Cardiovascular Innovation Awards

British Heart Foundation

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

BHF Oxford Centre of Research Excellence

BHF Oxford Centre of Research Excellence

Cardiovascular Innovation Awards

Kick-off Event

Friday 6th February 2026

at the Saïd Business School, Oxford

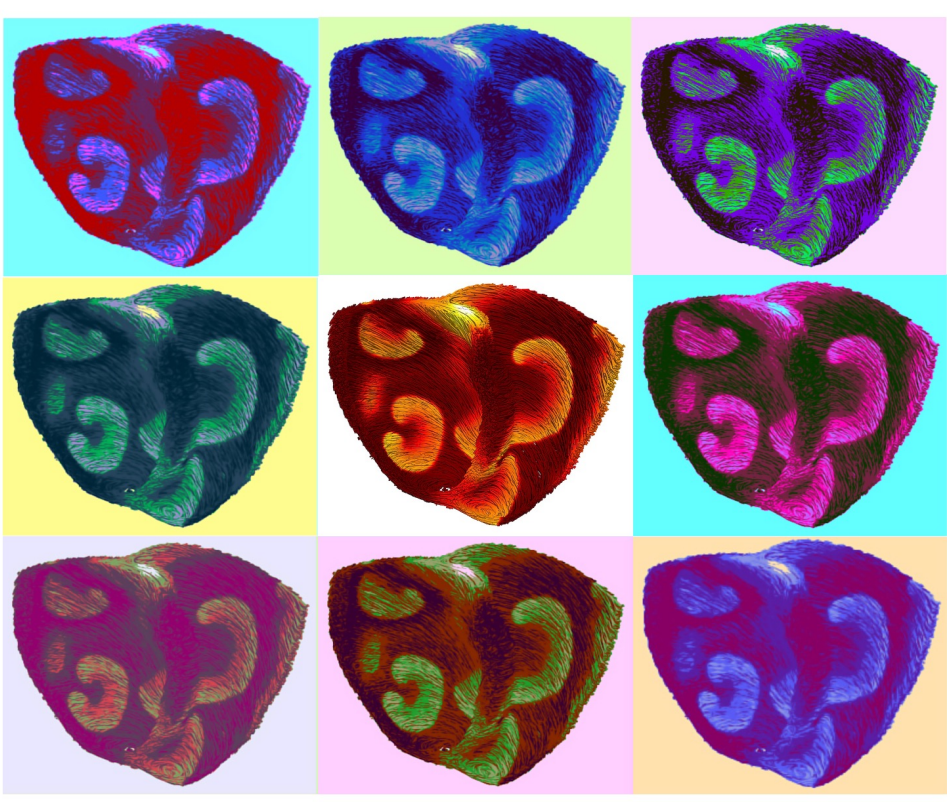

Image credit: **Fibrillation of the Ischemic Heart**
by Ambre Bertrand, Dr Hector Martinez-Navarro, Dr Ruben Doste, Department of Computer Science

BHF Oxford CRE Cardiovascular Innovation Awards Kick-off Event 2026

Friday 6th February 2026, 09:00-18:00
Saïd Business School, Park End St, Oxford, OX1 1HP

Venue details

Registration, lunch, refreshments, and drinks reception – entrance hall to the Saïd Business School

