



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships

# Growing Impact and Reach: Opportunities for HE and FE to Work Together

Mick Card	Innovate UK Business Connect Knowledge Transfer Adviser North Wales, Merseyside & West Cheshire
Ken Frame	Innovate UK Business Connect Knowledge Transfer Adviser Northern Ireland
Dr Fergal Tuffy	North West Regional College Technology & Innovation Manager
Rosie Peacock	Innovate UK Lead Specialist for Innovation Skills

**KTP 2025 Conference and Awards October 2025**



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships

# Growing Impact and Reach: Opportunities for HE and FE to Work Together

Contexts

Innovate UK Perspective

Northern Ireland NWRC Experiences

KTP Adviser Perspectives

Roundtables

Feedback, Discussion & Thoughts



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships

## Contexts

Well established regional business reach of FE  
HE pre & post award infrastructure  
FE Innovation Champions & Clusters  
High impact KE interventions  
FE KTP engagement  
Capacity and infrastructure barriers



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships

# Innovate UK Support for FE Innovation

Rosie Peacock



north west  
regional college  
Derry~Londonderry • Limavady • Strabane



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships



# Supporting Businesses with Innovation & KTP

Helping business is our business

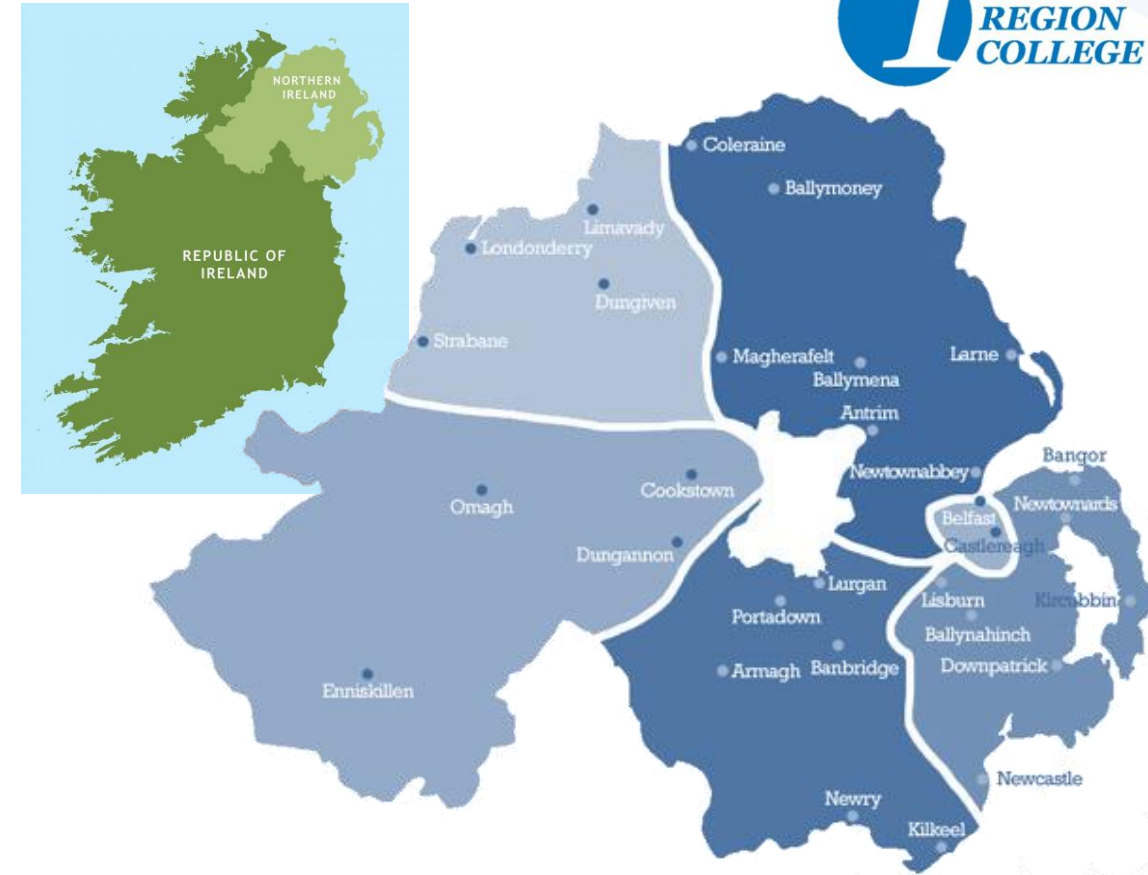


Dr. Fergal Tuffy, NWRC Business Support Centre Manager



# North West Regional College

- One of 6 FE Colleges in NI
- 3 main locations – 5 campuses
- Derry, Limavady & Strabane
- 12,500+ enrolments
- ~2,500 FT and ~10,000 PT
- 600+ staff
- £47 million turnover
- [NWRC corporate video](#)



