



Innovation House at Discovery Park, Sandwich, Kent



Strategic Partnership: Discovery Park & Canterbury Christ Church University.

Discovery Park, Sandwich

Discovery Park, a business, science and innovation park, is one of Europe's largest centres for life sciences and one of just six Life Science Opportunity Zones established across the UK. In the last 10 years, more than 160 companies and 3,500 staff representing pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, healthcare, technology and professional services have taken office or laboratory space at the site. In 2022, a multi-million-pound wet lab incubator facility and Barclays Eagle Lab offering laboratory and office space for start-ups and early-stage companies were opened.

CCCU's Relationship with Discovery Park

Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) has built a successful relationship with the Park across numerous collaborative initiatives, working together in partnership to enrich Park life, it's offer to its tenants and the wider community.

Life Sciences Industry Liaison Lab

In 2016, CCCU pioneered a Life Sciences Industry Liaison Laboratory at Discovery Park – an iconic space for drug discovery. This has helped us to create dynamic and industry-relevant connections with companies working at the cutting edge of research, helping them to find solutions that lead to new treatments and ground-breaking discoveries.

Our staff, students and doctoral researchers are contributing to life science breakthroughs of national and global significance in areas as diverse as pancreatic cancer, IVF technology, and the delivery of drug effects into the body. The *Industry Liaison Lab* has delivered more than 50 industry-focused projects of which 70% of projects provided internships and more than 40% led to employment of students. Since opening, more than 400 undergraduate students have also had a meaningful research- or industry-linked experience as a direct result of the Lab. The work also led to one of the two REF 2021 impact case studies submitted and new partnerships being formed including [Comax Life Sciences](#) to investigate new ways to combat the transmission of diseases.



Community Lab

In 2019, a unique collaboration between academia and industry saw the opening of a Community Lab at Discovery Park. Working with Pfizer and educational charity STEM Learning, the hub provides local schools with access to the industry standard facilities and equipment normally out of reach in the classroom. The overall objective is to educate and inspire hundreds of young people to pursue STEM careers and to grow the local STEM skills base. In 2019, the award winning [CCCU-owned Lab](#) trained four cohorts of teachers, welcomed over 200 students into the lab, and engaged more than 3,500 young people with Discovery Park and its partners. Currently physics based and aimed at A-Level pupils, there are plans to expand into biology, digital and different key stages.

Discovery Park Skills Hub

In December 2021, the Discovery Park Skills Hub was launched in partnership with CCCU, EKC Group and University of Kent. Following publication of the FE White

Paper - Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth Summary in January 2021, the focus of the hub is to enable employers at the park to have access to skills, guidance and funding opportunities through webinars, targeted events and virtual platform. The partnership has created a symbiotic relationship between businesses and Kent's top educational institutes, with students and apprentices benefiting from closer ties with local industries. To date, CCCU via the *Skills Hub* has helped more than 30 companies navigate the complex landscape of education and accessing talent. This includes apprenticeships; accessing student talent through projects and recruitment including a CDIO (Conceive, Design, Implement, Operate) project with healthcare company, eXroid, and a variety of networking and informative events, such as 'Unlocking Funding' co-delivered with Innovate UK Edge.



Representatives of the Discovery Park Skills Hub from CCCU, EKC and Discovery Park Management. Credit: Andy Jones

Health Hub

The Health Hub was launched in 2020 to bring together key stakeholders, tenants and the wider community in the healthcare sector to discuss key issues and to identify opportunities for collaboration. In April 2022, CCCU took part in a Health Hub Neuroscience, Mental Health and Ageing Showcase that featured a keynote speech by Jerry Burgess, Senior Lecturer at Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology.

Strategic Partnership

In 2022, Canterbury Christ Church University and Discovery Park signed a partnership agreement to help attract and retain much-needed regional talent and develop student enterprise and commercial services for tenants. The partnership

will also help create innovation zones and attract companies and jobs to Kent and Medway. The move follows the opening of the University's £65m Verena Holmes Building, our state-of-the-art facility to support Science, Technology, Health, Engineering and Medicine, and a key part of our £150m campus investment.

The new alliance will further accelerate student enterprise and commercialisation activities for Discovery Park-based companies by:

- Providing a Business School in residence at Discovery Park
- Setting up a business clinic to provide a wide range of commercial support
- Setting up a law mediation clinic to provide mediation support to the park's business community
- Tapping into International and UK academic partnership expertise
- Creating innovation zones and clusters
- Establishing a Data Lab to support the park's business community adopt a Data-Led decision-making approach



Discovery Park CEO, Mayer Schreiber, and Professor Mohamed Abdel-Maguid, Pro Vice-Chancellor (STEM) for CCCU

"This new face of business and university collaboration will drive far bigger benefits and support not only Canterbury Christ Church students and our tenant companies, but also the region's business communities. We are investing in the future by sharing resources and knowledge to stimulate new skills, foster talent and attract inward."

~ Mayer Schreiber, Chief Executive Officer at Discovery Park