

ENTREPRENEURIAL CAMPUS ACTIVITY

August 2025

This report provides a summary of the activities and immediate outputs delivered by SULSA through Entrepreneurial Campus funding between 1st January and 31st July 2025

Dr Ally Hughes
Executive Director

Jill Inkster
Senior Operations Officer



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between January and July 2025, the Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA) delivered a series of targeted activities funded by **Scottish Funding Council's collaborative Knowledge Exchange & Innovation funding, aligned to the Scottish Government's Entrepreneurial Campus Blueprint** which has been designed to strengthen Scotland's position as a world-class hub for innovation and enterprise in the life sciences sector.

In alignment with the Entrepreneurial Campus report, SULSA's activities focused on embedding an entrepreneurial culture across the academic research community. Through a combination of professional development, leadership training, and industry and investor engagement, the programme directly addressed the report's call to equip researchers with the skills, networks, and confidence needed to transition into impactful careers as innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders.

This work supports Scotland's broader ambition as outlined in the **National Strategy for Economic Transformation, which highlights the life sciences as a key growth sector** capable of driving inclusive and sustainable economic development. By fostering the entrepreneurial potential of Scotland's researchers, SULSA contributes to building the talent pipeline necessary for growing high-value businesses and strengthening regional innovation ecosystems, not just in the Central Belt of Edinburgh and Glasgow but across Scotland.

SULSA's initiatives also complement the **UK Government's Modern Industrial Strategy 2025, which emphasises knowledge exchange, commercialisation, and the development of skills** to support a competitive and innovation-driven economy. By helping researchers navigate pathways from academic discovery to real-world application, the programme reinforces the critical role of higher education in delivering economic and societal impact.

The outcomes of this activity have strengthened Scotland's entrepreneurial ecosystem in the life sciences and helped advance the strategic objectives of both national and UK-wide policy. Through this support, **SULSA continues to enable the next generation of researchers to become confident, connected, and capable drivers of innovation.**

This activity was co-ordinated by SULSA's Industry Engagement Ambassadors who have taken part in the Forging Futures training scheme and SULSA's Early Career Committee. In this way, all activity was co-designed and co-delivered with the community for which it directly benefits.



