



Stakeholder Case Study

Andrew Aveyard



EPSRC & NERC InDustrial CDT
for Offshore Renewable Energy www.idcore.ac.uk

Role

Andrew has been Company Liaison Manager at IDCORE for five years, and has enjoyed all aspects of his role on the Centre's leadership team. His favourite part of the role is watching the projects develop from the initial matching event through to creating impact by delivering benefits to the sponsoring companies. The success of the matching events is due in no small part to the amount of effort he and the rest of the IDCORE team put into them. They spend months engaging with industry, building relationships with industry partners, explaining and highlighting the potential benefits and value of IDCORE projects, before gathering project ideas, and preparing the students for the process. Andrew enjoys seeing the enthusiasm that the students have and the difference they make to the sponsoring organisations as they work on their projects. But the main reason he finds IDCORE so rewarding is that so many of the projects have delivered significant impact both for the sponsoring companies and the wider industry, and that the students have gone on to have impactful careers.

Student benefits

Andrew explains how these projects are set up to benefit both the students and industry partners in a whole host of ways. For the students, their involvement with industry is an integral part of the dynamic, practical learning that IDCORE provides. They get to experience life as an employed member of the sponsoring organisation, a key feature Andrew is keen to point out. Lots of effort goes into making sure each project complements the student's skills and needs, ensuring the maximum benefit for both sponsor and researcher. Andrew also has a pastoral role in these relationships, so he is well placed to see how they aid not only the impact of the research, but the personal development of the researchers.

IDCORE inspires me. Seeing the next generation of offshore renewable engineers coming through the system and developing innovation and impact convinces me that we will be able to get to net zero, with the majority of our energy coming from renewable sources.

The key values of IDCORE are the people and the relationships. Yes, we create knowledge. Yes, we create innovation. Yes, we create impact.

But actually, we create relationships and help develop people, and it is those relationships and those people that inspire and develop innovation.

Andrew Aveyard, IDCORE Company Liaison Manager



Partner benefits

For the industry partners, Andrew sees these relationships as being an extremely effective investment. Firstly, the company gains a highly skilled team member. Andrew met several IDCORE students through his activities prior to joining the Centre and was always impressed with them and the work they produced. Beyond this though, the students act as a useful gateway to the knowledge and resources of the academic institutions they represent. As these institutions hold some of the most developed knowledge around offshore renewables in the world, this is a very valuable feature indeed. The fact that the Centre always has more potential companies wanting to sponsor projects than there are students, illustrates the value of these relationships to companies. Andrew sees this as one of the strongest indicators of the Centre's success.

Andrew believes that these relationships also benefit the wider sector, as strong engagement between academia and industry 'inspires and develops innovation'. Almost all of IDCORE's students go on to work in the sector after their studies, continuing to build and use the relationships they forged there. As such, they continue to act as nodes of collaboration and innovation for the industry as IDCORE grows and develops. In his wider role as Business Development Lead for Energy at the University of Edinburgh, Andrew regularly sees the benefits of collaboration between academia and industry, seeing relationships growing into projects, many of which have had significant commercial impact. He is also well placed to judge how uniquely impactful the collaborations and relationships developed through IDCORE really are. With the proof being in the growing reputation of IDCORE and the number of companies such as EDF and SSE returning every year proposing projects and sponsoring students.

Future

Andrew is keen to ensure these relationships remain as mutually beneficial as possible, highlighting a few key factors for achieving this. Firstly, he believes IDCORE must keep creating an offer so valuable that industry can't refuse. Part of this is highlighting the commercial impact that the projects are creating. He's keen to keep industry partners competing to secure researchers from IDCORE. Part of this is ensuring that the Centre continues to attract the very best students with great potential and a collaborative mindset. To do this, he believes the Centre must continue providing opportunities that students can't get anywhere else, and giving them the chance to work with exciting industry partners. Andrew sees this virtuous cycle as a special strength of IDCORE.



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