

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

Masood
Entrepreneurship
Centre

CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY



WELCOME TO THE MEC ALUMNI ENTREPRENEURS SHOWCASE

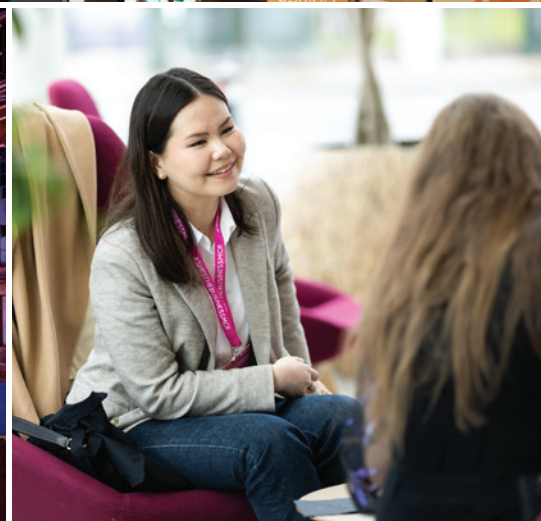
The Masood Entrepreneurship Centre (MEC) has, for over 20 years, provided entrepreneurship education and applied practice through its unique model of both on-curricular and co-curricular programmes offered in all Schools and Faculties across the University of Manchester.

We are delighted to showcase in this brochure, examples of the innovative and impactful start-ups founded by our graduates. As a University, we are proud to see so many of our graduates go on to start their own businesses. These entrepreneurs have taken their education and experiences gained at our institution and turned them into successful ventures that are making a difference in the world.

We hope that their stories will demonstrate the incredible potential that can be unlocked through entrepreneurship. The alumni have taken the initiative to create innovative solutions that solve real-world problems.

This is just a small selection of our student and graduate start-ups and you will get a glimpse of the diverse range of start-ups that are driving innovation and creating positive change. You will appreciate the creativity, hard work, and dedication that went into building these companies from the ground up.

We are proud to present their stories and achievements and we wish them continued success and look forward to seeing what the future holds for them and for all of our graduates who aspire to make a difference in the world through entrepreneurship.



LYNN SHEPPARD
Director, Masood Entrepreneurship Centre

AT THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO



MEC's mission is to develop entrepreneurial skills in University student's, staff and alumni. We promote a dynamic, enterprising culture that empowers the next generation of entrepreneurs to take control of their futures through our three core pillars.

LEARN
Our taught programmes are growing in numbers; we are adding new units based on growing demand across the campus.

DEVELOP
Our extracurricular programmes actively encourage people to move beyond curiosity and to pursue their business ideas.

LAUNCH
MEC is a vibrant hive of commercial and social enterprise where students, graduates and staff can take their ideas into the world.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER'S STRATEGIC PLAN >>



STRENGTHS OF THE MASOOD ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

54%

of all MEC start-ups were created in the last 5 years



Fully integrated within the institution - working closely with internal groups



Wide range of co-curricular activities

34

Taught enterprise units offered across the campus at all levels



Closely linked with student groups, the Students' Union, and key regional and national groups

£28m

MEC start-ups received £28m+ of external investment over the last 3 years



Highly experienced team of staff



Supported at senior level in the University

£50m

We have over 280+ start-ups surviving their first three years of business, employing over 1,000 people and generating over £50m in turnover

35

Student/graduate/staff start-ups created each year

80%

survival rate of MEC start-ups

AEH INNOVATIVE HYDROGEL LTD



BEENISH SIDDIQUE

PhD Materials
Alumni Class of 2019

“ I initially engaged with MEC to receive assistance with my application for the Venture Further Awards in 2019. As a result, I was successful in winning the Technology category, securing £10k. Following my award, MEC continued to provide me with unwavering support. The mentorship I received during my business’s first year proved invaluable, as it kept me motivated and focused on achieving my objectives. ”

in beenish-siddique-95726ba7

aehinnovativehydrogel.com



At AEH Innovative Hydrogel Ltd, our mission is to empower growers with sustainable and effective solutions for their farming needs. We’re committed to providing lightweight and natural material-based growing substrates that promote healthy plant growth. As a reliable partner to our customers, we establish long-term relationships built on trust and mutual success. We’re passionate about contributing to the growth and development of the agricultural industry through our environmentally friendly products, and we’re dedicated to promoting sustainable practices that benefit both growers and the planet.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

£3.5m

Secured £3.5m in investment



Working with growers across the world



Product has launched on a small scale



15 employees

£1m

Secured £1m+ Innovate UK grant



ASSETCOOL LTD



NIALL COOGAN
MChem Chemistry
Alumni Class of 2015

PhD ESPRC Power Networks
Centre for Doctoral Training
Alumni Class of 2019

“ I’ve engaged with **MEC** in a variety of ways, entering the **Venture Further Awards** competition in 2016, winning **£10k** in the **Business** category. I’ve also sat on various judging panels and engaged with the **Board of Governor Strategy Days**. ”

niall-coogan-b42596a1
 assetcool.com



AssetCool provides innovative and sustainable solutions that meet the increasing demand for reliable and affordable energy infrastructure. We are committed to revolutionising the transmission and distribution industry by significantly reducing the cost of adding 1MW of capacity to overhead transmission and distribution lines. Using highly engineered, cutting-edge coating technologies that can withstand harsh environmental conditions, we significantly improve the performance of transmission and distribution lines, lowering the cost of increasing transmission capacity by 80% or more.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

5yrs

Successfully collected over five years of field trial data validating performance and durability



Publishing international research on performance and durability of AssetCool’s product



Granted numerous patents

£1m+

Secured seven-figure investment and grant funding



10-24 employees



Developed a novel continuous manufacturing process for coated conductors



Become a truly global business, securing international partnerships for commercialisation and distribution

BRIGHT BIOTECH LTD



MOHAMMAD EL HAJJ
MSc Biotechnology and Enterprise
Alumni Class of 2012

PhD Biotechnology and Enterprise
Alumni Class of 2018

“ During my postgraduate studies, I participated in several enterprise taught units at the **Masood Entrepreneurship Centre**. MEC also endorsed me for both the **Graduate Entrepreneur visa** and the **Start-up visa**, allowing me to stay in the UK to develop my business. I also participated in **Venture Further** in 2021 and won first prize of **£10k** in the **Technology** category. Winning the competition gave me the confidence and credibility I needed to take my business to the next level. MEC’s support was instrumental in attracting the biggest and most active investors in **AgriFood Tech**. ”

mohammadkhalilelhagg
 brightbiotech.co.uk



Bright Biotech specialises in molecular farming. We genetically modify plants to produce high quality and affordable proteins that will enable sustainable industries such as cultivated meat production.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:



Built bespoke customer platform

£118k

Secured pre-seed investment of £118k



4 employees



Pilots completed with cultivated meat producers



Product portfolio expansion

£2.56m

Secured £2.56m in seed round investment



Scaled-up production capacity

BUNDLEE LTD



EVE KEKEH

BSc Hons International Management
with American Business Studies
Alumni Class of 2015

Master of Enterprise
Alumni Class of 2017

“I took many MEC taught units in enterprise and entrepreneurship education as part of my MEnt course run by MEC. I also took part in Venture Out and subsequently Venture Further in 2018, in which Bundlee won first prize of £10k in the Social category.”

evekekeh

bundlee.co.uk



Bundlee is the UK’s first rental subscription service for childrenswear. Giving families a more sustainable, convenient, and affordable way to dress little ones as they grow.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:



Formed partnerships with some of the best in the business including Stella McCartney Kids and Patagonia



Received Innovate UK grant funding to build our proprietary inventory management software

1,000

Over 1,000 subscribers



6 employees

£1m

Raised over £1m in investment



60,000 clothing rentals completed through our scalable system



Investors include co-founders of Monzo and Sweaty Betty



GRAPHENE INNOVATIONS MANCHESTER LTD



VIVEK KONCHERRY

BSc Textiles-Materials
Alumni Class of 2004

PhD Materials
Alumni Class of 2014

“ I won first prize of £50k in the Eli & Britt Harari Graphene Enterprise Awards in 2021 with Space Habitat and, on the back of this, raised nearly \$1m from North America for Graphene Innovations Manchester (GIM) ”



We will build a multi-billion-dollar company by 2030, setting up 20 highly profitable joint ventures in over 20 of the largest economies across the world. Based on our innovative, proprietary and highly sustainable graphene-based technologies, including GIM Concrete (a breakthrough material eliminating cement and water), GIM Hydrogen (a leak-resistant storage tank) and GIM Smart Clothing (personal protective equipment with active cooling properties), our recently signed agreement in the UAE is the first of the billion-dollar deals.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

\$1m

\$1m investment from North America



15 employees



Made commercial robot sales



Developed prototypes and filed multiple patents (UK and Globally)

\$1b

Recently signed \$1b joint venture agreement with Quazar Investment Company (UAE) for a large graphene application commercialisation factory

INVENTYA LTD



ALDO DE LEONIBUS

MEng Mechanical Engineering
Alumni Class of 2002

Master of Enterprise Engineering and Design
Alumni Class of 2003

“ I won a competitive scholarship from The University of Manchester, which led me to complete a Masters in Entrepreneurship in Advanced Composites (MEnt) in 2003 at the Alliance Manchester Business School. ”



Inventya (founded in 2010) is a company committed to empowering innovators and businesses by offering comprehensive commercialisation support and research funding expertise. Our mission is to accelerate the growth of innovative companies, foster collaboration, and propel economic development by providing bespoke solutions and resources that assist in transforming visionary ideas into flourishing businesses.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:



Acquired Cresco Innovation in 2021

Top 1k

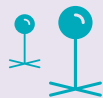
One of the FT's top 1000 fastest-growing businesses in 2023



Delivered 4 global collaborations in the USA, Australia and Europe

£192m+

Raised £192m+ in finance for our clients



2 fully owned subsidiaries of Inventya in Ireland and India



91 employees from 11+ different nationalities

£6m

£6M in turnover



Founded the Innovate UK Scaleup programme to help high potential businesses scale

PRAEFERRE LTD



ABHISHEK GHOSH
MBA Business Administration
Alumni Class of 2019

“The Masood Entrepreneurship Centre has been pivotal for our journey, starting from ideation, incubation, industry alignment and a lot more. We are grateful for the ongoing support we are getting from the university. Praeferre won the Venture Further Awards 2022, securing first place of £10k in the Technology category.”

PRAEFERRE
PRIVACY ENGINE

Positioned in the growing cybersecurity market, Praeferre is strengthening privacy management with our state-of-the-art, innovative, cyber security solution, helping global corporations to address data privacy challenges.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Secured £150k+ grant funding for prototyping and MVP securities through Innovate UK, ERDF etc

Selected by UKRI for UK-JAPAN and UK-South Korea 5G and smart city projects

Winner of the TIE Silicon Valley most innovative solution award 2022

5 employees

Raising pre-seed investment and secured lead investors

Crowned by DCMS as one of the most innovative cyber security SMEs in the UK

Finalist TechUK Cyber Den, SC Award Europe, British Business Awards, Manchester Young Talent Award



QV BIOELECTRONICS LTD



CHRIS BULLOCK

PhD Regenerative Medicine awarded as part of EPSRC-MRC CDT in Regenerative Medicine Alumni Class of 2019

“ During the third year of my PhD I received training from MEC as part of my CDT taught courses. I think the course was called ‘Entrepreneurship for researchers’ or something similar and I was mentored by Lynn during the course. Then in 2018, I won the Eli & Britt Harari Graphene Enterprise Award of £50k, alongside Richard Fu. The resultant funding was the spark that enabled us to start QV Bioelectronics. ”

in christopher-bullock

qvbio.co.uk



QV Bioelectronics is developing a first-of-its-kind implantable medical device for the treatment of malignant brain tumours using electrical fields.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

£1.5m

Secured £1.5m in grant funding



11 employees



Shown the compatibility of our system with MRI imaging

£3.2m

Raised £3.2m in investment



World-leading performance of our advanced material electrodes



State of the art cancer models demonstrate preclinical efficacy equivalent to a blockbuster cancer drug



Working towards human clinical trials



Shown the safety of our prototype system with implantation into sheep



SPECSCART



SID SETHI
MSc International Business
and Management
Alumni Class of 2016

“ MEC has played a key role in making Specscart a reality, first supporting me through the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa scheme, which allowed me to launch Specscart. In 2018, we won first prize of £10k in the Venture Further Awards Business category, allowing Specscart to buy our first set of eye test equipment to become a fully functional NHS contractor for conducting eye testing services. ”



Specscart is one of the fastest growing eyewear start-ups with a mission to “change the way people perceive eyeglasses”. We believe glasses should be a fun, fashionable accessory that are ethically produced and a joy to wear. Our innovative approach has made us one of the fastest-growing eyewear companies in the UK, with a strong online presence and three retail stores in Manchester, we’re changing the game.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:



3 stores across Greater Manchester including Glazing Production Lab



Multinational business with 50+ employees

£10k

Won £10k in the Venture Further Awards 2018 Business category



Launched e-commerce website in 2018



Won Albert Gubay Award and opened first retail space in 2017

£2m

Turnover of £2m in 2022



Specscart IT - India Office Expansion

£4m

Expected turnover of £4m in 2023



Secured £17.5K in grant funding




URBANCHAIN LTD



SOMAYEH TAHERI

PhD Urban Planning at
University of Manchester
Alumni Class of 2016

“ I came across MEC through my CCO, Mo Hajhashem. I got involved in many MEC programmes throughout the course of my PhD, and secured £5k in cash and £5k in-kind support. I also took part in Venture Further in 2018, where UrbanChain won first prize of £10k in the Research category. Finally, I secured a place on the ICURe programme, designed to help explore the commercial application and potential of UK research and received a £50k Innovate UK grant. ”

 somayehtaheri

 urbanchain.co.uk



UrbanChain runs a safe, transparent and unique energy market for renewables, enabling consumers to place an order for electricity and for generators to meet that order.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:



10 employees

1st

Developed first product, eChain, in April 2020

2nd

Launched second product, v-powerChain, in April 2022



Commercialised in April 2021 and scaled up in July 2022



Three new products currently under development

£22m

Expecting £22m turnover in the next 12 month

£2.1m

Raised £2.1m in investment



WATERCYCLE TECHNOLOGIES LTD



SEB LEAPER
MEng Materials Science and Engineering
Alumni Class of 2015

PhD Nanoscience
Alumni Class of 2019

“ I won the Eli & Britt Harari Graphene Enterprise Award of £50k in 2016 which enabled me to start the company and from which I was offered support from MEC. ”

sebastian-leaper-5413899b

 watercycletechnologies.com



Watercycle Technologies builds mineral extraction and water treatment systems that simultaneously solve the problems of water pollution and resource recovery. The company is focussed on the selective extraction and crystallisation of lithium from various water types and also the extraction of other minerals such as graphite, nickel, manganese and cobalt from spent lithium-ion batteries.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

£1.5m

Raised approximately £1.5m from a combination of investors and grant funding



First UK company to extract graphite, nickel, manganese, cobalt and lithium carbonate from spent lithium-ion batteries



8 full-time employees and 2 part-time employees

1st

First company to produce lithium carbonate from a UK brine





Masood Entrepreneurship Centre

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The University of Manchester
Booth Street West
Manchester
M15 6PB

entrepreneurship.manchester.ac.uk
entrepreneurship@manchester.ac.uk

#MECITHAPPEN

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