Morning sessions (09:30-12:30) – Nelson Mandela Lecture Theatre

Afternoon sessions (13:30-17:10) - Rhodes Trust Lecture Theatre

Session 1 **Start time 09:00**	**Opening session** **Chair: Angela Russell**
09:00	Registration with refreshments Meet fellow researchers, industry representatives, translation support teams & investors
09:25 - 09:30	Angela Russell: *Overview of the BHF Oxford CRE and the innovation journey*
09:30 - 09:50	Alison Noble: *Insights on impactful translation from research to real-world solutions*
09:50 - 10:05	Weronika Slesak & Adam Winnifrith: *Founder journey from a research idea into a biotech start-up*
10.05-10:15	Session Q&A
Session 2 **Start time 10:15**	**Identifying commercial potential in research** **Chair: Blanca Rodiguez**
10:15 - 10:40	Mina Bekheet (Panacea): *Commercial potential - Investor perspectives*
10:40 – 11:00	Kay Penicud (Apollo Therapeutics): *Industry-academic partnerships to accelerate innovation to the patient*
11:00 – 11:30	*Refreshment break & networking*
Session 3 **Start Time 11:30**	**Innovators unleashed: the science of entrepreneurship**
11:30 - 12:00	Thomas Hellmann: *Entrepreneurial mindsets for scientists*
12:00 - 12:30	Thomas Hellmann with Molly Stevens: *in conversation with an entrepreneur*
12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch & networking*
Session 4 **13:30 – 15:15**	**Business & Leadership skills for cardiovascular researchers** **Chair: Paul Leeson**
13:30 - 13:55	Mo Elzek: *Basics of business models and leadership skills for health innovation*
13:55 – 14:20	Constantin Coussios: *The OrganOx story – from research to exit*
14:20 – 15:15	Fireside panel discussion on: Insights from entrepreneurs and industry on navigating the translational pathway (4 mins intro each followed by discussion) **Panel:** Constantin Coussios (OrganOx-Terumo), Sophie Payne (entrepreneur), Stephanie Lesage (OSPT Ltd), Ben Lacey (UK BioBank)
15:15 – 15:45	*Refreshment break & networking*
Session 5 **15:45-16:00**	**Intellectual property - why it matters** **Chair: Callum Usher-Dodd**
15:45-16:00	Simon Warner, Oxford University Innovation (OUI) *Commercialisation and IP at Oxford*
Session 6 **16:00 – 17:10**	**Pathways to phase 2: next steps and funding opportunities** **Chair: Elizabeth Covey-Crump**
16:00 – 16:40 16:40 – 17:00	Fireside panel discussion on The Translational Funding Landscape **Panel:** Dan Swerlow (GSK), Adam Babbs (MRC), Adam Workman (OUI), Natasa Levicar (BHF) & Sanne De Jongh (OSE) **Case study:** Translation in action – The Ultromics story - Paul Leeson (Oxford University)
17:00-17:10	Angela Russell – CIA awards and closing comments
17:10-18:00	*Drinks reception & networking*

Cardiovascular Innovation Awards

Speaker profiles

In order of event programme

British Heart Foundation
BHF Oxford Centre of Research Excellence
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Alison Noble

Alison will talk about the Intelligent Ultrasound Ltd story, including personal perspectives on the journey. Intelligent Ultrasound Ltd was an early ultrasound AI company that was acquired by GE HealthCare for $51M in 2024.

Alison is the Technikos Professor of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Oxford, and a Vice President and Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society. She is formerly an MPLS Division Associate Head of Innovation and Industry Partnerships and nationally was a founding member of the Royal Academy of Engineering Enterprise Committee.
Alison is renowned for her pioneering work in AI-driven healthcare imaging technologies. She is the first woman to be elected a Statutory Professor in Engineering at Oxford and one of the earliest women academic co-founders of an Oxford university spinout.

Weronika Slesak and Adam Winnifrith

Adam (right) and Weronika (centre), Oxford PhD students and co-founders of Evolvere Biosciences will tell the story of Evolvere Biosciences, from its founding during their undergraduate degrees, through the Oxford ecosystem to The Bay Area, and challenges faced along the way.

Adam is a DPhil student on the Chemistry in Cells programme at Oxford, supervised by Adam Cribbs and Oliver Crook. He studied Biochemistry at Oxford where he published on generative AI for protein design (*Current Opinion in Structural Biology*) and design of experiments for drug discovery assay optimisation (*RSC Chemical Biology*, in the Lanyon-Hogg group). He is also CEO and co-founder of Evolvere Biosciences, a Y Combinator-backed company applying AI to biologics development.

