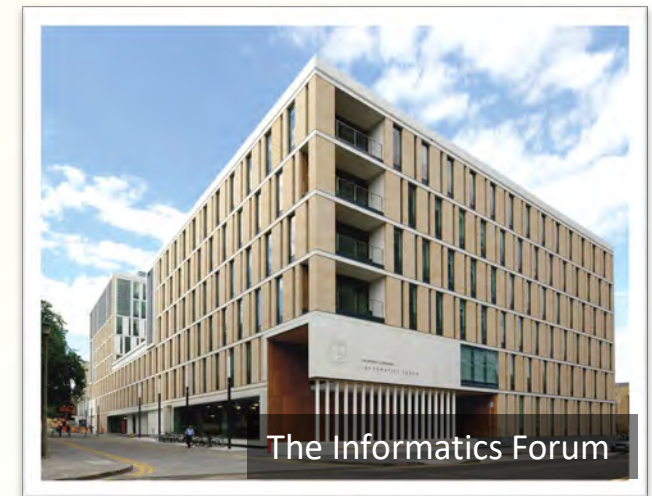


THE EPSRC CDT IN MACHINE LEARNING SYSTEMS

INFORMATION SESSION FOR APPLICANTS 2026

TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2026 – 2-3PM GMT

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



MLSYSTEMS PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

AMOS STORKEY – CDT DIRECTOR





THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



The University of Edinburgh

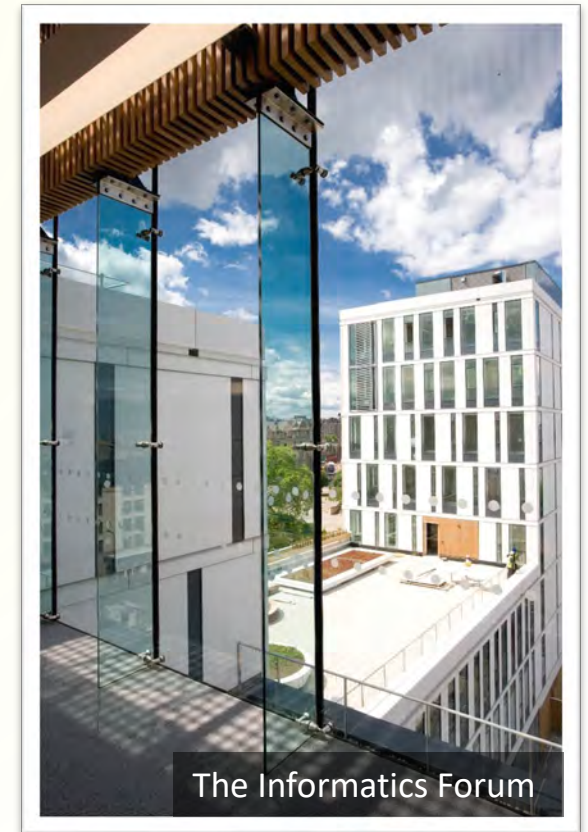
- ❑ Founded **1582**
- ❑ **48,820 students** total: 29,660 undergraduate, 12,615 taught postgraduate and 6,550 postgraduate research students from 150+ countries in 2024-2025
- ❑ **QS World University Rankings 2027:** 5th in the UK, 9th in Europe and 35th in the world
- ❑ **THES World University Rankings 2027:** 5th in the UK and 29th in the world



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.



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**



**UK Research
and Innovation**

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).

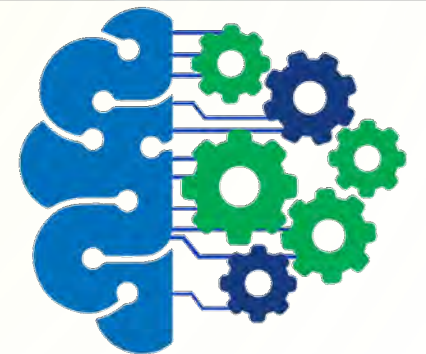


The CDT MSystems

- ❑ **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 (3-6 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 etc.





The CDT Training

Credit-bearing courses (180 credits)

- Year 1:
 - Machine Learning Systems
 - Optional Elective courses to suit individual needs
 - MLS research project
- Year 2: Controversies in the Data Society
- Year 3: Internship report

CDT activities and Essential PhD skills

- Company challenges and events
- Seminars
- Responsible Research and Innovation
- Entrepreneurship
- Research Communication
- Public Engagement
- EDI and Wellbeing
- Career Planning

Personal Training

Following a Development Needs Analysis, training to be tailored to individual requirements based on:

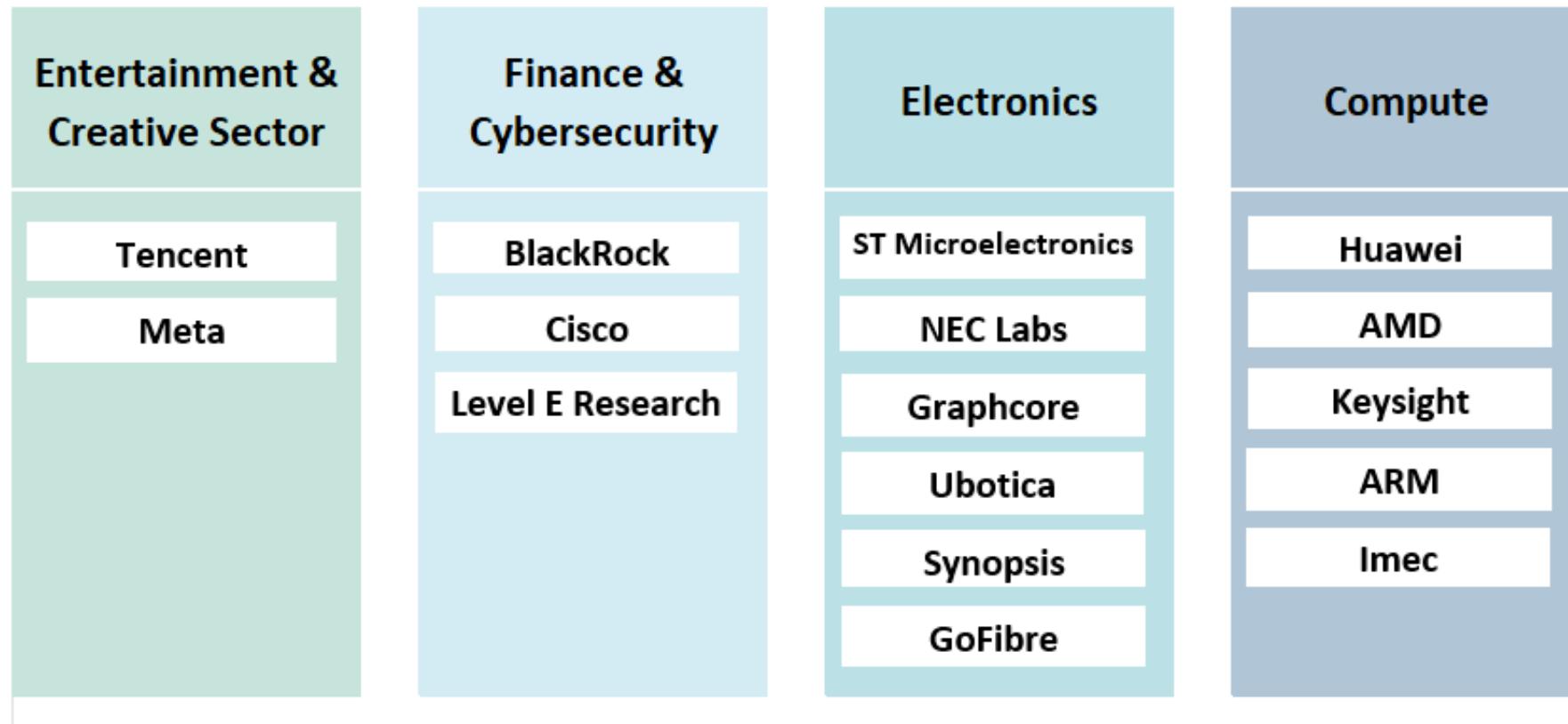
- research project
- career goals and objectives

The CDT Funding and Provision

- ❑ 4 years of UK-tax-free **stipend** at UKRI rate (£21,805 for 2026/27)
- ❑ 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



CDT Industry Partners



And many others...

Career Perspectives after MSystems 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

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)

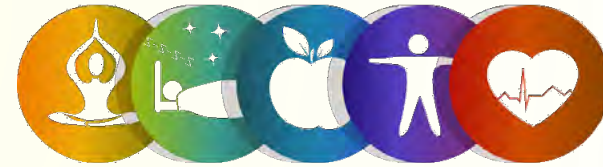
[UKRI Training Grant T&Cs](#)

[UKRI DSA Framework](#)

Student Support Services

University Student Support Services:

- Disability and Learning Support
- Wellbeing
- Health
- Counselling
- Sport and Exercise
- Student Immigration
- Doctoral PGR Development
- Careers
- Accommodation
- Student Finance
- Childcare



Edinburgh
University
Students'
Association



Edinburgh University Student Association - EUSA

Living in Edinburgh

