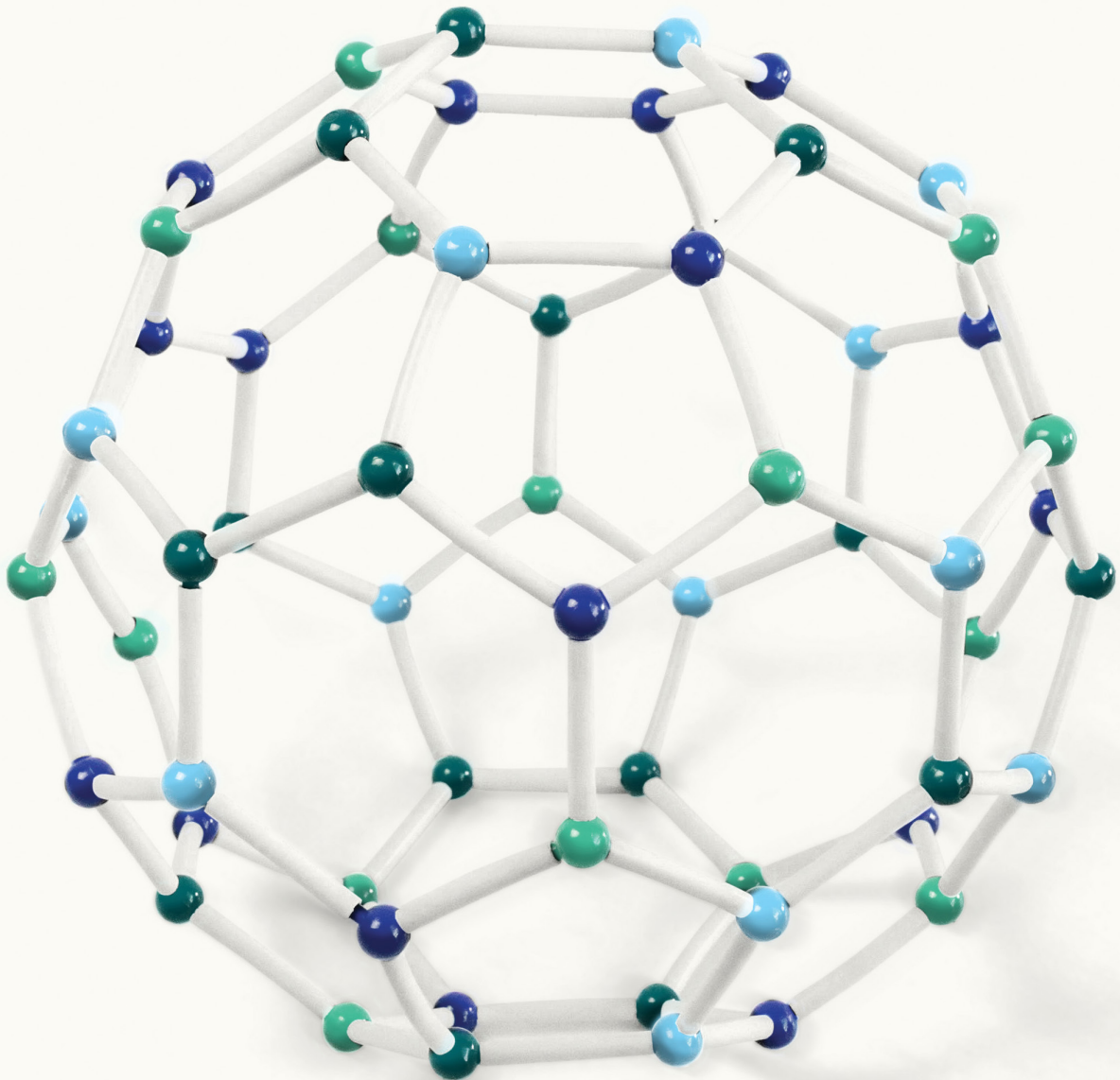


Horizons Institute

Leading in interdisciplinary
research development



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Horizons Institute

Leading in interdisciplinary research development

Why work with the Horizons Institute

The Horizons Institute fosters early-stage interdisciplinary research to address complex challenges through programmes that are designed to ignite creative approaches and collaborations.

