ESRC Centres for Doctoral Training
Je-S guidance for applicants

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Introduction
This is a guidance document created to assist applicants to this scheme in the completion of their proposal. It is specific to this scheme and should be used in conjunction with the following information:


- **Je-S help text** is available in every page of your Je-S form, simply click on the question mark against any section (or on the word ‘Help’ in the top right hand corner of each page)

- **Je-S helpdesk** (for all Je-S system enquiries)
  jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk or 01793 444164

If you experience difficulties using Je-S or have questions regarding its use, helpdesk staff can be contacted Monday to Friday 9.00-17.00 UK time (excluding bank holidays and other holidays). Out of hours: please leave a voice message.

When reporting problems by email or telephone, please give your name, organisation and user id, the date and time, what part of the form or system you were working on, and the nature of the problem.

- **Scheme-specific guidance**

For further information please email pgtframework@esrc.ac.uk or contact:

- Henna Patel
  Telephone: 01793 411914

**Important:** Where information and guidance issued in this document differs from the general guidance you should follow the guidance in this document.

**Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S)**
All proposals under this call must be completed and submitted through the Research Councils’ Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S). To be able to do this the organisation must be registered for Je-S, and the applicants must hold Je-S accounts.

Organisations from which proposals can be submitted:

- All UK-based research organisations (ROs) that are eligible to receive Research Council funding for research, have the infrastructure in place to deliver doctoral training and meet the stated metrics threshold will be eligible to submit a proposal for a Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT).
Je-S accounts for applicants

All applicants must have a Je-S account which has been verified by a third party before they can be found in searches within the Je-S System and added as an applicant. To get you started on creating an account please refer to the Je-S helptext at https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/pages/SettingupaJeSaccount/AccessingJeS.htm

Please ensure that applicants select the ‘Account Type: Research Proposal’ and the option ‘An Applicant on a Standard or Outline Proposal’ - see helptext https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/pages/SettingupaJeSaccount/AccountType.htm

It is recommended that applicants forward their proposal to the organisation submitter pool in good time before the call deadline to allow a sufficient period for the approval and final submission process. The proposal must be submitted through the Je-S System to ESRC by the institution’s nominated contacts. Once the applicant completes and submits the proposal, notification is then sent to their organisation’s ‘submitter’ to action. The ‘submitter’ is the person in that organisation authorised to approve the proposal and do the final stage of submission.

The applicant will receive an email confirming that the proposal has been submitted to the Submitter Pool - this means the proposal is still with the organisation but is not yet submitted to the Research Council. The final submission process is the responsibility of the host institution, and we cannot accept responsibility for any delay which may occur at this stage. We strongly advise applicants to check that they receive an email confirmation from the Je-S System confirming that the proposal has been submitted to the Research Council.

Before creating your proposal

Research proposals may only be made on Research Councils’ Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) forms.

Please note that the deadline for research organisation submission of proposals is 16.00 on 4 February 2016. You should allow sufficient time for completion of the research organisation submission process checks/authorisation. You can view all Je-S registered organisations via the Je-S login page, to ascertain whether the proposed submitting organisation is registered.

Your proposal will actually be sent to Je-S/ESRC from the submitter pool at your research organisation. There is a further layer of administration between your submission of the proposal and the proposal being submitted to the ESRC, via Je-S. The research organisation’s submission route usually includes both an approver (ie head of department) and submitter pool (ie central finance office), and the ESRC cannot accept responsibility for any delay which may occur as a consequence. We strongly advise applicants to secure confirmation from their relevant administrator that the proposal has been successfully submitted to the Je-S team (see also ‘Tracking your proposal’).

Creating your proposal

Log in to Je-S at https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Je2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx

Documents screen: Select ‘New Document’
Add new document screen: Select ‘Call search’ (highlighted at top of screen). When prompted, type in the call title ‘Centres for Doctoral Training 2017’ and select from the list created. The remaining three selection fields will be automatically populated.

Select the ‘Create Document’ button.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that the proposal is created and submitted against the correct call (and consequently correct scheme). We will not accept proposals for processing that are not submitted using the above call route.

Completing your proposal
The initial Je-S document instructions page will give you general guidance on the navigation layout, specifically icon descriptions.

