

Call for Contributions

Enterprise Collaboration Toolkit – Second Edition

September 2026

The Engineering Professors' Council is developing the **second edition of its [Enterprise Collaboration Toolkit](#)**, building on the highly successful first edition which brought together examples of effective collaboration between engineering academics and industry.

We are seeking **short case studies from engineering academics across the UK** that demonstrate how universities and industry partners can work together successfully to create impact for research, innovation, education, industry, graduates and society.

The environment for university–industry collaboration has changed significantly in recent years. Artificial intelligence, the growing importance of defence and security, global supply-chain disruption and manufacturing reshoring, climate change, energy security and decarbonisation, and shortages of engineering skills are all creating new challenges—and new opportunities—for collaboration.

We therefore particularly welcome case studies that demonstrate **innovative, effective and transferable approaches to working with industry in this changing and challenging environment**.

Your case study does not need to describe a large project or a major funding award. We are interested in the **approach to collaboration**, what made it work, the challenges encountered and the lessons that other engineering academics, especially early career, could learn from your experience.

We equally welcome honest accounts of collaborations that only partly succeeded, stalled or came to an end. What did not work, and why, is often the most useful lesson for others.

We welcome contributions from different types of universities (e.g. research-intensive, regional, specialist and newer institutions), from a wide range of engineering disciplines and different industrial sectors.

What makes a good case study?

We are looking for examples that:

- demonstrate a genuine and productive university–industry relationship;
- explain **how the collaboration was established and developed**, rather than simply describing its outcomes;
- identify challenges, barriers or setbacks and how these were addressed;
- provide practical lessons that other academics can apply or adapt;
- share honest views about what did not work and what you would do differently;
- demonstrate benefits for both the university and industry partner(s);
- illustrate how collaboration can contribute to research impact, innovation, education, skills, economic development or demonstrate wider societal impact.

Case studies may involve a single company, multiple industry partners, SMEs, large corporations,

public-sector organisations or industry networks.

Please submit your case study using the template provided below before 30 November 2026.

Contributions should be concise and accessible to engineering academics who may have little previous experience of working with industry.

The EPC's Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer Committee will review submissions and select a balanced collection of case studies for inclusion in the second edition of the Enterprise Collaboration Toolkit. Selected contributors may be contacted to clarify or edit their submission before publication.

We particularly encourage contributions from early-career academics and colleagues who have developed successful collaborations without the benefit of large established research-industry networks.

The aim is to build a practical resource that helps engineering academics answer a simple question:

What can I learn from others that will help me build a successful relationship with industry?

We intend to publish the **second edition of the Enterprise Collaboration Toolkit** in the summer of 2027.

Submission categories

Each case study should be submitted under **one primary category**. Contributors may also identify one or two secondary categories where appropriate.

1. Building and developing industry partnerships

Examples include:

- establishing a relationship with a new industry partner;
- moving from an informal relationship to a strategic partnership;
- developing long-term relationships rather than one-off projects;
- building trust between academic and industrial partners;
- creating effective university–industry networks or consortia;
- developing partnerships with SMEs or organisations that have limited experience of working with universities.

Key question: What did you do to establish and develop a productive longer-term relationship?

2. Collaborative research, innovation and R&D

Examples include:

- collaborative research projects;
- industry-led or co-created research;
- contract research and consultancy developing into longer-term collaboration;
- translational research and technology development;
- industry participation in research programmes;
- commercialisation and exploitation of research;
- interdisciplinary university–industry R&D.

Key question: How did the partnership turn academic expertise into research, innovation or value for industry?

3. Knowledge exchange and innovation ecosystems

Examples include:

- knowledge-transfer partnerships;
- knowledge exchange between academics and industrial practitioners;
- innovation centres, institutes or hubs;
- regional innovation ecosystems;
- industry networks and clusters;
- shared facilities, laboratories or demonstrators;
- mechanisms for transferring knowledge into industrial practice.

Key question: What mechanisms and structures enabled knowledge and expertise to flow effectively between university and industry?

4. Industry-informed education, curriculum and student projects

Examples include:

- industry co-designed curricula;
- industrial involvement in teaching;
- live industry projects and challenges;
- capstone and design projects;
- industrially based student research;
- use of industry data, facilities or equipment in education;
- industry professionals contributing to programme development or delivery.

Key question: How did industry collaboration improve engineering education and student learning?

5. Skills, employability and talent pipelines

Examples include:

- developing industry-relevant skills;
- graduate recruitment partnerships;
- placements and internships;
- degree apprenticeships;
- continuing professional development;
- upskilling or reskilling the existing workforce;
- addressing engineering skills shortages;
- developing new talent pipelines with industry.

Key question: How did the collaboration help address current or future engineering skills needs?

6. Responding to major industrial and societal challenges

This category is deliberately broad and should capture collaborations responding to major changes affecting engineering and industry.

Examples include:

- artificial intelligence and digital transformation;
- defence and security;
- manufacturing reshoring and supply-chain resilience;
- climate change and adaptation;
- decarbonisation and net zero;
- energy security, energy costs and renewable energy;
- resource efficiency and circular economy;
- infrastructure resilience;
- demographic and workforce changes.

Key question: How did university–industry collaboration help address a significant emerging challenge?

7. Impact, regional development and economic growth

Examples include:

- supporting regional industrial development;
- creating or retaining high-value jobs;
- supporting local SMEs;
- developing new industries or supply chains;
- regeneration and place-based innovation;
- university–industry partnerships contributing to regional economic growth;
- demonstrable research or innovation impact.

Key question: How did collaboration create value beyond the individual university and company?

8. New models and approaches to university–industry collaboration

This category is intended for genuinely novel approaches that do not fit comfortably elsewhere.

