

ICURE Explore EXSEP25

Tuesday 26th August to Thursday 18th December 2025

KEY DATES, EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDANCE**

Applications Open		Week commencing Monday 2 nd June
Applications Close		Monday 7 th July at 23.59
If your application is shortlisted the EL, PSA and TTO will each be invited to an interview		Week commencing Monday 14 th July
Result sent to applicants		Wednesday 23 rd July
Welcome Conference Call		Thursday 24 th July - ELs must attend, optional for team members
Week 0		
26 th , 27 th , 28 th , 29 th August 2025	ELs are employed full-time on Explore (from 26 th August). This time is for bootcamp preparation – further details will be provided at the welcome call.	
26-28 th August 2025	Optional sessions 10:30-12pm for ELs to 'drop in' and ask questions.	
Week 1		
Bootcamp Part 1 – Face to Face in Southampton		
Tuesday 2 nd September 2025	Bootcamp Day 0	ELs arrive during the evening.
Wednesday 3 rd September 2025	Bootcamp Day 1	ELs only
Thursday 4 th September 2025	Bootcamp Day 2	ELs All Day PSA, TTO, BAs should attend from registration at 3.30pm for Introduction Sessions at 4pm, followed by evening dinner & over-night stay.
Friday 5 th September 2025	Bootcamp Day 3	All Team members attend until 3pm
Week 2		
Bootcamp Part 2 - Online		
Tuesday 9 th September 2025	Bootcamp Day 4	Entrepreneurial Lead (EL) and Technology Transfer representative (TTO) must attend all day. Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) and Business Adviser (BA) must attend until 2pm for 'Time to complete BMC and Action Plans' (these documents form the basis of the Letter of Award).
Wednesday 10 th September	Bootcamp Day 5	Entrepreneurial Lead (EL) and Technology Transfer representative must attend all day. Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) and Business Adviser (BA) - optional to receive submission feedback.
Week 3		
Mon 15 th Sept 2025, 13:00 - 15:00	Catch Up Call - Online	ELs & TTOs required PSA & BA optional
Friday 19 th Sept 2025	Digital Market Testing - Initial enquiry emails to be sent by ELs	ELs required. TTO, PSA & BA optional
Week 4		
Mon 22 nd Sept 2025, 13:00-15:00	Catch Up Call - Online	ELs & TTOs required PSA & BA optional
Week 5		
Mon 29 th Sept 2025, 13:00 - 15:00	Catch Up Call - Online	ELs required TTO, PSA & BA optional
Week 6		
Mon 6 th Oct 2025, 13:00 - 15:00	Catch Up Call - Online	ELs required

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		TTO, PSA & BA optional
Fri 10 th Oct 2025	Digital Market Testing to be in place	
Week 7	Gate 1 - Mid-Point Review - Online	
Mon 13 th Oct 2025, 09:00 – 13.30	Mid-Point Review - Online	ELs required TTO required 1hr, 20 mins AM, & 1hr PM. PSA/BA optional.
Week 8		
Mon 20 th Oct 2025, 13:00 - 15:00	Catch Up Call, including digital support - Online	ELs required TTO, PSA & BA optional
Week 9	Holiday Week	
Mon 27 th Oct – Fri 31 st Oct 2025	Holiday Week	
Week 10		
Mon 3 rd Nov 2025, 13:00 - 15:00	Catch Up Call - Online	ELs required TTO, PSA & BA optional
Week 11	Gate 2	
Mon 10 th Nov 2025, 09:00 – 13:30	Gate 2 - Online	All team members required for mentor group presentation. Approx. 1hr, 20 mins.
Week 12		
Mon 17 th Nov 2025, 09:30-15:30	Business Models Bootcamp	ELs & BA required TTO & PSA optional
Fri 21 st Nov 2025, 09:30-12:30	Investment workshop	EL & TTO required PSA & BA optional
Week 13		
Mon 24 th Nov, 12:30-15:30	IP Due Diligence and Timeline Workshop	EL & TTO required PSA & BA optional
Week 14	Options Roundabout Pitch Training	
Mon 1 st Dec 2025 and Tues 2 nd Dec 2025	Options Roundabout Pitch Training Day – Face to Face @ Southampton	ELs & BA required PSA and TTO recommended to attend
Week 15		
Mon 8 th – Fri 12 th Dec 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 to 1s with mentors Options Roundabout presentation and Panel questions rehearsal (1 hour) 	All team members recommended to attend
Week 16	Options Roundabout Panel	
Mon 15 th Dec & Tue 16 th Dec 2025	Options Roundabout Panel – Face to Face @ London	All team members required to attend. See notes below.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recommend all team members attend in person but there is a hybrid option for those who cannot. At least the EL and one other team member MUST attend in person. Each team will be allocated a 1-hour slot on one of the 2 days. This will be confirmed after the Mid-point review on Monday 13th October 2025. The EL with their team members present will deliver their 'ICURE Journey' presentation at the Options Roundabout The Options Roundabout panel will provide feedback to the team on the commercialisation route they feel is most appropriate for the project/team at that stage. 	