The left hand column ‘Document Menu’ lists all the sections associated with this call and clearly identifies which ones are mandatory (red cross, turning to green tick when completed).

The details below are not an exhaustive step-by-step guidance, and we recommended that you refer to the Je-S helptext for additional information.

Please note you may return to edit saved documents at any time.

Applicant
Enter the name of the proposed Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) Director. The proposed CDT director will be the main point of contact for any correspondence regarding the assessment, processing or outcome of the proposal. We expect the Director to be a research leader in the field.

Research organisation
Enter the name of the research organisation responsible for submitting the proposal. For proposals involving more than one research organisation, this should be the organisation who will manage the CDT on behalf of the consortia.

All UK-based ROs (including Northern Ireland) that are eligible to receive Research Council funding for research, have the infrastructure in place to deliver doctoral training and meet the stated metrics threshold will be eligible to submit a proposal for a CDT.

Collaborating organisations
If you are submitting a proposal that involves collaborating with other research organisations, please enter the name of the collaborating organisation(s).

There is no limit on the number of research organisations which can be involved in consortia arrangements, but applicants must ensure that there is a number of students at each RO and they can interact together as a cohort.

Project details
- The start date must be 1/10/2017 and the duration should be input as 84 months (seven years), to cover up to three cohorts of four-year studentships. Please note
the actual duration can be updated once awarded to allow for part time provision, studentship extensions, suspensions etc).

- ‘Your Reference’ should be supplied by your research organisation (consult your Research Office). If your Research Office does not have a system for referencing grant proposals, a suitable reference of your own choice will be acceptable. Use "Your reference" to help distinguish easily between proposals in users' Current Documents lists. The reference is intended to be a unique identifier for the proposal, and is unrelated to the reference that the organisation would be asked to provide if a grant were awarded.
- Enter the name of your CDT as the ‘Project Title’ (maximum limit of 150 characters) indicating the focus area of the CDT.
- For ‘Proposal Call’, select Centres for Doctoral Training 2017

**Project partners**

CDTs must be developed in collaboration with a non-academic partner(s) from the outset and for at least twenty per cent of the funding to be supported by partner(s) or other sources. Please see the call specification for the specific funding requirements for the call you are applying to.

Please enter details of all non-academic partner(s) and the amount that they will be contributing towards the following:

- Total contribution towards stipends
- Total contribution towards fees
- Total contribution towards other costs (in kind contributions should be given a monetary value within this field)
- Overall total – applicants should note that due to a calculation error within this field it should be left blank.

If more than one non-academic partner is selected, please ensure you tick the ‘is main project partner’ box against one of the project partner(s) listed.

**Number of studentships requested**

Each CDT must support at least 10 students per annum, eight of which will be funded by the research councils. Applicants must enter the total number of studentships (at least 10) the CDT will support throughout the three year accreditation period.

**Ethical information**

The ESRC emphasises high ethical standards in the development, conduct and reporting of the research and training it provides. Please outline the CDT’s approach to identifying and considering the ethical implications of a doctoral research project.

Our Framework for Research Ethics ([http://www.esrc.ac.uk/researchethics](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/researchethics)) contains a full explanation of our approach, with guidance for applicants.

**Proposal classifications**

The information provided in this section will be used by us to identify appropriate peer reviewers. It would therefore assist us greatly if you could populate the Research Area/Qualifiers/Keyword sections to provide a comprehensive description of your area of expertise.
The Proposal classification area is a harmonised (and expanded) structure agreed with other Research Councils. Therefore, if your area of expertise crosses the remits of more than one Research Council you will now only need to provide the information once.

It is an essential requirement that your **primary training area** is in the social sciences, and **each studentship** must be **at least 50 per cent within the social sciences**.

Please refer to the list of research areas that fall within ESRC remit (http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/is-my-research-suitable-for-esrc-funding/discipline-classifications/) for further information. Please note this information is used to determine eligibility for ESRC funding and to assist in the selection of appropriate reviewers.

