

BAE Systems Case Study

In October 2016 a strategic partnership was signed between the University of Birmingham and BAE Systems. This was part of developing a pre-existing relationship but also a major move by BAE to rationalise its Higher Education partner portfolio from 50 broad partnerships to five key strategic engagements.

An innovative element of the partnership was to embed a BAE graduate placement into the University, to help accelerate research and nurture the relationship. Emelia Galkowska, a Birmingham alumnus, commenced her sixth month placement in December 2016. The focus of Emelia's role was to evaluate and understand the University's research through the lens of BAE's development in technology and systems.

Emelia spent two days a week within the Quantum Hub at the University and had the opportunity to work with the Research and Innovation team in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences to develop a deep-rooted understanding of the nature of innovation within the University. By embedding Emelia in the centre of the prestigious Quantum Hub, it ensured that she would engage with a steady stream of leading academics, as they themselves, endeavoured to understand what was possible in this new area. This enabled her to make that first contact, and then meet up with them in their research labs, thereby broadening her knowledge of research undertaken at the University.

Emelia then collated and viewed these insights through her 'BAE Systems' technology filter, and reported her insights back into the business at BAE Systems board level. She was key in highlighting and promoting potential areas of collaboration



and application. The placement allowed Emelia to hone her customer management and collaborative relationship skills, in a controlled environment, where autonomy was promoted, but support was also available if required.

The placement was a new venture for both the University of Birmingham and BAE Systems. Both parties are keen to see how the model can be rolled-out to other strategic partnerships to accelerate and drive true innovation. For BAE it has proven a successful way for introducing future leaders of the company through a 'from ground-up' perspective, embedding them within research from the very start of their career.