Weronika is a DPhil student on the Chemistry in Cells programme at Oxford, supervised by Craig MacLean and Harrison Steel. She studied biology at Oxford, focusing on statistical genomics of bacterial mobile genetic elements, and was an Amgen Scholar at Institut Pasteur where she worked on phage experimental evolution (published in Science, Bacterial Genome Plasticity Unit). She is also a CSO and co-founder of Evolvere Biosciences, a Y Combinator-backed company applying AI to biologics development.

Mina Elisha Bekheet

Mina shares an investor's lens on identifying real commercial potential in academic research. It introduces an investor view - problem first, timing over brilliance, and spinout versus licensing - illustrated through cardiology and the rise of Bio-AI convergence, where biology, data, and deployment finally meet.

Dr Mina Bekheet is a serial entrepreneur and venture capitalist working at the intersection of biology and computation. He is Founder, CEO, and Managing Partner of Panacea, a Bio-AI venture building and investment platform born at Oxford that backs life-science and health-tech companies globally. Panacea has supported 400+ start-ups with a combined value of over £2 billion. Before Panacea, he built and exited ventures across healthcare and deep tech, working through every layer of health-tech - from pharmacy counters and formulation labs to industrial scale and product launch. He began commercialising drug-discovery code as an undergraduate and helped advance novel cancer biomarkers during his PhD in Oncology at Oxford. He advises governments and global institutions, serves on international boards, and contributes to the UK Life. Science Strategy and House of Lords AI inquiries, shaping the future of AI-enabled healthcare.

Kay Penicud

Kay will discuss models for industry and academic partnership, including the Apollo model, and the contributions all stakeholders can make to successfully translate world class biological research into new therapeutics for patients.

Kay Penicud is the VP, Head of Research Partnerships at Apollo Therapeutics. Kay is responsible for Apollo's university partnerships, and finding, evaluating and bringing new programs into Apollo's pre-clinical portfolio. Previously, Kay was Director of Innovation and Business at the UK Dementia Research Institute, where she established and led their commercialisation and innovation function. This included leading spin-out formation, out licensing deals, strategic industry partnerships and translational funding initiatives, including the UK DRI's £30m partnership with LifeArc. She has also had roles in BTG plc's Business Development and Strategy team, Imperial College London's Enterprise Division, and started her career at GSK. Kay has a PhD in Cancer Biology from CR-UK's London Research Institute, and a Masters in Biochemistry from Oxford University.

Thomas Hellmann

Thomas will talk about what it means to have an entrepreneurial mindset and examine how scientists can explore entrepreneurial opportunities to increase their research impact. He will also lead an interactive conversation with Dame Molly Stevens about her experience of combining science and entrepreneurship.

Thomas Hellmann is the DP World Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Saïd School of Business, University of Oxford. He holds a BA from the London School of Economics and a PhD from Stanford University. He previously worked at Stanford GSB and UBC Sauder, taught at Wharton and Harvard Business School, and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Ghent. His research focuses on entrepreneurial finance, entrepreneurship, innovation, and public policy. His textbook on Entrepreneurial Finance came out in 2020. He founded the Creative Destruction Lab at Oxford and is currently the Academic Champion for EnSpire Oxford.

Molly Stevens

Professor Dame Molly Stevens is John Black Professor of Bionanoscience at the Institute for Biomedical Engineering and the Department of Physiology, Anatomy & Genetics at the University of Oxford, and Deputy Director of the Kavli Institute for Nanoscience Discovery. She is also part-time Professor of Biomedical Materials and Regenerative Medicine and the Research Director for Biomedical Material Sciences in the Department of Materials, Department of Bioengineering and the Institute of Biomedical Engineering at Imperial College London, and part-time Professor at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm. She is a serial entrepreneur and has significant expertise and experience in commercialisation of devices, with numerous patents filed and 4 spin-out companies based on her research.