Dr Ally Hughes
SULSA Executive Director

SULSA's Industry Engagement Ambassadors & Early Career Representatives



Badri Aekbote

Research Associate at University of Glasgow



Debabrata Dutta

Postdoctoral Researcher at Heriot-Watt University



Francesca Moramarco

PhD Student at University of Aberdeen



Connie MacKinnon

PhD Student at the University of the Highlands and Islands



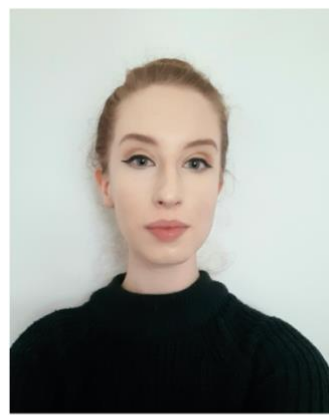
Gael Morrow

Chancellor's Fellow at Robert Gordon University



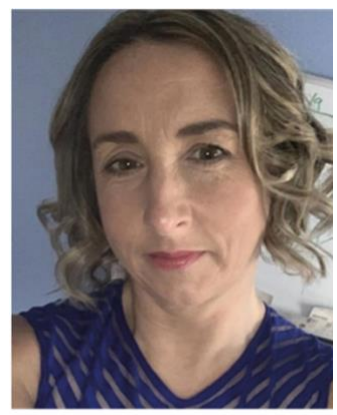
Jack Allan Cockerill

PhD Student at University of Strathclyde



Iona Campbell

PhD Student at the University of Strathclyde



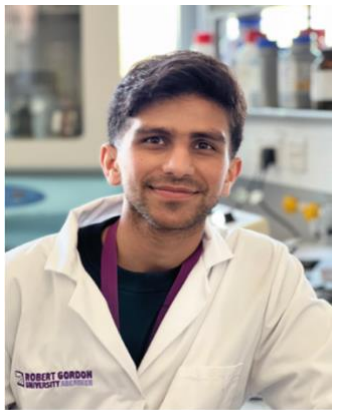
Lisa Logie

Postdoctoral Research Assistant at the University of Dundee



Nia Gray-Wannell

Postdoctoral Research Scientist at the James Hutton Institute



Nuruddin Mahadik

PhD Student at Robert Gordon University



Tegan Gaetano

PhD Student at University of Aberdeen



Zainab Olatunji

PhD Student at Glasgow Caledonian University

SULSA ENTREPRENEURIAL CAMPUS ACTIVITY 2025

SCIENCE ENTREPRENEUR CLUB ACTIVITY

EDINBURGH, MARCH 2025



Entrepreneurial Mindset
workshop held with 23
PhD & PostDocs



Mixer to launch Scotland Chapter
of SEC with 27 Academia, 15
CxO/Founders & 9 Investors



SEC Scotland Chapter
championed by new &
established CxOs in Scotland



100% interested in joining SEC
BioAcademic network expanding
representation from Scotland



Events received
5/5 star rating



67% planning meeting with
Entrepreneurs & Entrepreneurs in
Residence at their institute

COMMERCIALISATION WORKSHOPS

ONLINE, MAY-JUNE 2025



Four online
workshops held by
Symbiosis IP



Topics covered Research
Commercialisation, Importance of IP,
Improving Tech Success & How to Spin-Out



85 researchers
attended the
workshops

LS SKILLS & OPPORTUNITIES IN NE SCOTLAND

ABERDEEN, MAY 2025



Panel on Skills Across
Life Sciences Sectors
(KTPs, Industry, Business
Development,
Entrepreneurship)



Panel on Career
Journeys in the NE
Scotland (with speakers
from Elasmogen, TauRx,
SeaDyes, Uni of Dundee)



62% were keen to
explore careers
opps they would
not have
considered before



31% said they'd
connect with
and apply to
industry in NE
Scotland

MY FUTURE PLAN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

GLASGOW, JUNE 2025



8 SULSA Industry Ambassadors
received leadership training &
3 received 1:1 career coaching



Training received
4.9 / 5 star rating



80% will think about career
development & planning
differently after attending

CV CLINICS

ABERDEEN, EDINBURGH & GLASGOW, MAY 2025



CV Clinics held to
51 PhDs & Students
across three cities



Talks from Careers Offices,
Industry, Professional
Services & Entrepreneurs



Attendees said it was "eye
opening", "informative"
and "incredibly helpful"



SCIENCE ENTREPRENEUR CLUB WORKSHOP & MIXER

After consulting with our **Industry Engagement Ambassadors** and **Early Career Committee**, there was a strong desire from these PhD and Postdoctoral Researchers to learn about the **commercialisation of research**. They felt hindered in exploring commercialisation opportunities due to uncertainty about how to identify commercially viable aspects of their research and how to develop an entrepreneurial mindset towards it.

To address this, we partnered with Professor Ross Tuffee, creator of the Connect-Ed platform and co-ordinator of the Entrepreneurs in Residence mentors across Scottish universities and Professor Gillian Fleming, co-founder of Mint Ventures, and they agreed to deliver a workshop on **cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset** and guiding researchers towards resources and networks to help them further develop their skills in this area.

Separately, a former **SULSA Industry Engagement Ambassador**, Dr Bill Carton, connected us with **Science Entrepreneur Club**, a London based not-for-profit that has built extensive networks of entrepreneurs/CxOs, investors and academics. With a network based in London, they were keen to expand further into the UK, including Scotland. SULSA pledged our support in establishing a **Scotland Chapter of the Science Entrepreneur Club** with plans to run two joint networking events per year.

