



Innovate UK - Accelerated Knowledge Transfer (AKT) Standard Competition (AKT6)

Frequently Asked Questions

This document only relates to the Accelerated Knowledge Transfer Partnerships 6 (AKT 6) and may be updated throughout the duration of the competition.

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Please note that Business Partners cannot apply directly for an Innovate UK AKT award.

All applications must be led and submitted by a UK Knowledge Base.

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KNOWLEDGE BASE PARTNER

Which Knowledge Bases are eligible to apply for Innovate UK – AKT6?

The eligibility of the Knowledge Base partner is defined in the Competition Brief in IFS. You may or may not be approved to participate in KTP as a Knowledge Base. You will find a list of Knowledge Bases already approved to participate in KTP here:

<https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/guidance-for-specific-funds/knowledge-transfer-partnership-guidance/find-your-local-knowledge-transfer-adviser/#contents-list>

If you are not already approved as a Knowledge Base to participate in KTP, but meet the definition of an eligible Knowledge Base, you will still be eligible to apply for an Innovate UK AKT award.

What cost model should be used by the Knowledge Base in applying for an Innovate UK - AKT grant?

Knowledge Bases should follow the [AKT Cost Guidance](#) for this competition. Where the Knowledge Base institution uses FEC, they will be required to attach an up to date FEC letter with their application. This must be valid on the date of the competition Funder's Panel. The FEC letter need to explain to us how their costing would work, and what would be covered. There is a list of categories in our FEC guidance document, and we need to know whether (as a minimum) these would be included within an FEC letter.

<https://www.ukri.org/publications/cost-categories-for-ktp-fec-full-economic-costing-projects/cost-categories-for-ktp-fec-projects/#section-project-costs-for-fec>

Please carefully review the Innovate [AKT Cost Guidance](#) before [AKT Cost Guidance](#) for this competition (AKT6), before beginning an application. Rules may change for specific AKT competition rounds. Please ensure that you refer to the correct guidance for the AKT round that you are participating in.

Can a Knowledge Base apply for more than one Innovate UK - AKT grant?

Yes, there is no limit on the number of applications a knowledge base can submit, however, it is strongly encouraged to select only the strongest applications as should we receive a higher volume of applications than capacity, we may take the number of applications from each knowledge base into consideration when allocating funding. Applicants should also explain how they will be able to effectively deliver multiple projects should this be the case.

Can one Knowledge Base Supervisor be present in two applications?

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Yes, however, this will be a matter for the Knowledge Base institution. NB. Involvement of a single Knowledge Base Supervisor in 2 Innovate UK AKT projects would require a minimum of 0.5 days per week (i.e. 0.25 days per project per week).

Can the Knowledge Base Supervisor be allocated more time to the project?

Academic supervision will typically be delivered at 0.5 days per week, with a minimum of 0.25 days per week. Any additional supervision time will need to be justified in the application and should represent the best means of delivering the project.

Can the Knowledge Base cost in more than One Academic Supervisor?

Typically, it is expected that only 1 academic will be supported via the grant. The use of additional supervisor's time will need to be justified in the application and should represent the best means of delivering the project.

What criteria is there for the Supervisor? Do they have to be an academic?

The Knowledge Base should be content that the Supervisor has the requisite knowledge, experience, and capability to supervise the project. They need not necessarily be academic staff but must be employed by the knowledge base.

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BUSINESS PARTNER

I am interested in AKT, but I don't have a Knowledge Base to collaborate with?

To find your local Knowledge Base, please use the search tool available on our website at the following link: <https://iuk-ktp.org.uk/find-your-local-knowledge-base/>

What exactly do you mean by Business Partner and who is eligible?

An eligible Business Partner must be registered in the UK and have a minimum of 4 FTE. Contractors or 4 part-time employees do not meet the criteria for this requirement. There is no upper limit on the size of the organisation. Third sector and Public Sector organisations are not eligible Business Partners for this competition.

Can a Business Partner be involved in more than one Innovate UK - AKT project?

Yes, within reason, however, applicants should explain how they will be able to effectively deliver multiple projects.

If the Business Partner was supported through a project in any of the previous rounds, are they eligible to apply again?

Yes, this is a stand-alone competition, so long as this is a new project idea, they will be eligible to apply.

Can Business Partners with an existing live KTP apply?

Yes – however, we will need to be convinced that the company has the capacity to support any additional activity to the KTP project; these must be different to the existing or previously funded KTP activities.

