

Lazzeroni: from previous experience of ITNs, CDTs and MPAGS:

- 1) my understanding is that UKRI CDTs are designed to pay for PhD studentships and related costs, not PDRAs. But I think teaching fellows can be part of the bid (or we will end up with academics doing more teaching for free). And the time of academics for admin-related activities (like steering board, admissions, etc.). And I guess proper admin and contract support.
- 2) the focus of CDTs is on quality control at each step of the process (how students are selected, how projects are sourced and assigned, how supervisors are selected and assigned, etc. etc), and core-base training to equalize the PhD experience and core knowledge.
- 3) the training must be well structured (as well as useful !!), and probably NOT concentrated only in the first year (if concentrated, it is harder to sell to students and to industrial partners, and it also may cause a dropping rate of students after Y1). I would also avoid linking the training the formal University system of credits, for several reasons including the fact that every University has its own credit system.
- 4) another focus is on cohort-building experience (the added value of being a group, not just individuals doing a PhD) and transferable skills.
- 5) a further focus is on knowledge exchange, industry engagement and placements etc. (again, quality control here is important). This must be folded in into the training.
- 6) said all that, funding can (and should) be required for training, team-building and networking activities (as well as students' salary+fees)
- 7) from what I know, the CDT bid doesn't include specific projects to start with, but projects are called for at each yearly round, advertised to students and then a matching procedure project/student is followed. It makes sense to bid for something like 5 rounds, i.e. 9 years in total (each PhD is 4 years). It does make a lot of sense to me to generally structure projects along the DRD themes, without being too specific or over-prescriptive, and within that around priority themes. Specific projects will follow, on a yearly basis, which will have the advantage of being adaptable to the evolving specific needs of the community.

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regarding the training delivery, we can consider the successful model of the Midlands Physics Alliance Graduate School (of which Birmingham is part of), where the “formal” teaching is delivered over zoom for all participating institutes, with academics offering courses depending on their expertise. Labs and practical sessions are delivered in person at the location with the most appropriate equipment (and staff).

In MPAGS, we have videoconference rooms at each site. And we have a residential Easter School. We have a couple of residential Lab courses but not for Particle Physics.

Each course has credits, and supervisors advice students on which courses to follow out of a portfolio.

We then collect the overall credits per student and this is pass to their University coordinator, as part of the compulsory Y1 training.

I would retain an element of optionality in courses in the CDT. I think it’s good to be able to offer choices, within reason.

I agree that a Summer School for the CDT is advisable, and in fact necessary, and concentrated on hardware (the RAL Summer school and the MPAGS Easter school have no element of hardware, and SUPA sounds the same).

Lazzeroni: Questions I have for today's meeting

- 1) Response to specific CDT call ? or free submission ? Timeline ?
- 2) Guidelines and funding envelope
- 3) Relation with DRDs
- 4) How many institutes and which ones?