On 26th March in Edinburgh, 23 PhD and Postdoctoral Researchers participated in the **‘Developing an Entrepreneurial Mindset’** workshop delivered by Prof Ross Tuffee and Prof Gillian Fleming. After the session, Science Entrepreneur Club’s networks of 15 CxOs and 9 investors joined the group for a lively networking mixer. Feedback revealed strong enthusiasm: 67% of researchers expressed interest in developing their own business ideas, meeting with investors, and arranging follow-up discussions with entrepreneurs or Entrepreneurs in Residence mentors. All respondents said they would attend similar events in the future and planned to join Science Entrepreneur Club’s BioAcademic network. The event received an overall attendee rating of 5 out of 5 stars.

This mixer also created an opportunity for SULSA to **apply for investment from a philanthropic fund** represented at this event. While this has not yet resulted in additional core funding for SULSA, it demonstrates the power of these events in bringing unexpected opportunities and has opened a new avenue and network for SULSA to explore.

“The fact [that] people from different academic background came together was wonderful to see. The networking mixer was [an] amazing opportunity to talk to [them] about their journey”

Attendee (Postdoctoral Researcher)



From L-R: Dr Alison McIntosh (SULSA), Sara Benesova (SULSA), Dr Matthew McCann (Science Entrepreneur Club), Dr Ally Hughes (SULSA), Dr Bill Carton (former SULSA Industry Engagement Ambassador), Dr Ian Parnham (Science Entrepreneur Club Lead for Scotland Chapter)



COMMERCIALISATION WORKSHOPS

Multiple attendees from the Entrepreneurial Mindset Workshop and Science Entrepreneur Club Mixer expressed their interest in a follow-on workshops around some of the more **practical elements** to consider when **commercialising research**.

Whilst universities have their own commercialisation/tech transfer offices, early career researchers can be reluctant to connect with these offices as they lack confidence in their idea and/or do not have enough knowledge on the process to engage in a meaningful way. To address this, we partnered with **Symbiosis IP's** Dr Amy Lam who previously worked as Head of Business Development at Edinburgh BioQuarter and is now Associate Director of Consulting and IP Transactions with Symbiosis IP. Dr Lam's background in life sciences enabled her to communicate effectively with our researchers, addressing their scientific and technological questions in terms they could readily understand and assist them with specific inquiries.



Dr Amy Lam delivered four online lunchtime workshops on commercialising research across May and June 2025. The four workshops worked best as a series but could be attended as standalone workshops for those interested in particular parts of the spin out process. The four workshops were:

- **Research Commercialisation – What’s it All About?**
Increase your understanding of research commercialisation and the various ways in which research can generate a commercial return. Perfect for those new to the concept.
- **What is Intellectual Property and Why is it Important?**
Learn about the different types of IP, what they protect, and how the IP system works. A key session for any researcher looking to protect their innovations.
- **Improving Your Technology’s Chances of Success**
Explore common reasons why new technologies fail and discover strategies to improve your chances of success in a competitive market.
- **So You Want to Spin-Out?**
Learn about different types of investors, what they’re looking for, and how to prepare for conversations with funders. Ideal for anyone considering launching a company.

Attendee Overview (across all workshops):

- **Total:** 85 attendees
- **3 x** Undergraduate/Master’s Students
- **4 x** Graduates
- **11 x** PhD Researchers
- **26 x** Postdoctoral Researchers
- **6 x** Teaching Fellows/Lecturer/Senior Lecturer or Equivalent
- **3 x** Reader/Professor or Equivalent
- **4 x** University Management
- **28 x** Other University Roles (including Professional Services)

Throughout the series, Dr Lam encouraged attendees to connect with their university's tech transfer or commercialisation teams to explore how they can support in developing commercial ideas and helping them through the options that are available to them.

Although formal feedback was not collected for this series, participant responses during the sessions were highly positive. Recordings of all workshops were available after the workshops. Symbiosis IP will also be exhibiting at SULSA's IndAc25 Conference in October, offering the SULSA network further opportunity to access commercialisation advice.



