

ESRC Innogen Centre

ESRC COLLABORATIVE (CASE) +3 PhD STUDENTSHIP

The role of brokerage organisations in knowledge exchange processes: the case of Genesis Faraday Partnership

Further particulars

Applications are invited for a 3-year PhD CASE studentship, funded by ESRC and the Biosciences KTN, and commencing as soon as possible. The normal ESRC grant will apply (Home/EU fees and maintenance grant), with an additional minimum supplement of £2,000 p.a.

The student will work with the Biosciences KTN (an organisation focused on promoting and supporting the conversion of bioscience knowledge into innovative agricultural, food and industrial bioscience products for the benefit of businesses, the economy, the environment and society in the UK) and the Innogen Centre at the University of Edinburgh to examine the former's knowledge brokerage role, with a view to understanding what processes promote research uptake and what factors shape these processes.

This project will be supervised by Dr Catherine Lyall and Dr Ann Bruce.

Informal inquiries and expressions of interest including a short CV can be directed to Dr Catherine Lyall, email c.lyall@ed.ac.uk.

Candidate requirements

Applicants should hold a Masters degree or equivalent and have some relevant social research experience (although we anticipate that candidates may come with either natural science or social science first degree training). Applicants may be expected to undertake some further research training as part of the first year, if required, and must satisfy the ESRC residential eligibility requirements. An interdisciplinary background would be useful and candidates must be able to collaborate with both academic and non-academic partners.

Applicants must satisfy the ESRC academic and residential eligibility requirements http://www.esrc.ac.uk/images/Postgraduate-Funding-Guide-2010-11-studentships_tcm8-14765.pdf

In selecting candidates we will consider not only the intellectual capacity of potential nominees to undertake doctoral training, but also their ability to work on a research project involving collaboration with both academic and non-academic partners. Knowledge of genetics, livestock agriculture and an understanding of commercial issues within the animal health or animal breeding industries might be helpful but is not a prerequisite.

As well as the formal research training and induction provided by the University of Edinburgh, the student will be provided with a specialist induction to the work of the Biosciences KTN.

Project Aims

This project seeks a better understanding of the factors that shape the processes leading to research uptake. The study will adopt a detailed, largely qualitative approach to identify the flows of knowledge, expertise and influence that take place during the process of knowledge exchange between producers and users in a variety of settings (commercial, industrial, policy or practice). In particular, it will take the case of the Genesis Faraday Partnership in farm animal genetics and genomics (GFP), a precursor to the Biosciences KTN, and evaluate its role in this process. It will compare and contrast the role of knowledge brokers in the animal breeding and animal health sectors with other well-studied sectors. By developing a deep understanding of one knowledge intermediary within this wider context of knowledge brokerage we expect to draw lessons about the value of public funding for similar research brokerage organisations in the future and the contribution that they can be expected to make to UK innovation.

Research Objectives

1. To develop a detailed understanding of the outcomes of studies already undertaken on the role of knowledge intermediaries in the innovation lifecycle.
2. To combine empirical research results with theoretical insights in a comparative context.
3. To develop an integrated analysis of the key determinants of a successful knowledge intermediary.
4. To disseminate findings to policy-makers (such as Technology Strategy Board) and strategic planners in government, companies, research councils and to the broader academic community.

Research Design

The research methodology will be interdisciplinary and will adopt a comparative, case study approach based on a combination of literature studies and rich interview data. GFP will provide a series of mini-case studies enabling us to study their impact on component sectors which reflect their membership and target areas of operation (e.g. fish breeders, cattle, pig). These will be aggregated to form a 'meta case'. The student will identify an appropriate knowledge brokerage comparator and draw on secondary data analysis to tease out lessons and points of comparison. The project will draw on literature from a carefully targeted set of academic disciplines in which the supervisors and colleagues have expertise – science and technology studies (STS), innovation management; research utilisation, policy development, public management, stakeholder engagement – and will contribute to both theory and practice in these fields.

Expected Outputs and Contribution to Knowledge

We expect the student to develop contributions to the disciplines of STS, research utilisation and policy analysis as well as to interdisciplinary theory and methodology, and to be active in facilitating possible application and uptake of the practical outcomes. The project will provide new and original qualitative datasets of interest to both academic and non-academic user groups (e.g. government departments and agencies that fund knowledge brokerage activities).

The project's most significant contribution is likely to be a greater understanding of the processes of research uptake and use. Since the results will have significant relevance to non-academic users, the student will be encouraged, and facilitated, to disseminate findings not only at formal academic conferences and journals, but also through industry/policy workshops; science and trade journals; and policy briefs.

Supervisors

The supervisory team will consist of Dr Catherine Lyall (University of Edinburgh); Ann Bruce (University of Edinburgh) and Dr David Telford (Biosciences KTN). We are a team of people who have worked together on previous projects and combine Innogen's expertise in the use of genetic and genomic technologies with colleagues' familiarity with research utilisation and knowledge exchange processes. The student will also benefit from Innogen's long-standing capability in conducting interdisciplinary research (see for example www.tinyurl.com/idwiki).

About the ESRC Innogen Centre

Innogen is the ESRC Centre for Social and Economic Research on Innovation in Genomics. Formed in October 2002, it is part of the ESRC Genomics Network studying the evolution of genomics and life sciences and their far-reaching social and economic implications. Innogen is a collaboration between the University of Edinburgh and The Open University, and is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The researchers working at Innogen include social scientists, economists, and lawyers. Innogen also engages with a wide range of stakeholders, nationally and internationally, including scientists, industry and private interest groups, policy makers and regulators, and citizens and public interest groups. The Centre is directed by Professor David Wield. For further information see www.genomicsnetwork.ac.uk/innogen

About the Biosciences Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN)

The Biosciences KTN is a new not-for-profit organisation that has been formed through the amalgamation of three previous companies: Genesis Faraday, Bioscience for Business KTN, and the Food Processing KTN. The new entity is focused on promoting and supporting the conversion of bioscience knowledge into innovative agricultural, food and industrial bioscience products for the benefit of businesses, the economy, the environment and society in the UK. This is being delivered achieved through activity in four sectors of Bioscience: Animal, Industrial, Food and Plants. The Biosciences KTN is based at Roslin, Midlothian. For further information see <https://ktn.innovateuk.org/web/biosciencesktn/>