



National X-ray
Computed
Tomography

NXCT Free Beamtime Access Scheme

Please note, the Free Beamtime Access Scheme does not include Diamond Light Source Facilities

This policy describes the process and criteria by which applications for free at point of access (FATPOA) beamtime are judged and awarded. You can request free at point of access funding when you fill in the online application form to use the NXCT facilities.

Applications will be judged in terms of feasibility, according to the criteria listed below and then ranked according to the scientific assessment criteria (also listed below).

Access Requirements

As the NXCT 'Free Beamtime Access Scheme' is funded by the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC), applications must describe how the EPSRC data policy requirements will be met (<https://epsrc.ukri.org/about/standards/researchdata/>).

This principally includes the storage of the data for at least 7 years and ensuring there is a clear route to ultimately making the data/research publicly available. This obligation does not compromise the need to keep all information collected highly confidential until it is ready for dissemination.

Industry Access

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are able to apply for free at point of access funding for research work. For this:

1. the company must be an SME, as defined by UK Government (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dit-small-and-medium-enterprises-sme-action-plan/department-for-international-trade-dit-small-and-medium-enterprises-sme-action-plan>) and should not be owned (wholly or partially) by a larger company,
2. the work should constitute 'fundamental research' or a 'feasibility study', as defined by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the parent body of EPSRC (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/innovation-apply-for-a-funding-award#categories-of-research-and-development>)

Please contact us if you are an SME, are interested in utilising NXCT facilities and have any questions.

Application Criteria

Free Beamtime Access Scheme applications should:

- Support a research, teaching or public engagement topic



- Be 1-3 days in duration, only more in exceptional circumstances
- Be judged to be technically feasible within the time allowed
- Not normally be used to support projects that already have funding for X-ray CT. Exemptions can be considered on application.

Free Beamtime Access Scheme projects **must** also involve at least 1 of the following:

Criterion		Description
1	New Users	Never used X-ray CT for their research before
2	Development of a new technique	New technique must have a route to dissemination so that others can benefit from it
3	Development of a new environment/rig	Outputs from this work should help future users
4	Proof of concept experiments prior to a grant bid	Clear route to support a proposal for funding within reasonable timescales
5	Be of high novelty, involving blue skies ideas, which are difficult to fund in traditional ways or require very rapid access	Providing information on the likelihood of success will be critical to us assessing the application
6	Creation of materials for public engagement/outreach/advocacy	Expected outputs, dissemination and timescales need to be described in the application
7	Contribution to round robin/standards	Details of outputs expected need to be described in the application

Scientific assessment Criteria (listed in priority order):

- Scientific merit of the proposal – novelty, significance and rigour
- (Outreach and other applications ranked according to impact and novelty)
- Match of NXCT equipment and/or techniques proposed to the research question
- Timeliness
- Very hot topics
- Overall the NXCT has to ensure a balance is maintained across all of the Free Beamtime Access Scheme allocations, so will be used as a secondary judgement criteria.

Outcome

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their proposal within 2 weeks or notified that further consideration is needed at our quarterly Facilities Board (FB) meeting. Successful applications will then be able to book in their experiment with the facility they have been given access to using their local contact person.

Additional Information

In reviewing the proposal, it may be returned to the applicant for further information or with recommended changes, for example, whether the resources – instrument and/or number of days – requested are appropriate. The review board will always try and ensure that work is carried out at a time most convenient to the user but in some cases, users may be asked to carry out their work at a certain time, for example, to organise the efficient use of *in situ* rigs and/or to ensure the necessary expertise are available.

Appeals on application decisions may be lodged at info@nxct.ac.uk, which will be escalated to our governance boards for arbitration.