

UKRRIN launches call for new Centres of Excellence

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The UK Rail Research and Innovation Network (UKRRIN), the £92 million partnership between academia and industry, has opened a call for expressions of interest to establish two new Centres of Excellence, in 'Inclusive Passenger Experience' and 'Rail Economics, Policy and Operations'.

UKRRIN was established in 2018 to provide a step-change in innovation in the rail sector and accelerate new technologies and products from research into market applications globally. Since the publication of the renewed Rail Technical Strategy, UKRRIN is looking to develop two new Centre of Excellence in:

- Inclusive Passenger Experience, covering topics such as inclusive design; passenger digital connectivity; future passenger preferences and demand and passenger performance metrics.
- Rail Economics, Policy and Operations, covering demand forecasting; cost modelling; pricing; regulatory policy & competition; investment appraisal & evaluation; and operations research.

The two new centres will join the current network of four Centres of Excellence already established, covering Digital Systems, Rolling Stock, Infrastructure and Testing. Academic institutions are being invited to put forward expressions of interest for establishing the Centres of Excellence, which would see them

become part of a UK wide network of businesses and academia which are leading the way in delivering rail innovation.

Jo Binstead, Chair, UK Rail Research and Innovation Network, said: “It is fantastic to be launching this call for two further Centres of Excellence, which build upon UKRRIN’s current capabilities. Over the past three years – since UKRRIN’s launch – the partnership between academia and industry has shown how powerful collaboration is in supporting innovation in rail, enabling universities and businesses to get their products and services into use on the rail network.”

Sharon Odetunde, Head of Academic Partnerships, RSSB said: “RSSB welcome this proposal from UKRRIN to enhance its capabilities, and recognise its close alignment to the priorities highlighted in the Rail Technical Strategy. Attracting customers back and reducing railway costs are the biggest railway challenges as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic. These need the very best expertise and collaboration platform to be successfully tackled. The two new proposed UKRRIN Centres of Excellence are key to accelerate the development of the required new knowledge and innovative solutions.”

Photo credit: UKRRIN