



**Centre for Digital  
Entertainment**

Handbook 2018

EngD in Digital  
Entertainment

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# Welcome to the Centre for Digital Entertainment



Welcome to the EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Digital Entertainment (CDE)! We hope that you will have an enjoyable and worthwhile time with us. Please take some time to read through this handbook and familiarise yourself with the contents. In this handbook we highlight and summarise key information about the Engineering Doctorate (EngD) in Digital Entertainment. It will often point to other information sources, which contain more detail for those who need it and are available on-line.

The University of Bath's Doctoral College Handbook (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/doctoral-college-handbook-for-research-students/>) sets out information common to all research students at the University. The CDE Handbook contains information specific to the EngD programme and the CDE itself. Every effort is made to ensure that the information in this handbook is up-to-date. Please inform us of any errors you find.

Peter Hall  
Director

## CDE staff

There are two CDE directors, one at each university site: Prof Jian Zhang (Bournemouth) and Prof Peter Hall (Bath). The Directors provide academic direction to the CDE and are responsible for determining the breadth of the areas that CDE students study and the suitability of company placements. The directors interact with the EPSRC funding body so that CDE can respond appropriately to a variable funding landscape.

There is one Centre Manager: Brent Kiernan (Bath). The Centre Manager is responsible for running the CDE on a day to day basis, including budget control, inter-site (Bath, Bournemouth) relationships, communications, organising management meetings, and staff management. The Centre Manager represents the CDE at meetings and events, liaises with industry, and writes reports on CDE progress for the funding body.

The two Research Project Managers (Mike Board BU and Sarah Parry Bath) lead on student recruitment and retention, facilitate company partnerships, liaise with industry partners and academics, and negotiate placement agreements.

The two Events Coordinators (Zoe Leonard BU and Becca Knight Bath) are responsible for CDE event organisation and are involved with day-to-day procurement and travel arrangements.



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The CDE has a Project Board which includes representatives from students and the EPSRC. It meets three times a year, usually alternating between Bath and Bournemouth. Student reps can raise general issues on behalf of all students.

A Professional Advisory Board, with representatives from our partner companies and sector bodies, helps guide our development.

All of the CDE management team will respond to you and we are always pleased to hear from you, about your successes as well as to answer your questions.



## About the CDE

The CDE is an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) funded Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) specialising in Digital Entertainment, especially supporting the UK creative digital media company sector: games, animation, visual effects, and post-production. Digital technology companies are a large and expanding part of the UK economy, hungry for highly-skilled graduates. The CDE was created in response to the training need identified by government and industry. Over 40 industrial partner companies and organisations have contracted with the CDE to train Research Engineers (REs) during their Engineering Doctorate (EngD) Programme.



The CDE is a joint venture between the University of Bath and Bournemouth University, which has been running since 2009. The EPSRC provided £6.3 million for 50 studentships in 2009, and a further £4.8 million in 2013 for an additional 50 studentships, which are part-funded by the universities and industrial contributions. Our former students are now taking senior positions within industrial partner companies and wider UK industry sectors.

As an EPSRC-funded CDT we offer a one year skills-building taught programme at each University, followed by a three year research secondment to a company. Each RE is guided jointly by an academic supervisor and a company supervisor. REs are not employed by the company and remain a full-time research student throughout the placement period.

By being in a company for the three research years, REs gain exceptional industry-leading skills and research results can be quickly absorbed and utilised by the company, supporting its growth and development. This makes for a rewarding mix of classic University research and fast impact on the commercial world.

This pattern of training – a taught first year followed by three years of research – leads to an EngD degree. The title reflects the practical nature and application of the research and the academic standard is identical to that for a PhD.



## About the EngD

Like a PhD, a successful EngD will need to demonstrate innovative research leading to papers in high-quality academically-refereed outlets. Unlike most PhDs, REs do their research in a company, where there may be many interesting distractions. An EngD project should weave practical and professional experience with the research itself and demonstrate the impact of the new knowledge or IP generated. Skills courses are offered by both universities to developing the knowledge to do top-quality research in industry but in the long run “company experience” and “research experience” should happen throughout the placement. If this isn't happening, supervisors and students should re-focus.



