

Inspiring and supporting the creation of high-growth startups

Tuesday, 11 July 2023

conceptionx

The UK's leading PhD deeptech venture programme

# Agenda

- What is Conception X?
- Case Studies
- Key lessons from our 5 years as the UK's leading PhD deeptech venture programme

Conception X is a venture programme and platform that helps PhD students commercialise their research and create investable deeptech startups.

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Our partner:

[XTX]  
VENTURES



What is  
**deeptech?**

Technology relying on  
meaningful scientific  
innovation; with some  
level of R&D risk

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Conception X first launched in  
2018 in partnership with  
University College London

The programme has since spun out  
as an independent non-profit,  
and it now represents founders  
from **40+ universities** across the  
UK and beyond, including  
partnerships such as the Northern  
Deeptech Hub

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NORTHERN  
DEEPTECH  
HUB >>>>>>>

At Conception X, all decisions and plans are designed to serve our core mission:

- **Creating a generation of Venture Scientists** by helping some of the smartest people in the world to become innovators
- **Tech-for-good:** Solving big problems in energy, health, climate, etc.
- Boosting the university ecosystem and promoting **public sector innovation**

# Where are we now?

**400+**

**Venture  
Scientists  
supported**



# Our startups



Cybersecurity



Fintech



Hardware



Climate



Space



Logistics



AI/ML



Quantum Computing



SaaS



Robotics



MedTech / Health



BioTech



BCI / Neuroscience



VR / AR / XR

**40+**  
**universities**

Our reach is extending  
across the UK



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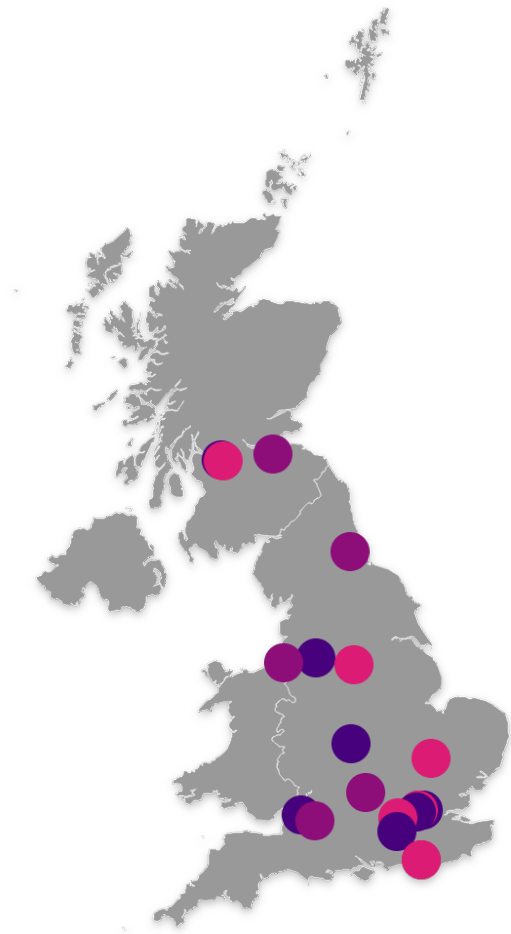
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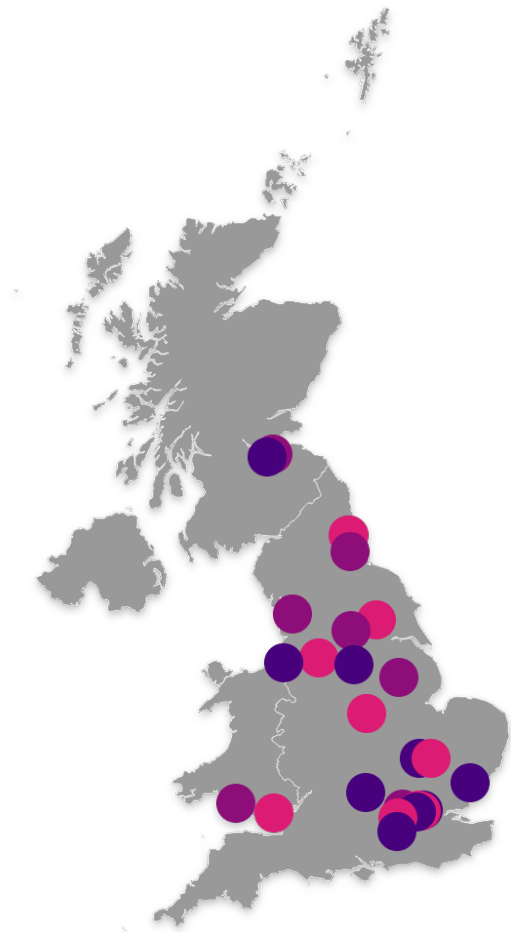
# Our reach is extending across the UK