Mo Elzek

Mo will cover the practical foundations researchers need when considering the spinout journey: the core questions every health innovation business model must answer, common gaps between research excellence and commercial readiness, and what changes when transitioning from researcher to founder. Attendees will leave with a simple framework they can apply to evaluate the translational potential of their own research.

Mo Elzek is a physician-scientist (MBBcH, Alexandria University, PhD, University of Cambridge) and co-founder of Longevity Hacks, which accelerates AI for health and longevity biotech prototypes through innovation sprints across Europe. Mo is a venture scout & advisor for multiple VCs including Ada ventures and Alpha Intelligence Capital. Mo has advised early-stage healthtech & biotech startups through accelerator programmes at Cambridge, Oxford, & UCL.

Constantin Coussios

Professor Constantin Coussios was elected to the first Statutory Chair in Biomedical Engineering at the University of Oxford in 2011.He received his BA, MEng and PhD in Engineering from the University of Cambridge. He was appointed to the first faculty position in biomedical engineering at Oxford in 2004, where he founded and heads the Biomedical Ultrasonics, Biotherapy and Biopharmaceuticals Laboratory (BUBBL), a research group of some 50 researchers today housed in the Marcela wing of the Botnar Research Centre. He served as the Director of the Institute of Biomedical Engineering between 2016 and 2025. Between 2014 and 2021, he served as Director of the £11m Oxford Centre for Drug Delivery Devices ($OxCD^3$) supported by a national programme grant from the UK's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council in collaboration with the pharmaceutical and medical device industry to improve oncological drug delivery: during this period, he led TarDox, a first-in-human trial of ultrasound-triggered targeted drug delivery in patients with liver tumours (Lancet Oncology 2018). In 2021, he became the founding director of the Podium Institute for Sports Medicine and Technology, supported by a £25m benefaction to the University. In 2008, Prof. Coussios was one of two academic founders of the Oxford University spin-out OrganOx Ltd., which has developed a novel normothermic perfusion device for improved liver and kidney preservation prior to transplantation through to randomized trials (Nature 2018), CE marking, FDA approval, and successful commercialization in both Europe and North America. OrganOx became the largest acquisition and the first in excess of £1bn out of the University of Oxford in 2025.

Sophie Payne

Sophie will be discussing her experiences of her recent move towards entrepreneurship, and the innovation that she has been working on for the past year. This includes participation in the Oxford Venture Builder and Ideas2Impact programmes, run by the Oxford Saïd Entrepreneurship Centre, and being accepted into the final cohort of the 2026 Nucleate Activator programme.

Sophie studied for an undergraduate Master's degree in Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry in Oxford, before moving to UCL to study the role of the chromatin remodeller CHD7 in heart development for her PhD. This project gave her a fascination for mammalian embryonic development, so she then moved to Oxford to work in Professor Sarah De Val's lab, studying the transcriptional pathways that regulate different aspects of coronary vessel growth. This work has covered both developmental and regenerative biology, with a focus on neovascular growth of coronary vessels following myocardial infarction.

Stephanie Lesage

Stephanie Lesage has a multidisciplinary background in biological sciences (BSc), technical textile engineering (MEng) and medical devices (MSc), with 19 years of start-up leadership experience. She is CEO of OSPT Ltd, a company she co-founded in 2020, developing a novel antibacterial material integrating bacteriophages to produce medical implants which will reduce surgical site infections and antibiotic use. Beyond her entrepreneurial work, Stephanie is a founding member of Phage-UK (established in 2021), a growing network of clinicians committed to expanding access to phage therapy for UK patients. In recognition of her expertise, she was invited in 2023 to the House of Commons to provide oral evidence on the potential of bacteriophage therapy in the UK's healthcare system.