**Attachments**

It is important that applicants **only submit the supporting attachments specified in this document**. We reserve the right to reject applications that do not include the required attachments or include attachments not specified in this guidance. It is recommended that attachments are uploaded in PDF (rather than Word) format, to ensure unsupported font type issues do not cause problems with maximum length requirements, please see Je-S guidance; https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/pages/SystemRequirementsFormatsandSa/SystemRequirementsFormatsandSa.htm

The following are mandatory Je-S attachments for this call:

- Case for support
- Additional information for collaborative bids (mandatory for consortia applications)
- Supporting Metrics
- CV (for the Director)
- Letters of Support (mandatory for consortia bids)
- Additional Statement (for applicants to both the CDT and DTP call)
- Budget Management
- Project partner letter of support
- Pathways to Impact.

**Important note:** If you are unclear about whether you can include a specific attachment please contact pgtframework@esrc.ac.uk for advice, as unrequested attachments can hinder the processing of your application. ESRC reserves the right to return or reject applications that include attachments not permitted on this call.

**Case for support** (maximum of 12 sides of A4)

In composing the case for support applicants must refer to the Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2015 (hereafter known as guidelines) and the call specification.

Organisations should provide demonstrable evidence to support their narrative.

Please note that for consortia bids the information provided should cover all of the participating research organisations. Information regarding the management and co-
ordination of the consortium should be addressed within the additional information attachment for consortia bids.

Applicants are advised to structure their case for support around the following headings:

**Institutional/consortia strategy and vision**

Applicants must provide an overview of their strategy and vision for the CDT. More specifically this must include:

- what the strategic vision is for the CDT and how it fits within the research organisation(s) strategy for doctoral training provision, and how the doctoral training strategy fits within the research organisation(s) overall vision and goals, particularly the strategy for social science research
- the future strategy for promoting and developing the focus area of the CDT including how the learning from the CDT will be sustained and taken forward after the final cohort of students have started
- a justification of the structure of the CDT, whether single or consortia, particularly the added value to the delivery of training and to the student experience. For consortia, applicants must complete an attachment setting out how each organisation will contribute to the partnership and the delivery of the overall strategy
- how the CDT will link to and draw on wider institutional resources such as ESRC and other research council doctoral training provision, careers service, and facilities to support knowledge exchange and impact
- strategies for fostering research careers, including support for the career development of researchers.

Letters of support are required as an attachment from each participating research organisation.

If any of the collaborating research organisations involved with the CDT proposal(s) are simultaneously applying to the Doctoral Training Partnerships call, they must submit an additional attachment setting out how they will co-ordinate/support the centres should all bids be successful, including a suitable governance structure and strategy for sharing best practice.

**Environment for postgraduate training**

Please provide an overview of the social science research environment in which the research training will take place. This must include:

- evidence that the Director and team are research leaders in the field of biosocial research or new forms of data
- evidence of the experience of the research team leading the CDT, specifically in relation to interdisciplinary working and maintaining a high quality and coherent infrastructure for the delivery of core and advanced postgraduate training
- an overview of the research environment the students will be working in. Particularly evidence of how excellent innovative, diverse and interdisciplinary research is promoted within the participating RO(s)
- the infrastructure in place for the delivery of core postgraduate training provision (including research skills, research methods, and transferable skills)
- the strategy and mechanisms to encourage and facilitate a strong and active cohort of postgraduate research students, details of how the students are encouraged to
integrate with the research environment; and details of student facilities including the mechanisms to communicate opportunities and ensuring that both students, and their supervisors, are aware of these.

Content and delivery of postgraduate training
Please outline the research training provision that will be provided through the CDT and how this meets, or exceeds, the requirements set out in the guidelines. This must include:

- an explanation as to the importance of the substantive area of enquiry, the key skills they are seeking to develop and the types of projects students will be undertaking
- detail their plans for interdisciplinary training and identify how students will be supported across disciplinary areas, though shared supervision etc
- details of how and when the core, general research and transferable skills training requirements, as specified in the guidelines, will be delivered across all partner institutions comprising the CDT and how this learning will be shared. Please note, the guidelines stipulate the minimum requirements, we will only consider requests to vary to this in very exceptional circumstances which must be detailed within your proposal
- how the subject specific training is integrated with core, general research and transferable skills; which components of subject specific training are compulsory
- whether the training provision is established or new
- the principal Unit of Assessment(s) pertinent to the training provision detailed
- the training structures for the delivering of the training available (e.g. 1+3, +3, 2+2, +4, with an explanation as to why this will enable the delivery of the most effective training for the research area. It should also identify where provision can be delivered full-time, part-time or through distance learning. Applicants will need to justify why training cannot be delivered on a part-time basis.
- details of the CDT’s mechanism to implement an annual training needs analysis process across all partner institutions and the CDT’s strategy to analyse the outcomes, identifying gaps in training provision and developing a clear and coherent approach for sourcing more advanced or specialist training that is not available within the host institution
- the content and delivery of advanced training, and whether this is provided locally or sourced through regional or national provision
- describe the supervisory arrangements available at the research organisation(s) and what procedures are in place to ensure consistent effective provision. This should include the CDT’s policy for appointing supervisors: details of how supervisor duties are shared across more than one supervisor/supervisory teams, particularly for interdisciplinary and collaboration including non-academic partners where appropriate. The CDT’s approach to supervisor training and what formal systems are in place for identifying supervisor training needs as well as evaluating and monitoring their performance
- a strategy for communicating with supervisors to ensure they are fully engaged with the aims and objectives of the CDT and the opportunities available to ESRC-funded students
- highlight how your training provision will enable students to develop the cultural and methodological skills required for working with international partners.

Collaboration with non-academic partners
CDTs must be developed in collaboration with a non-academic partner(s) from the outset.
Please outline the role of the non-academic project partner(s) and what their input will be to both to the CDT and the students, this should include the following:

- the appropriateness and strength of the partnership(s)
- the benefits of the partnership(s) to the CDT and to the users involved
- what the collaborating partner(s) hope to achieve and how their involvement will enhance the quality of training
- the proposed nature of supervision (where applicable) and support to be offered to students.

All students within the CDT should benefit from the non-academic partner engagement, we expect 30 per cent of studentships to be either CASE style, delivering a co-produced research idea, and/or internships which apply social science skills in a practical situation or delivers a focused piece of research. Please describe the CDT’s strategy for how students will engage in collaboration and meet this collaborative target. This should include:

- an outline of the research organisation(s) strategy for maximising knowledge exchange and impact at the level of doctoral training, and how the CDT will draw on relevant institutional services;
- details of the mechanisms for collaboration with non-academic partners that the research organisations(s) will wish to make use of (e.g. collaborative studentships, internships or other innovative 'people exchange'- activities and opportunities at the doctoral level)

Details of training content relating to user engagement and impact as part of core training provision should be set out under the environment for postgraduate training heading above.

Letters of support must be provided for each of the partners involved with the CDT.

Applicants should also explain how they will engage with the Digital Catapult and the Catapult network more broadly to create routes and activities leading to impact.

**Governance, organisation and management monitoring**

Please provide a clear justification on how the CDT will be governed and managed along with the CDT’s approach to managing and monitoring postgraduate provision. This might include:

- details of the proposed governance and management structure and the breakdown of roles and responsibilities within them. The structures should enable effective engagement and communication with all levels of the CDT, including supervisors and students to ensure best practice is effectively shared.
- justification of the choice and time commitment of Director, and the membership of the senior management team.
- the strategy and mechanisms for the allocation of ESRC studentship-funding and how this would seek to meet the CDT’s capacity-building priorities.
- upgrade procedures for different award structures, and explicit criteria and processes for the termination of awards.
- a strategy for how the DTP will contribute to the widening participation agenda and promote postgraduate research to a diverse base of talented graduate students across the UK.
**Additional information for consortia bids** (maximum of 2 sides of A4)

Please note that there is no limit on the number of research organisations which can be involved in consortia arrangements, but applicants must ensure that there is a number of students at each RO and they can interact together as a cohort.

This attachment must be completed for all proposals that include more than one research organisation.

Proposals should set out the following additional information:

- a summary of the governance structure including how administrative management and co-ordination will operate across the institutions comprising the consortia
- a description of the training provision which will be delivered in collaboration with another research organisation(s). Please note this should indicate which organisations are involved in the delivery of training and how it will be delivered across the collaborating organisations
- a description of how the student selection procedure and allocation mechanisms across the collaborating organisations.

