

NW CYBERCOM: COMMERCIALISATION SANDPIT

ASK ME ANYTHING

FAQs

Can you apply if you're from a social sciences rather than technical background?

Yes absolutely, we want a range of perspectives. You don't have to solve the entire challenge on your own – you can either partner with someone who can bring other skills or focus on one aspect of the challenge. You can make a note of this in your Expressions of Interest.

What if my colleagues and I have the same idea and what to submit similar Expressions of Interest?

We encourage you to think about whether you might want to partner with each other to submit a joint idea, or you may wish to submit separate ideas and explore partnerships following the workshop on 22 April.

What are you looking for in an Expression of Interest?

Some of the things we would be looking for are:

- A great idea relevant to the challenges with strong research behind it
- Appetite for commercialisation
- Showing that you are open to collaboration or partnerships, or have considered what you might need

Can we see proposal questions for the next stage?

You can find this on page 15.

What IP guardrails will be in place?

Lancaster University will be issuing a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to all parties.

FAQs

Can I change my idea after the workshop, before submitting a final proposal?

Yes, we expect you may wish to change, update and iterate the idea based on the workshop on 22 April and understand that the idea may evolve to an extent following the initial Expression of Interest.

Do we need approval to attend the workshop on 22 April?

We require that you receive organisational approval to submit a proposal but would recommend that you follow your organisation's guidelines when it comes to external events or submitting an Expression of Interest.

Is there any leeway on the proposal submission deadline of 29 April?

We are happy to assess this on a case-by-case basis, please let us know if you foresee any challenges.

What if I can't attend the workshop with industry on 22 April?

We see this workshop as being highly important for helping you refine your idea and hearing directly from industry. Please let us know if you have a reason why you can't attend, and we can work with you on a case-by-case basis.

This won't automatically mean you aren't able to be eligible for the funding at the proposal stage.

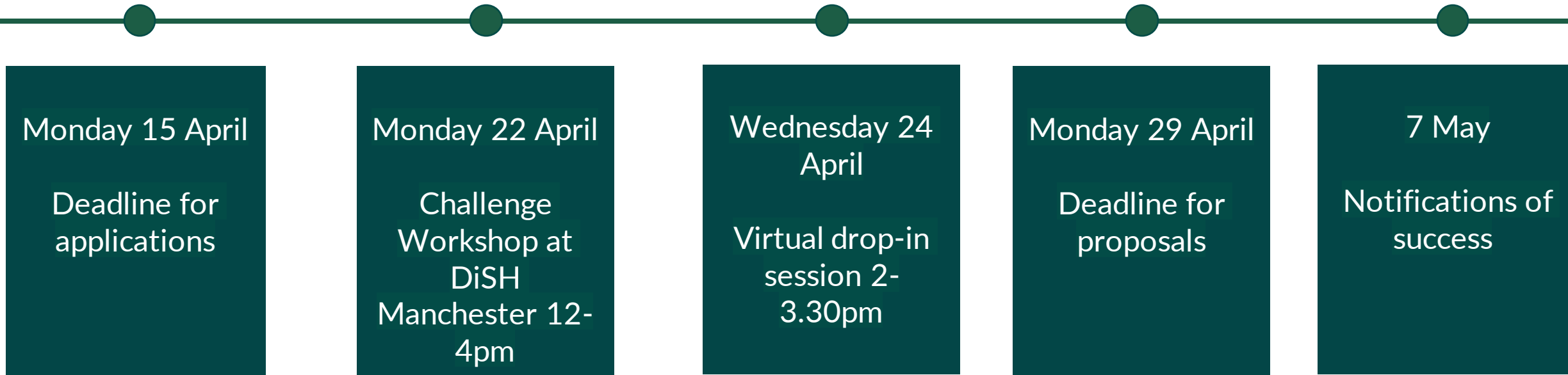
The workshop is in person with no virtual option.

I've not been invited to the Commercialisation Sandpit on 22 April. What should I do?

Please fill in the Expression of Interest form here by 15 April, and we will invite those shortlisted to attend the workshop: <https://forms.office.com/e/ec6dVz12sF>

KEY DATES

Selected academics will be invited to a Commercialisation Sandpit workshop on 22 April with industry and startups, after which you'll be asked to submit a full proposal. We'll be on hand throughout to help you craft the right idea and understand how your research applies to the first challenge.



