Drug Discovery and Advanced Therapeutics Innovation Lab

Overcoming business challenges with academic collaborations

Thursday 20th June 2024

**Background and purpose**

The University of Manchester has developed Manchester Innovation Labs as a mechanism to enhance academic-industry engagement and to develop and pump-prime collaborative projects to address a specific business need. The [Translation Manchester](https://www.translation.manchester.ac.uk/) and Business Engagement Teams at the University of Manchester have partnered with the [NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre](https://www.manchesterbrc.nihr.ac.uk/) to host an Innovation Lab on Thursday 20th June 2024 (venue TBC) focused on the theme of **Drug Discovery and Advanced Therapeutics**. In this Lab we hope to allocate up to **£20,000** per project to fund academic expertise to identify solutions to help businesses tackle challenges around drug discovery and advanced therapeutics. We are seeking businesses who are active in this area to submit challenges to be considered for inclusion.

**Aims of the Event**

This event will bring together businesses working within drug discovery and advanced therapeutics who are seeking to overcome a specific challenge. The University will curate groups of academic experts to support each business and over the course of this half-day facilitated workshop, projects will be developed and pitched for seed funding. Up to four projects will each receive £20,000 to fund academic experts to identify solutions to a business challenge.

**Why Drug Discovery and Advanced Therapeutics?**

The University of Manchester wants to partner with companies at the forefront of drug discovery and advanced therapeutics to support the development of transformative tools and technologies to understand, manage and improve human health. The identification of new drugs and therapeutic methods is key to developing new and sustainable, personalised treatments for patients and the University is committed to supporting this via pioneering interdisciplinary research.

**Our Expertise**

The University of Manchester has expertise relevant to the discovery of new drugs for a wide range of diseases, which draws on interactions between Biological Sciences & Biotechnology, Chemistry, Computer Science, our technology platforms, applied health researchers and commercial partnerships. Examples that may be of interest to companies working on the development of new therapeutics include;

* Multiomics profiling and fundamental research to understand new disease mechanisms.
* Cutting-edge biophysical approaches, reagent generation and validation (e.g. including nanobodies), and cellular assays in primary materials.
* Expertise in computational, medicinal and synthetic chemistry including emerging modalities such as protein-drug conjugates and protein degradation.
* Development and deployment of cell-based therapies, gene therapies and protein biologics.
* Development, utilisation and analysis of disease-relevant models.
* Formulation design and development and PK/PD modelling.
* Health economics, real world evidence, implementation science and clinical trial design.
* AI approaches to data analysis and regulatory processes.

The University of Manchester has a clearly established pathway to drug discovery and advanced therapeutics through a number of collaborative projects and partnerships. Examples of our pioneering collaborations in these areas include the [North West Centre for Advanced Drug Delivery (AZ)](http://www.nowcadd.manchester.ac.uk/), [Centre for Applied Pharmacokinetic Research,](https://www.capkr.manchester.ac.uk/) which has multiple pharma partners involved and invested in our research . Our [VICTORION-Spirit study](https://healthinnovationmanchester.com/news/greater-manchester-cholesterol-inclisiran-study-launch/) was part of the first NHS ‘population health agreement’ between the NHS and Novartis. The groundbreaking collaborations enabled thousands of patients to benefit from new medication over the course of the study. At the University we also take pride in our successful history of spin out companies within the therapeutics space including [PharmaKure](https://www.uominnovationfactory.com/projects/pharmakure/), [TaBriX](https://www.uominnovationfactory.com/projects/novel-anti-tb-therapeutics/), [Apini Therapeutics](https://www.uominnovationfactory.com/projects/the-cellular-level-enampt-stimulation/), [Links Biologics](https://www.uominnovationfactory.com/projects/the-missing-link-link-biologics/) and [Complement Therapeutics](https://www.uominnovationfactory.com/projects/a-vision-of-success/).

**Manchester Innovation Labs**

### How does it work?

* The Innovation Lab follows a facilitated process led by a creative consultancy.
* At each Lab we host 3-5 industry partners, working in teams of 4-6, with cross-discipline academic groups.
* We work through a dynamic, creative process - defining the problem and generating a range of solutions, before concluding with the optimal project which will be pitched to our expert panel for seed funding. There is a strong emphasis on developing projects which have the potential to grown into larger collaborations.