We work with researchers, institutions, and sector-wide initiatives to facilitate interdisciplinary partnership-building across the UK and globally.

Our expert facilitators equip researchers with the skills and the means to build thriving collaborations, all while helping them to explore their work from different perspectives.

Our team consists of academics and research professionals from different disciplinary and sector backgrounds, with expertise in policy, community engagement, and both participatory and lab-based research. Between them, the Horizons Institute team have extensive

experience in the design, delivery, and evaluation of interdisciplinary research programmes including the UKRI Cross Research Council Responsive Mode Pilot Scheme.

We offer a range of bespoke interventions that will help your researchers develop skills for, and confidence in, interdisciplinary working and research idea development. These approaches can be delivered separately or as a package, online, in-person or hybrid, to meet the scope and requirements of your organisation. We can also work with you to create something designed specifically for the needs of your institution and research community.



“My initial research project developed through the Horizons Institute Academy Programme has now grown into something substantial, from a small pump priming grant that generated pilot data to a larger UK Government research grant, and now to involvement in several other funded initiatives where the team brings their expertise to a variety of projects.”

Dr Chris Hassall,
Crucible Programme participant





What we can offer

Crucible Programme

Interdisciplinary research programme delivered in two or three parts over a 4 - 6-month period. This programme promotes the development of innovative ideas and allows for the exploration of high-risk strategies to be explored.

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Collective Scoping Workshop

Interactive workshop to co-develop areas of research interest around a specific theme (a half or full day).

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Collaborative Lab

A one-off or series of sessions to identify grand challenges and develop capacity to address them typically within a 1-month period. The labs develop networks of researchers, research professionals and external partners.

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Interdisciplinary Leadership Development

A series of online and in-person short sessions plus an in-person 2-day leadership retreat designed to develop the skills, attitude, and behaviours to be an effective interdisciplinary research leader.

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In addition to these programmes, we can also offer the following:

- Consultancy around setting up an Interdisciplinary Research Institute or Centre.
- Project scoping and programme co-creation including pre-event process, candidate selection and recruitment of external provocateurs.
- Post-programme evaluation and assessment, including support for the development of evaluation and assessment strategies to align with the objectives and aims of the partner organisation.
- Research Manager development – we can connect Research Professionals involved in interdisciplinary research development to our network to further develop capacity.
- Bespoke programmes - we can work with you to create something specific to your organisation or institution.

Crucible Programme

Format and length

A two or three-part programme delivered to 20-30 participants over a 4-6-month period. Each part is 2-days and will be delivered in an offsite residential location. The programme is interactive and reflective.

Outcomes

- New research ideas and approaches generated.
- Increased confidence to lead interdisciplinary research.
- New interdisciplinary partnerships developed.
- Increased understanding of other disciplines and methods and interdisciplinary ways of working.

The Crucible Programme is our flagship programme and is delivered in two or three parts over a 4-6-month period. This programme is designed to give researchers time and space to collaborate and develop interdisciplinary research ideas. Institutions may choose to offer seed funding to enable teams to test interdisciplinary research ideas on completion of the programme.

At our home institution, we have used the Crucible Programme to bring together early and mid-career researchers from the University of Leeds, University of Ghana, University of Pretoria, and University of Witwatersrand.

Externally, we have facilitated Crucible programmes for the CircleU European University Alliance and the World Health Organisation.

In this programme, we use creative approaches to challenge researchers' thinking and encourage them to develop novel solutions with reciprocal benefits for everyone in the research team.

Each part of the programme focuses on a different aspect of the interdisciplinary research development process from the researcher's perspective: the outward facing researcher; the interdisciplinary researcher; your research community and networks; and the innovative interdisciplinary researcher: creativity and taking risks.

We can design bespoke programmes to meet the required aims and objectives of the partner. This can include delivering a programme with a central theme to channel ideas towards specific funding opportunities.



Dr John Sedofia and Dr Asiya Islam participating in a Horizons Institute workshop



Having the opportunity to explain my research to a different audience helped me to develop a language that could be more easily understood in an interdisciplinary environment."