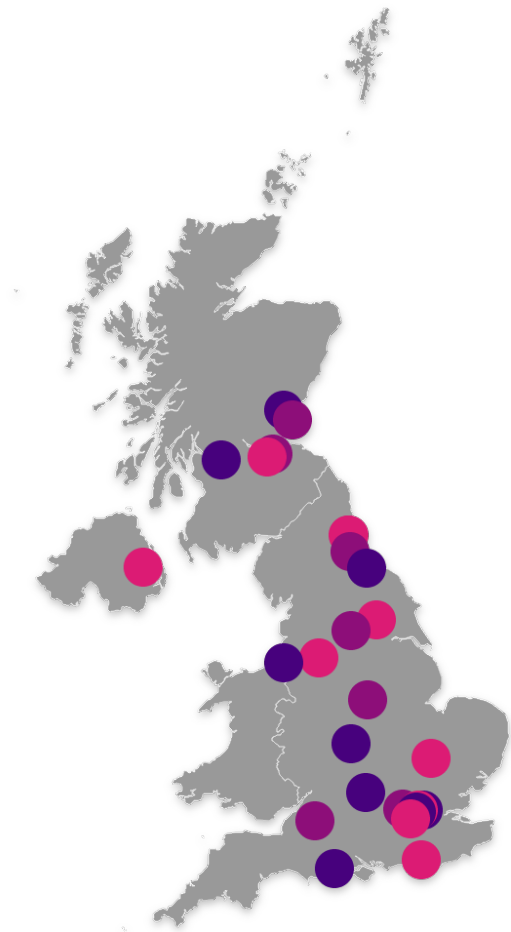
Our reach is extending  
across the UK



Our reach is extending  
across the UK



Our reach is extending  
across the UK





**£53m**  
raised



Photo by Marcus Ciccirin on Unsplash

Is this a PhD student  
or a Startup Founder?

# VENTURE SCIENTIST <<<

[ SINCE 2018 ]

NOUN, PLURAL venture scientists.

1. A scientist who transforms original research into impactful and scalable products, bridging the gap between lab and market.

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# Case Studies

- Radar Informatics
- Myriad Wind
- Rahko



**RADAR**  
INFORMATICS



Radar Informatics develop impact telemetry wearables and individualised injury profiling tool to manage concussion in sport

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Myriad Wind Energy Systems are designing the next generation of high-performance wind turbines, aiming to make wind energy more affordable, in particular to remote, hard-to-reach locations

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# rahko



Rahko was a quantum drug discovery platform that drives a better understanding of the behaviour of drugs

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# Key challenges faced by Venture Scientists

- Time commitment
- Lack of networks, outside of the academic setting
- Team Building
- Customers
- Funding
- Mindset



# Time commitment



9 month  
programme



18 shorter  
sessions



PhD always  
comes first

# Lack of networks



Large expert &  
investor network



Local  
events



Other student  
success stories

# Team building



What to look for  
in a team



How to find  
cofounders



What makes a high  
performing team

# Customers



Figuring out your  
starting market



Defining your  
customer



How to speak  
to customers

# Funding



Relationships  
with investors



Sources of  
capital & grants



How to engage  
with investors

# Mindset



What is their  
purpose?



What it means to  
be an entrepreneur



Thinking in a  
customer centric way

# How do we support them?

- Deeptech entrepreneurial training
- One-to-one business and technology coaching
- Conception X expert network
- Show & Tell sessions
- Community and networking events
- Fundraising support
- Demo Day



# Two-track approach

## Project X

For those still in the idea stage,  
who want to become upskilled in  
entrepreneurship and gain access  
to industry partners

## Startup X

For those who already have  
an idea, product or service and  
are on their way to building a  
startup



# What makes our programme different

- Zero equity
- Virtual – broader access
- Cross-university
- Runs alongside PhD and leverages university resources and networks
- Supportive environment
- Sector agnostic
- Earliest stage support
- Strong expert and investor network
- Compatible with any university commercialisation policy

# Conception X benefits

- Putting the UK on the map as a leader in deeptech innovation
- Tackling big problems in energy, health, etc. – **most of our startups have a tech-for-good angle**
- Expanding the career options of talented PhD students
- Increasing the impact of university research
- Re-thinking the public sector as a launchpad for deeptech innovation
- Promoting diversity in tech entrepreneurship

“We all know breakthroughs that save lives are years in the making.  
**Conception X** is part of this trend, and ethos.

We are creating companies today that **solve problems** that will become apparent 3-5 years down the line.”

*Riam Kanso, CEO at Conception X*



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