We will be looking for evidence of strong institutional commitment and contributions from all of the collaborating research organisations involved within the proposal. We recognise that whilst some organisations will have well established collaborative arrangements already in place, for others this may be a new development which will take time to fully evolve and for partnerships to be consolidated or extended.

**Supporting metrics**

Research Excellence Framework (REF)-based metrics will be used as part of the assessment criteria to ensure that we support consistently high quality training. Staff who was submitted to different Units of Assessments (UoAs) may still contribute to the supervision and training of students, but the training must be in the area where the UoA has met the threshold.

All proposals must be accompanied by an attachment setting out a series of metrics using the Je-S document type - other attachment. A proforma for this information has been provided in **Annex 1**.

The metrics provide supporting data to correspond to research excellence, critical mass, training excellence and impact excellence. The data will also be used to inform the peer review assessment.

It is important that the information collected for this purpose is as robust as possible and, wherever possible, avoids duplicating routine data gathering work already carried out at an institutional level. For this reason, it has been decided to request data from the REF 2014 exercise.

**CV** (maximum of two sides of A4)

A CV for the proposed director must be included. This should include contact details, qualifications (including class and subject), academic and professional posts held since graduation, a list of the most relevant and recent publications, and a record of research funded by the ESRC and other bodies. This should not exceed two A4 sides.
Letters of support from consortia organisations (maximum of one side of A4 for each research organisation)

A letter of support for each collaborating organisation must be submitted as part of the proposal. Each letter should be signed and on headed paper and should address the following:

- The organisation’s commitment to the CDT for the lifetime of the partnership and beyond
- The alignment to the organisation(s) strategy
- The organisation’s contribution towards an appropriate management structure for the named CDT.

Additional statement (maximum of one side of A4)

Applicants applying to both the Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) and Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) calls must submit an additional attachment using the Je-S document type ‘other attachment’, setting out how the organisation(s) will co-ordinate/support the centres should all bids be successful. This should include a suitable governance structure and strategy for sharing best practice.

Budget management (maximum three sides of A4)

All CDTs will receive an allocation of studentships and the costs associated with that allocation will be paid via a doctoral training grant. CDTs have considerable flexibility in managing this budget but must ensure that they have mechanisms in place to allocate this funding.

The indicative costs associated with each studentship are listed in the specification for this call and reflect our commitment to supporting a student experience that goes beyond the simple receipt of stipend and fees.

Please describe your strategy and mechanisms for allocating the following funds:

- Research Training Support Grant and Overseas Fieldwork
- Student and cohort development to include collaboration, overseas institutional visits, facilitating interdisciplinary skill development, and cohort development.

Please note, as this call is being issued ahead of the outcome of the spending review proposals must also demonstrate how they would maximise the use of funding for Student and cohort development should this budget be reduced by 25 per cent.

Pathways to Impact (maximum of two sides of A4)

The Pathways to Impact attachment should be used to explain what will be undertaken by the applicant to ensure that opportunities for users to benefit from training students in this area, and thus for achieving economic and societal impact, are maximised.

The Pathways to Impact is your opportunity to describe how the potential impacts of the CDT will be realised. This attachment is specific to users and beneficiaries who are outside of the academic research community including, for instance, the public sector, private sector, civil society or the wider public in general. User communities may include bodies and individuals from industry, charities, universities, local authorities and other public
bodies, government departments and independent policy bodies. Please detail how the CDT will be managed to engage users and beneficiaries and increase the likelihood of impacts.

Impact can take many forms, manifest at different stages in the research process, and be promoted in different ways. It may be helpful to consider impact in respect of the short term (during the currency of the grant), medium term (up to one year afterwards), and the long-term.

We expect the CDT to be developed in collaboration with a non-academic partner(s) from the outset. The details of the role of the academic partner and what their input will be both to the CDT and the students should be set out in the Case for Support.

Potential academic beneficiaries of your work and pathways towards achieving academic impact should not be detailed in this attachment but in the ‘Academic Beneficiaries’ section of the Je-S form and the ‘Case for Support ‘as appropriate.

Applicants should note that reviewers may comment on the applicant’s reasoning during consideration of the proposal.