CircleU Sandpit participant, 2024

Collective Scoping Workshop

Format and length

A half or full day workshop that will address three questions: where are we now, where do we want to go, and how will we get there?

Outcomes

- New research ideas and approaches generated.
- Emergence of new research themes.
- New interdisciplinary partnerships developed.

The Collective Scoping Workshop is an interactive event that is designed to build cross-sector collaborative partnerships that can work together to co-create research themes.

We have used collective scoping workshops to bring together researchers with policy makers, third-sector organisations, and industry professionals to develop collaborations between the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council, and for City of Culture projects (Leeds 2023 and Bradford 2025).

During the workshop, researchers and external stakeholders will scope the current research landscape and collaboratively develop future research

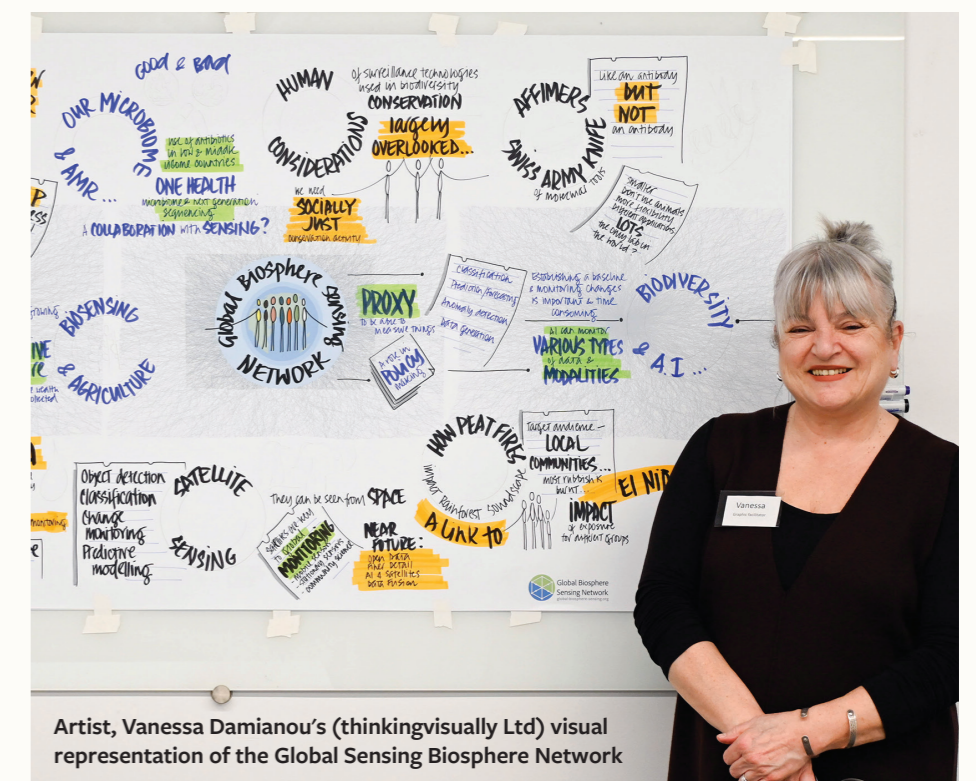
strategies that draw on the expertise and areas of research interest of those in the room.

A bespoke programme can be designed to meet the required aims and objectives of the host institution.



The Horizons Institute helped us to create a space for people to connect across institutional and sectoral borders, share personal and professional points of views and foster new connections between colleagues and peers."

Dr Nathalie Czeke and Dr Elettra Casselto, University of Leeds



Artist, Vanessa Damianou's (thinkingvisually Ltd) visual representation of the Global Sensing Biosphere Network

Collaborative Lab

Format and length

A one-off, one day workshop, or a series of shorter sessions tailored to the organisation's requirements. These interactive sessions require input from researchers from multiple disciplines.

Outcomes

- Emergence of new research themes and networks.
- New interdisciplinary partnerships developed.
- Increased confidence to lead interdisciplinary research networks and foster collaboration.



Initially when I received the CVs, I saw very different areas and wondered how we would fit in. When doing introductions, the disciplines didn't seem to matter so much."