### What are the benefits?

* To engage in a trusted and successful model for building academic-industry collaborations.
* The opportunity to secure up to £20,000 seed funding to pay for academic expertise to help overcome your business challenge.
* University support will be available to develop seed funded projects into larger collaborative research funding proposals.
* Develop new relationships with university researchers with cross-cutting areas of expertise.

### What do we need from business partners?

* Identify and share in advance, a challenge for exploration in the area of Drug Discovery and Advanced Therapeutics. This could be a business challenge/question/opportunity where academic expertise could add value.
* Commit 2-3 representatives to attend the workshop (5 hours), (to get the most out of the session we recommend you bring representatives who will be involved in overcoming the challenge if your project is funded e.g. technical staff if your problem is technical in nature).
* Be able to consider an element of match-funding (cash) for researcher time to conduct projects as designed at the workshop, to enhance the scope of the project.
* Consider challenges with potential to develop into a larger research collaboration down the line.

See a [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDFVTUii4SY) summary of our previous Innovation Lab 2022 and a [recap blog](https://www.translation.manchester.ac.uk/2023/05/30/diagnostics-in-healthcare-innovation-lab-2023/) of our most recent 2023 Innovation labs to learn more about the process and benefits to businesses.

**Intellectual property**

The Innovation Labs Award is funded by [Wellcome](https://wellcome.org/), a charitable organisation supporting research and innovation in healthcare sciences. There are terms and conditions set by Wellcome in connection with this award that focus on the delivery of public benefit. These terms and conditions include, amongst other things, clauses that relate to the ownership of intellectual property arising during the funded project, and expectations relating to the public dissemination of the project outputs.

For details, please visit:

* [Intellectual property and translation - our approach - Grant Funding | Wellcome](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/wellcome.org/grant-funding/guidance/intellectual-property-guidance/intellectual-property-and-translation-our-approach__;!!OL9ShTEEVu4!pGv7AFjRZHb4GttCpaz4VOfoOkghN2Is7llOQbLlEIyhAMpqwfJZsFOkR3n7yBVTurO6-RZhohjQhVgUFyHcLkxCKygipQYEyw$)
* <https://wellcome.org/grant-funding/guidance/grant-conditions>
* <https://wellcome.org/grant-funding/guidance/grant-funding-policies>
* <https://wellcome.org/grant-funding/guidance/policy-intellectual-property>
* <https://wellcome.org/grant-funding/guidance/policy-consent-revenue-equity-sharing>

## Interested? Here’s what you need to do next

Please complete the form below and return it to translation@manchester.ac.uk by **Friday 15th March 2024**. We will assess your submitted challenge matching it with our academic expertise and should the challenge be shortlisted we will invite you to the Innovation Lab.

The event will take place face-to-face at The University of Manchester (venue TBC) on **Thursday 20th June 2024**. Details will be confirmed with an official invitation.

Please direct any questions to translation@manchester.ac.uk.

Innovation Lab

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**Expression of Interest Form**

Please return to translation@manchester.ac.uk by **Friday 15th March 2024**.

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| --- | --- |
| **Company Name:** |  |
| **Are you an SME?** | [ ]  Yes[ ]  No | **Are you based in Greater Manchester?** | [ ]  Yes[ ]  No |
| **Your business challenge area(s)** Please provide an overview of the problem, issue, challenge, or opportunity that the project team would seek to explore and resolve through a collaborative project, if possible, describe the potential short and longer-term business impacts. Please note that elements of this summary will be shared with academics should you be invited to the Innovation Lab. (max 500 word count) |
|  |
| **Have you identified a particular academic expertise that you need, or individual academics you wish to collaborate with?**Please provide details of the field of expertise you seek support in (e.g. pharmacokinetic research, biomedical research, bioinformatics support, therapeutic procedure etc.) or the names of individual academics from the University of Manchester that you would like to collaborate with. Please note that at this stage we are not able to guarantee if these academics will be able to take part in the event. |
|  |
| **Is there an R&D budget within your company to support this work?**If yes, please provide details on the level of investment your company is making in this area |
|  |
| **Do you have a fixed timescale for your objectives?** |
|  |
| **Primary Contact details and position, plus names of other potential participants on the day (if known):** |
|  |
| **I acknowledge that I have read and understand the standard IP terms and conditions.**(page 3 of this document) | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |