

ICURE Explore Women's – January 2027

Monday 14th December to Friday 25th March (102 days – 14.57 weeks – 13 weeks delivery)

KEY DATES, EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDANCE**

Applications Open		Tuesday 6 th October	
Online Briefing Session		Tuesday 13 th October 12.00 – 13.00	Register on Eventbrite
Applications Close		Monday 2 nd November 23:59	
If your application is shortlisted the EL, PSA and TTO will each be invited to an interview		PSA and EL interviews on the 9 th , 10 th and 11 th November	TTO conversations 5 th - 14.00 – 16.00 11 th – 10.00 – 13.00 12 th – 14.00 – 17.30
Results sent to applicants		By close Friday 20 th November	
Welcome Conference Call		Tuesday 1 st December, 09:30 to 13.00 - ELs must attend, optional for team members	Mentors will be attending (09.30 – 12.15)
Week 1 - Preparation Week	Online Sessions between 10am and 4pm		Mentor Availability
15 th , 16 th , 17 th and 18 th December	ELs are employed full-time on ICURE Explore (from 14 th December). On each day there will be online preparation and consolidation sessions – further details will be provided at the Welcome Call.		ELs required each day TTOs new to ICURE are recommended to attend 11.00 – 13.00 and 14.30 – 15.30 on Tuesday 15 th December. TTOs (experienced), PSAs and Bas optional
Week 2	Bootcamp Part 1 – Face to Face in Southampton, @ voco Southampton		Mentors available all day
Tuesday 5 th January	Bootcamp Day 0	ELs arrive during the evening.	
Wednesday 6 th January	Bootcamp Day 1	ELs only	
Thursday 7 th January	Bootcamp Day 2	ELs All Day PSA, TTO, BAs should attend registration at 3.30pm for Introduction Sessions at 4pm, followed by evening dinner & overnight stay.	

Friday 8 th January	Bootcamp Day 3	All Team members attend until 2.45pm	
Week 3	Bootcamp Part 2 - Online		Mentors available all day
Tuesday 12 th January	Bootcamp Day 4 (9am-5.30pm)	Entrepreneurial Lead (EL) and Technology Transfer representatives (TTO) and/or PSA must attend all day. If Business Adviser (BA) is not available all morning would recommend that 2 x 1 hr slots before 2pm for 'Time to complete BMC and Action Plans' (these documents form the basis of the Letter of Award).	Assessment panel in evening
Wednesday 13 th January	Bootcamp Day 5 (9am-5.30pm)	Entrepreneurial Lead (EL) and Technology Transfer representatives (TTO) must be available all day. Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) and Business Adviser (BA) - optional to receive submission feedback. But they could be needed to input into Action Plan, would recommend they expect to check in during the day.	
Week 4			Mentors available all day
Mon 18 th January 13:00 - 15:00	Catch Up Call – Online International Ecosystem Map and Strength Deployment Workshop	ELs & TTOs required PSA & BA optional	121s with mentor to be booked – please contact your mentor
Week 5			121s available if requested
Mon 25 th January 13:00-15:00	Catch Up Call – Online Resilience and Trade Show Best Practice	ELs & TTOs required PSA & BA optional	Mentor Group Meet as part of Catch Up Call
Week 6			
Mon 1 st February 13:00 - 15:00	Catch Up Call – Online Data Management, Teams, Traction and preparation for Gate 1 Catch Up Call - Online	ELs required TTO, PSA & BA optional	121s with mentor to be booked – please contact your mentor
Week 7	Gate 1 – Progress Review Online		
Mon 8 th February 09:00 – 15:00	Gate 1 Review - Online	ELs required TTO required 1hr, 20 mins AM, & 1hr PM. PSA/BA optional.	Mentors available until 14.00
Week 8			
Mon 15 th February 13:00 - 15:00 (Half Term)	Catch Up Call – Online Honing assumptions – why should I pivot?	ELs required TTO, PSA & BA optional	Mentor Group Meet as part of Catch Up Call

Week 9			
Mon 22 nd Feb 13:00 – 15:00	Catch Up Call – Online Data Management, Routes to Commercialisation, Alumni talk and preparation for Gate 2	ELs required TTO, PSA & BA optional	121s with mentor to be booked – please contact your mentor
Week 10	Gate 2 - Online		
Mon 1 st March 09:00 – 13:30	Progress Review Gate 2	All team members are required for mentor group presentation. Approx. 1hr, 20 mins.	Mentors available until 14.00
Week 11			
Mon 8 th March 09:30-15:30	Business Models Bootcamp	ELs & BA required TTO & PSA optional	121s with mentor to be booked – please contact your mentor
Wed 10 th March 09:30-12:30	Investment workshop	EL & TTO required PSA & BA optional	
Wed 10 th March 13.00 – 15.30	Timeline workshop	ELs and TTOs (or BA's required) BA and PSAs optional	
Week 12	Pitch Training		
Mon 15 th and Tues 16 th	Options Roundabout Pitch Training Day – Face to Face (venue tbc)	ELs & BA required PSA and TTO recommended to attend	121s available if requested
Week 12			Mentor available both days
Thurs 18 th and 19 th March	1 to 1s with mentors - Options Roundabout presentation and Panel questions rehearsal (1 hour)	All team members recommended to attend	Mentor/s and Pitch training lead available for one hour meeting
Week 13	Options Roundabout Panel		
Tues 23 rd and Wed 24 th March	Options Roundabout Panel – Face to Face @ Central London		All team members are required to attend. See notes below.
	- 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 gate 1 review on Monday 8th February. - 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 13-week programme the EL will spend 10 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 8th March 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 – Monday 14th December to Friday 25th March 2027.

What is Women's ICURE Explore?

Innovate UK ICURE Explore is approx. 3-4 months 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 transferable 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 covering approximately 3-4 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 for your market discovery journey.
- Approximately 10 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 the 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 make a pitch to an experienced panel of funders, stakeholders and mentors to help accelerate the impact of 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 may then be reclaimed after the programme finishes, based on actual and evidenced expenditure.
- (ii) Innovate UK will not cover any travel Visa costs.

*if the EL is a senior member of staff, this amount may be adjusted upon request.

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Why Attend?

Past participants say that having dedicated time to understand 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.

This is a closed programme for **women** only – if you are not eligible, other ICURE Explore Programmes are available on our [website](https://www.setsquared.co.uk). Should you have any queries please contact icure@setsquared.co.uk.

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 5th January to Thursday 15th April 2027.
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 £3000 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, 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.

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