## Developing Skills, Fostering Innovation, Driving Applied Research

### ■ Customised Industry Training

- Bespoke training for industry – responsive to their needs
- Delivered through curriculum schools
- DfE Skills Focus, Skill Up, Assured Skills Academies....
- **Developing the pipeline and talent of those already in work**
- **....almost 1000 people in the past year**

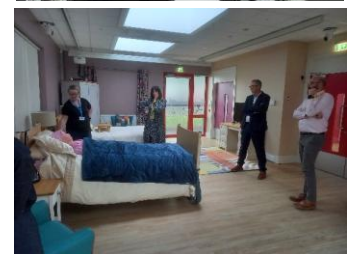
### ■ Industry r&D (Dedicated technical consultants & academic staff)

- Helping companies develop new products, processes and services
- Practical solutions – market focussed
- Delivered via 5 novel innovation centres & their staff
- **Supporting businesses to be more innovative and competitive...  
develop new products, processes and markets  
.....over 150 business annually across the island**





- NWRC Vision.... Economically focussed innovation & skills centres - £4M+ investment
  - Foodovation – Nov 2016
  - Product Design Centre - Nov 2018
  - DIAL Centre (Design Innovation for Assisted Living) – Nov 2019
  - XR Centre - June 2022
  - i4.0 Centre - evolved from discussions for UKRI SIP Smart Nano NI project – March 2023
- Supporting industry - new product & process development and industry growth
  - Support to students, staff, entrepreneurs, industry and community;
  - Info about new technologies
  - Access to state-of-the-art equipment and skills
  - Assisting early-stage entrepreneurs, micro and SMEs
  - Idea generation and producing prototypes, mock-ups and technology demonstrators
  - Conducting industry r&D and link back to curriculum
  - [NWRC Business Support Centre Showreel \(youtube.com\)](#)





# Innovation escalator.....

## KTP

- Strategic R&D innovation project – Typically 2 years
- Braidwater – Outstanding KTP award;
- 7 to date at NWRC; 2 ongoing.



## Innovation Vouchers & AKT

- NWRC consultancy to develop a new product
- 30+ delivered for small companies per year
- AKT project with Brighter Gold on 'waste' seed cake



## InnovateUs

- 1:1 bespoke training to implement innovation activity for a new product
- Stimulating innovation activity – 1st engagement – fresh thinking
- 75+ businesses supported per year

**STAGE 4** Driving New Knowledge  
Collaborative industry led research in emerging technology areas.

**STAGE 3** Application of Knowledge  
Support for companies and clusters to undertake research and development and exploit new technologies and processes.

**STAGE 2** Developing Capacity  
Assistance to develop capacity to explore how innovation and R&D solutions can help businesses drive value through innovation.

**STAGE 1** Building Innovation Awareness  
Building awareness and support for companies to take the first steps in undertaking innovation solutions to technical and business challenges.

INNOVATION SUPPORT



# KTP Case Study - Braidwater

- Braidwater is an Eglinton-based construction company - across residential, commercial, industrial, retail development - projects across UK & Ireland
- Wanted to develop an “Intelligent Home Delivery Platform” - [Braidwater Video](#)
- KTP developed a cloud-based system to manage the construction process from site selection to handover
- 2-year project with £150K funding from InnovateUK & Invest NI
- NWRC graduate, software developer, was recruited as KTP Associate
- Project developed a system using various technologies such as;
  - satellite imagery & drone technology for surveys,
  - linking with Building Information Modelling (BIM) data, building plans, site plans legal documentation,
  - 360 video, augmented reality, app development, AI for housing demand, chatbot & automated customer portal

