

## MRC ICURE Discover – December 2026

Medical Research Council Focused

Thursday 3rd December 2026 to Thursday 11th February 2027

### KEY DATES AND EXPECTATIONS

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                             |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Applications open                                           |             |
| Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> October 12:00-13:00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <a href="#">Information Session REGISTER via Eventbrite</a> |             |
| Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2026 @ 23:59                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Applications close                                          |             |
| Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> November latest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Notification of results sent to applicants                  |             |
| Programme Outline                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                             |             |
| Session 1 (Welcome Call)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2026                      | 13:00-16:00 |
| Session 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2026                     | 13:00-16:00 |
| Session 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2026                     | 13:00-16:00 |
| Mentor contact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | w/c 5th January 2027                                        |             |
| Session 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2027                      | 13:00-16:00 |
| Session 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2027                      | 13:00-16:00 |
| Session 6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> January 2027                      | 13:00-16:00 |
| Session 7                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2027                      | 13:00-16:00 |
| Session 8 (Options Roundabout)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2027                     | (All day)   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All sessions scheduled online</li><li>• The research student/technician will be expected to attend all sessions scheduled above and should hold these dates in their diary when applying.</li><li>• Technology Transfer Representatives are also welcome to attend all sessions, but it is not obligatory.</li></ul> |                                                             |             |

\*\* Timetable subject to change.

### **What is the MRC ICURE Discover programme?**

Innovate UK ICURE is partnering with the Medical Research Council (MRC) to deliver an ICURE Discover programme in December 2026, specifically to accelerate research and innovation in diagnosis, advance treatment and prevent human illness.

MRC ICURE Discover is a 10-week, part-time online market discovery programme developed using the lean startup methodology, which applies the scientific method (hypothesise, test, evaluate) to business ideas. Participants will learn how to use this approach to gauge their potential customers' opinions about their idea, product service or experience. This programme is suitable for participants looking to explore the potential of their early-stage projects or those who require a part-time commitment for market exploration.

The Medical Research Council (MRC) ICURE Discover programme is delivered in partnership with Innovate UK and supports researchers to explore the commercial potential of their research and identify the most appropriate route to impact. Through a combination of structured training, market discovery activities and expert mentoring, participants gain insight into customer needs, market opportunities and commercialisation pathways, including licensing, partnerships and spin-outs.

Through 2026/27 Innovate UK ICURE is running a series of UKRI council pathways, sector-specific cohorts delivered with individual research councils and research centres.

### **MRC and Innovate UK ICURE**

MRC has a strong track record of supporting translational research through investments such as the Gap Fund (now Impact Acceleration Awards), the Development Pathway Funding Scheme (DPFS), now MRC Proof of Concept, and other translational and impact acceleration activities. While these schemes effectively de-risk technologies and support early development, many projects face challenges beyond the science, including market validation, customer discovery, regulatory considerations, reimbursement and adoption within healthcare systems.

The MRC and Innovate UK ICURE partnership helps address these challenges by connecting researchers with a proven commercialisation framework. The programme aims to strengthen the translation pathway and support promising discoveries to progress towards patient, economic and societal impact.

MRC ICURE Discover welcomes projects across the full breadth of MRC's remit, including novel therapeutics, medical devices, diagnostics and other interventions addressing human health challenges in the UK and globally. The opportunity is open to all researchers working within MRC's remit, irrespective of funding source.

**This ICURE Discover is focused on innovations in the sectors described. If you are unsure whether your technology or research fits these sectors, please get in touch [icure@setsquared.co.uk](mailto:icure@setsquared.co.uk).**

### **How does it work?**

Our 10-week, part-time online market discovery program is developed using the lean startup methodology, which applies the scientific method (hypothesise, test, evaluate) to business ideas. Participants, researchers and technicians, will learn how to use this approach to gauge their potential customers' opinions about their idea, product, or service. This programme is suitable for participants looking to explore the potential of their early-stage projects or those who require a part-time commitment for market exploration.

### **What does it include?**

- Support to carry out market and customer discovery on a part-time basis over a 10-week period.
- 8 half-day workshops, followed by an Options Roundabout where you will present your market validation findings.
- Flexible online delivery
- Hearing from guest speakers, who will share their learning and experiences from their ICURE journeys.
- Introduction to Strategyzer Business Model Canvas (BMC)
- Trainer, mentor, and peer feedback with next steps guidance following your ICURE Discover journey.
- Up to £2,500 support for market discovery activities

### **ICURE Discover provides a route towards other ICURE Programmes**

It is a pre-requisite to attend ICURE Explore.

### **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?**

MRC ICURE Discover is open to all UK universities and approved public sector research establishments (PSREs) who are working specifically across the full breadth of MRC's remit, including novel therapeutics, medical devices, diagnostics and other interventions addressing human health challenges in the UK and globally. The opportunity is open to all researchers working within MRC's remit, irrespective of funding source.

### **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 color, those living with disabilities, and those from the LGBTQI+ communities.
- Approved public sector research establishments (PSREs) conducting research within the specified domains.

### How do I apply?

- The online application form will ask a series of questions about you and your research project.
- There is a limited number of spaces on each Cohort, but we try to provide support to as many applications as possible.
- The application form may be accessed from the links on this website.
- **You will need to have engaged with your University Technology Transfer Office (TTO) and your Principal Investigator prior to applying. Please contact us if your university does not have a TTO or IP Manager and we will endeavour to help.**

If you have any further questions, please direct them to [icure@setsquared.co.uk](mailto:icure@setsquared.co.uk) or use the contact form via this website.