



i-Teams, Cambridge University Michaelmas Term 2025

***Be part of a multi-disciplinary team, learn about taking
real technologies to market, strengthen your skills,
and have fun!***

“Our team was like a small company, working together to achieve a common goal.”

“i-Teams is one of the most entertaining and inspiring projects I have ever worked on. It has helped to reshape and direct my future career towards entrepreneurship”

“Participating in i-Teams has been one of the best things I did while being in Cambridge. It inspired me to talk to the technology transfer office about whether we can patent my own research. As a result, next year we will be looking at whether we can work with an external company, which is very exciting. I wouldn't have thought of trying something like this prior to participating in i-Teams.”

Instructors:	Amy Weatherup, i-Teams Programme Director, IfM Bang Ming Yong, i-Teams Deputy Director, IfM
Time:	Mondays, 7-10pm Meet in the IfM common room for pizza from 6.30pm
Location:	Lecture Theatre 2 Institute for Manufacturing, West Cambridge site
Contact:	Amy Weatherup, am678@cam.ac.uk

Overview

i-Teams allows entrepreneurial post-graduates and early career researchers to work with real inventions to determine the best route for their commercialisation, and present the results to a diverse audience of business and academic experts.

Each i-Team consists of up to 7 participants from different disciplines and experience, who work with a nominated University research project. The i-Team assesses the commercial prospects for the technology by discussing the technology with real target customers in relevant industries. The teams are guided by the i-Teams Programme Director (Amy Weatherup, an experienced local entrepreneur), and mentors from the local business community. Together the teams will identify suitable product markets and define directions for future technology development, helping to drive the use of University research in real-world applications, and gaining hands-on consulting experience.

Identifying the best path for commercialising a breakthrough technology is an iterative process, so the programme is designed with many small checkpoints. We expect that you will put forth hypotheses, test them, then go back and revise them based on customer input or other feedback. At several points during the term, teams will have the opportunity to present updates on their progress, to get feedback from the other teams. At each step, the entire group will have the opportunity to review and challenge your hypothesis and conclusions, helping to ensure that the final conclusions represent a well-justified analysis of the technology's commercial potential.

i-Teams Goal

The goal of i-Teams is to explore, identify and analyse the commercial potential for your team's emerging, breakthrough technology. At the end of the term, your team will have identified the markets and applications with the most potential. It is also entirely acceptable for your team to come to a well-researched conclusion that there is no attractive market for the technology at the current time.

A key part of the i-Teams project involves finding contacts in relevant industries to gather real-world feedback on your ideas for applications for the technology. This will build and extend your existing network of contacts, as well as helping you to develop hands-on experience in talking to new people with a range of different backgrounds about your project. You will also gain experience in working in a team of people with different skills and experience to yourself.

Your final presentation will provide an overview of the competition, the most appropriate applications for your technology, and the next steps for moving forward. This analysis will be presented in the form of a power point presentation along with supporting materials, which could serve as the starting point for the inventors to develop a business plan or licensing programme.

Each team will make a presentation of their findings to a broad audience at the end of the term, as well as discussing their more detailed findings with their inventor at a final handover meeting.

Deliverables

Brainstorming session:

At the end of the brainstorming session, each team will make an informal verbal presentation to the other teams, summarising their project and their ideas about it so far.

Weekly team meetings:

Teams will have weekly team meetings to report to their fellow team members on progress, and agree priorities and task allocation for the following week. Time is made available for this in the Monday evening sessions.

Mid-term Presentation:

The mid-term presentation will be 10-15 minutes long and is given to the other teams, their mentors and researchers. This will be your first formal presentation and should include:

- Summary of your technology and its benefits
- Market areas investigated
 - Applicability of technology to market areas
 - Any background information you have discovered so far
 - Companies or people you hope to speak to in each area
- Anything else you have found out!

Customer Interviews and Analysis:

The most critical aspect of the project will be identifying the markets that hold the most potential for the technology. To that end, contacting and interviewing potential customers in that market to determine their level of need for/interest in the product is a key requirement. Each team will be expected to conduct a minimum of 10 customer interviews, which will be summarised in a pack of supporting materials for the final presentation.

Verbal Updates:

At each i-Teams session, teams will update the group on their progress so far, including:

- Important or interesting findings (from market analysis or customer feedback)
 - Findings of direct relevance to the technology, eg key needs for a particular market as relayed by a customer,
 - Findings of more general applicability, eg we found interviewees were more forthcoming under the following circumstances
- Any roadblocks or hurdles that need to be resolved

These updates will usually be around 5 minutes long

Final Presentation:

The final presentation should be designed for an audience with no prior exposure to the technology. It will need to be short and to-the-point, covering in 10-12 minutes the following key aspects:

- Brief introduction to the technology and its key differentiators
- Review of markets analysed, including any competitive products
- Summary of results from different markets
- Recommendations and next steps

Each presentation will be followed by Q&A to defend the conclusions reached.