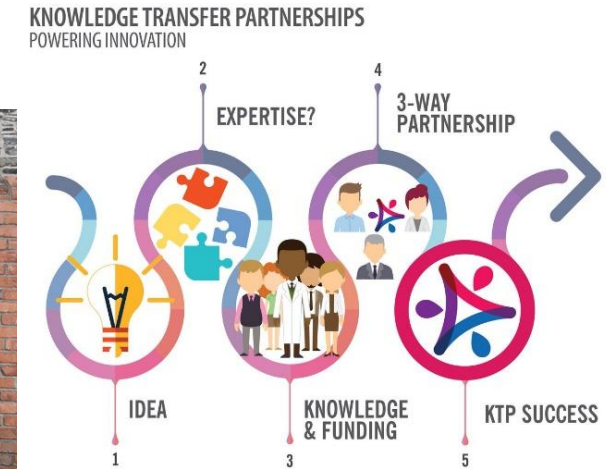


KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIPS  
POWERING INNOVATION





- NWRC & AE GLOBAL KTP (Knowledge Transfer Partnership)



# KTP & the process

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIPS  
POWERING INNOVATION

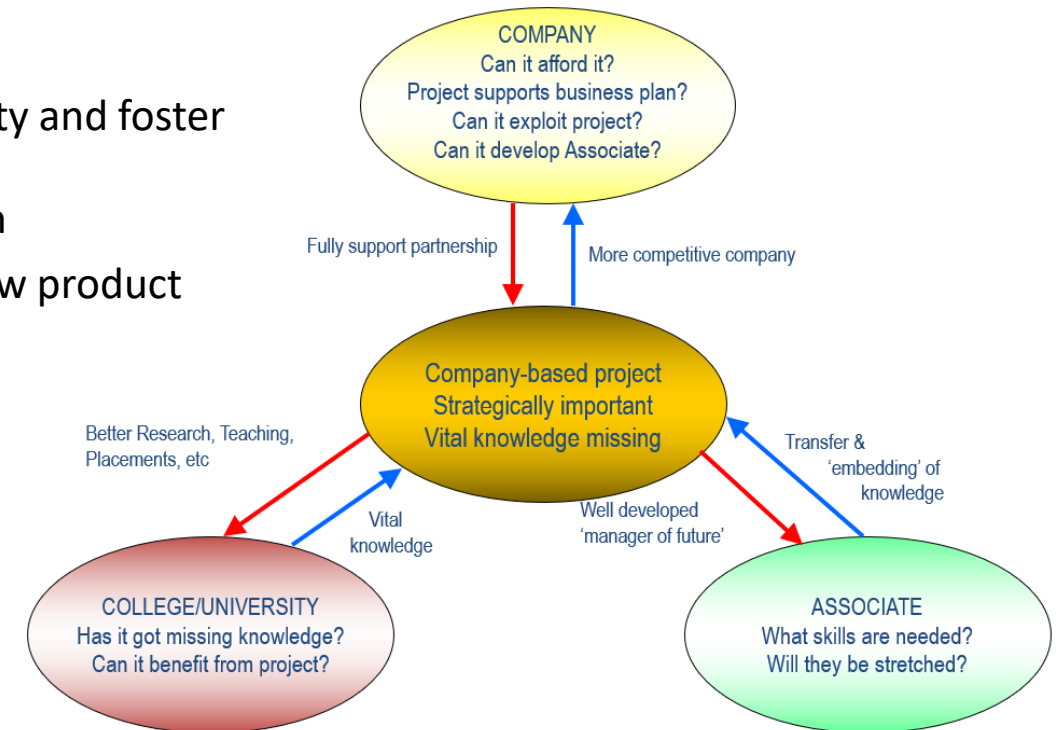


- UK-wide programme for industry-academic partnership
- Funded by InnovateUK & various research partners (Invest NI in NI)
- Company with a plan for an innovative product or service - but company are missing key knowledge
- A knowledge base (such as NWRC) who has the knowledge
- A graduate who is appointed to undertake the work to deliver the new product or service for the business
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships will help the business:
  - Embed expertise, generate new knowledge, expand capability and foster a culture of innovation
  - Drive competitive advantage through accelerated innovation
  - Increase revenue/profits through access to new markets, new product development, increased productivity and better processes



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships



# KTP & the process

- Project length typically 2 years
- Needs to be a **strategic innovation** project
- SMEs (less than 250 staff) get 60% funding from InnovateUK towards project
- Graduate will be recruited, jointly by College & Company
- Graduate is employed by NWRC but works to business terms & conditions
- Project and graduate is based at the Company with support from College
- Academic supervisor spends around 0.5 day per week on the project
- Meeting (LMC) with Innovate UK advisor 3/4 times per year
- College gets £15K per year to cover academic supervision costs
- Similar amount in academic overhead – so up to £30K per annum
- College manages the project & claims quarterly in arrears

