**4-Year Studentship FAQs**

**1. Can international organizations be listed as co-applicants on a proposal?**

PhD awarding universities can only be selected from eligible UK institutions. However, industry partners and other non-PhD awarding institutions that want to participate in the consortium can be based outside of the UK. This decision will need to be explained within the application, and the contribution provided by such partners fully articulated.

**2. Can collaborators be added to the application?**

While there are no dedicated fields for collaborators within the application form, they can be introduced by the lead applicant when describing the proposed programme. Collaborators will be required to upload letters of support confirming their involvement and the support provided to the programme in Section 8 of the application form.

**3. Is it possible to have more than one industrial/non-academic collaborator?**

Yes, applications can include more than one non-academic partner. This includes naming a co-director for each institution in the consortium. It is expected that at least two UK universities, able to host and award PhDs, are part of each consortium. Industrial/non-academic organisations can also join the programme as collaborators. In this case they will not be required to indicate a co-director. However, the lead applicant will be required to fully articulate in the proposal the involvement and support provided by such collaborators, and they will be required to confirm this in a letter of support to be included in Section 8 of the application form.

**4. What is the difference between consortium partners and collaborators?**

Applications can contain a maximum of four consortia partners, two of which must be PhD awarding UK institutions. The other partners can include industry and other non-academic organisations. All partners within the consortium will need to select a director (for the lead applicant) or co-director (for the other three partners) to share responsibilities and the administration of the programme. Programmes can also include collaborators. Collaborators don’t need to select a co-director, but they will need to clearly articulate their role and input within the programme in a letter of support to be included in Section 8 of the application form.

**5. Can other non-industrial partners, such as government departments, be included as part of a consortium?**

Yes, non-industrial partners, including government departments, can be one of the four partners of a consortium. The proposal must clearly indicate the role and contributions of each partner in terms of experience and training for the students. It is expected that at least two UK universities, able to host and award PhDs, are part of each consortium.

**6. Does the proposed programme need to follow the 1+3 structure, or is a 4-year program a possibility?**

The 4-year program focuses on foundational training for the student. Programmes must be structured with a 1-year training element and a 3-year PhD. Whilst the contents and structure of training element are flexible given the multidisciplinary nature of the award, students will need to be assigned a project and registered as PhD students at the end of year 1. Allowing the students a year of exposure to a broader range of science before committing to a PhD project represents a key strength of the programme.

**7. Can a university propose to co-fund students with BHF?**

Yes, both academic and non-academic partners can propose to co-fund students with BHF up to a maximum of 50%. For example, if the consortium requests funds for 6 students, they can support up to extra 6 students, but if they request 4 students, they can propose to support up to 4 students maximum.

**8. Can the same institution lead two different consortia if different researchers are the principal applicants?**

A lead institution may submit only one application to the new scheme. However, distinct groups within a single institution can contribute to multiple consortia, provided that individuals (including supervisors) named in one application are not included in any other consortium.

**9. If a consortium partner other than the Lead Applicant hosts a student from the programme, can invoices be sent to BHF directly, or must they be sent to the Lead Applicant first?**

All invoices must be sent from the Lead Applicant. If a student from the programme is based elsewhere, their organisation must invoice the Lead Applicant who will then invoice BHF.

**10. Will medical students be eligible for the programme?**

The aim of the BHF four-year PhD programme is to provide outstanding training in cardiovascular science to talented graduates who have obtained degrees (at 2.1 or higher) in relevant life sciences disciplines. The four-year programme is intended to provide access to and training in scientific approaches relevant to the chosen theme of the programme in year one followed by a three year period of research leading to the award of a PhD degree. Medical students who meet all of the scheme requirements and wish to undertake a 4-year PhD during their medical degree will be eligible to join the programme. All such candidates must be accepted onto a recognised MBPhD programme at a UK university that allows a 4-year PhD component. To ensure equality across the programme all members of a consortium proposing to accept medical students must run MBPhD programmes that allow a 4-year PhD.

Medical students will be paid the standard BHF stipend rate and must be willing and permitted to undertake a 4-year PhD, with the expectation that they will participate in the same year 1 structure and foundational training activities that the programme is proposing for the cohort as a whole. Candidates who are accepted onto a MBPhD programme that only allows a 3-year PhD component will not be eligible to join a 4-year programme (for example they cannot skip year 1 and join for years 2-4). This is to ensure that the purpose and spirit of the scheme as a cohort building initiative with a strong foundational research training element is maintained. Medical students who want to take a 3-year PhD within BHFs remit should consider our dedicated MBPhD funding opportunity, with further details available on our webpage [MBPhD Studentships - BHF](https://www.bhf.org.uk/for-professionals/information-for-researchers/what-we-fund/mbphd-studentships)

**11. Can we propose a 4-year programme that is exclusively for MBPhD candidates?**

No, programmes that are designed solely for medical students will not be permitted, as the opportunity to join these 4-year programmes must also be open to non-medical students wishing to undertake training in fundamental cardiovascular science.

**12. Are clinicians in speciality training or with their CCT eligible to join the programme?**

No, this opportunity is not available for those who have already qualified with their medical degree. Please see the alternative PhD funding opportunities available for clinicians in speciality training on our webpage [Clinical Research Training Fellowships - BHF](https://www.bhf.org.uk/for-professionals/information-for-researchers/what-we-fund/clinical-research-training-fellowships).