

Creating a new industry-funded research centre – Faculty of Engineering

Contacts in the Faculty

For guidance and support on setting up an industry funded centre within the Faculty of Engineering please contact a member of the Industry Partnerships and Commercialisation team [here](#) or feel free to get in touch with:

- [Dr Rebeca Santamaria-Fernandez](#), Director Industry Partnerships and Commercialisation, Faculty of Engineering

These guidelines have been designed to allow flexibility for different types of industry-funded centres. For example, research centres can be established as a result of a large corporate research award across departments or across faculties.

Definition of an industry-funded Research Centre

An Industry-funded Research Centre is a grouping of researchers focused on a significant common research area, with critical mass of both permanent academic staff and funding, whose existence brings identifiable benefits to the College regarding, for example, growth, breadth, internal and external visibility for the sponsor, developing fundamental and applied research in a number of engineering disciplines to support the development and application of *the sponsor's products and technologies*

Although centres are often cross-departmental in terms of their activities and the nature of research supported, all of the existing centres are based in a single department or institute for administrative and financial purposes.

This is a distinguishing characteristic of research centres compared to College Institutes which are organisationally separate from departments.

Guidelines

The following criteria are to be the minimum requirements to qualify for recognition as an industry funded research centre. The Faculty has established over 20 new industry funded centres in the last 5 years hence consistency is important.

Showcase area

Size

Industry sponsored Centres are expected to have at least three staff members, including postdoctoral researchers and academic staff.

Funding

The minimum industrial funding within a Centre's ambit is expected to be at least £500,000/year for 5 years or a combined £2,500,000 over a 5 year period. Renewal agreements are expected to be at the same level. Please discuss with the team how best to shape the programme and elements which the Faculty would expect to see covered by the funder.

Term

Minimum term for an industrial centre to be set up is five years. Centres are to be set up with a view to establish a strategic partnership with the sponsor securing a presence in Campus and formalising an existing or new research collaboration.

Host Department/Institute

Every centre must have a host Department or Institute which is responsible for overseeing the administrative and financial arrangements of the Centre.

Director

Each Centre must have a Director(s) who is a member of academic staff from the host Department/Institute. The position must be covered at or over 0.2 FTE over the 5 year period.

Research Manager

Each Centre must have a Research Manager. The individual might be seconded from industry (to be agreed jointly, bench fees apply) or a member of academic/research staff from the host Department/Institute.

Publications

Centre staff should be actively engaged in research and publish under the centre's name on a regular basis. A list of the centre's publications should be included in the annual report submitted to [Faculty Research Committee](#) (FRC).

Website

Centres should have an up-to-date web presence, including information on current research, contacts for external visitors, the most recent annual report, recruitment opportunities etc.

Additionally, centres will be expected to participate in appropriate outreach activities, externally facing promotion of the centre's research, and other activities designed to promote the centre's visibility.

Approval process

Creation of new centres

Proposals for new industrial centres, including a statement of the scope and objectives of the centre as approved by the head of the host department and a summary of the contractual terms negotiated with the sponsor are to be submitted to FRC.

The Industry Partnerships and Commercialisation team will check there is no conflict in scope with existing industry funded centres, perform required due diligence and coordinate preparation of the Naming Approval paper to be sent to the College's Secretary. FRC will discuss/resolve any conflicts and make recommendations to [Faculty Management Committee](#) (FMC) based on the criteria listed above.

Maintenance and continued recognition

The requirement for continued recognition is that the centre continues to satisfy the criteria listed above. Centre annual reports (one page A4, or where the centre already produces an annual report, this will suffice) are to be submitted to FRC in April of each year.

Once approved by FRC and FMC, centres will be listed on the Faculty web pages. The benefits of this 'formal' recognition and approval process will include promotion and publicity (e.g. via the Faculty web, news bulletin etc.) and support for development and maintenance of the centre's web pages.

Termination/Renewal of the centre

Industry Centres run for an initial 5 years term. A mechanism for review/renewal and termination must be built in the contractual Agreement.