

Flexible Mobility Award (FMA) Funding - Guidance

1. What is Flexible Mobility Award (FMA) funding?

Flexible Mobility Award (FMA) funds are to encourage and support mobility between academia and industry within the remit of the i-NutriLife Hub. The i-NutriLife Hub is one of six Hubs funded by BBSRC in 2022 as part of the Open Innovation Research Club (OIRC) on Diet and Health.

The awards aim to promote the movement of researchers and technicians between different research settings. Beneficiaries of FMAs can be either Early Career Researchers (ECRs) from academia wishing to undertake work in a company or a private organisation; or staff from industry (including technicians, specialists, engineers, researchers etc.) wanting to further their career progression through work experience in a public research organisation. The FMA funds will help resource such movement if it is likely to:

- Initiate a new collaboration
- Strengthen an existing collaboration
- Lead to a longer term relationship
- Lead to a funding application
- Lead to new technology transfer projects

2. How much FMA funding is available from i-NutriLife?

The maximum request for FMA funding is £20K, with funds awarded at 100% of the request. Awards include a set contribution of £3K towards the expenses of the host organisation.

Funding is paid to the academic institution. If the placement is for an academic moving to industry, then the academic partner would pay the costs of their employee being on placement (e.g. travel accommodation, subsistence). Conversely, if the placement is for an industrialist moving to academia, then the academic partner would make the arrangements for the placement and pay for them (e.g. travel, accommodation) or would reimburse those costs to the industry partner.

3. Who is eligible to apply for FMA funding?

Funding is available to applicants who are eligible to receive BBSRC funding. Priority will be given to the support of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) from academia and technicians, specialists, engineers, researchers from industry.

FMA funding should involve UK-based industry partners where there is benefit to the UK research base and the UK economy. In exceptional circumstances, where there is not a UK company to exploit the research, FMA funding may be awarded to work with an overseas partner company, noting that in such a circumstance the application should provide a clear justification for working with an overseas partner company as well as outline how the project will lead to building international collaborations and will be taken forward leading to inward investment and benefit the UK.

4. How long should an FMA-supported placement be?

Funds will support placements for a duration of **up to 3 months** in either academia or industry.

5. When are the funding calls?

Applications for FMA funding can be submitted at any time. They will be reviewed every 2 months.

6. What is the application process?

The applicant should complete the application form available on the i-NutriLife Hub website or by request to the Hub Manager (i-NutriLife@soton.ac.uk). It is recommended, but not mandatory, that

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all applicants (including co-investigators and industry partners) join the i-NutriLife Hub. Membership is free and it only takes a few minutes to apply for Hub membership online.

Briefly, the application form asks for the following details:

- Applicant details
- Details about the industry partner(s)
- Placement details
- Financial details (including details of the industry contribution)
- A letter of support from the industry partner(s)

The completed application form, PI 2-page cv, letter of support and any other relevant documents should be emailed to the Hub Manager (i-NutriLife@soton.ac.uk). Receipt of your application will be acknowledged.

A 'Companies House' search of the industry partner(s) will be conducted.

The Hub Manager will check that the application meets the criteria and has the required information. Any omissions that cannot be easily remedied will result in the application being returned for revision and resubmission.

7. What will be the review process?

Applications will be peer reviewed. Funding decisions will be made by the i-NutriLife Hub Funding Committee (FC) based upon the peer review feedback. The FC will be composed of representatives from the Hub membership including industry; we have a process to avoid any conflicts of interest. The Chair of the FC (i-NutriLife Hub Lead) will review the award recommendations prior to their submission for approval by BBSRC.

Criteria for assessment will include:

- Quality of the placement
- Status of those being supported
- Relevance of the application to the remit of the i-NutriLife Hub
- Potential for building long-term relationships and for future funding
- Feasibility within the budget and time allocation
- Opportunity for early career investigators
- Value for money

8. How and when will the award be paid?

The successful applicant, co-applicant(s) and industry partner(s) will join the i-NutriLife Hub (apply for Hub Membership). They will agree a start date and need to have a signed collaboration agreement in place prior to the project commencing. The Hub Manager will require evidence that this is in place before releasing funds.

A formal offer letter (including award 'Terms and Conditions') will be issued by the University of Southampton to the successful applicant.

A final expenditure claim must be submitted within **one month of the placement ending** as part of the Project Completion Report. The Project Completion Report template will be provided by the Hub Manager. Funds will be transferred from the University of Southampton to the PI's institution. This will be detailed in the Award Letter.

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9. What reporting will be required?

A Project Completion Report (authorised by the industry partner for use in the public domain) including a final expenditure statement (authorised by the academic organisation) must be submitted within one month of the placement ending and should be sent to the Hub Manager (i-NutriLife@soton.ac.uk).

Briefly, the Project Completion Report will include:

- Summary of placement outcomes
- List of outputs if any e.g., papers, patents, new products or processes, prizes, collaborations
- Testimonial(s) from the industry partner(s)
- Future plans
- Financial details of the actual spend of the project

The i-NutriLife Hub Executive Group (EG) will review and approve all reports; conflicts of interest in this reviewing will be avoided.

The report will be used to create a case study available in the public domain (e.g., i-NutriLife Hub website and BBSRC publications).

The awardee must acknowledge the support of the BBSRC award **BB/X51231X/1** on papers and other relevant outputs.

Awardees will act as ambassadors for the science area represented by the i-NutriLife Hub by attending and contributing to events within relevant areas at the request of Hub Lead or the BBSRC.

A full audit trail must be in place for all incurred expenditure on the project. BBSRC will not expect to see this evidence, but it should be in place and can be checked if the Research Organisation is subject to a funding assurance visit.

10. What data protection and data sharing policies are in place?

Copies of applications will be made available to peer reviewers and to the i-NutriLife Hub Funding Committee in confidence.

Applications may be shared with other Hubs where the application is considered more relevant to another Hub.

Administrative staff of the University of Southampton will use the information provided in the application for processing the proposal, the award of any funding, and reporting.

To meet BBSRC obligations for public accountability and dissemination of information, details of grants (including successful awards) may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists. BBSRC will use this information for research-related activities, including but not limited to, transfer of funds, statistical analysis in relation to evaluation of BBSRC OIRC, study of trends and policy and strategy studies.

11. Any questions?

Please e-mail the i-NutriLife Hub Manager: i-NutriLife@soton.ac.uk



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