Elizabeth Covey-Crump

Liz Covey-Crump is a Senior Business Partnerships Manager in the University of Oxford's Medical Sciences Business Partnerships team, responsible for developing and managing strategic industry collaborations. She has over two decades of experience in life sciences business development.

Simon Warner

Simon will talk about how Innovation, IP protection and commercialisation happens at Oxford and how OUI can help Oxford innovations reach patients, create impact and fair revenue returns to the University.

Simon is currently head of Licensing and Ventures for Life Science at Oxford University Innovation, where he has driven growth in licensing and company creation and increasing financial returns to the University and commercialising impactful technology to benefit the world. Previous career highlights have included the successful sale of Oxitec, a spin-out from the University of Oxford, where he was CSO, leading the development of pioneering insect control in public health and agriculture. Oxitec was purchased by synthetic biology specialist, Intrexon in 2015 for $160m. Simon worked for Syngenta for over a decade and had roles based in California, North Carolina and the UK, where he innovated in crop biotechnology and was responsible for developing agricultural products sold today. Simon has a Biochemistry degree from University College London and a PhD in plant molecular biology from the University of Leicester.

Dan Swerdlow

Dan Swerdlow is Executive Medical Director and Translational Medicine Group Lead in the Respiratory, Immunology and Inflammation Research Unit (RIIRU) at GSK, based in London. At GSK, he leads translational and early clinical development in vascular disease and neurodegeneration and provides clinical leadership in RNA therapeutics. Prior to joining GSK, Dan led siRNA clinical development programmes in cardiovascular medicine, haematology and inflammatory kidney disease at Silence Therapeutics, and previously held posts at BenevolentAI and Genomics plc. Dan trained in medicine on the UCL MBPhD programme before undertaking a range of clinical academic posts in London and then transitioning into industry. In his academic career at UCL he led international genetics consortia investigating potential therapeutic targets in atherosclerotic disease and heart failure, with findings published in the Lancet, Nature Communications and other leading journals. He remains an honorary faculty member at the UCL Institute of Cardiovascular Science.

Adam Babbs

As the MRC's Associate Director of Translation, Adam Babbs oversees programmes including Impact Accelerator Accounts, the Gap Fund, DPFS, and Experimental Medicine that are designed to help academic researchers initiate early translational development. His work focuses on offering clear guidance, constructive support, and funding models that help academic teams navigate early-stage challenges and progress toward patient impact.

Adam Workman

Before joining OUI in 2016, Adam was a Partner at 350 Investment Partners, a cleantech venture capital firm, and previously worked with The Carbon Trust, 3i Group, and Shell Exploration. He manages three funds supporting innovation from proof-of-concept through to growth: the Oxford University Challenge Seed Fund, the Oxford University Innovation Fund (with Parkwalk Advisors), and the Spinout Equity Management Fund.

Adam Workman is Head of Investments and New Ventures at Oxford University Innovation (OUI), where he helps turn world-class research from the University of Oxford into successful, high-impact companies. His role spans the creation of new spinouts, management of the University's equity portfolio, and engagement with investors to fund Oxford's most promising ventures.

Natasa Levicar

Natasa is a Senior Research Advisor for Translational Awards at the BHF. Prior to joining BHF she spent a few years at Queen Mary Innovation focusing on commercialisation of innovative clinical and healthcare technologies arising from QMUL and Barts Health. Natasa started her career as a translational academic researcher and spent several years at the interface between a biotech start-up and academia

Sanne De Jongh

Sanne is a partner at Oxford Science Enterprises, bringing more than a decade of experience in biotech venture capital, from venture creation to company scaling. She sits on the board of OSE's portfolio companies Sitryx, Orfonyx, Alethio (observer), and MatchBio. Before she joined OSE, Sanne was an Investment Manager at Gilde Healthcare, looking after biotech investments in Europe, and previously held roles at Anterra Capital and M Ventures, the corporate VC fund of Merck KGaA. She holds a BSc in Biochemistry from Leiden University with a minor in Neurology, and MSc in Biochemical Engineering from Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands, graduating cum laude

