The Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards celebrate the partnerships between business, third sector, and public sector organisations and academia. Now in its 11th anniversary year, this flagship event recognises and rewards exceptional collaborations that deliver economic, environmental and social benefits for Scotland.

**Innovator of the Future 2026**

Recognises the achievements and impact of an individual who has made significant contributions to knowledge exchange projects.

**Criteria:**

* This award is open to:
  + Further Education and Higher Education students
  + Postgraduate students from research and teaching programmes (including those who have undertaken an Innovation Voucher Student Placement)
  + KTP Associates (involved in KTP and AKT projects)
  + Early Career Researchers (within eight years of their PhD award or six years of their first academic position)
* Applications should clearly demonstrate how the individual’s concept or research has made an impact on their field, contributed to their professional progression, and positively influenced a business
* To be considered eligible, collaborations must meet one of the following conditions within the period from **August 2023 to August 2025**:
  + **Active Engagement**: Demonstrated joint activity such as co-delivered project objectives, shared research or development work, or sustained partnership operations
  + **Impact and Outcomes**: Evidenced measurable outcomes or clear impacts resulting from collaborative efforts, including but not limited to innovation, economic, environmental or societal impact, or strategic advancement for the academic and/or business partner
* We strongly recommend that the application form is filled out by a nominator rather than the nominated individual
* The judging panel’s decision is final. The panel reserves the right not to make an award in a specific category if the standard is deemed to be of insufficient quality
* Previous award winners are not eligible to apply to a category that they have won in the past.
* If shortlisted, you will be required to complete a 60 second video overview of the project

**Please email your completed application to** [**marketing@interface-online.org.uk**](mailto:marketing@interface-online.org.uk) **by 5pm on Thursday 11th December 2025.**

**Key Dates:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Submission Deadline: | 5pm, Thursday, 11th December 2025 |
| Shortlist Announced: | Wednesday, 11th February 2026 |
| Awards Ceremony: | Thursday, 19th March 2026  MacRobert Arts Centre, University of Stirling |

If you have any questions, please contact [**marketing@interface-online.org.uk**](mailto:marketing@interface-online.org.uk)

**Nomination**

**Lead applicant / Nominator** (main point of contact that the Interface team will liaise with)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Nominator** |  |
| **Job Title** |  |
| **Organisation name** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Contact number** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Nominee (student / KTP Associate / Early Career Researcher)** |  |
| **KTP number**  **(if applicable)** |  |
| **Name of lead contact within the business, business name and address** |  |
| **Name of university or college supervisor and institution** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tick the check box to indicate which eligibility criteria this application meets.** To be considered eligible, collaborations must meet one of the following conditions within the period from **August 2023 to August 2025.** If applicable tick both. | |
| **Active Engagement**:  *Demonstrated ongoing joint activity such as co-delivered project objectives, shared research or development work, or sustained partnership operations.* |  |
| **Impact and Outcomes**:  *Evidenced measurable outcomes or clear impacts resulting from collaborative efforts, including but not limited to innovation, economic, environmental or societal impact, or strategic advancement for the academic and/or business partner.* |  |

**Application Form**

**To ensure that applications can be considered on equal terms, please ensure that you follow the word limits specified below. Exceeding the word count may lead to your application being discounted by the judging panel.**

However, if you would like to add any assets in support of your application (such as images, diagrams or video links), please include these within this submission as an appendix.

|  |
| --- |
| **Section 1 – Describe the professional background of the individual** *e.g. who they are, area of research, level of expertise (200 words)* |
|  |
| **Section 2 – Describe how the individual has engaged with industry to further their field of research.** *Please include details of industry collaborations including names of the business(es) and the nature of the projects undertaken including timescales. (400 words)* |
|  |
| **Section 3 - Describe the professional progression of the individual as a result of the project(s).**  *(250 words)* |
|  |
| **Section 4 -****For the business(es) what is the impact of the individual’s work and has the project led onto further research or collaborations with the same academic or new academic partners?** *e.g. innovation, efficiency savings, economic, social and / or environmental impacts. Please include timescales. (300 words)* |
|  |
| **Section 5 - How will the business(es) ensure the knowledge gained is integrated into the business’s operations?** *(300 words)* |
|  |
| **Section 6 –****What is next for the individual? (200 words)**  **e.g. other projects, further study, more research, employment.** |
|  |

**Pre and Post Award Promotion:**

The Interface Marketing and Communications team will endeavour to raise the profile of your organisation, the Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards and the Interface service through pre and post Award promotion. By submitting this application/nomination form, you are agreeing for the details to be used in any related press and marketing materials. We recommend, therefore, that there should be no IP or confidentiality issues which would restrict publishing details of your application.

|  |
| --- |
| **To assist with the application promotion which will be used for the shortlist announcements, please provide a brief summary of your collaborative project below** (*Maximum 60 words*).  For examples see the 2025 project summaries [here](https://interface-online.org.uk/news/scottish-knowledge-exchange-award-winners-showcase-collaboration-at-its-finest/). |
|  |

**Data Protection:**

By completing this application / nomination form, you accept and consent to the use of your data by Interface and any individuals, i.e. judges, those involved with the delivery, audit, review and evaluation of this application/nomination form. It is the lead applicant’s role to ensure that all parties, whose details are included in this application form, are aware of and agree to this submission.

Interface’s full privacy statement can be read [here](https://interface-online.org.uk/privacy-and-cookies).

**Please email your completed entry forms to:**

[**marketing@interface-online.org.uk**](mailto:marketing@interface-online.org.uk)

**by 5pm on Thursday 11th December 2025**