NORTHEAST SCOTLAND EVENT

SULSA's first cohort of **Industry Engagement Ambassadors** (2021-23) from the University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University partnered with ONE BioHub to deliver a '**Life Sciences Innovation and Commercialisation in the North-East of Scotland**' event which included structured networking between early career researchers and entrepreneurs, success stories on commercialising research, and a panel discussion on funding. Our second cohort of Industry Engagement Ambassadors wanted to continue this focus on the North-East of Scotland but were interested in learning about the advantages and disadvantages of choosing the North-East as a region to build your career in life sciences.

Industry Engagement Ambassadors from the University of Aberdeen, University of Dundee, James Hutton Institute, University of the Highlands and Islands, and Robert Gordon University worked together, alongside ONE BioHub, to host '**Life Sciences Skills and Opportunities in North-East Scotland: A Forging Futures Collaboration with Academia and Industry.**' This event comprised of two panel sessions, one focused around skills needed for different life sciences sectors (Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, Industry, Business Development, and Entrepreneurialism) and a second session on career journeys focused on the advantages of staying or setting up base in the North-East of Scotland.

The event welcomed 71 attendees who had the opportunity to network with industry, ecosystem enablers and professional services from across the North-East including representatives from the North of Scotland KTP Centre, James Hutton Ltd, Elasmogen, TauRx, and SeaDyes.

The event received an overall rating of 4.5/5 stars with 62% of attendees reporting they would explore career opportunities they would not have considered before and 31% were interested in connecting with industry in NE Scotland and applying for employment opportunities in the NE of Scotland. To encourage attendees in these actions, the organising team created an **Industry Showcase booklet** with information on over 30 universities, ecosystem enablers and industry in the North-East of Scotland. Print versions of this booklet are available at ONE BioHub and can be found on the [SULSA website](#).

A blog written by organiser Dr Rebecca von Hellfeld, University of Aberdeen is available on the [SULSA website](#).

“It was a great opportunity to see a wide range of types of jobs/industries in the NE Scotland sector that I was not aware of before. A brilliant mix of different life sciences, and every presenter was incredibly engaging and inspiring.”

Attendee (Postdoctoral Researcher)



Picture 1: Group photo from event at ONE BioHub, Aberdeen

Picture 2 (L-R): Nuruddin Mahadik (RGU), Dr Nia Gray-Wannell (JHI), Dr Lisa Logie (UoD), Francesca Moramarco (UoA), Dr Gael Morrow (RGU), Connie MacKinnon (UHI), Dr Rebecca von Hellfeld (UoA)



MY FUTURE PLAN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The **My Future Plan 1** session, delivered to SULSA Industry Engagement Ambassadors as part of the Forging Futures scheme, proved to be the most popular segment of the programme. Led by Dr Tony Bradshaw of Biosocius, the workshop used psychometric analyses to help researchers better understand their personality types, key drivers, and areas of strength and weakness. An impressive 85% of attendees rated the session as “better” or “much better” than expected, and there was strong demand for further workshops with Dr Bradshaw.

Building on this success, Dr Bradshaw has developed **My Future Plan 2**—a leadership and resilience training workshop—alongside **My Future Plan 3**, which offers one-to-one tailored coaching for those who have completed the first two sessions. With the support of this funding, places on **My Future Plan 2** were offered to **eight Industry Engagement Ambassadors** from both cohorts.

Feedback from **My Future Plan 2** was equally positive: 80% of participants reported that the workshop prompted them to rethink their career development and planning, while 67% said they intended to implement the leadership strategies discussed. The session achieved a rating of 4.9 out of 5.

From this group, three researchers were transitioning to more senior roles at their respective institutes and were looking for extra guidance and support as they began establishing their own research groups and taking on additional responsibilities. We have been able to offer these researchers a place on **My Future Plan 3** for **personal coaching** looking at any of the elements discussed from workshops 1 and 2. This training and skills development over a period of time, culminating in 1:1 coaching at a pivotal stage in their careers will no doubt create confident and capable leaders in both the research and innovation space in Scotland.

Due to the success of our partnership with Dr Tony Bradshaw, SULSA members have been offered eight places in My Future Plan 1 and 2 within the **RESILIENCE – UK Medicines Manufacturing Skills Centre of Excellence** programme which will run in autumn 2025.

