



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 the point of access (FATPOA) beamtime are judged and awarded. You can request free at the point of access funding when you fill in the online application form to use the NXCT facilities.

FATPOA applications must meet one of the criteria, listed in the table(s) below, and will be judged in terms of feasibility, and then ranked according to the scientific assessment criteria (also listed below).

Application Criteria

Free Beamtime Access Scheme applications should:

- Support a research, teaching or public engagement topic
- Be 1-3 days in duration, with 4-10 days awarded 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:

BEAM DAY PROJECTS		
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	Providing information on the likelihood of success will be critical to us assessing the application



BEAM DAY PROJECTS	
Criterion	Description
	fund in traditional ways or require very rapid access
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
8	X-ray CT Operator training For Research Technical Professionals employed to operate X-ray CT equipment for other users (letter of support required from their institution)

DATA DAY PROJECTS	
Criterion	Description
1	Novice user Up to half a day of staff support, providing guidance to enable self-sufficiency
2	Development of a new technique or data analysis workflow New technique/analysis workflow must have a route to dissemination so that others can benefit from it
3	Proof of concept experiments prior to a grant bid Clear route to support a proposal for funding within reasonable timescales
4	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
5	Creation of materials for public engagement/outreach/advocacy Expected outputs, dissemination and timescales need to be described in the application
6	Contribution to round robin/standards Details of outputs expected need to be described in the application
7	RTP data analysis training For Research Technical Professionals employed to support other users in their X-ray CT data analysis (letter of support required from their institution)

Scientific assessment Criteria (listed in priority order):

- Scientific merit of the proposal – novelty, significance, rigour and impact
- (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.

Access Requirements

As the NXCT 'Free Beamtime Access Scheme' is funded by the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC), successful applicants must adhere to EPSRC's Policy framework on research data (<https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/epsrc/our-policies-and-standards/policy-framework-on-research-data/expectations/#contents-list>).

This principally includes the storage of the data for at least 10 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 the 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>)

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.