UNLOCKING THE COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL OF THE NORTH WEST

The £1.2m North West Cyber Security Connect for Commercialisation (NW CyberCom) aims to unlock the cyber security potential of the North West.

We're on the search for individuals from all backgrounds to bring their diverse ideas, approaches and research to the table to tackle some of the most important cyber security challenges facing the North West region and the UK at large.

Be part of a genuine ecosystem-wide collaboration that will unlock the commercial potential of the North West and the very best ideas from world-leading institutions.

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

We want to drive a collaborative approach between higher education institutions, industry and the startup ecosystem to generate novel commercial ideas stemming from academia, to encourage a thriving cyber ecosystem in the North West.



PARTNERS AND FUNDER



ABOUT PLEXAL...

Plexal is the innovation company which delivers programmes for the public and private sector, ranging from in-person bootcamps to months-long virtual accelerators and challenge-led initiatives for industry.

We connect startups, academia, investors, the government and industry in cyber and emerging technology, and support entrepreneurs at all stages with building businesses that solve pressing real-world challenges.



National Cyber
Security Centre
For Startups

**CYBER
RUNWAY**

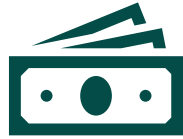
WHY ENGAGE WITH NW CYBERCOM?

You will:

- partner with entrepreneurs and businesses to develop ideas
- Identify and create new solutions to cyber challenges affecting society and the fabric of the economy
- harness academic research and expertise to create a competitive advantage for the North West, resulting in growth and the creation of local startups and spinouts
- help the North West capitalise on existing strengths and sectors where it's already thriving to be a UK leader in cyber and emerging technologies
- Have the opportunity to develop a Proof of Concept (POC) with £25,000 in funding and support

MAKING AN IMPACT

We asked the HEI partners to write down as many indicators of what success looks like to them for NW CyberCom. The key themes which emerged are:



Generate investment and funding



Commercialisation opportunities



Create spinouts / startups



Build an ecosystem and partnerships

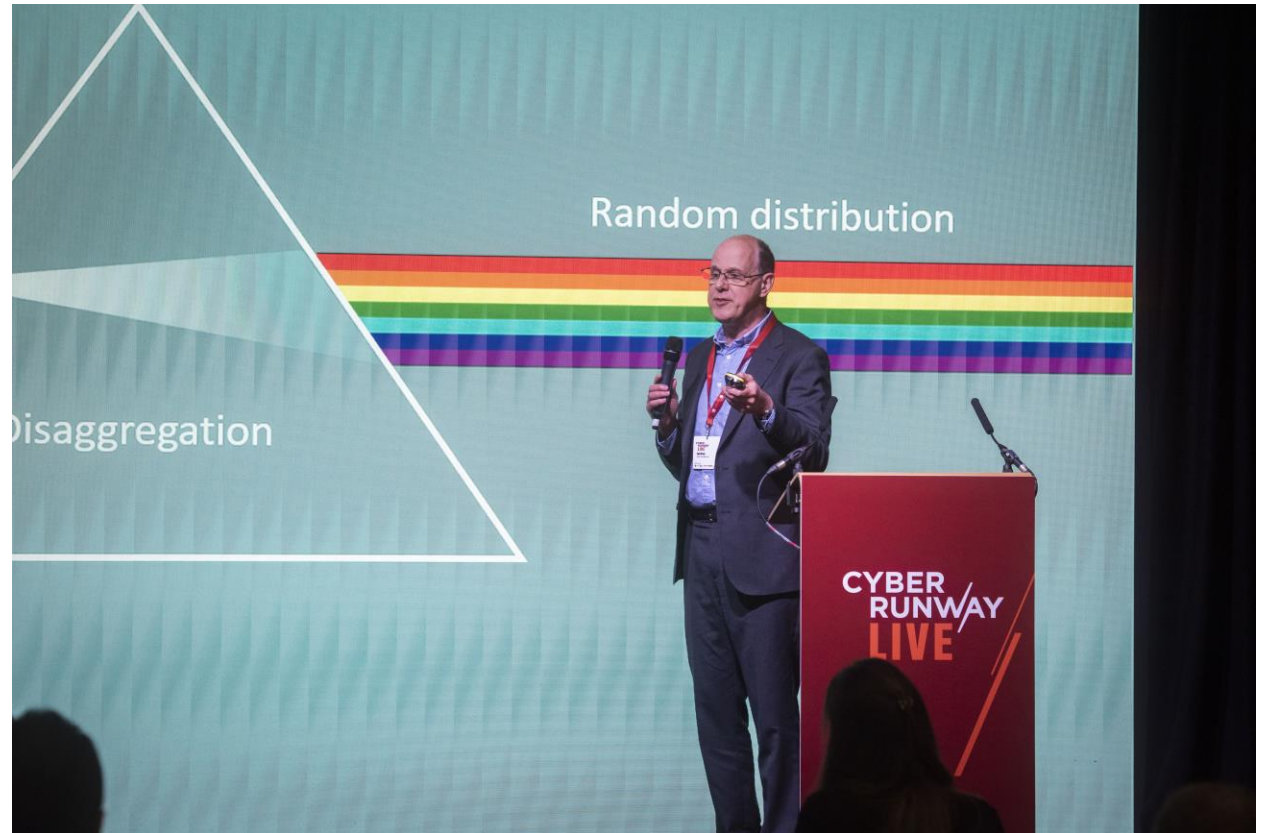
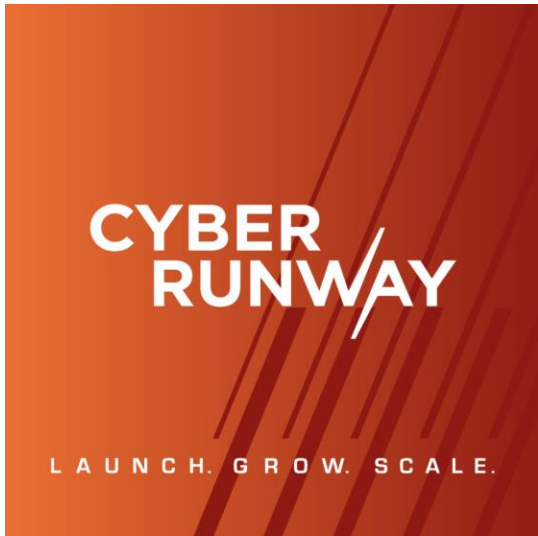


