THE EPSRC CDT IN MACHINE LEARNING SYSTEMS

INFORMATION SESSION FOR APPLICANTS 2025

THURS 20 NOVEMBER 2025 – 1-2PM

Amos Storkey – MLSystems Director
Stephanie Robin – MLSystems Manager
Jack Lee – MLSystems Administrator
Yangshen Deng – MLSystems Student
Benjamin Redhead – MLSystems Student

1. Programme Overview
2. Application and Selection Process
3. Q&A

MLSYSTEMS PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

AMOS STORKEY – CDT DIRECTOR
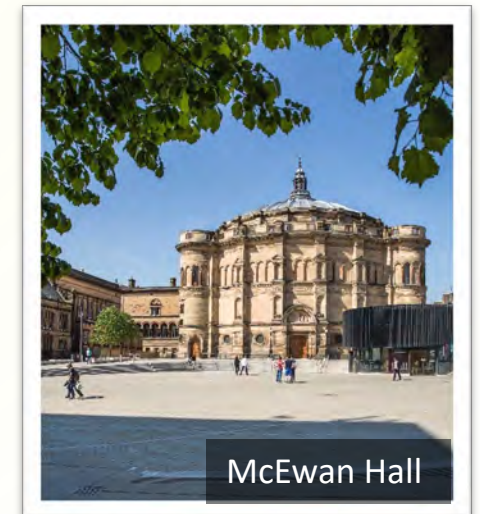
The University of Edinburgh

- ❑ Founded **1582**

- ❑ **49,640 students** total: 29,905 undergraduate, 13,120 taught postgraduate and 6,610 postgraduate research students from 150+ countries in 2024-2025

- ❑ **QS World University Rankings 2026:** 6th in the UK, 6th in Europe and 34th in the world

- ❑ **THES World University Rankings 2026:** 5th in the UK and 29th in the world

Old College

McEwan Hall

Teviot Row House

The School of Informatics

- **Research Excellence:** #1 in the UK for research power in Computer Science and Informatics THE ranking. 97% of our output (REF) is world leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*).

- Our research goes beyond Computer Science and encompasses various disciplines such as **Artificial Intelligence, Cognitive Science and Data Science**

- >**300 academic and research staff, 130 professional staff** and > 2000 taught and research students **(~600 PGR students)**, largest in the UK and one of the largest in Europe.

- Experienced and dedicated **business development team** working with industry, business, and government partners to transfer our world-leading research to the Scottish and global economies.

The Informatics Forum

What is a CDT?

- ☐ Centre for Doctoral **Training**

- ☐ UKRI-funded (**EPSRC**)

- ☐ **Cohort-based** programme: **5 cohorts of about 12 students** between 2024 and 2028 (September start only)

- ☐ Embedded in schools/departments with an existing **PhD community**

- ☐ A **dedicated management and support team**

What is a PhD?

❑ A contribution to the body of **knowledge** in a field (submission of a PhD thesis by end of funding)
❑ **All about research**, in collaboration with supervisors, partners and peers

❑ Break from university study. NOT more of the same

❑ **Outreach**: publications, conferences, public engagement

❑ Defining **problems**. Building **solutions**. Assessing validity.
❑ **Future options**: company research, academic, management, startup (and many others).
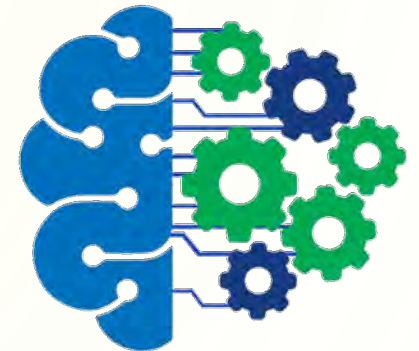
The CDT MLSystems

- ❑ **Fully-funded studentships** (stipend, fees and research costs) for 4 years
- ❑ PhD programme with **integrated study** (credit-bearing courses) over 4 years
- ❑ Flexible **training** via credit-bearing courses (180 credits), transferable skills training programme and personal training
- ❑ CDT **cohort-based** events
- ❑ **Industry connection and engagement** via events and integrated internship (4 months) or research visits

The CDT remit: Machine Learning AND Systems

❑ ML performance depends on the systems that implements it. This is about machine learning methods that work!

❑ Students collaborate and research on the cutting edge across the full ml-systems stack. **PhD projects must include both elements: ML & Systems.**

❑ One supervisor ML / one supervisor Systems

❑ See the website for examples of projects:

  ▪ ML4Sys, Sys4ML, environment aware ML, efficient ML, continual learning, architecture design, optimization.

The CDT Training

Credit-bearing courses (180 cr)

- Y1: Machine Learning Systems
- Y1: Elective courses to suit individual needs
- Y1: MLS research project
- Y2: Controversies in the Data Society
- Y3: Internship report

CDT activities and Transferable skills

- Hackathons, mini-projects, seminars etc.
- Responsible Research and Innovation
- Entrepreneurship
- Research Communication and Public Engagement
- Career Planning
- EDI and Wellbeing

Personal Training

- Following a Development Needs Analysis, training to be tailored to individual requirements based on:
  - research project
  - career goals

The CDT Funding

❑ 4 years of UK-tax-free **stipend** at UKRI rate

(£20,780 for 2025/26)

❑ 4 years of tuition **fees** (home and international)

❑ **Research costs** of minimum £6,000 to support research

expenses

❑ Standard **IT equipment** kit, hotdesking facilities in the
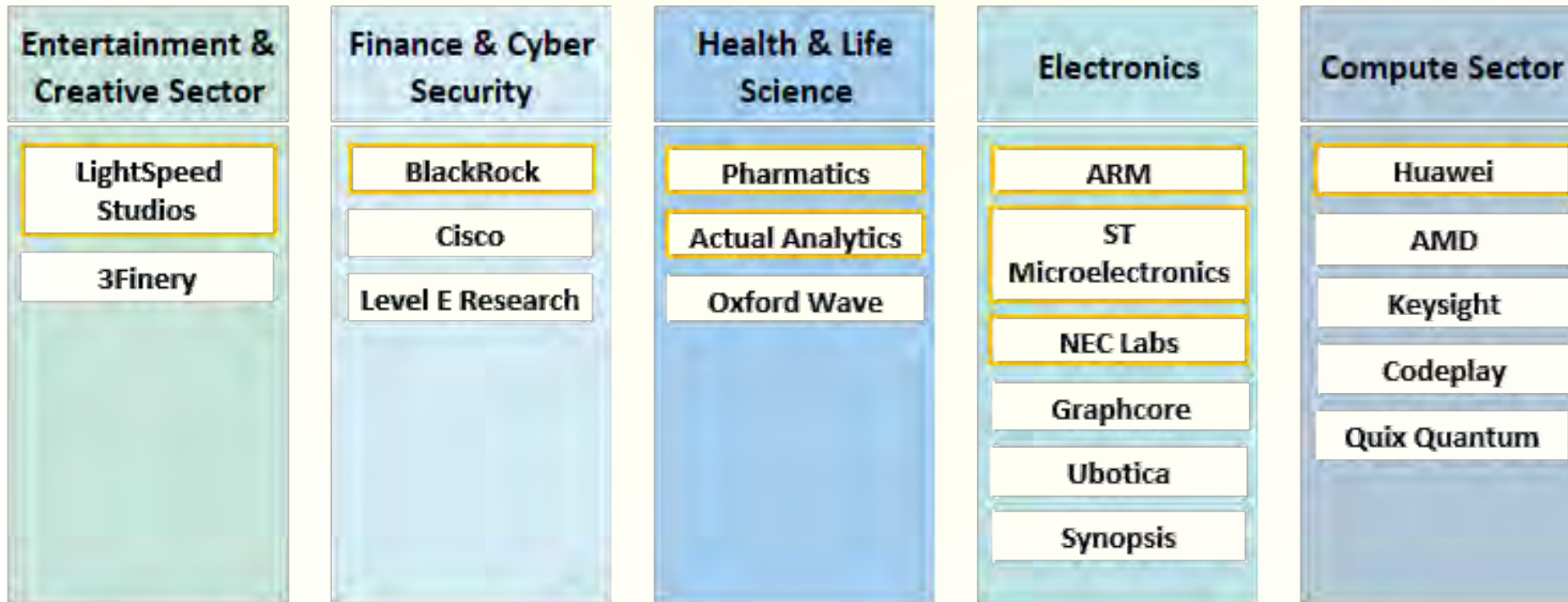
Informatics Forum, GPU compute cluster access

TechExpert Enhanced Stipend scheme

- For **Home students** only

- Annual stipend enhanced by **£10,000 on top of the UKRI rate**, for 4 years.

- **Additional requirements** (increased Widening Participation and Outreach activities, annual TechExpert meeting attendance etc.)

- Details to be confirmed in **January 2026**

CDT Industry Partners

Entertainment & Creative Sector	Finance & Cyber Security	Health & Life Science	Electronics	Compute Sector
LightSpeed Studios	BlackRock	Pharmatics	ARM	Huawei
3Finery	Cisco	Actual Analytics	ST Microelectronics	AMD
	Level E Research	Oxford Wave	NEC Labs	Keysight
			Graphcore	Codeplay
			Ubotica	Quix Quantum
			Synopsis	

— CDT Strategic Partners

And many others…

Career Perspectives after an MLSystems PhD

What do students do post PhD?

- Research labs within companies (e.g. larger internet companies)

- Join startups developing AI or systems tooling

- AI Consultant or manager within companies

- Commercialise research

- Further research within academia

But the options are many!

The UKRI Training Grant Terms and Conditions

CDT students are subject to the UKRI Research and Training Grant Terms and Conditions. These include the provision of:

❑ **Paid leave**: annual leave, medical leave, family leave and other types of leave

❑ **Disability Support Allowance** (after needs assessment by the University Disability and Learning Support Service – available from the point of studentship's acceptance)

UKRI Training Grant T&Cs   UKRI DSA Framework

Student Support Services

University Student Support Services:

- Disability and Learning Support
- Wellbeing
- Health
- Counselling
- Sport and Exercise
- Student Immigration
- Careers
- Institute for Academic Development
- Accommodation
- Student Finance
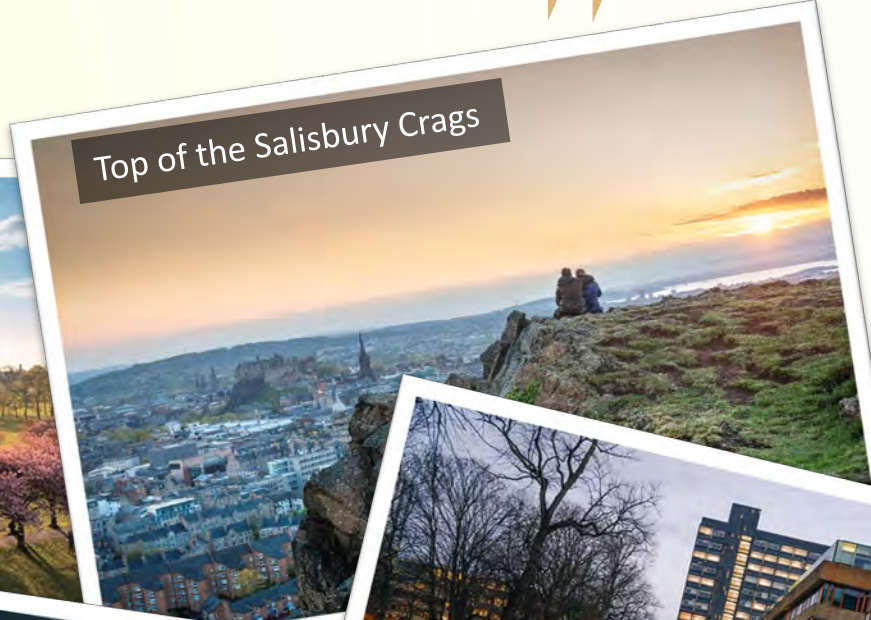- Childcare

Edinburgh University Student Association - EUSA

Living in Edinburgh

The Meadows

Top of the Salisbury Crags

Calton Hill

Central Campus George Square

Princes Street Garden

Scottish Parliament

Forth Bridge

First-stage Application deadline (Round 1):
11 December 2025 23:59

FOR SEPTEMBER 2026 ENTRY

https://informatics.ed.ac.uk/cdt-in-machine-learning-systems/apply

Any questions:

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