** Timetable subject to change.

Please note:

- The EL and PSA roles may only be undertaken by one person per role (i.e., you cannot have one staff member covering both roles).
- As part of the 17-week programme the EL will spend 12 weeks contacting and holding online and face-to-face meetings with target companies and organisations to investigate the market for their research. Contacts/travel will be both national and international, although from Monday 10th November travel will be limited to day travel only.
- The EL must be employed full-time by the applying university / PSRE and dedicate 100% of their time to the programme for its duration – Tuesday 26th August 2025 until Thursday 18th December 2025.

What is Explore?

Innovate UK ICURE Explore is a 4-month full-time market exploration programme designed to train, fund and supports research teams to determine whether there is a market for products or services that utilise their ideas, research, science, and technologies. Up to £35,000 of funding is available to 'get out of the lab' and validate commercially promising ideas in the marketplace.

How does it work?

ICURE takes the scientific method (hypothesize, test, evaluate) and applies it to commercialisation. You will learn how to use this approach to test what your potential customers think about your idea, product, or service. In addition, you will receive training and interview practice, carrying out over 100 interviews and acquiring transferrable business and social skills. Past participants say that having ICURE support, training, and funding to spend on market discovery has dramatically changed their perspective on their innovation.

What does it include?

- Funding support up to £35,000. This comprises the EL salary for the duration of the programme, participation costs and a market research budget.
- Support to cover approximately 4 months of EL salary to have fully committed time for customer discovery activities whilst participating in the programme.
- Access to SETsquared experts in bringing research to market, as well as proactive connections to our network of entrepreneurs, investors, and funders.
- Dependent upon the outcome of the Options Roundabout some teams may have the opportunity to access further training and some specialist sector support and access investors as part of the ICURE Exploit / Investor Readiness Programme.
- Face-to-Face and online bootcamps – this will be an intensive bootcamp where you will learn how to talk about your technology to customers, develop a hypothetical business model and identify your customers' pain points. You will also create a detailed action plan of your market discovery journey.
- Approximately 12 weeks of market validation against the customer discovery plan for your research using online software platforms, video conferencing and marketing tools and face-to-face engagement. This will involve targeting direct engagements with over 100 business leaders. You will join weekly conference calls with our team of experts who will provide guidance in taking research ideas to market.
- Face-to-face pitch training to teach you how to pitch your research to potential customers and investors.
- Options Roundabout Panel - the opportunity to pitch to an experienced panel of funders, stakeholders and mentors to help accelerate the impact from your research and give feedback on commercialisation pathways.

NB!

- (i) This funding is not a grant, and there is no money paid upfront. Expenditure will go through the appropriate finance office at your university and would then be reclaimed after the programme finishes, based on actual and evidenced expenditure.
- (ii) InnovateUK will not cover any travel Visa costs.

Why Attend?

Past participants say that having dedicated time to spend understanding what commercialisation of research means has dramatically changed their perspective on their research, ideas, and innovations. The programme introduces ICURE and provides the space and opportunity to think differently about impact, commercialisation, and entrepreneurship.

Who is eligible?

ICURE Explore is open to research teams in the UK excluding those from incorporated and/or trading companies. This includes, but is not limited to, UK researchers in a public or academic lab, a research institute, an incubator, or a national facility.

ICURE teams are composed of four individuals:

1. **Entrepreneurial Lead / researchers and technicians who have completed research** – MUST be employed by the university and able to commit Full-Time for the duration of the programme starting Tuesday 26th August until Thursday 18th December 2025.
2. **Principal Scientific Adviser** – MUST be able to attend required bootcamp sessions as well as the Options Roundabout and be willing to support the programme throughout its duration – please see schedule of dates above.
3. **Technology Transfer Officer (TTO)** – MUST be able to attend required bootcamp sessions as well as the Options Roundabout. In addition, provide support for the EL and team during the ICURE programme and continued support for further commercialisation activity following the ICURE programme. Please see schedule above.
4. **Business Adviser** – motivated to offer expert guidance and support. Teams are strongly encouraged to name an adviser in their application. If you are unable to find an appropriate person, the ICURE team will help you identify one. Teams are responsible for any agreements or financial arrangements that may be needed with their Business Advisers.

NB! There is provision for £1200 charge including VAT within the budget, however this may only be recovered via the participating University who may then claim from ICURE as part of the overall spend at the end of the programme.

We particularly welcome applications from individuals in:

- Universities who have not previously participated in the ICURE programme.
- Universities who do not receive HEIF funding.
- Under-represented groups including women, people of colour, those living with disabilities, and those from the LGBTQI+ communities.
- Approved public sector research establishments (PSREs) conducting research within the specified domains.