

UK Ocean Acidification Research Programme

Call for Studentship Proposals

Closing date: 16:00 on 8 December 2009

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1. Summary

Proposals are invited for studentships as part of the *UK Ocean Acidification Research Programme*. This £12M collaborative programme is a *Living With Environmental Change (LWEC)* accredited programme and is co-funded by NERC, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

This integrated strategic programme directly relates to the delivery of the NERC Strategy (Earth System Science and Biodiversity Science Themes) and the UK Government's Strategic Objectives with respect to adapting to, and mitigating climate change and ensuring a healthy resilient, productive and diverse natural environment.

This call is to broaden community engagement and strengthen the capacity development activities of the programme by funding up to five studentships that will address the deliverables of this programme. Joint supervision between the different science communities, at the national and international level is strongly encouraged.

Researchers submitting a full proposal to the main UK Ocean Acidification Research Programme Announcement of Opportunity will not be eligible to apply. Eligibility for this programme includes the UK Government Departments' marine laboratories.

The closing date for proposals is 16:00hrs on the 8 December 2009.

2. Background

In the last decade there has been growing scientific concern over changing ocean carbonate chemistry caused by ocean uptake of anthropogenic atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) and how this will affect marine organisms, biodiversity, biogeochemistry, habitats and ecosystems. This knowledge has been exchanged with policy makers and stakeholders and there have been calls to reduce uncertainties in effects of and responses to future ocean acidification (Royal Society 2005; Turley et al. 2006; IPCC 2007). The UK Ocean Acidification Research Programme is a response to this need with £12M

funding from NERC, Defra and DECC. This 5 year programme will address the policy and societal need for a greater understanding of the implications of ocean acidification and its risks to marine biogeochemistry and biodiversity and impact on the whole Earth System, through the delivery of seven Science *Deliverables*. Programme activities (excluding global scale modelling) will be focused on the North-East Atlantic (including European shelf and slope), Southern and Arctic Oceans. The programme will encourage strong collaboration, where appropriate, with other national and international programmes, primarily the newly funded German ocean acidification programme, BIOACID, and the EU Programmes, EPOCA and MEECE, to maximise the delivery of the programme's three *Objectives*.

Ocean Acidification Programme Objectives

- a) To reduce uncertainties in predictions of carbonate chemistry changes and their effects on marine biogeochemistry, ecosystems and other components of the Earth System.
- b) To understand the responses to ocean acidification and other climate change related stressors by marine organisms, biodiversity and ecosystems and to improve understanding of their resistance or susceptibility to acidification.
- c) To provide data and effective advice to policy makers and managers of marine bioresources on the possible size and timescale of risks to allow for development of appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

3. Scope of this Call

This document must be read in conjunction with the UK Ocean Acidification Science and Implementation Plans, which detail the scope of the programme and provide full details on the Programme Deliverables. This call is to broaden community engagement and strengthen the capacity development activities of the programme through funding studentship proposals that address the programme's deliverables.

Up to five studentships across the breadth of the programme will be awarded.

Proposal Requirements

- 1) Proposals must align with a specific deliverable (please see Science and Implementation Plans at <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/programmes/oceanacidification/resources.asp> from the programme and **this should be clearly referenced** in the supporting text;
- 2) The topic should offer genuine scope for doctoral research and innovative science;
- 3) Access to good facilities, expert staff, and training in research methods and transferable skills should be demonstrated;
- 4) Proposals should demonstrate that the training can be completed in 3-4 years (42 months funding);
- 5) The proposal should include details of supervisory contact, monitoring and assessment procedures;
- 6) Co-supervision between the different science communities is strongly encouraged - at both the national and international level, particularly regarding the German programme *Biological Impacts of Ocean Acidification* (BIOACID) and the four year (2008-2013), EU Framework 7 programme's *European Project on Ocean Acidification* (EPOCA) and *Marine Ecosystem Evolution in a Changing Environment* (MEECE).
- 7) CASE studentships (involving a co-operating body, able to co-support the award) are encouraged where such arrangements are appropriate to the topic.

4. Eligibility

In line with the aim of broadening community engagement no Principal or Co-Investigator who submits a full bid to the main Announcement of Opportunity (for Deliverables 1-6) of the UK Ocean Acidification Research Programme will be eligible to apply

Applicants must be eligible UK researchers (see the NERC [Research Grants Handbook](#) for eligibility). In addition the Government Departments' marine laboratories are eligible for this call.

5. Application Procedure

Applications must be submitted using the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S) and will utilise the studentship proposal proforma. Guidance on the application process, including details of eligible costs, is available in the Je-S Helptext and the Studentships Handbook (<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/studentships>). NERC's normal studentship terms and conditions will apply, and these are also outlined in the handbook.

When adding a new proposal on Je-S, you should select Council 'NERC', document type 'Studentship Proposal' and the 'Directed Programme' Scheme. On the Project Details page you should select 'UK Ocean Acidification'. The duration of the award is 42 months and this should be entered on the Project Details page on Je-S.

In addition to the studentship proforma, applicants will also be expected to provide a case for support detailing the proposed work to be undertaken. The case for support will be a maximum of 2 pages in length and should detail the potential application covering the areas outlined in the 'Proposal Requirements' under section 3.

Further to this all proposals should include appropriate supervisory arrangements and collaborative arrangements (with other Research Organisations and CASE partners). Academic partners should be included as Co-investigators, with non-academic collaborators (CASE partners) identified as project partners in the proposal.

The standard level of support for a studentship is funding in the form of a Doctoral Training Grant, for three and a half years of student maintenance and university fees and £4450 for a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG—which includes support towards conference attendance). In the proposal, a case can be made for extra funding to cover fieldwork and collaborative travel costs (excluding visits to the CASE partner, which should be covered by them). A case can also be made for up to £3,000 for extra exceptional consumables costs. NERC will not pay more than £4450 (RTSG) plus £3000 towards the studentship costs (except for fieldwork) and where required further funds will need to be sought from the department or CASE partner or where appropriate, use made of "free at the point of delivery" NERC facilities. Where there is a CASE partner, the partner must supplement the student's maintenance grant by paying at least £1000 pa directly to the student for the first three years of the award.

6. Assessment

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Excellence
- Fit to Requirements

Where possible, the funders will seek to fund a selection of projects which span across the programme deliverables.

Applications will be reviewed and ranked by a panel.

7. Timeline

Closing date for proposals: **16:00 8 December 2009**

Funding decision communicated to applicants: **January 2010**

8. Programme Management and Reporting Requirements

Each studentship will be associated with a relevant project under the Deliverable that the studentship aligns to once the main grants from the UK Ocean Acidification Research Programme have been awarded. The terms and conditions for the main grants will include a requirement to interact with studentships funded through this mechanism

Further Programme Management details can be found in Section 12 of the Implementation Plan.

Funded proposals will be required to:

- comply with the programme standards and guidelines for CO₂ experiments in ocean acidification studies (Implementation Plan, Section 5)
- comply with standard NERC and UK Government reporting requirements
- contribute to the Knowledge Exchange activities.
- comply with the programme's media policy.
- comply with the programme's data management policy.