

Innovate UK Business Connect - KTP Platform (Current)

2725 Innovate UK KTP 50th Golden Awards

Queen's University Belfast

Application name should be the nominee name (i.e. the name of the Partnership team, project, people or person who will be the recipient of the Award).

Entrant Name

Entrant Email

Nominee Name Queen's University Belfast

Nominee Email

Confidentiality Declaration

- ✓ I confirm all contributors to this project have provided consent for the use of the information provided in this application to be used by the organisers in any promotion of the Awards.
- ✓ The information provided does not include commercially sensitive content that requires approval before it is made public.

Consent

- ✓ I am happy for any of the information provided to be used by the organisers in any promotion of the Awards

1. Knowledge with Impact Criteria

In this category applications should demonstrate exemplary TCS / KTP credentials, with a particular focus on evidencing the impacts made, the transformative outcomes delivered, and the exploitation potential realised.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this award, your TCS / KTP participation must have begun after 1st January 1975 and have been completed by 30 June 2025.

2. Driving Innovation for the Future Criteria

Here we wish to showcase the most creative, innovative and market-disruptive aspects of TCS / KTP. Applicants here should be able to demonstrate and evidence the nature, novelty and scale of progressive change enabled and exploited by TCS / KTP.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this award, your TCS / KTP participation must have begun after 1st January 1975 and have been completed by 30 June 2025.

3. The Art of Successful Collaboration

Criteria

This theme exemplifies the TCS / KTP ethos, here we wish to focus on the relationship aspects of TCS / KTP and how applicants can demonstrate a depth and breadth of reach and impact that has been facilitated through people and organisations working in partnership for a common goal.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this award, your TCS / KTP participation must have begun after 1st January 1975 and have been completed by 30 June 2025.

The shortlisted finalists for each category will be invited to attend the Gold Awards Gala Dinner on Wednesday, 29th October 2025 at the Kimpton Clock Tower Hotel in Manchester.

Each shortlisted finalist will be allocated three Gold Awards Gala Dinner tickets, but will be responsible for covering their own travel and accommodation costs.

Are you applying for the Yes
Art of Successful
Collaboration Category?

About the Nominees

Describe the People/ Partners/ Participants involved including any available TCS/ KTP project details (mention here any relevant context such as Knowledge Base and Company Partner details, main company activities, markets, locations; also consider providing turnover, profitability, and headcount numbers where possible).

Queen's University Belfast has led the UK in Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) for nearly 40 years, delivering over 400 projects, supporting 500+ talented Associates, and engaging 300+ academic staff. These collaborations have generated £50M in institutional income, contributing around £300M to the UK economy—driving innovation, accelerating commercial growth, and reinforcing Queen's reputation as a national leader in transformative university-business partnerships.

Queen's hasn't just participated in KTP; we have shaped it. In 1993, we pioneered the Knowledge Base-led KTP Centre model, transforming university-industry engagement and setting national standards for best practice. This model elevated KTP delivery, enhanced strategic innovation, and expanded programme influence across the UK.

Our commitment to excellence is reflected in 25 National KTP Awards, including four Best Partnership, four Engineering Excellence, and eleven Future Leader accolades. In 2019, Queen's was the first KB named "Best KTP Support Team", affirming the strength of our infrastructure and dedication to partnership success.

Queen's continues to deliver meaningful commercial outcomes for business partners, while advancing research and generating wide-reaching societal impact, building on a legacy defined by shared ambition, impactful collaboration and enduring relationships, placing us at the forefront of KTP excellence, demonstrating 'The Art of Successful Collaboration'.

The Strategic Context

What was the strategic challenge, need or opportunity that this KTP (or formerly TCS) nomination set out to address? Please outline the key purpose/ aims/ objectives of your partnership(s) and/ or the drivers motivating the Gold Award nominee(s)

In the 1980s, the strategic challenge for Queen's University Belfast was how to deepen university-industry collaboration while driving innovation-led, economic growth in Northern Ireland and beyond. In a region affected by decades of political turbulence and societal division, industrial decline and underinvestment in R&D, the University set out to be a catalyst for change, driving knowledge exchange, upskilling graduates, creating employment opportunities and boosting productivity across all business sectors.

Queen's delivered this agenda with ambition and foresight—establishing one of the UK's earliest TCS Programmes in 1986 and investing in the creation of a dedicated Knowledge Base-led KTP team in 1993. This transformed institutional support for KTPs, shifting engagement from reactive to strategic. By embedding robust infrastructure and visionary leadership, Queen's demonstrated how universities could drive high-impact Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.

The key aims of our partnership strategy included:

Creating meaningful and long-lasting relationships between academia and industry

Supporting graduate recruitment, retention, and professional development in SMEs

Mobilising academic expertise to solve business challenges

Delivering commercial outcomes and societal impact through collaborative R&D activities

Having seen the transformational potential of KTPs, Queen's has consistently pushed boundaries - refining processes, sharing best practice nationally, and contributing to policy making. The journey has been shaped by vision, strategy, and a steadfast commitment to partnership excellence.