Examples include:

- new partnership models;
- innovative approaches to intellectual property or governance;
- new funding or investment models;
- unusual approaches to sharing facilities, people or expertise;
- international university–industry collaborations with UK relevance;
- collaborations involving multiple sectors;
- approaches that have significantly changed how an institution works with industry.

Key question: What was different and novel about the way the collaboration was organised, and why did it work?

9. Other

Use this category only where the case study does not fit meaningfully into any of the categories above.

Case Study Submission Template

Concise submissions are encouraged. The EPC may edit selected case studies for length, clarity and consistency before publication. You will also be asked to add some of this information into [the EPC submission form](#).

1. Case study title

Provide a short, engaging title that describes the collaboration or its main lesson.

2. Lead author and institution

Lead author and co-authors:

University/institution:

Email of lead author (corresponding author):

3. Industry partner(s)

Industry organisation(s):

Sector:

Organisation size: SME / large organisation / other

Briefly describe the industry partner(s) and its role in the collaboration.

4. Category

Primary category:

Select one of the categories described in the Call for Contributions:

Secondary category/categories:

Optional.

5. The challenge or opportunity

What problem, challenge or opportunity led to the collaboration?

Briefly explain:

- what the industry or societal need was;
 - why university expertise was relevant;
 - why collaboration was considered necessary or beneficial for the university;
 - why collaboration was considered necessary or beneficial for the industrial partner(s).
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6. How did the relationship start?

How did the university and industry partner first come together?

Describe, where relevant:

- who initiated the relationship;
 - how the partners identified each other;
 - previous relationships or networks;
 - the role of key individuals or organisations;
 - how trust and mutual interest were established and developed;
 - how the particular type of collaboration was identified and pursued.
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7. What did the partners do?

Describe the collaboration itself.

Focus on the practical arrangements rather than technical detail. Explain:

- what institutional support was used, if any;
 - what each partner contributed;
 - how responsibilities were divided;
 - how decisions were made;
 - how the collaboration was funded or resourced;
 - how academics and industry staff worked together;
 - how the relationship evolved over time.
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8. What made the collaboration successful?

What were the key factors behind its success?

Consider:

- leadership and commitment;
- trust and communication;
- alignment of objectives;
- flexibility;
- access to facilities, people or expertise;
- institutional support;
- project management;
- intellectual property arrangements;
- funding;
- speed of decision-making;
- relationships between individuals.

Please identify and describe the **two or three most important factors** rather than providing a generic list.

9. What challenges or barriers were encountered?

What did not go smoothly?

Describe significant challenges, setbacks or differences between academic and industrial ways of working.

For example:

- different timescales or priorities;

- intellectual property;
- confidentiality;
- procurement;
- contracts;
- funding;
- bureaucracy;
- risk;
- academic incentives;
- communication;
- organisational culture.

Most importantly, explain **how the partners addressed these challenges**. Please also say what you would do differently if you were starting again.

10. What was the impact?

What changed as a result of the collaboration?

Where possible, provide evidence or measurable outcomes.

Consider:

- research impact;
- new products, processes or services;
- innovation;
- business growth or productivity;
- cost savings;
- jobs;
- investment;
- skills development;
- student outcomes;
- graduate employment;
- changes to teaching;
- policy or societal impact;
- environmental impact;
- regional economic impact.

Please address different **outputs** (what was produced) and **outcomes/impact** (what changed as a result).

11. What happened next?

Did the collaboration continue or develop further?

Explain whether the initial collaboration led to:

- further research;
 - additional funding;
 - a strategic partnership;
 - new products or services;
 - further student engagement;
 - recruitment;
 - new collaborations;
 - creation of a research centre, network or facility;
 - other longer-term activity.
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12. Lessons for other engineering academics

What should another academic learn from your experience? If an engineering academic approached you today wanting to establish a similar partnership, **what would you tell them to do first?**

Please identify **three practical lessons or recommendations**.

For each lesson, say who it is for (for example a new lecturer with no industry contacts, or a mid-career academic in a teaching-focused role, etc.) and what they should do first.

These should be specific and actionable, for example:

"Start by understanding the company's problem rather than presenting your existing research."
rather than:

"Good communication is important."

13. References

Please add references as necessary, [in Harvard format](#).

14. Key facts at a glance

University type: Research-intensive / regional / specialist / other

Engineering discipline(s):

Industry sector:

Geographical scope: Local / regional / UK / international

Duration of collaboration:

Number of academic staff involved:

Number of students involved:

Approximate scale of funding/investment: Optional

Current status: Ongoing / completed / evolved into another collaboration

15. Supporting material

Please provide, where available:

- photographs or diagrams illustrating the collaboration;
- links to relevant public information;
- evidence of impact;
- relevant publications or outputs;
- quotations from industry partners;
- other material that could help illustrate the case study.

Please confirm that EPC has permission to reproduce any supplied images or other material.

Please ensure that all images supplied are:

- a minimum of 800 pixels wide
 - high resolution
 - in .jpg or .png format
 - labelled with their name and source
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Short summary for the Toolkit

Please provide a **100-word summary** of the case study suitable for display on the EPC website.

The summary should answer:

What was the collaboration, why was it needed, what made it successful, and what can other academics learn from it?

The logic of your summary should follow this logic:

The challenge → The partners → How they collaborated → What made it work → What went wrong → Impact → 3 lessons for academics.

- The deadline for submitting your case study is 30th November 2026.
- [Please submit your case study here.](#)
- Co-authors should complete [this form](#).
- If you have questions, or are interested in joining the working group for this call for content, please email Ion Sucala: i.sucala@exeter.ac.uk