SYSTEMS
EPSRC Centre For Doctoral Training
in Machine Learning Systems

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

The Informatics Forum

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH informatics

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MLSYSTEMS
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in Machine Learning Systems

MLSYSTEMS APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

STEPHANIE ROBIN - CDT MANAGER

The Informatics Forum

UKRI Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

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MLSystems Eligibility

UKRI Eligibility Criteria

- All applicants, **regardless of their nationality and country of residence**, are eligible to apply.
- All appointees, regardless of their nationality and country of residence, will receive a **fully-funded studentship**.

Cap on international students number (30%)

MLSystems can recruit a maximum of 3 international students per year.

UoE fees status categories

- **Home fees:**
  - UK nationals, EU students with UK pre-settled status or settled status, non-EU students who have indefinite leave to remain (ILR), some Irish nationals
  - **AND** who comply with the 3-year UK/EEA residency immediately before the start of the degree (UK or Ireland residency for Irish nationals)
- **International fees:** all other categories

Exceptions: refugees, children of UK nationals, legitimate absence from the UK for UK nationals

More on the CDT webpages

MLSystems Entry Requirements

Academic Requirement

- minimum of **2.1 undergraduate degree** or equivalent
- Relevant **work experience** and/or a **Masters** degree will be considered
- A Master's degree is not a requirement to apply for an MLSystems studentship

ATAS

If you are not an EU, EEA or Swiss national, you may need an Academic Technology Approval Scheme clearance certificate to study on this programme.

Deadline for an offer for ATAS students is 30th April 2027.

English Language Requirement (for non-native English speakers)

Degree taught and assessed in English:

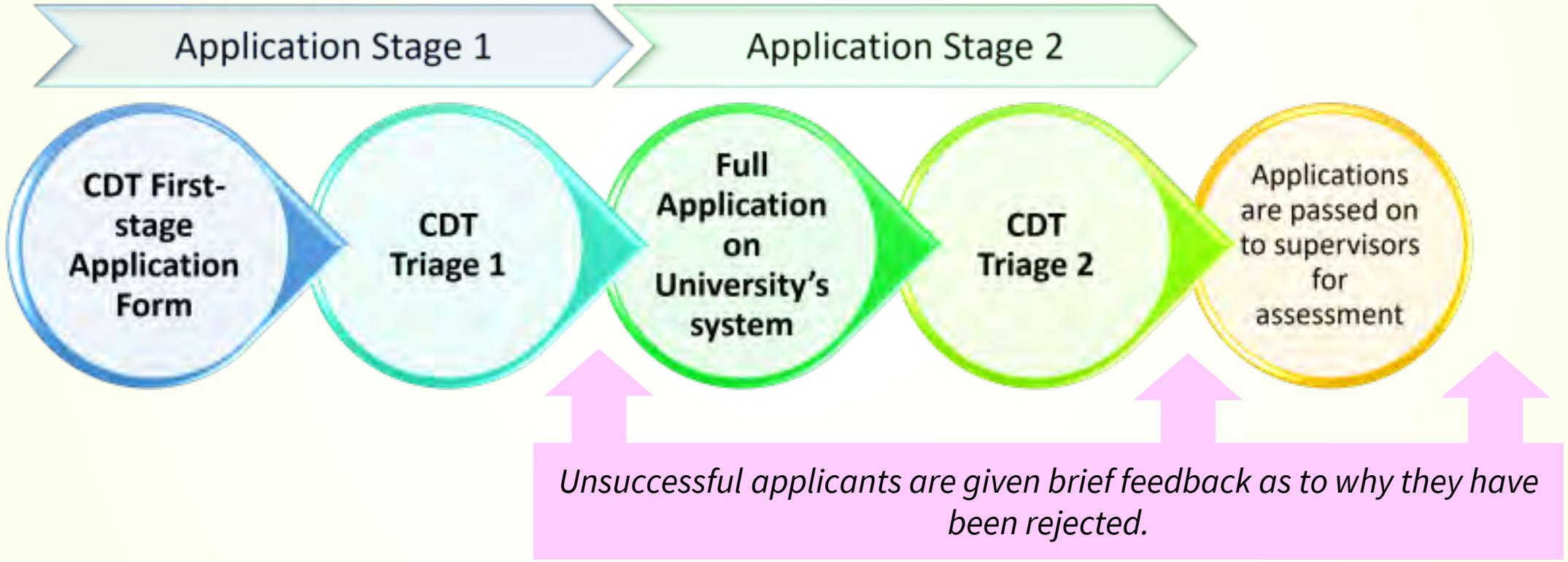
- UG or PG
- No older than 5 years at programme start
- taught and assessed in English in a majority English speaking country (see list)

English Language Tests

- IELTS Academic, TOEFL-iBT, CAE, CPE, Oxford ELLT and TEA (see minimum marks required)
- No older than 2 years (3.5 years for CAE/CPE)

More on the CDT webpages

Application Process Overview



More on the CDT webpages

MLSystems Application Pathways

Student-led PhD Project

- Applicants submit their own research proposal, based on their expertise and interests.
- The project must fit to the CDT remit.
- They must find a prospective supervisor willing to support their project and application.

