

Heriot-Watt embraces partnership working in recovery strategy

Heriot-Watt University is hoping to build multinational businesses of the future with its new partnership with produce development agency Filament PD.

The plan is to help small businesses scale up to compete at global level in a post pandemic landscape.

The university's Global Research Innovation and Discovery (GRID) facility with entrepreneurial talent among its numbers will combine with Filament PD who have both commercial and industrial experience.

The way forward is an open-ended support structure driving investment for new technologies in Scotland's cutting edge design area. Filament has already helped over 100 businesses to bring their products to market in the last five years. One example is a digitally tagged coffee cup which will tackle the disposable cup problem, and another technology used in lighthouse lenses which allows food to be cooked without a heat source. This will be a vital link between graduates and their eventual customers.



Heriot-Watt is proud of its graduate employability record, and is committed to helping their students get into work. There will be programmes run by the partnership to upskill students, improve job opportunities and to spark entrepreneurship.

Paul Devlin, Head of Commercialisation at Heriot-Watt University, said: “Scotland has a proud history of invention, coupled with a prosperous start-up culture.

“Our partnership with Filament PD will connect people, ideas and skills in order to develop commercial products that not only compete but lead the market. This underpins the value we place on our students working on real-world problems, collaborating across disciplines to deliver practical solutions with global impact, as well as our academics and existing industry partnerships.

“Collaboration and the sharing of expertise generates stronger opportunities for R&D funding and, by working together, we can support high calibre, industry-ready graduates while securing investment to help grow and scale successful businesses.”



Paul Devlin

Gregor Aikman, co-founder and managing director of Filament PD, said: “By collaborating in this way, we can ensure we have the collective skills and knowledge to develop, and most importantly retain, intellectual property in Scotland – ultimately driving domestic employment, revenue and exports. In the current climate, this is even more important as restrictions tighten once again.

“By working with the network of students, academics, start-ups and scale-ups at GRID to progress ideas right through to product delivery, we can improve speed-to-market, therefore winning valuable commercial advantage over global competitors and boosting Scotland’s success and reputation further.

“GRID has a unique mix of disciplines which includes computer game modelling, engineering and electronics. As a world leader in academic and entrepreneurial excellence, GRID features the latest in technological innovation, and we were particularly drawn to its augmented reality and virtual reality capabilities.”

Last month, Heriot-Watt University launched its [Prospectus for Recovery and Growth](#), illustrating the institution's commitment to supporting the global recovery efforts in relation to Covid-19. The Prospectus places collaboration, partnership and accelerating commercialisation at the heart of its approach.

The Prospectus sets out four primary commitments, and accompanying actions:

- Aligning research to inclusive economic growth and green recovery
- Focusing on the skills and expertise needed for the future
- Inspiring young people to be ambitious, resilient and enterprising
- Engaging global networks to drive transformative recovery