> *We are sowing the seeds now, but success will be enthusiastic researchers using the facilities across the hub and spokes to produce world-leading outputs*

Case study 2020

University of Edinburgh

The Rosalind Franklin Institute

Distance no barrier

The University of Edinburgh may be The Franklin's farthest flung spoke, situated nearly 400 miles north of Harwell, but this distance is proving no impediment to close collaboration. For over a decade Edinburgh has been working with and travelling to the established research organisations based at the Harwell Campus, and has been consistently in the top 5 of UK institutions in terms of joint publications with colleagues at Harwell. Distance was not an issue when the University became a member of The Franklin – especially given there were so many other compelling reasons to be part of the new institute.

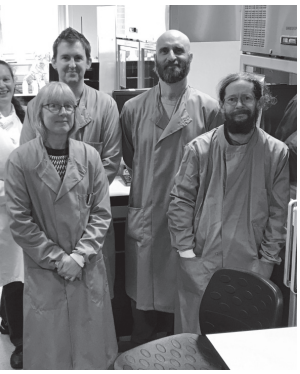
Edinburgh has been actively involved from the start, helping to shape the research themes, particularly Structural Biology, Biological Mass Spectrometry and Next Generation Chemistry for Medicine. The University has appointed a lead academic for each of these themes: Professor of Structural Biochemistry, Malcolm Walkinshaw, David Clarke, Senior Lecturer in Biomolecular Mass Spectrometry and Alison Hulme, Professor of Synthesis and Chemical Biology.

Professor Andy Mount, Dean of Research of the College of Science and Engineering

Professor of Physical Electrochemistry and Dean of Research of the College of Science and Engineering, Andy Mount was, until recently, a Board member for The Franklin and still sits on the Value for Money Panel, in addition to his work as member representative for Edinburgh. He believes the hub and spoke model of The Franklin is a strength for the institute.

"Because the hub doesn't need to reproduce what's already happening in member universities, it can instead create something that offers a real leap forward," he says. "We see the model supporting technology development and transfer between the hub and spokes, with the work at Harwell informed by and building on knowledge and expertise at Edinburgh, in areas such as protein production."

The Franklin's plans, within the Structural Biology (SB) theme, to establish Protein Production UK (PPUK) as a cutting-edge national facility for sample production are building on long-established expertise at Edinburgh. Professor Walkinshaw, Edinburgh's lead for the theme and a member of The Franklin SB advisory panel, founded the Centre for Translational and Cell Biology at the University which incorporates the Edinburgh Protein Production Facility (EPPF).



The EPPF/PPUKe team

The Franklin is also drawing on expertise at Edinburgh that cuts across all five research themes, looking at how to extract information and insight from the large volume of data that will be generated from the new technologies created. Dave Robertson (previously Head of Informatics and now Head of the College of Science and Engineering at Edinburgh) will be working to bring together data science and machine learning specialists in Franklin and Edinburgh with others to develop systems that curate, manage and mine the data the Institute creates.

With a common focus on using fundamental science for transformative real-world applications, Professor Andy Mount sees The Franklin as a perfect fit for Edinburgh and is looking forward to the future.

"Once the hub is established as a vibrant centre for research, I see Edinburgh creating very strong connections with The Franklin, with regular visits and exchanges between academics and technical staff to transfer knowledge, and pool expertise between all the partners," he says. "We are sowing the seeds now, but success will be enthusiastic researchers using the facilities across the hub and spokes to produce world-leading outputs."

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