For Queen's, KTP is not just a programme - it is a strategic vehicle for delivering the university's civic responsibility, advancing research excellence, and contributing to long-term economic and societal development. Our sustained participation in KTP over nearly four decades reflects a deliberate commitment to use collaboration as a catalyst

for innovation and impact. The breadth of our reach and the depth of our impact - spanning hundreds of partnerships, across disciplines and industries - demonstrates the transformative potential of KTP when embedded within institutional purpose.

Overview of Outcomes/ Impacts for the Beneficiaries

Please outline the key achievements for the host Organisation(s), the Knowledge Base(s) and the Associate(s). What were the evidential impacts and outcomes realised alongside any evidence of changes in operations, culture, economic/ societal/ environmental benefits etc. How was TCS / KTP applied to optimal effect for the mutual benefit of the involved stakeholders and how did the collaborators ensure that sum of the outcomes realised went beyond the individual and collective ambitions.

Queen's University Belfast has long recognised the transformative potential of academic expertise for businesses across Northern Ireland. During the Troubles, access to international talent and investment was severely constrained and we used our TCS/KTP partnerships to support local industry, particularly SMEs, with vital technical knowledge and R&D capability. Our interventions built business confidence and reassured customers and overseas investors of the credibility, ambition, and scale of innovation available in the region.

The impact of our Partnerships has extended far beyond individual collaborations. They've influenced supply chains, strengthened critical regional sectors, and catalysed wider economic development. A standout example is the 1990s cluster of TCS projects with local plastics and polymer processors, which laid the foundation for the University's Polymer Processing Research Centre (PPRC). Today, PPRC plays a central role in the £100 million Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) - a strategic initiative projected to generate £1 billion in economic impact by 2050 and create over 1,500 permanent jobs. The upcoming opening of the 'Factory of the Future' in 2026 will further empower local manufacturing through access to cutting-edge technologies and sustained academic collaboration.

Over our 40-year journey, Queen's University has built a KTP infrastructure now recognised as a national benchmark. Tools developed at Queen's—such as the LMC finance spreadsheet, project launch and associate induction booklets, IP templates, and our latest KTP application map—have been adopted by Knowledge Bases across the UK. These resources reflect our ethos of collaboration beyond individual projects and reinforce our strategic leadership within the KTP community.

Now in 2025, our focus is on quality and excellence—across projects, partnerships, and service delivery. Queen's KTP activity is aligned with our ambition to be recognised as a civic university, using the programme to deliver societal impact and create lasting prosperity within the communities we serve.

WOW Factor!

What makes this nomination special in having applied the TCS/ KTP partnership culture and ethos to best effect and why should it win the Art of Successful Collaboration Gold Award?

/ 5.00

To help differentiate a scale has been designed (1 - 5):
Unsatisfactory / Inadequate / Satisfactory / Worthy / Wow.

Score Description

Queen’s University Belfast exemplifies the true spirit of TCS/KTP through decades of strategic leadership, innovation, and collaborative excellence. Far beyond participation, Queen’s has actively shaped the KTP landscape - from launching one of the earliest TCS programmes to pioneering the KB-led KTP Centre model that has influenced national delivery. Hosting landmark events such as the first KTP Conference in 1998, followed by others in 2004 and 2016, and redefining the Associate Conference format in 2019, Queen’s has consistently elevated the KTP experience.

Our commitment and service to the KTP National Forum is longstanding and impactful. Lorraine Marks, Head of KTP, has served as Chair, Vice-Chair and now Secretary and Northern Ireland Regional Representative, influencing policy, programme strategy, and delivery across the UK. During the Pandemic, as Forum Chair, Lorraine represented all Knowledge Bases, advocating for stability and continuity for businesses, academics, and Associates, and advising Innovate UK on the impact of critical interventions.

5 WOW

Queen’s KTP legacy is visible across sectors and continents - from red London buses and aircraft interiors to targeted drug therapies and global music artists using Lowden guitars. Our collaborations have shaped infrastructure, advanced medical technologies, revolutionised software systems, and enhanced global food security. Our achievements, and those of our industry partners reflect the ethos of KTP: innovation through partnership.

Over 500 graduates have been recruited and mentored through Queen’s KTPs, many now leading in business, government, and knowledge exchange. This enduring impact on people, policy, and practice is a testament to our collaborative culture and enduring relationships.

For four decades, Queen’s University Belfast has not just embraced the TCS/KTP ethos - we have helped define it. Through visionary leadership, deep-rooted partnerships, and transformative outcomes, Queen’s is a deserving recipient of the “Art of Successful Collaboration” Golden Award.

4 Worthy