## Programme structure

Both Universities have developed first year programmes for the EngD in Digital Entertainment. For practical reasons they differ in content and delivery while covering similar territory.

The University of Bath's Online Programme and Unit catalogues at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/catalogues/> has details of the Bath programme.

The programme begins with a taught first year at Master's-level. The purpose of the taught component is to equip CDE students with the wider background they need to become REs who contribute positively to product development.

The teaching programme is open to the influence of external partners. This is most obvious in the summer projects, which allow partners to have a direct voice on the topic. Partners are encouraged to suggest problem areas for study and in this way proto-type projects prior to placement.

		Milestone	Deliverable
Year 1	Taught MSc		Coursework and Dissertation
		Candidature	Research Plan
Year 2	Company placement research project		6 month Progress Report
		Confirmation	10,000 word Report
			6 month Progress Report
Year 3			6 month Progress Report
		Writing Up	6 month Progress Report
Year 4		Submission	Thesis/Portfolio

## First year taught course (MSc)

The 90-credit taught component of the programme comprises the Master's level units of either the MSc in Digital Entertainment or the MSc in Human Computer Interaction. The MSc Programmes are designed to provide the material needed for the EngD in Digital Entertainment students, while also permitting other students to take it as a stand-alone degree. The purpose of the taught units is to equip students with the knowledge and expertise to progress in CDE's industry sectors, primarily computer animation, visual effects and computer games, but also wider sectors that are adopting this technology such as health, education and defence.

Woven through the taught year is a growing emphasis on understanding research, culminating in a research-led summer project. For the EngD students, this project is the opportunity to work with a company and academic supervisors to set the agenda for the research programme in years 2-4.

The first semester (from October to January) covers a range of skills found in all of our company sectors. There is also a chance for REs to start thinking about research, and specific areas of interest. We will arrange meetings and interviews between students and companies appropriate to their shared interests.

During the second semester (February to May) REs specialise more, reflecting the needs of the research phase.

Over the summer period REs will be wholly focussed on research, aiming to have a direction which will give a good start to the company placement.

REs need to get an average mark of 60% or over on the taught programme to continue on the EngD. The taught Master's pass mark is 50% so we expect a higher standard for research students.

In addition to the training at the University of Bath, REs are able to take short courses at the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice at Bournemouth University: <https://www.cemp.ac.uk/courses/shortcourses.php>.

Throughout the programme, REs have free access to all Doctoral Skills workshops and online learning at the University of Bath: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/rdu/courses/pgskills/skills-development/>.

<b>MSc in Digital Entertainment course structure</b>			
<b>Unit code</b>	<b>Unit title</b>	<b>Unit status</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Semester 1</b>			
CM50244	Computer Animation and Games 1	C	6
CM50248	Visual Understanding 1	C	6
CM50264	Machine Learning 1	C	6
XX50215	Statistics for Data Science	C	6
CM50200	Mobile and Pervasive Systems	Choose 1 unit	6
CM50206	Intelligent Agents		6
ZZ50001	Director of Studies approved unit		6
<b>Semester 2</b>			
CM50175	Research Project Preparation	C	6
CM50245	Computer Animation and Games 2	Choose 2 units	12
CM50247	Visual Effects		12
CM50249	Visual Understanding 2		12
CM50170	Dissertation	C	30

<b>MSc in Human Computer Interaction course structure</b>			
<b>Unit code</b>	<b>Unit title</b>	<b>Unit status</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Semester 1</b>			
CM50109	Software Engineering	C	12
CM50121	Safety Critical Systems	C	6
CM50123	Networking	Choose 2 units	6
CM50200	Mobile and Pervasive Systems		6
XX50134	Quantitative Methods 1		6
ZZ50001	Director of Studies approved unit		6
<b>Semester 2</b>			
CM40179	Entrepreneurship	C	6
CM50150	Interactive Communication Design	C	6
CM50175	Research Project Preparation	C	6
CM40149	Collaborative Systems	Choose 2 units	6
CM50205	Theory of Human Computer Interaction		6
CM50209	Security and Integrity		6
ZZ50001	Director of Studies approved unit		6
CM50170	Dissertation	C	30

## Candidature (12 months)

At the beginning of Year 2, a candidature form is needed to indicate the topic of research and supervisory arrangements. The candidature form is completed by the student, supervisor and Director of Studies via the University's online Student and Applicant Management Information System (SAMIS): [https://www.bath.ac.uk/samis/urd/sits.urd/run/siw\\_lgn](https://www.bath.ac.uk/samis/urd/sits.urd/run/siw_lgn). The form must be submitted within one month of the start of year 2.

Further information is available in section 6 of <http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/documents/OA7.pdf>.

## Years 2-4

Progress reports are required every six months during the research phase. These are again submitted via SAMIS.

## Confirmation (24 months)

The end of the second year is a key milestone for the EngD in Digital Entertainment. First, REs must have completed the required taught credits and research integrity training by this point. Normally this will be done in year 1 so any missing credits must be completed in year 2.

For Confirmation, REs must submit a report of 10,000 words explaining research achievements to date and outlining the research direction for the next two years to a Progression Board of Examiners. A data management plan must also be in place. There is an oral examination and the Board will also consider the RE's skills training record and statements on progress from supervisors.

The progression report is like any other piece of examined coursework, in that there is a deadline to be met and a formal progression point for continuing to year 3.

The report may include existing publications or technical reports. It should explore any remaining difficulties and identify any resources or barriers to be overcome in order to complete. It should set out clearly what the research challenges are, the achievements so far and the plan for the remaining time.

Candidates are permitted to seek Confirmation on a maximum of two occasions. No third attempt will be permitted. The first submission of the Progression Report must take place not more than twenty-four months after the RE's first registration for the degree of EngD. A candidate who fails to

submit the work by the deadline will normally be deemed to have failed their first attempt. Where the candidate fails either to meet the deadline or to achieve the required standard for confirmation for EngD candidature, submission of work for the second attempt must take place on or before a further deadline specified by the Progression Board of Examiners, normally within six months of the first attempt. A candidate who fails to submit the work by this deadline will normally be deemed to have failed their second attempt.

Further information is available at

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/documents/QA7-appendix-5.pdf>.

### Thesis (48 months)

Full details of the specification for the thesis can be found at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/documents/QA7-Appendix-6.pdf>.

We strongly recommend that writing up starts 9 months before submission (month 40 onwards) and that the final 6 months (month 43 onwards) is set aside for writing up and not much else.

REs should work closely with academic supervisors throughout writing up.

### Industrial placement

Following the first year taught programme and supervised research project each student will undertake up to three years supervised research based in an external partner company.

REs cannot continue as an EngD student past the end of Year 2 without an Industrial Placement (though this is normally in place by the end of Year 1).

1. Finding a company placement is a joint partnership activity between the student and the CDE staff. The CDE staff will contact companies on behalf of the students but welcome identification by the students of suitable companies.
2. Progression to the second year is not possible without securing a company placement except under exceptional circumstances and only if approved by the Director or Co-Director.
3. Students should not attend an interview with a company if they have no intention of accepting the placement.
4. Students should not refuse a placement without a very good reason, and without discussing this with the Director or Co-Director.

5. Funding may be withdrawn if a student turns down a placement, on the discretion of the Director or Co-Director.
6. As the commercial details of the arrangement between the University and the company can take months to finalise, it is essential that planning for potential placements as soon as possible in year 1.
7. Any company where a student is placed needs to be sufficiently large to have an active R&D function, the expertise to provide an industrial supervisor, and financial stability, including an agreed financial contribution to CDE over the duration of the placement.
8. Any restriction placed by a student in relation to geographical location may limit the success of finding a company placement; students are encouraged to be as flexible as possible with respect to company partners and specific R&D projects.
9. A student will be interviewed and their skills may be assessed by a company to determine their suitability for a specific R&D project.
10. Once a student has accepted a placement, the University and the company will finalise a contract between them. The agreement is based on a standard CDE contract model. Students are not party to this contract and do not have to sign it. They will, however, need to sign a deed of assignment covering IP and confidentiality.
11. For the duration of the placement students are still registered at the University and are not employed by the company.
12. Students should not make any substantial arrangements for the placement such as committing to accommodation until it has been confirmed that the contract between the University and the company has been signed, as this process can take some time.

The Students' Union has a Placements Hub at <https://www.bathstudent.com/placement/>. which includes a map of students on placement, which can help REs contact other Bath students looking for accommodation for placements.

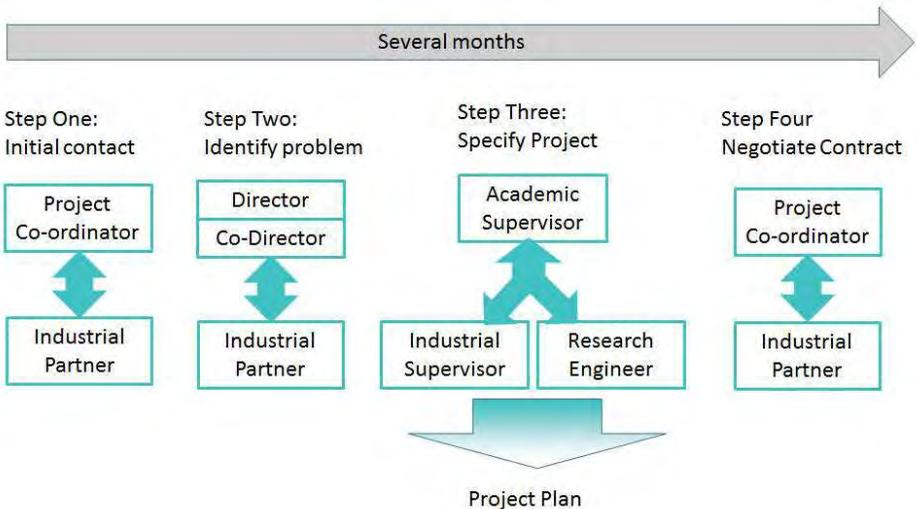


# Research plan

Once a student, supervisor and company have been matched, a written plan for the project must be submitted to the CDE management team. The plan is intended to mitigate problems of remote supervision. It should be intended to last three years and include aims and objectives, and deadlines and deliverables. It should describe the literature gap and the pathway to impact.

The plan must include a diary of meetings, both remotely and face-to-face. It must include provision for the student to attend CDE events and to write-up both a transfer report and a final thesis or portfolio. A skeletal template is found in Appendix A.

## Arriving at a Project



## Supervisory arrangements

REs are supported by a supervisory team: a lead academic supervisor from the University of Bath and an industrial supervisor from the partner company. The team may include secondary academic supervisors (from either university) who have particular specialities that can benefit the project.

The aim of establishing a supervisory team is to ensure that each student has access to a breadth of experience and knowledge, not only across their

discipline but also for general research training and support. The supervisory team also acts as a mutual support group, to ensure that the company and university partners fully understand what each is expecting.

The supervisors guide the RE in planning and delivering the research project. The industrial supervisor will advise on the strategic importance and industrial relevance of the work. The academic supervisor should ensure the work meets the requirements of the degree and that there is sufficient awareness and depth of understanding demonstrated in research outputs. Supervisors should give REs achievable targets and clear guidance on milestones.

## Meetings

In years two to four, we recommend that REs make contact with the lead academic supervisor once a week (be this via telephone or Skype) and meet face to face once a month. We recommend that REs and industrial supervisors meet weekly.

Both supervisors and the RE should meet together via Skype at least once a month and face-to-face at least once a quarter.

It is best practice to keep a record of each meeting and to take notes at these meetings as they occur.

## Key responsibilities

The Academic Supervisor:

- Guides the RE's research agenda
- Advises on the doctoral worth of research agenda (regarding novelty and literature)
- Advises on depth of understanding and analysis
- Ensures the RE has had relevant university inductions
- Guides the RE on choice of taught units and relevant professional training
- Approves spend on the RE's Training Support Fund
- Regularly meets with RE and industrial supervisor to monitor and record progress\*
- Guides the RE on the production of the thesis/portfolio including suitability of evidence

The Industrial Supervisor:

- Guides the RE's research agenda
- Advises on strategic importance and industrial relevance of work
- Ensures the RE has had relevant company induction

- Ensures the RE is aware of the company's expectations regarding conduct and what material is suitable for disclosure to the public sphere
- Ensures company colleagues fully understand the nature of the RE's role as a research student embedded in a company who is not an employee
- Clears the RE's presentations to external audiences
- Guides the RE on choice of taught units and professional development to fill skills gaps
- Regularly meets with the RE and academic supervisor to monitor and record progress\*
- Allows the RE time to attend conferences and do coursework. Time spent on these are an integral part of the programme and do not count as leave.
- Approves leave in consultation with the academic supervisor

## Personal development

REs should attend relevant training sessions and master classes given by ourselves, partner companies, and external organisations. These are not assessed but form part of the training and should be recorded in the Progress Reports.