Looking at the current scope for projects within the Industrial Strategy, my company does not align with any of them. Am I not eligible to apply for an AKT?

The Industrial Strategy alignment should be based on your project idea, not based on your business sector. The project has to be innovative and have the potential to deliver value to the partners. For AKT, projects must first consider how it will align with the Industrial Strategy's six prioritised sectors by Innovate UK. [Please refer to the scope of this competition.](#)

What financial contribution is made by the Business Partner?

The Business Partner must commit to a minimum 10% contribution to the total project costs, which must be in cash. Additionally, they must provide resources to cover their own costs and any additional project costs over £35,000 for the 3 month project. The Knowledge Base is responsible for recovering the 10% contribution and any other costs from the business partner.

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Can a business use a grant acquired from elsewhere as their match contribution?

No. Public money cannot be used to match Innovate UK - AKT funding.

What other contribution is the business partner expected to make?

The business should dedicate its own staff and necessary resources to facilitate the AKT project and work in partnership with the Knowledge Base institution and the Associate. The exact nature of this will need to be discussed and agreed by the project partners before the application is submitted. The AKT grant does not support any costs incurred by the company during delivery of the project.

Is there any flexibility around the requirement for the Business Partner to have 4 FTE's?

We believe that a Business Partner with 4FTE's will be better able to contribute and support the project and this is why this is a fixed non-negotiable requirement for the Business Partner.

Regarding 4 FTE's, what if the business has contracted workers working full-time on the business, not actually employees?

The Business Partner must have a minimum of 4 FTEs registered in the UK and in employment

Can start-ups use the funding to explore an opportunity before looking into a full project?

Yes, so long as they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Competition Brief on IFS.

Can 2 SMEs apply jointly for the project?

No. AKT is restricted to one Knowledge Base working with one Business Partner.

Can UK based Organisations apply where the impact will be delivered overseas?

Impact must be delivered within the UK.

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ASSOCIATE

Can the Associate be part-time

The Associate can be part-time (at 0.5 FTE) or up to two Associates (0.5 FTE each) can work on the project, up to a maximum of 1 FTE in total. No other combinations are allowed.

Does the Associate have to spend time at the Business Partner's premises?

It is expected that the project team (all partners, as defined in the application form) will meet at least every two weeks. Ideally, these meetings should occur at both the Knowledge Base institution and the Business Partner premises, but they can also take place remotely. Spending some time at the Business Partner premises is desirable, but not mandatory.

Do you have to name the Associate on the application?

No, Associates must be employed by the Knowledge Base and be suitably skilled to deliver the project but there is no requirement to identify an associate prior to application nor to openly advertise the position. All of the partners must be content with the associate(s) delivering the project. Note that the associate(s) should be available to start project delivery **within 6-weeks** from the date of issue of the GoL.

Does the Associate have to be based in the UK?

The Associate will need to be in the UK and will be employed by the Knowledge Base Partner.

Can we build in Visa costs for the Associate?

Visa costs are not an eligible cost in this competition.

Can the Associate already work for the business?

An Associate from the business would be ineligible as the Business Partner must cover their own costs. Associates cannot be seconded from the Business Partner to the Knowledge Base partner.

Can a KTP Associate who is already working for the Business Partner be the Associate on an Innovate UK - AKT project?

The KTP Associate role is a full-time position so they cannot participate in a KTP project and an Innovate UK - AKT project at the same time. However, if an Innovate UK - AKT project starts as the KTP contract comes to an end, the KTP Associate could potentially segway directly into an Innovate UK - AKT project, provided the Knowledge Base HR processes allow for this.

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Can an Innovate UK - AKT Associate become a KTP Associate?

Not directly, but a successful AKT Associate would be welcome to apply for any relevant KTP Associate role. Knowledge Bases are reminded that a demonstrably open and fair recruitment process is required under the terms of a KTP grant.

Are there any eligibility criteria for the Associate?

The Associate must be employed by the Knowledge Base on a temporary or permanent basis during the lifetime of the project. The Associate must be appropriately skilled to deliver the project. The minimum requirement is a Level 4 qualification (or equivalent qualification) or relevant significant experience.

Can someone who has already been an Innovate UK – AKT Associate do so again, i.e., if they were employed on a project during last year's round?

Yes, this is permitted.

Can the business find the Associate or does this need to be the Knowledge Base?

The Associate must be employed by the Knowledge Base partner. The Business Partner should be content with candidate(s) selected to deliver the associate role.

Could an academic or someone working within the Knowledge Base already act as an Associate?

Yes, as long as the available grant (maximum of £35,000) will 'buy' enough time for the academic to deliver the project. Note that the Associate and the Supervisor cannot be the same person.

Could an Associate be home-based or in a hybrid work arrangement?

Yes, however, this should be made clear in the application and, in particular, the provisions for maintaining good communication between the project team must be described.

Can I claim holiday leave for the Associate?

During the life of the project, the Associate will be entitled to holiday leave. This should be pro-rated to the project duration and in line with their employment terms. Due to the short nature of the project, no additional leave should be taken within the 3 month period. If leave is not taken within the period, this must be claimed as an additional cost, as this will effectively make the project longer than 3 months in claimed costs, and therefore, leave should be factored into the planning of your project.

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PRE-AWARD GUIDANCE for AKT6

How do we apply online?

All applications must be submitted via the [Innovation Funding Service](#) (IFS). The competition title is “**Accelerated Knowledge Transfer Partnerships 6 (AKT 6)**”.

Is there guidance and advice on project costing?

Yes. Please carefully review the Cost Guidance document for AKT6, which will be posted [here](#), in advance of the competition opening.

Do we need an IP agreement?

It is not anticipated that IP will be generated within an Innovate UK - AKT project, however, if either party wishes to put an IP agreement in place, it should be agreed and in place before the application is submitted.

Is there a document similar to a Joint Commitment Statement for AKT?

A separate JCS is not required for Innovate UK – AKT applications. However, in submitting applications, applicants will be required to work together as a partnership and to deliver on the commitments made in the application around partnership working.

How will applications be assessed?

Please review the competition briefing session for more information around how applications will be assessed. The recording is available on the competition site.

How quickly will we be notified if our application is successful?

The competition project timeline is available in the funding competition link on the IFS.

Can we build in costs for equipment hire?

The hiring of specialist equipment is allowed within the estates category.

Are international Travel Costs Eligible?

International travel costs are not eligible. Any travel outside the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) will not be eligible.

Software is not an eligible cost, how about cloud services?

Cloud services are not an eligible cost.

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POST-AWARD GUIDANCE for AKT6

Once we receive the Grant Offer Letter (GOL) how soon must the project start?

The project should start as soon as is practicable, but must start within 6-weeks from the receipt of the grant offer letter.

Will there be an opportunity to request variations or project changes?

There will be no opportunity to request variations, revisions or project change requests in this competition that result in higher amounts. In rare cases, project costs can be moved between certain allowable categories, such as from travel to consumables, but require a formal request via email to akt@iukbc.org.uk and approval before any spend takes place.

What happens if we can't start within 6-weeks of receiving the Grant Offer Letter?

Your funding will be withdrawn.

Is it mandatory to attend a New Project Workshop?

Yes, all knowledge bases must have a minimum of one attendee (typically the project manager) at the New Project Workshop, this will be scheduled to take place one week after notifications are issued.

Can we substitute an Associate during the project?

The expectation is that the Associate will deliver the entirety of the project. If an associate is no longer available to deliver the entirety of the project, the project partners must select an alternative associate(s) that they are agreed upon. If an agreed suitable substitute cannot be found, the project will be terminated.

Do we need to provide Innovate UK with the names of the associates working on the project?

On or before the first day of your project, you will be required to submit the associate(s) names and the project start date on the Innovate UK Business Connect - AKT competition portal [Good Grants](#). If one or more associates are no longer available to complete the project, you should notify us by email at akt@iukbc.org.uk.

How will projects be monitored?

Requirements around project monitoring will be clarified in the Grant Offer Letter. Between the 6th to 8th weeks, you are required to complete an Interim Report, and once your project has ended, you will be required to complete the Final Report, Case Study and Presentation on the AKT Competition portal of Good Grants. Before you submit your finance claim on IFS, you are required to complete a Finance Transaction List, which needs to be checked and approved by the Monitor Officer.

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Can we request that the project is paused and or extended for any reason, for example, to allow an associate to be replaced?

No. Projects will neither be extended nor paused. If an associate is not available for work for an extended period or they resign from their position as an associate, you must inform us promptly by email to akt@iukbc.org.uk

In previous rounds, the competition fell during the Christmas period. If our Associate is not able to work during this period, is there any flexibility around this for the time lost in the project?

In exceptional circumstances, up to 14 days non-costed contingency may be considered for disruptions, changes and pauses to projects. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact akt@iukbc.org.uk with your request. This will be reviewed, and if approved, a new end date will be issued.

How will Claims be paid?

Claims must be submitted within the GOL terms of the end of the project, following the Innovate UK claim process on IFS. Claims must be accompanied by a final report, case study and a presentation as set out in the GoL, on the Innovate UK Business Connect - AKT competition portal (Good Grants).

NB. The Knowledge Base Partner is expected to recover the Business Partner contribution. Invoices for payment should be raised by the Knowledge Base at a time agreed with the Business Partner and prior to the submission of the final claim.

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is the total value of the grant awarded?

The maximum grant that will be awarded will be £35,000 for three (3) month projects.

What is considered as 3 months?

The three month project is based on 13 weeks.

Will the local KTA support the application development?

No, applications should be submitted by the knowledge base directly. KTAs do not have a responsibility to support Innovate UK - AKT applications or to review applications pre-submission. You must invite lucia.locubiche@iukbc.org.uk as the KTA Monitor Officer within Application Team Section of the application form. This is covered in the webinar and in the IFS competition brief.

Are there any limits on the scope of an Innovate UK - AKT project?

The project has to be innovative and have the potential to deliver value to the Partners. The scope is broad but must show how they align with the 6 priority [Industrial Strategy sectors outlined within the competition brief](#). If your project does not align with one of the six priority sectors, it may still be eligible if it is exploiting a novel area of research and the Business Partner meets the criteria for a high growth potential. Priority will be given to projects that align with the Industrial Strategy.

Who is responsible for recovering the Business Partner contribution?

The Knowledge Base will be responsible for recovering the Business Partner contribution. The Knowledge Base must invoice the Business Partner for their contribution prior to submitting their financial claim.

What are the expected output of an Innovate UK - AKT project?

At the end of the project as a minimum we expect:

- A short report outlining the project activities and outcomes.
- PowerPoint presentation given by the associate to the business summarising the outcomes of the project.
- Case study for publication.

Can we see the templates for the final report ahead of time?

Once the project has been set up and live, templates for final reporting and claims will be shared with the Project Manager.

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What are the implications if a project does not deliver against all stated objectives from the project plan?

'Failing Fast' is a successful outcome for these projects. The value of such outcomes should be discussed in the final report.

What are the expected outcomes from an AKT?

For an AKT to be considered successful, there must be clear evidence that the knowledge transfer has been embedded within the business. Other positive outcomes may include progressing to a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) or securing further Innovate UK funding. In previous rounds, we have also observed positive impacts on the knowledge bases involved, including the exploration of further knowledge transfer activities within their areas of expertise and continued collaboration. Examples of past projects can be found in the [AKT Case Study Directory](#).

Are Business Schools eligible to apply as the Knowledge Base Partner?

Yes - there are no restrictions on the eligibility of academic discipline accessed.

What is the maximum associate salary that can be claimed?

The maximum Associate cost is £55,000 (£58,000 in London), based on the annual costs. This must be pro-rated for the duration of the project. If there is a need to exceed this limit, the top up must be covered 100% by the Business Partner. Anything above the eligible amount must be added to the additional business partner costs section.

How would a portfolio approach be applied to the competition?

Dependent on the volume and quality of applications received for the competition, a portfolio approach may be applied to determine final funding decisions. This will apply evenly and equally across the portfolio and may consider a number of factors such as geographical disbursement of projects. IS6 alignment and spread and distribution of projects amongst applicants may also be factored into this.

I have started a new application for the AKT 6 round and noticed that the T&Cs that are attached to the competition, which we sign up to, are the T&Cs for KTP and not AKT.

Whilst the terms and conditions for KTP and AKT are broadly the same, there are key differences within reporting requirements, managing changes and recruitment timeframes, please ensure you are aware of the requirements for AKT before you apply. The T&Cs cannot be changed on the application form at this stage, please accept these on the basis of reviewing the sample AKT terms and conditions is available on the AKT webpage.

What are the requirements that the company needs to provide on IFS?

Please review the Cost Guidance, section IFS Application - *Completing 'Company Finances'*,

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If you are not able to resolve your question, please submit your enquiry to akt@iukbc.org.uk

Please read the Competition Brief and Cost Guidance thoroughly and watch the Competition Briefing Webinar before emailing us with your query.

All competition details, guidance, and webinar can be found on <https://iuk-ktp.org.uk/accelerated-knowledge-transfer/>