycle may be used for research and analysis purposes.

Your anonymity and confidentiality are protected in accordance with UK GDPR laws and University of Birmingham (UoB) Data Security and Privacy Regulations: [https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/privacy/student-applicant-privacy-notice](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.birmingham.ac.uk%2Fprivacy%2Fstudent-applicant-privacy-notice&data=05%7C02%7CNok-Hang.Hui%40warwick.ac.uk%7C4de2a64b6f8e405796fa08de0038b3b2%7C09bacfbd47ef446592653546f2eaf6bc%7C0%7C0%7C638948440683404787%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ClYpczQrJjGALbI0zfQPP4eQ%2F1S3%2BezXVgkzbLGypI8%3D&reserved=0) (please note, although this specifically refers to applications to study at the University of Birmingham, it applies across all the CENTA partner applicants since UoB serves as the CENTA administrator.)

If you do not consent to your application materials being used for research and analysis purposes, please tick the box below before submitting your application.

For more information and to request a copy of the CENTA Data Privacy Policy, please contact [centa-admin@contacts.bham.ac.uk.](mailto:centa-admin@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

By submitting this form, I confirm that:

* I acknowledge that my application materials may be reviewed and used for monitoring purposes.

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| Please select one option below before submitting your application:  I consent to my application materials being used for EDI analysis and research purposes.  I do not consent to the use of my application materials for EDI analysis and research purposes. \*  \*Please note: anonymised data from your EDI survey will still be shared with UKRI/NERC. |