## Research Fish

Research Fish is an online survey that collects research outcomes so that the EPSRC can track the impacts of their investments. Providing details of the outputs produced during your doctoral research is a condition of your scholarship funding. Research Councils apply sanctions on the University for non-compliance, preventing future students from benefitting from scholarship funding. You will need to provide this information every year until three years after your studentship has finished, and the EPSRC will contact you ahead of the annual submission period using your University email address.

## Problem solving

The EngD is a complex academic research programme with a variety of stakeholders. This can lead to issues that need to be resolved by dialogue between the parties. If concerns arise that cannot be dealt with locally by supervisors, please contact the CDE staff.

There are also regular meetings between staff and student representatives where student issues can be raised and discussed. CDE student reps are elected at the start of each year.

# Finances and leave

## Stipend

Stipends are paid quarterly in advance at the EPSRC national minimum rate for Research Engineers (REs) undertaking an Engineering Doctorate (EngD): <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/students/help/minimumpay/>. Student stipends are tax-free.

Students in a company placement are paid up to an additional £4,000 stipend per year (pro-rata), where the company is making an appropriate contribution to the University. There will be no top-up when a student is not in placement or where the host organisation is not making a direct financial contribution to the University.

CDE students with a placement within the boundaries of the Greater London Authority are eligible for an additional stipend of £2,000 per year. The London Weighting will only apply during the placement period (normally years 2-4).

## Travel and equipment

REs have a generous Training Support Fund (TSF) of £10,000 for the duration of the EngD. The fund may be used to attend conferences and events, buy appropriate equipment, and other activities supporting the research. The academic supervisor must approve any expenditure and is responsible for ensuring the University's processes and standards are followed.

The TSF will be allocated a unique project code at the beginning of the year to which any expenditure can be charged through the University's finance system, Agresso <http://www.bath.ac.uk/agresso.bho>.

It is important that REs discuss the budget with supervisors on a regular basis. In particular, known expenses such as conferences should be planned ahead of time. Following attendance at any event, a brief written report (including photos where possible) should be submitted to the CDE Events Co-ordinator outlining how the event is relevant to the research. Elements of these reports will be used to update the website/blog and as case studies for EPSRC.

The University of Bath's travel agent is Clarity: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/services/make-a-travel-booking-through-clarity/>. It is not possible to use other travel agents through the University. For group travel, where CDE is sending multiple people, the Events Coordinator will normally arrange everything and then charge it to the appropriate TSFs. For travel

insurance, please see <http://www.bath.ac.uk/insurance-services/travel-insurance/index.html>.

### Reclaiming expenses

Reasonable minor expenses (for example, food and drink while travelling on project-related business, and rail travel to meetings) can be claimed by REs and academic supervisors in keeping with University policy (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/finance-procurement/guidance/travel-expenses/travel-subsistence-expenses/>). All claims must be supported by receipts.

Expenses are claimed through the University's finance system, Agresso (Business World On). Instructions on how to make a claim are at: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/agresso.bho/expenses/index.html>.

### Prepayment of larger expenses

The Centre can cover up-front costs for expensive items such as conference registration, hotel reservations, etc.

If you would like the Centre to make a purchase this way, please contact the CDE Events Co-ordinator in plenty of time. Conferences and air tickets are usually much cheaper if booked well in advance.

### Computer equipment

Any equipment purchases by REs must be approved in advance by the academic supervisor. Only very minor purchases such as cables or memory sticks are acceptable to buy and reclaim as an expense. Do not buy any substantial equipment yourself and then expect to reclaim it! The University has specific suppliers and all orders must be made through the University processes. Our IT Support Manager, Keir Mobbs, can order computer equipment on behalf of the RE and charge it to the appropriate TSF.



All goods, including laptops that have been purchased on the CDE grant, are the property of the University of Bath and need to be returned on completion of the project.