Information Pack and Handover meeting:

In addition to the final presentations, teams will hold a final handover meeting with their inventor and Cambridge Enterprise representative to go through their findings and recommendations in more detail.

Teams will package up their detailed findings (including summaries of discussions and details of industry contacts) for the inventor to use going forward.

Teams are also expected to present their final results in poster format so that they can be shared at future i-Teams presentation sessions.

Platforms

i-Teams uses several cloud-based platforms – you will receive invitations to join each of these.

File sharing via Google Drive:

Each team will have a designated Google Drive workspace set up for their project. Slides and recordings of each lecture/workshop will also be shared via Google Drive along with weekly hints and tips to help with the projects.

Team communications via WhatsApp:

Teams need to communicate regularly between sessions to share progress updates as they happen. We will set up a WhatsApp channel for each team.

Online whiteboard via Miro:

We use Miro.com as an electronic whiteboard in the brainstorming session and human-centred design workshop. Please make sure everyone brings a tablet or laptop to those sessions to use the whiteboard.

Online meetings via Zoom:

Zoom links are set up for anyone who cannot join an evening session in person. This is also used if we cannot hold a session in-person (e.g., due to bad weather).

Schedule

Each session will consist of a talk or presentation at 7pm, followed by inter-team discussion and updates on the status of the projects, focusing in particular on problems experienced and how to address those.

Pizza will be provided from 6.30pm in the IfM tea room.

After each lecture the teams will have their weekly team meetings with the support of their project mentor and the i-Teams Programme Director.

i-Teams week 1 October 6th 7pm-10pm Inventors from 8pm	Introduction to i-Teams Amy Weatherup Assessing target markets and finding relevant contacts – this session provides the tools to get started on your projects Meet the inventors: Teams meet their inventors and learn about their technology Actions: Share team contact details Each team member should carry out background research into their technology and application areas before the next session
i-Teams week 2 October 13th 7pm-10pm	Team brainstorming session Brainstorming session in individual teams to generate ideas for applications and uses of the technology Each team summarises their results at the end of the session Actions: Assign tasks between team members, based on each person's knowledge and experience
i-Teams week 3 October 20th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8.30pm	Workshop session: Communication skills Katie Bardes An interactive workshop focusing on the key communication skills you will need to gather information and feedback effectively from industry experts. Actions: Before next week, each team should meet with their inventor to identify which of their market applications are technically feasible Start reaching out to potential industry contacts
i-Teams week 4 October 27th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8pm	Pitching and presenting Dr. Bang, start-up founder Hints and tips for your mid-term presentations Actions: Agree prioritization order for potential markets Continue reaching out to potential industry contacts Prepare for mid-term presentations

i-Teams week 5 November 3rd 7pm-10pm Attended by inventors, mentors & Cambridge Enterprise	Mid-term presentations Formal presentations with powerpoint slides or similar 10-15 minutes to present, 15 minutes for questions from the other teams Actions: • Before next week, each team member should aim to speak to at least 3 people in your target markets • Teams also need to select their top 3 markets, which they will focus on for the rest of the term
i-Teams week 6 November 10th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8.45pm	Workshop session: Design Thinking and Human-centred Design Dr. Simon Pulman-Jones An interactive workshop covering some of the steps needed to take a new technology and use it as the basis for a product that will fit smoothly into people's lives.
i-Teams week 7 November 17th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8pm	Guest entrepreneur speaker TBC Real-world experiences of growing a startup and working with customers Team updates (verbal): Updates on project progress - focus on feedback from your customer discussions, including what worked well and any problems you encountered Actions: Further prioritisation – aim to focus on one or two target markets in more depth for the remainder of the term
i-Teams week 8 November 24th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8pm	An introduction to patents and other intellectual property Nathalie Muller, Cambridge Enterprise Team updates (Key tasks remaining before the final presentations)
i-Teams week 9 December 1st 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8pm	How to conclude your i-Teams project Amy Weatherup • Selecting the best application for a technology • What features can be compared • What are the routes to market for each application
Final presentations December 10th (Wednesday) 6.30pm – 9pm	Final presentations Teams present their results and recommend next steps for their projects Team members, mentors, inventors as well as representatives from the University and local business community will attend these presentations

Maxwell Centre	Finger buffet from 6.30pm, presentations start at 7pm
Handover meeting with inventors and mentor	Final meeting to go through the team's detailed findings, and identify any key contacts to follow-up with Date and time to be arranged by the team and inventor

Acknowledgements

The i-Teams name and logo are reproduced with the permission of MIT and the Deshpande Center.

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