



**Social i-Teams
University of Cambridge
Michaelmas Term 2025**

***How can we use university innovations to
maximise social impact?***

“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”

“Truly one of the most awesome opportunities for Cambridge University students”

“i-Teams completely shifted how I approach problem solving. It wasn’t just about brainstorming ideas, we had to validate our assumptions with end users and industry experts, map out the technology ecosystem, and think through how impact could scale”

Instructors:	Amy Weatherup, i-Teams Programme Director, IfM
Time:	Tuesdays, 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

Social i-Teams brings together multi-disciplinary teams of students and post-graduates with real university innovations, and asks what should be done to maximise their social and societal impact.

Teams consist of up to 7 participants, selected to have diverse backgrounds and skillsets. Social i-Teams participants can be PhDs, PostDocs, MPhils, undergraduates or Cambridge residents, from any discipline – the goal is to bring in as many different viewpoints and experiences as possible.

Teams will work for 7 weeks with an experienced mentor and an existing innovative approach or technology, learning about the realities of social enterprises, gaining hands-on consulting experience, and making recommendations to the innovators to help maximise their impact.

Questions that the teams will consider will include:

- What is the social need that this technology or approach aims to address?
- Is this appropriate for use in a non-research context, and if so, are there changes needed to create a marketable product?
- What are the best routes to market, and how does pricing and business model affect these?
- What is the best way to generate sustainable long-term impact? For example, via commercial organisations, social enterprises, governmental organisations, charities or a combination of these?

A key part of the project will involve finding relevant knowledgeable contacts and gathering real-world feedback on your ideas and on the usefulness of the innovation. 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 the innovation, 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 innovators 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 innovators at a final handover meeting.

Deliverables

Initial Presentation:

At the beginning of the second 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 available for these after each week's lecture.

Expert Interviews and Analysis:

The most critical aspect of the project will be identifying the markets that hold the most potential for the innovation. To that end, contacting and interviewing relevant experts 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 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 innovation, 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 be less than 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 innovation 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 innovator 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 innovator 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:

If you need an online whiteboard application for brainstorming or organizing your thoughts as a team, then miro.com is the best we have found so far.

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 14th 7pm-10pm Innovators 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 innovators 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 21st 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: Start reaching out to potential industry contacts
i-Teams week 3 October 28th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8pm	Best practice in social enterprises Emma Salgard-Cunha, Cambridge Enterprise An introduction to building successful social enterprises Team updates (verbal): Summaries of your findings and progress so far Actions: Before next week, each team should meet with their innovator to identify which of their market applications are feasible
i-Teams week 4 November 4th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8.30pm	Storytelling workshop – creative ways to explain your ideas Helen Alexander, IE Cambridge An interactive workshop exploring ways of making your ideas more accessible to your audiences Actions: Agree prioritization order for potential markets Continue reaching out to potential industry contacts

i-Teams week 5 November 11th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8pm	Share your project session Workshop session where each team shares details of their project so far, and gathers input and feedback from the other teams and mentors. Updates should include key highlights and any current roadblocks, with a focus on findings from expert interviews. Actions: Prioritisation of markets – aim to focus on two or three target markets in more depth for the remainder of the term
i-Teams week 6 November 18th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8pm	Guest entrepreneur speaker - Kim Abramson Real-world experiences of growing a social enterprise and working with customers and stakeholders Team updates (verbal): Updates on project progress – and your key areas of focus for the rest of the project
i-Teams week 7 November 25th 7pm-10pm Team meetings from 8pm	How to conclude your i-Teams project Amy Weatherup • Selecting the best application for a new technology • What features can be compared • What are the routes to market for each application Team updates (verbal): Key tasks remaining before the final presentations
Final presentations December 4th (Thursday) 6.30pm – 9pm Maxwell Centre	Final presentations Teams present their results and recommend next steps for their projects Team members, mentors, innovators as well as representatives from the University and local business community will attend these presentations Finger buffet from 6.30pm, presentations start at 7pm
Handover meeting with innovators 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 innovator

Acknowledgements

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

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