Dr Desmond Klenam,
Crucible Programme
participant 2024-25

The Collaborative Labs are our innovative approach to network development and capacity building within an institution or organisation.

The labs require participants from multiple disciplines including research professionals, technicians, and external partners. They take a holistic approach to the design of interdisciplinary research networks by creating an opportunity for a diverse audience to provide constructive critiques for Network proposals in the inception phase.

We can work with you to develop a list of invitees who can help to provoke discussion that will shape the emergence of new and timely research networks.

We have successfully used Collaborative Labs for the development of our Challenge Theme Networks at the University of Leeds, for example the Leeds Interdisciplinary Mental Health Research Network and the Reimagine Ageing network.

A bespoke programme can be designed to meet the required aims and objectives of the host institution.



A group discussion during a Horizons Institute Collaborative Lab 2024

The Interdisciplinary Leadership Programme

Format and length

A series of facilitated online sessions and a two day off-site residential retreat. The programme is delivered over a 4-6-month period. Maximum 24 participants. The programme is interactive and reflective.

Outcomes

- Increased confidence to lead interdisciplinary research.
- New network of interdisciplinary research leaders developed.
- Skills and attributes of innovative interdisciplinary leaders developed.



I liked the cultural diversity of the group: it's not just the professional or academic disciplines, but also the human aspects of the programme."

Dr Thobela Nkukwana,
Crucible Programme
participant 2023-24

The Interdisciplinary Leadership Programme combines facilitated online delivery and an in-person residential, delivered over a 4 - 6-month period to give researchers the space and time to develop the skills, attributes, and behaviours to be an effective interdisciplinary research leader.

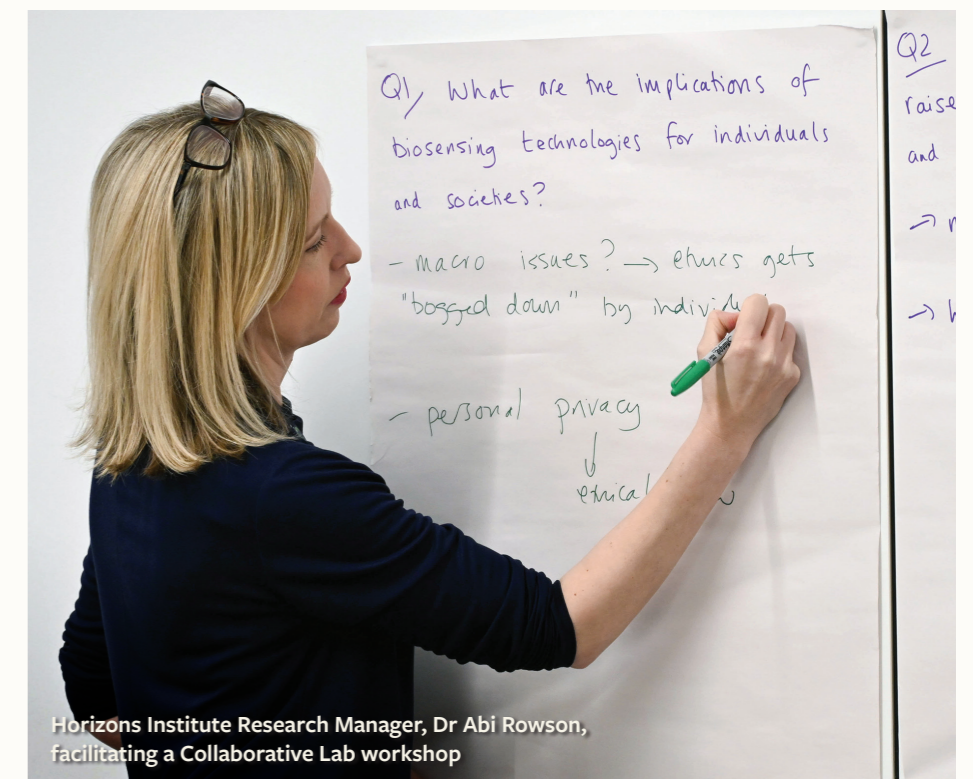
In this programme, we use creative and provocative approaches to challenge researchers to reflect on the type of leader they are and the leader they want to be.

