

AN INTERVIEW WITH: ALEX LOUDEN

Alex started his journey with ORE Catapult five years ago after completing his degree in Environmental Science and an MSc in Renewable Energy and Environmental Modelling.

Now, as a Senior Technology Acceleration Manager, Alex is responsible for supporting start-ups and early-stage companies to develop and commercialise their products, services, and technologies. He also looks after ORE Catapult's Launch Academy programme.

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LAUNCH ACADEMY IN OUR
CASE STUDY AT

<https://ore.catapult.org.uk/stories/national-launch-academy/>

We spoke to Alex to find out more about his role as Senior Technology Acceleration Manager at ORE Catapult.

Q: What has been your career journey since starting at ORE Catapult?

A: I joined as an Innovation Coordinator in 2017. My focus was around working with individual companies and helping them access the right support, scoping up projects and helping them develop and commercialise new technologies to bring to market. I was then promoted to Innovation Manager, and most recently in the last 18 months, I have progressed to my current role as Senior Technology Acceleration Manager.

Q: Could you tell us a bit more about what your current role involves?

A: As well as innovation management, my current job involves overseeing what we offer to start-ups and early-stage companies across the organisation and how we support them strategically. It also involves looking after programmes like Launch Academy, ORE Catapult's flagship technology acceleration programme.

Q: How does your role contribute towards supply chain growth?

A: At ORE Catapult, supply chain growth includes bringing new companies into the UK supply chain, helping companies from other sectors transition into offshore wind, wave and tidal, or helping companies already in the industry grow and become more competitive.

My role in this is about helping new businesses with new technologies enter the supply chain.

Q: So, how did you end up working in the renewables industry?

A: My background is in Environmental Science, which was also my first degree. However, I felt that we learnt a lot about the negative impact that humans have on the environment rather than the positive impacts, such as using and expanding renewable energy sources. My interest in renewable energy led me to study a Masters degree in Renewable Energy and Environmental Modelling, and after graduating I started at ORE Catapult.

Q: Tell us what you enjoy most about working at ORE Catapult?

A: The most rewarding thing is seeing the success of the companies we have supported, for example through our Launch Academy programme. Whether it's hearing that one of the cohort companies has won a contract, raised a significant amount of money in a fundraising round or successfully validated their technology in a collaborative research project with us, it's always nice to hear about the positive impact we have had. We can then use these findings to improve our strategy and look at how we can do things better next time.

Q: What would you say has been a highlight for you so far?

A: When I started this new role, my priority was to kick off the second cohort of Launch Academy,

bring new sponsors on board and connect the cohorts. So, when we had the opening event in February 2022, it was a major milestone as we'd come together as a programme team and ticked the first thing off the list. Now, Launch Academy is a sustainable annual programme – we're looking for applicants for Cohort Three and there's a pipeline of new cohorts in the works.