“I went into the session hoping to better understand myself professionally, and left with much more. I left motivated and with real clarity on how to actively work on my development. Tony helped me see how my strengths and behaviours show up at work, and how to improve both self-leadership and how I work with others.”

Participant (PhD Student)



Dr Bradshaw delivering My Future Plan Leadership and Resilience workshop to SULSA Industry Engagement Ambassadors



CV CLINICS

It has been well demonstrated that diversity in experiences and thinking creates stronger and more confident leaders, researchers and innovators. However, PhD and Postdoctoral Researchers often struggle with understanding the variety of career opportunities available for someone with a science background or how to accurately convey their skills and experiences when applying for diverse roles.

SULSA frequently receives feedback that, while university careers offices and activities are valuable and informative, PhD and Postdoctoral Researchers often seek more sector-specific advice and career guidance. To address this need, we used this funding to establish three regional CV Clinics (Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen) working in partnership with university careers officers. These clinics combined the officers' expertise with the real-world insights of professionals who have successfully transitioned into diverse roles within the life sciences sector.

The CV Clinics included guidance from university careers officers, career stories from industry and professional services staff, and a workshop tailoring Dr Rick Sanchez's (from Rick and Morty) professional profile for a range of jobs including Postdoctoral Researcher Associate, Clinical Trials Co-ordinator, Industry Laboratory Scientist, Project Manager with the NHS and Research and Policy Officer with Scottish Government. Participants gained practical experience in identifying which achievements to highlight for different roles and how to effectively present their skills and experiences to different employers.

Across the three CV Clinics, a total of 51 attendees participated. Feedback indicated that many intended to change their approach to job applications (Aberdeen 50%, Edinburgh 72%, Glasgow 86%) and explore career sectors they had not previously considered (Aberdeen 33%, Edinburgh 72%, Glasgow 43%). Regarding future career aspirations, Aberdeen attendees showed the strongest interest in transitioning to industry, Glasgow attendees were evenly split between academia (57%) and industry (43%), while Edinburgh attendees were most interested in industry (43%) and government or public sector roles (29%).

"The CV workshop was incredibly helpful in clarifying how to present my experience and skills effectively. I left with practical tips that made my CV more focused and impactful."

Attendee (Aberdeen)



Picture 1: Aberdeen CV Clinic organisers; **Picture 2:** attendees working through job profiles at Glasgow's CV Clinic



SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

SULSA's **Forging Futures** programme and associated activities respond to many themes within the **Entrepreneurial Campus Blueprint**, including *Theme 1: aligning with regional ecosystem and external partners to accelerate*, and *Theme 3: to support the development of an entrepreneurial mindset in students and staff*.

Over the last 20 years, SULSA has become a trusted broker by our members and the wider life sciences and research innovation ecosystem for delivering meaningful activity for early career researchers. Through collaboration with our Industry Engagement Ambassadors, our inclusive approach ensures that we are delivering activity co-designed and co-delivered with the community it aims to serve.

A key priority for SULSA and its members is inspiring and supporting early career researchers to explore innovation and commercialisation opportunities. These activities aim to bolster the early pipeline towards industry engagement and spinouts, in line with **Scotland's National Innovation Strategy** and its Research Commercialisation ambitions, specifically within Health and Life Sciences sector as one of the four Innovation Priorities.

While we have the necessary infrastructure and key relationships in place, SULSA are unable to resource the next iteration of the **Forging Futures** scheme through core funding alone. We require additional investment of £40k during AY2026-27 to deliver the following for a cohort of 26 (one PhD Student and one Postdoctoral Researcher from each of SULSA's 13 members):

- In person launch event and networking activity (~£3,000)
- Forging Futures Innovation and Industry Engagement Training (~£15,000)
- My Future Plan 1 Personality Profiling and Group Career Coaching (~£5,500)
- My Future Plan 2 Leadership and Resilience Training (~£7,000)
- Pay-it-forward activity like those demonstrated above that give the cohort opportunity to develop and deliver activity on behalf of their community (~£9,500). Activity will take place both online and in-person across Scotland