We have used the Interdisciplinary Leadership Programme to build the capacity of colleagues at all career stages including centre leaders at the University of Leeds and the ESRC Research Leadership Network.

Areas covered include:

- how to build peer groups with an outcome in mind;
- how to develop a healthy team culture;
- how to be an inclusive interdisciplinary leader;
- how to support your interdisciplinary career development;
- how to create a pathway to interdisciplinary impact.

A bespoke programme can be designed to meet the required aims and objectives of the host institution.



Horizons Institute Research Manager, Dr Abi Rowson, facilitating a Collaborative Lab workshop

Contact us

Pricing for each of our offers is available on request. We can work with you to design a programme that fits your needs. Please contact the Horizons Institute team at horizons@leeds.ac.uk.

www.leeds.ac.uk/horizons-institute

[@horizonsinstitute](https://twitter.com/horizonsinstitute) bsky.social

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Dr Tafadzwa Mushonga
participating in a Horizons
Institute workshop

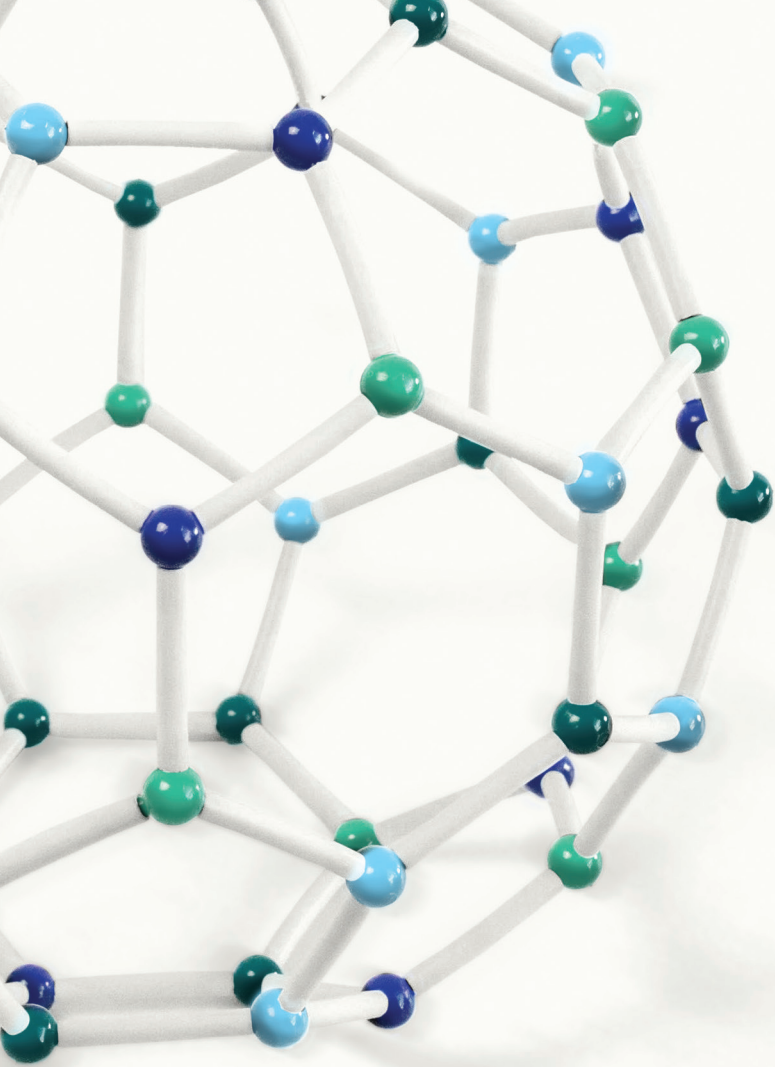


A key thing I learned [through Crucible] is about knowledge as a whole – we're not just about advancing knowledge in my discipline or field, so we should have this aim of collectively working towards common goals."

Dr Matthew Noakes



Dr Matthew Noakes
participating in a Horizons
Institute workshop



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