Table 2 – non-FEC

	1.	2.	3.
Costs eligible for support	Partnership Budget £	Business's Contribution £	Government Contribution £
Directly incurred costs			
a. Associate employment	90000	36000	54000
b. Academic and secretarial support	30000	12000	18000
c. Associate development	4000	1600	2400
d. Travel and subsistence	3100	1240	1860
e. Consumables	4000	1600	2400
f. Other costs	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>131100</b>	<b>52440</b>	<b>78660</b>
<b>Government Contribution (%)</b>	<b>60</b>		

Contribution to the Knowledge Base Partner's overheads calculated at 46% of the Government contribution to direct staff costs (column 3 figures at a. and b. above).	33120
<b>Maximum amount of Government Grant</b> Total of Government contribution, including the 'indirect costs' element	<b>111780</b>

Based on the 2 year KTP March 2025		Amount of grant requested 60%	Company contribution to the 'Budget' 40%		
Directly incurred costs		InnovateUK UKRI			
Associate(s) Employment Costs	£80,000	£48,000.00	£32,000.00		
Associate(s) Development	£4,000	£2,400.00	£1,600.00		
Travel and Subsistence	£2,500	£1,500.00	£1,000.00		
Consumables	£4,000	£2,400.00	£1,600.00		
	£0	£0.00	£0.00		
Directly Allocated Costs	£0	£0.00	£0.00		
Knowledge Base Supervisor	£30,000	£18,000.00	£12,000.00		
Academic Institution Overhead	£30,636.00	£30,636.00			
<b>Total</b>	<b>£151,136.00</b>	<b>£102,936.00</b>	<b>£48,200.00</b>	<b>£24,100.00</b>	
Graduates are paid by NWRC but working to company T&Cs. Paid within NWRC salary band 5, starting at the bottom, have access to NWRC pension but only get no of days annual leave of the company.					
NWRC	Scale point	2024/25 Estimated scale £	ER NIC (all staff)	Employer on-cost – NILGOSC Members	Total for NILGOSC
Band 5	Point 20	£30,296	£2,925	£5,756	£38,977.29
	Point 21	£30,825	£2,998	£5,857	£39,679.80
	Point 22	£31,364	£3,072	£5,959	£40,395.59
	Point 23	£32,076	£3,171	£6,094	£41,341.13
	Point 24	£33,024	£3,302	£6,275	£42,600.07
	Point 25	£33,945	£3,429	£6,450	£43,823.16
Over KTP duration					
1 year at point 20				£38,977.29	£38,977.29
1 year at point 21				£39,679.80	£39,679.80
				£0.00	£0.00
					£78,657
KTP budget associate salary costs for 2 years					£80,000
Company Top-up					
Total company contribution over 2 years					£48,200
Monthly invoice from NWRC to Company (above divided by 24 months)					£2,008.33
Annual cost					£24,100.00



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships





## Benefits for academics



- The chance to build new relationships with industry or take existing relationships further
- The opportunity to apply the latest academic 'know-how' to solve real-world issues
- KTPs provide an opportunity to form a multi-disciplinary academic team that will add significant value
- Learn together with industry via the KTP – College : associate : company
- Academic staff to learn new knowledge applied to industry needs & trends – applied staff development
- There is an opportunity to facilitate business engagement with student projects
- Many academics use their experience of KTPs to enrich their teaching practices
- Increased credibility for College for applied innovation
- Case studies for classroom & on media / social media
- Demonstrate how College can support industry to address a real-world challenges
- Trusted partnerships - can lead to industrial student placements, guest speakers, site visits
- Additional income for College as a result of undertaking a KTP



KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIPS  
POWERING INNOVATION





# Developing skills, fostering innovation; driving applied research.

Fergal Tuffy  
[fergal.tuffy@nwrc.ac.uk](mailto:fergal.tuffy@nwrc.ac.uk)

<http://bsc.nwrc.ac.uk/>





Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships

# KTP Adviser Perspectives & Support

Ken Frame



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships

## Roundtables

In table groups of mixed FE & HE

Share your current KTP experience

What are your aspirations?

What are the challenges and barriers you face?

Where are your KE strengths?

What models do you see for HE & FE collaboration / partnering?



Innovate  
UK

Knowledge  
Transfer  
Partnerships

# Table Feedback & Discussion