University of Glasgow
Critical Technologies Innovation Fund (CTIF) 2026-27

Critical Technologies Innovation Fund (CTIF) – Pathway 2 Applicant Briefing

The Critical Technologies Innovation Fund (CTIF) supports the development of early-stage innovations with commercial and industrial potential in the priority sectors of Quantum Technologies, Photonics, Semiconductors, and Biomedical Engineering. These sectors represent areas of internationally recognised research excellence at the University of Glasgow and are of increasing strategic importance to the UK and regional economies.

CTIF offers two funding pathways, reflecting different stages of innovation development:

- **Pathway 1: Market Discovery and Customer Validation** – for early-stage projects seeking to understand market needs, potential applications and commercial opportunities.

- **Pathway 2: Derisk and Demonstration** – for projects with early evidence of market interest that require further technology development, validation or demonstration activity.

About Pathway 2

Pathway 2 supports projects that have identified a clear market opportunity and now require technical validation to progress towards commercialisation or industrial adoption. Funding is intended to address key technical risks, demonstrate feasibility, validate performance, and generate evidence that supports engagement with customers, partners, investors and future funders.

Applicants are encouraged to explore the capabilities of the James Watt Nanofabrication Centre (JWNC). Through its expertise in advanced materials, fabrication processes and device technologies, JWNC provides a unique environment for technology development, validation and demonstration, helping projects generate the evidence needed to accelerate commercial or industrial adoption. Applicants unfamiliar with JWNC can access advice through the Critical Technology Accelerator (CTA) programme, which can help identify relevant capabilities and additional resources to support project delivery.

Applications are now open and must be submitted by 12.00pm on Monday 30th November 2026. Early submission is encouraged to support the review process. Successful projects must complete all funded activity by 5th July 2027. Further information is provided in the timetable below.

Who can apply?

Pathway 2 is open to all University of Glasgow academic and research staff, postdoctoral researchers, and PhD students who have salary or stipend support in place until **31 July 2027**. It is also open to prospective University Spin-Outs.

Early career researchers and research staff from the JWNC are encouraged to come forward for this call.

Associate and honorary staff are not eligible to act as budget holders. In these cases, an eligible University staff member (for example, a Co-Investigator or collaborator) must be named as the budget holder and Principal Investigator.

PhD students are eligible to apply provided an eligible staff member acts as Principal Investigator and budget holder, offering appropriate project oversight and support. To be eligible, PhD students must also familiarise themselves with any relevant terms and conditions relating to the ownership and assignment of intellectual property arising from their project, ensuring there is clear agreement on IP rights before participation.

Where a PhD student's fees or stipend are funded by a third party, approval must be obtained from that organisation before participation in the programme. Evidence of this approval must be submitted with the application. We may also require additional confirmation from a Head of School or from the relevant college that participation on the programme will not conflict with PhD activities.

You will also be asked to confirm that you have engaged with your college Innovation & Impact team. They can help you develop your project and your application, so we recommend getting in touch early.

Engagement with the University IPC Team & College Impact Team

Applicants intending to apply must engage with the University of Glasgow IP & Commercialisation (IPC) team before applying. This engagement will ensure appropriate discussions have taken place regarding the project, its commercial potential, and any requirements relating to the identification, protection, management and assignment of intellectual property.

Applicants should contact the IPC team as early as possible and no later than **one week before the application deadline**. If you don't have an IPC contact, please email innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk and an introduction can be facilitated.

As part of the application process, you will be asked to confirm that you have engaged with your College Innovation and Impact Team. They can provide valuable support in developing both your project idea and application, and early engagement is strongly encouraged.

Key Dates

This round of funding is now open, with key dates as follows:

Applications open	2nd November 2026

Application deadline	30th November 2026 at 12 noon
Applicants notified of outcome	Mid December 2026
Expected project spend/delivery period	1st February 2027 – 5th July 2027
Project spend and activities deadline	5th July 2027
End of project report deadline	30th July 2027

All projects must complete spend of budgets and activity by Monday July 5th, 2027. We will not be able to extend projects beyond this date and any expenditure incurred after that date will not be eligible for reimbursement.

What funding and support is available?

Applicants can apply for **up to £50,000** of support. Applicants are requested to consider what funding they **need** to complete eligible activities by 5th July 2027.