**Project partner letter of support (maximum 2 sides of A4)**
Each CDT must provide a letter of support from each of the non-academic partners (or cluster of partners if more appropriate) contributing to the co-creation and co-design of the CDT outlining the following:

- the appropriateness and strength of the partnership(s)
- the strategy for managing the partnership(s)
- the benefits the partner(s) hope to achieve from participating in the CDT
- how their involvement enhances the quality of the training provided and where appropriate how they are engaged in current doctoral training provision
- their involvement in the development of the proposal and the added value the partnership(s) provides
- details of any in-kind contribution(s) and what it will be.

**Submit your proposal**
After all mandatory sections have been completed, the submit button will appear across the top menu bar. Please ensure that you have completed all attachments that are not standard mandatory attachments for Je-S but are a mandatory requirement to be completed for this specific call. The submit button will route your finalised proposal to the authorising facility within your organisation (as explained in the Registration section above).

Please note that the proposal must be formally submitted by your organisation before **16.00 on 4 February 2016**.

**Commissioning timetable**

- Call open - September 2015
- Deadline for expressions of interest - 16.00 on 30 October 2015
- Deadline for submitting proposals - 16.00 on 4 February 2016
- Panel assessment, including CDT Director interviews – 5 or 6 July 2016
- Decisions to applicants – September 2016
- First cohort of students start – October 2017

**Tracking your proposal**
There are additional document maintenance actions that can be undertaken via the Document actions button. For example, the ‘Show submission path’ will indicate to you where in the organisation submission chain the proposal currently is located (and who holds current responsibility) - eg owner, approval pool, submitter pool or submitted to Council.

**Further enquiries**
Enquiries relating to ESRC postgraduate rules and proposal procedures should be addressed to:
- Henna Patel
  Email: pgtframework@esrc.ac.uk
  Telephone: 01793 411914

Enquiries relating to technical aspects of the Je-S form should be addressed to:
- Je-S helpdesk
  Email: jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk
  Telephone: 01793 444164
Annex 1
ESRC Postgraduate Framework - Supporting Metrics

Research Excellence Framework (REF) based metrics will be used as part of the eligibility criteria for Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) therefore, all proposals for accreditation must be accompanied by an attachment setting out a series of metrics. This data needs to be provided for every Unit of Assessment (UoA) referred to in the proposal. The metrics provide supporting data to correspond to research excellence, critical mass, training excellence and impact excellence. In addition, some of the data collected will be used in an algorithm to inform the allocation of studentships to DTPs.

Units of Assessment (UoA) which do not meet the threshold set out below will not be eligible for inclusion. These will be checked at the submission stage, and proposals will be returned through Je-s if any ineligible UoAs have been included.

All CDTs must be made up of UoAs which have:
- A greater than or equal to 50% REF output (3*+4*)
- A greater than or equal to 50% REF environment (3-+4*)
- A greater than or equal to 50% REF impact (3*+4*)
- A research volume equivalent to a minimum of 5 FTE staff with output at 3* or 4* (calculated by number of FTE social science staff submitted to REF 2014 ‘multiplied by’ percentage of REF output at 3* or 4*).

Notes on data requirements
1. REF Research Output Profile – please enter the overall percentage of 3* and 4* activity for the UoA
2. REF Research Environment Profile – please enter the overall percentage of 3* and 4* activity for the UoA
3. REF Research Impact Profile – please enter the overall percentage of 3* and 4* activity for the UoA
4. FTE Category A staff submitted for the UoA
5. PhDs awarded (excluding professional doctorates): *
   5a. please enter the number of PhDs awarded as submitted to the REF (excluding professional doctorates)
   5b. please enter the proportion of PhDs awarded as submitted to the REF that were social science (excluding professional doctorates)
   5c. please enter the number of Professional Doctorates awarded that were social science

*Please note that where data has been requested that solely relates to social science activity, it is down to the institution(s) to determine how to disaggregate this information from the total UoA submission. This also applies to disaggregation of data on Professional Doctorates.
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<th>Unit of Assessment</th>
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* Where applications are being subjected as part of a consortia bid, this information will need to be provided for each of the institutions as relevant.