

CASE STUDY:



Launch Academy, established in 2020, is an Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult programme set up to support UK-based SMEs entering the offshore wind industry.

CHALLENGE

SMEs face numerous hurdles when navigating their way into the offshore wind industry. Key technical, commercial, financial, legal, contractual, and risk-based considerations must be made before bringing a technology, product, or service to the offshore wind supply chain. It can be daunting for SMEs to enter a new market, and some fail at an early stage due to a lack of support.

SMEs are vital to make sure the supply chain can support the expected offshore wind industry expansion, and that this delivers economic benefit to the UK on the road to net zero.



SOLUTION

Launch Academy is a nine-month programme for UK SMEs that aims to break down barriers when bringing an innovative technology, service, or product to the offshore wind industry. It recruits up to 10 companies at a time onto the programme, which is delivered by experts at ORE Catapult, key industry players and business growth and professional services, allowing each company to really connect with the energy industry.

ORE Catapult works with each cohort to understand their businesses and help them tackle the challenges they might face through a series of modules focused on specific barriers.

The programme gives companies the chance to proactively engage with the industry and receive valuable and tailored support and guidance that they can use to launch their product.

Working with Launch Academy sponsors, the programme identifies key technology challenges that represent a market opportunity for new businesses. Previous cohort sponsors include major industry players such as bp, Ørsted, RWE, and Equinor. Together, they identify challenges in the UK supply chain that the cohort's products can overcome. Examples include:

- Developing low-carbon vessel technologies
- Monitoring and protecting cables
- Monitoring and protecting wildlife

The programme concludes with a graduation ceremony where companies have the rare business opportunity to pitch to the sponsors, as well as ORE Catapult's network of investors.

RESULTS

Since Launch Academy started in 2020, it has had a lasting impact on cohort companies. From the 2022 cohort, Jet Connectivity and MasterFilter are just two of the success stories that have accelerated their entry into the UK offshore wind supply chain due to being part of Launch Academy.



Provide 5G connectivity products and services in challenging environments such as offshore wind sites.

JET Connectivity secured over £2.5m through investment and R&D grant funding during their time in Launch Academy, enabling them to successfully launch a floating 5G base station and expand their team.

“IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING WHETHER TO APPLY TO ORE CATAPULT’S LAUNCH ACADEMY PROGRAMME, WE WOULD WHOLEHEARTEDLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO DO SO. THERE IS A RANGE OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE DEPENDING ON YOUR OWN BUSINESS NEEDS WHICH CAN DRIVE YOUR GROWTH AND DIRECTION.”

Izzy Taylor, Head of Business Development at JET Connectivity



Develops enhanced oil filtration systems for lubrication systems within wind turbines.

Launch Academy has given MasterFilter the chance to develop its technology by securing a £50k grant to design a lubrication unit in collaboration with bp and the National Engineering Laboratory. This has allowed them to boost the growing UK offshore wind operation and maintenance (O&M) supply chain. There are also plans to test the company’s technology on ORE Catapult’s Levenmouth demonstration turbine in 2023, taking

them one step closer to commercialisation. Paul Clark, Managing Director of MasterFilter said: “Being part of Launch Academy has provided us, as a small company, with a degree of credibility... it’s been a real godsend.”

Scottish Enterprise, sponsor and funder of the 2022 cohort, said: “It is gratifying to see the progress being made by the 2022 cohort in bringing their products and services to market, thanks to the impressive ecosystem of support assembled by ORE Catapult. I have no doubt that Scottish Enterprise will continue

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT ORE CATAPULT’S LAUNCH ACADEMY AT

<https://ore.catapult.org.uk/what-we-do/innovation/launch-academy/>

to work with Launch Academy graduates in the months and years ahead as their businesses develop and grow, and Launch Academy goes from strength to strength.”

The success companies have experienced from taking part in Launch Academy shows the enormous potential for growth in the UK offshore wind sector. Through the programme, ORE Catapult uses their facilities, research, and resources to accelerate growth within the sector, enabling greater UK content and identifying innovative solutions to real industry problems.