## International visits

The CDE can provide up to an additional £5,000 per student for an international visit of one month or longer, such as visiting another division of a host company or a university overseas. Further details are available at <http://www.digital-entertainment.org/cde-documents/cde-documents-copy/>.

## Annual Events and Student-led Activities

The CDE holds at least one annual event where all students are expected to showcase their research to an invited audience of academics, researchers and industry leaders. The cost of annual events is met from the central CDE grant rather than TSFs. Host companies must allow time for REs to attend conferences and do coursework. Time spent on these are an integral part of the programme and do not count as leave.

Students are also encouraged to arrange events themselves, such as a Coding Retreat, ResJam or Writing Retreat.

## Public Engagement

Public Engagement is an important part of public-funded research and students are encouraged to undertake public engagement training and planning prior to a range of events they may participate in such as Bath Taps Into Science, The Cheltenham Science Festival and Images of Research.

## Grant Reference

If work is published or presented, please reference the funding provided by the EPSRC by quoting their grant reference number: EP/L016540/1.

## Leave entitlement

Doctoral students are entitled to 25 days' holiday (pro-rata for part-time students) in any 12-month period, in addition to days on which the University is closed. The timing of leave must be negotiated with the academic supervisor and, during placement, the industrial supervisor. During the taught element of the course, leave should be taken during the intersemester breaks only. For details of parental leave, please refer to the University of Bath's Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave Policy for Research Students.

The industrial partner company can keep a record of the leave days taken.

# Communications

## In person

The CDE team welcome email, phone-calls and drop-ins at any time during office hours.

## Email

The CDE and the University will send all communications to student's Bath email account, not to a personal or company email account. It is your responsibility to read this regularly and to make sure your inbox isn't full.

There is a mailing list for Bath and Bournemouth students which also includes our key members of staff: [cde-students@lists.bath.ac.uk](mailto:cde-students@lists.bath.ac.uk).

## Web Site

Our [Contacts page](http://www.digital-entertainment.org/contact) (<http://www.digital-entertainment.org/contact>) lists all of the CDE staff and how to contact us.

## Blog

The Centre for Digital Entertainment runs a blog and news pages in order to share news and events <http://digital-entertainment.org/>. These are managed by the Events Coordinators. Please get in touch with them to share your successes, travel or news items. All ideas are welcome!

## Twitter

The Centre has an active Twitter account. You can follow us @centre\_digi\_ent.

## Facebook

There is a CDE student only Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CDEstudents>

Revised and updated July 2018

# **A Project Plan**

This section contains a template for a written project plan in the form of headings and explanatory text. It is based largely on the case for support documents as required by EPSRC for grant applications.

## **A.1 Project Title**

List the team too.

## **A.2 Synopsis**

Explain the project in very broad terms, including what motivates the partner and why CDE should have an interest.

## **A.3 Aims and Objectives**

Clearly state the aim of the project, and the objectives that act as constraints.

## **A.4 Prior art and Planned Contributions**

Explain the background to the project. Identify the contributions to the literature that the work should yield. It is not always possible to be precise, but the general form of the contribution should be described.

## **A.5 Method**

Here the broad working methods are described. Does the project comprise a sequence of related steps, or is it to be a collection of more loosely related projects?

## **A.6 Work Plan**

In as much detail as possible, specify a set of milestones, deliverables, and time frames. Allow for writing up and for a transfer report. Be sure to include references to publication ambitions, and to describe a mechanism for transferring IP from the research into the partner's working environment, as appropriate.

Include an outline of the responsibilities of team members and a diary of meetings. REs are recommended to make contact with each supervisor at least weekly, be this separately or in a joint session (which can be via remote means). The entire supervisory team and the RE should meet together at least quarterly to review progress and next steps.

## **A.7 Resources Required**

Say what computer, cameras *etc* will be required. Include a reference to visits by the student to conferences and CDE events.

## **A.8 Pathways to Impact**

Describe, at least in general terms, how the integration of IP is to be audited, and its impact measured. Potential impacts are sales, intellectual property, patents and publications.

## **A.9 Other**

Here include any additional information of relevance. For example, CDE encourages and has funds to support international visits. If that has been discussed and an agreement reached, include it here.