Projects are requested to detail total costs required to advance to a next meaningful commercial milestone.

Eligible costs

Pathway 2 funding supports access to the JWNC to support the derisking and demonstration of your technology, and associated staff time. Eligible costs include:

- Staff costs - up to five months of staff costs for project activities are eligible for inclusion, where it can be demonstrated that appropriate staff can be recruited in the timescale and/or that contractual arrangements for current staff on temporary contracts can be reasonably altered.
- Access to JWNC equipment and expertise to undertake activities such as Device Fabrication, Equipment Access, Metrology Access, Access to Consumables.
- Prototype or component development activities
- Technical development or de-risking activities to support customer validation or investor/funder/ customer engagement.

Please note all applicants must fill out the relevant Excel costing templates (there are separate templates for academic and commercial projects). For academic costing and commercial costing templates, applicants must get in contact with JWNC directly for guidance - and submit together with the application form.

Applicants to Pathway 2 are encouraged to contact the Critical Tech Accelerator (CTA) team prior to application for guidance on designing projects, enquiries can be sent to Anthony.Kelly@glasgow.ac.uk.

Ineligible costs

The Pathway 2 fund will not support the following costs for any applicant:

- Shortfalls from research funded by other grants
- PhD fees
- Publisher costs associated with Open Access
- Costs associated with academic conference attendance
- Any other costs that do not relate to the derisking and demonstration of your project.

How to apply?

- The deadline for applications for all calls is 12pm (noon) Monday 30th November 2026.
- Late applications will not be considered. Applicants are encouraged to submit an application as soon as it is ready, rather than wait for the deadline.
- Spin-outs and other separate legal entities must also declare any subsidy or minimal financial assistance received, in the subsidy control section of the application form.
- All completed and signed Application Forms (in Microsoft Word format), and if applicable CTIF Pathway 2 - UofG Staff Costing Template 2026-27 template (in Excel format), and if applicable JWNC Costing Template (in Excel format) must be submitted electronically to innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk.

What are the assessment criteria?

All applications will be checked for eligibility, and thereafter eligible applications will be assessed by a small expert panel comprising commercialisation and economic development expertise from the University of Glasgow and its partners. The panel will assess and prioritise applications with respect to:

- Overall alignment with the purpose of the Fund and its priority sectors
- The stage of concept/protype development and intellectual property status.
- Evidence of any industry endorsement and engagement with industry partners.
- The market and impact opportunity.
- The potential for scalable spin out venture creation.

Applicants should note that Pathway 2 is intended for projects with evidence of market or customer interest. Where this evidence is not yet established, applicants may be directed to Pathway 1: Market Discovery and Customer Validation to further develop and validate the commercial opportunity.

Application writing guidance

- Describe clearly what this project will achieve in the timescale, and what impact this will have on the innovation or commercial journey and credible next commercial or industrial steps.
- Please ensure your project is market or industrially led.
- Be specific about what you need from the JWNC. Name the fabrication, equipment,

metrology or consumables you'll use, and explain how each one moves the technology closer to an industrial standard.
- Define your next commercial milestone and the commercial route.
- Show your industry engagement and partnerships. We strongly encourage you to engage with industry while preparing your application. Tell us about partners who have shaped requirements, offered samples or testing, contributed time or in-kind support, or provided letters of support
- Explain your **competitive advantage**. Show what makes your solution better or different from what's already out there.
- Show your progress. If you've had UofG and external innovation funding before, show your progress. This includes Pathway 1 funding and any other internal or external support. Please also highlight how your project progressed through all the support.

Expected outcomes

By the end of a Pathway 2 project, we'd expect you to have:

- A prototype, process or component developed, tested or demonstrated, ideally to an industrial standard or a specific customer requirement.
- A key commercial or technical gap closed, or a clear response to commercial or industrial feedback.
- A more de-risked technology. Key technical uncertainties should be tested, giving investors, partners or licensees greater confidence.
- A stronger IP position, including progress on protection and freedom to operate where relevant.
- A sharper case for competitive advantage, backed by data generated during the project.
- A clear next step towards commercialisation, such as investment, follow-on funding, a licensing conversation or spin-out formation.