➢ **First-stage Application Form:** summary of proposed research
➢ **EUCLID Application:** full research proposal
➢ **Final PhD project** is defined by the students and their supervisor once on board, in year 1.

Company-linked PhD Project

- The CDT has some pre-defined research project developed with an academic and an external partner.
- Applicants find a good match with one of these advertised projects.
- They check suitability with the named supervisor before applying.

➢ **First-stage Application Form:** fit-to-project statement
➢ **EUCLID Application:** research approach
➢ **Final PhD project** will not normally vary from the advertised project description.

More on the CDT webpages

The 4 Application Steps

STEP 1: Get support from a supervisor

STEP 2: Submit a first-stage Application Form (online)

STEP 3: Submit a full application on EUCLID

(if invited to do so)

STEP 4: Wait for the outcome

More on the CDT webpages

First-stage Application Deadlines

Round	Applicants	Applications open	Applications close
Round 1	**All Applicants**	**05/10/2026 00:00**	**14/12/2026 23:59**
Round 2	Home Applicants only	15/12/2026 00:00	15/03/2027 23:59
Company-linked projects	*As per advert*	*As per advert*	*As per advert*

More on the CDT webpages

MLSystems EDI and Widening Participation

EDI and WP information:

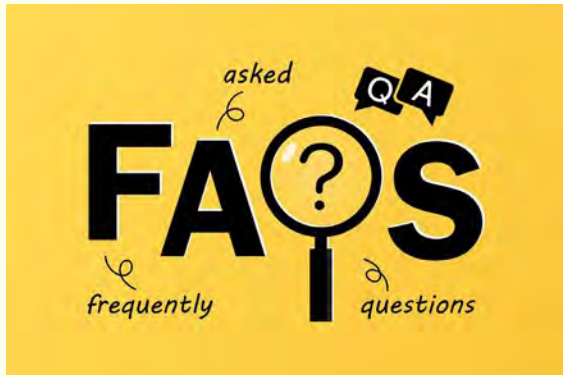
- **Collecting EDI and WP information via first-stage application to:**
  - **Know** who our applicants are
  - **Support** applicants from under-represented groups
  - **Monitor** the WP data across the selection cycle
  - **Comply** with EPSRC EDI Data collection
- **Under-represented groups:** female students, ethnic minority background, declared disability, first generation to attend university, caring responsibilities, lower socio-economic backgrounds, care-experienced, estranged students etc.
- **Not seen by selectors/supervisors**
- Kept **confidential**
- **Voluntary** – "Prefer not to disclose" option always available

Special Circumstances

You can disclose Special Circumstances and Barriers to your study or opportunities in your **first-stage application form** for supervisors/selectors to take into consideration when assessing your application.

Applicant Support

Applicants FAQs



Applicant FAQs | CDT in Machine Learning Systems | School of Informatics

Informatics PhD Fair: 12 November

Sign up on Eventbrite

Applicant Information 19 November

Registration

More on the CDT webpages

Selection Process Overview

More on the CDT webpages

Selection Process Timeline (Round 1)

Applications open	05/10/2026
First-stage Application Form submitted by	**14/12/2026, 23:59**
EUCLID Full application deadline	**21/01/2027, 23:59**
Shortlisting and interviews by supervisors	Late January to Late February 2027
First round of offers sent by	Beginning of March 2027
Post-offer visits and first-round offer acceptance deadline	Late March to April 2027
Second round(s) of offers (reserve list)	Until end of May 2027

More on the CDT webpages

What we are looking for

Scientific Skills

- Substantial knowledge of the background methodology
- Good mathematical understanding and capability: a confidence and competence in handling mathematical ideas, and manipulations.
- Clear computational and software engineering experience
- Good basic computer science understanding

Research skills

- Clear experience of doing research and a level of capability at that research
- Evidence of scientific writing capability

Professional/Transferable Skills & Competencies

- Substantial proactivity
- Evidence of diligence, honesty, rigour, scholarliness, and accuracy
- Evidence of friendliness, a care for others, a willingness to help out, good working with others, and commitment to working partnerships
- Evidence of excellence (awards and prizes, publications, achievements of all sorts, community engagement, project lead etc.)

More on the CDT webpages

Application Tips

Plan Ahead

- **Contact potential supervisors** before preparing your application.
- **Read the application guidance** fully and make sure you know what to do and expect.
- **Prepare your first-stage Application Form** using the downloadable version ahead of the online submission.

Make your application count

- Ensure you have support from one (or more) supervisors
- Use the first-stage Application Form statements to demonstrate the **skills**, **experience and knowledge** you will bring to the project and the CDT.
- Make sure that your **research summary** is detailed enough to give us a good overview of what your proposed research looks like and which problem(s) you will be trying to address.
- **Adjust** your research proposal to the **CDT remit** (both Machine Learning and Systems)

More on the CDT webpages

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First-stage Application deadline (Round 1):

14 December 2026 23:59

FOR SEPTEMBER 2027 ENTRY

Any questions:

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

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