Industry engagement and challenge generation



Wider impact (societal, regional growth)

YOUR FUTURE COULD BE...



TOWARDS A PROOF OF CONCEPT

WHAT IS A POC?

A Proof of Concept (PoC) is designed to demonstrate the feasibility of a proposed solution. It can help you:

- Test a new business model, product or solution
- Validate whether to pursue it further
- Gauge market demand and move towards product-market fit
- Gain feedback and insights that can help you iterate or pivot

COMMERCIALISATION SANDPIT ON 22 APRIL

The best startups and technologies are built with the end user, and with deep understanding of their pain points.

Develop your idea with peers from academia, and hear from startups and industry to gain insights into the end user need.



THE CHALLENGE: ETHICAL AI AND QUANTUM FOR CYBER SECURITY

Emerging technology areas, such as AI and quantum, are impacting the future of cyber security and enabling new approaches for industry to process, secure and analyse data. This can create greater efficiencies and reduce burden on employees.

However, technologies such as AI and quantum also present a new cyber security threat: the ability to generate convincing information and data, which may not be accurate or validated, as well as a new threat to established security protocols. Industry will need to leverage cutting-edge research to employ novel solutions to mitigate these risks.

We're looking for ideas utilising research which innovatively address either (or both) of the following key questions:

- (1) How can you use ethical AI to automate decision making reducing 'cognitive load' in a cyber secure way?**
- (2) How can you use AI or quantum to ensure data authenticity and/or assure confidential data sharing?**

Your idea can leverage any approach using AI, or quantum, or both to address these key cyber security challenges industry is facing.

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

In order to be eligible for the £25,000 funding for a POC, we are asking participants to write a short proposal.

This will be:

- 1 - 2 page, each question will have a word limit
- Covering key question areas you may want to consider throughout the process
- We are not expecting anything more than a viable commercial idea based on research that can use funding to develop a POC at this stage

Brief introduction to your idea

Confirm approval from TTO and Head of Department

How would you use the funding?

An indication of your POC timeline

Any key partnerships you would look to implement?

A plan for your approach to market validation

WHAT NEXT

Fill in the form below (QR code linking to the form is on the right):

<https://forms.office.com/e/ec6dVz12sF>

Any questions? Email us on
email nwcybercom@lancaster.ac.uk

North West CyberCom: AI &
Quantum Commercialisation
Sandpit



THANKS!

