



# NXCT Free Beamtime Access Scheme

## Eligibility guidance

*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 access via our 'Free Beamtime Access Scheme' 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).

As the 'Free Beamtime Access Scheme' is funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, 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.

SME's are able to apply for free at point of access funding for research work but this will be described under a different scheme with details to be released soon. Please contact us if you are an SME and are interested in utilising NXCT facilities.

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 to be used to support funded projects. Exemptions can be considered on application.

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

- New Users (never used X-ray CT for their research before)
- Development of a new technique (new technique must have a route to dissemination so that others can benefit from it)
- Development a new environment/rig (outputs from this work should help future users)
- Aimed at developing a new area/community (proof of concept for new materials/applications or work designed to attract new users)
- Proof of concept experiments prior to a grant bid (clear route to support a proposal for funding within reasonable timescales)

- Be of high novelty, involving blue skies ideas which are difficult to fund in traditional ways or require very rapid access (Information to allow us to assess the likelihood of success will be critical to the application)
- Creation materials for public engagement/outreach/advocacy (expected outputs, dissemination and timescales need to be described in the application)
- Contribution to round robin/standards (details of outputs expected need to be described)

**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 NRF equipment/techniques proposed to the research question
- Timeliness
- Very hot topics
- Overall the board has to ensure a balance is maintained across all of the FATPOA allocations which 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.

**Further notes**

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 number of days) requested 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 ensure the necessary expertise is available.

Appeals on decisions made may be lodged which will be escalated to our governance boards for arbitration.