

Business Collaborator

Collaborating with PhD students can be great – they are experts in their fields, often at the cutting edge, using innovative techniques and with fresh ideas. There are many ways of collaborating with a PhD student – it can be a long-term relationship, or it can be a short-term consultancy arrangement. Think through the following questions to ensure you get the most out of your collaboration.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF COLLABORATING WITH A PHD STUDENT?

- PhD students often have expertise or knowledge on specific areas which may be pertinent to your business
- PhD students are often experts in specific methodologies which may be helpful to your business
- PhD students work closely with established academics and can be a great way to access this expertise



WHAT IS THE RESEARCH QUESTION YOU NEED HELP ANSWERING?

Do you have a specific problem you are struggling with in your business?
How can research help you solve your problem?
Can your business challenges be framed as research questions?

- ✓ Define your research question or set of research questions



WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME FOR YOU TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?

Is it a long-term question which could be answered over the course of a 3+ year PhD?
Do you need a quick answer which a PhD student can collaborate with you on a short-term consultancy basis?

- ✓ Be clear on your required time frame

Business cont.



WHAT ARE YOU HAPPY/ABLE TO SHARE WITH A RESEARCHER?

Access to data? If so, which data sets are you able to share?

Access to staff? If so, how much time are you willing for your staff to spend with a researcher?

Access to customers or clients? If so, what are the parameters of this? Do you need a data access agreement in place to enable the research?

- ✓ **Identify what you are happy (and not happy) to share with a researcher**



WHAT RESOURCE ARE YOU ABLE TO SHARE WITH A RESEARCHER – NOTE, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GIVE ANY OF THE BELOW FOR A COLLABORATION TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

Supervision time – are you, or a member of your business, interested in co-supervising a PhD student, helping to keep them on track and ensure that the business-application is considered throughout the PhD?

Funding – is your business able to contribute any funding towards research costs?

Space – if appropriate, are you able to offer a researcher a desk or a space at certain points in the research process?

- ✓ **Communicate the resource you have available to invest in a researcher – there are no right or wrong answers to this, but clarity is key!**



WHAT KINDS OF OUTPUTS DO YOU NEED FROM THE RESEARCHER TO MAKE THE COLLABORATION SUCCESSFUL?

A research report?

A presentation?

A workshop or training/professional development?

A toolkit?

- ✓ **Consider how your business can benefit most from the collaboration**