Paul Leeson

In 2017, Paul Leeson and Ross Upton founded Ultromics and became one of the first academic spinouts to bring AI to cardiology practice. Over the following decade the company has built global collaborations, brought three medical devices into clinical use, and run some of the largest prospective trials of AI in cardiovascular imaging

Professor Leeson is a Consultant Cardiologist and the Academic Lead for Innovation across the Medical Sciences Division at the University of Oxford. He is a longstanding champion of innovation within healthcare both in his role as Chair of a NIHR i4i Product Development Awards panel and by encouraging his research group to patent and spin out their best ideas and discoveries.

Delegate List

First Name	Surname	Affiliation
Samuel	Acreman	RDM OCDEM
Boluwatife	Adebowale	Computer Science
Claire	Aitken	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Naveed	Akbar	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Luisa	Alemany	St Hugh's College/LBS
Maxine	Allen	Business Partnerships Office
Adam	Babbs	MRC
Thareq	Barasabha	Psychiatry
Carole	Bataille	Translational Research Office
Matt	Baxter	RDM WIMM
Ambre	Bertrand	Computer Science
Toby	Brown	Pharmacology
Alastair	Buchan	RDM WIMM
Alfonso	Bueno Orovio	Computer Science
Soumyanetra	Chandra	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Keith	Channon	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Ying-Chi	Chao	DPAG
Surawee	Chuaiphichai	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Susanna	Cooper	DPAG IDRM
Constantin	Coussios	Institute of Biomedical Engineering
Liz	Covey-Crump	Business Partnerships Office
Sara	Daher	INSEAD
Sanne	De Jongh	OSE
Sarah	De Val	DPAG IDRM
Ruben	Doste	Computer Science
Tammy	Dougan	Business Partnerships Office
Mo	Elzek	Said Business School
Daniel	Foran	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Elizabeth	Forrester	Pharmacology
Thomas	Foster	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Jacky C.K.	Fung	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Sanjay	Gohil	
Shutong	Gu	Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology, NDORMS
Abdallah	Hasaballa	Computer Science
Luke	Haslett	Novo Nordisk
Yu	He	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Thomas	Hellmann	Said Business School
Manus	Henry	Engineering
Max	Hill	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Maxx	Holmes	Computer Science
Jemma	Hopewell	BHF
Mehrsa	Jafarpour	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Heeseung	Jo	DPAG
Casey	Johnson	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Aaron	Johnston	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Sam	Jones	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Reza	Khorshidi	
Deepak	Kumar	Translational Research Office, MSD
Benjamin	Lacey	NDPH
Philip	Langer	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Mojtaba	Lashgari	IBME
Paul	Leeson	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Stephanie	Lesage	Bioescalator
Natasa	Levicar	BHF
Andrew	Lewis	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Dan	Li	DPAG
Katerina	Lind	Pharmacology

Delegate List

Brandon Shu Huang	Low	DPAG
Chenhan Sam	Ma	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Philippa	Major	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Tracey	Marr	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Clare	Mcfall	Chemistry
Emma	McMillian	Computer Science
Vedanta	Mehta	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Adib	Mellah	Computer Science
Sohaib	Mir	LifeArc
Neda	Mohammadi	DPAG
Claudia	Monaco	Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology, NDORMS
Lucia	Moreira	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Amin	Mottahedin	NDCN
Marta	Moya Jodar	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Dorota	Nawrot	Research Services | Innovation & Engagement
Alison	Noble	Institute of Biomedical Engineering, Department of Engineering Science
Ellena	Okeeffe	DPAG
Angus Qi Chwen	Ong	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Elif	Oran	Pharma/Biotech
Kazuki	Osuka	DPAG
Adam	Poti	Chemistry
Kar Lai	Pang	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Kyung Chan (KC)	Park	Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology, NDORMS
Asawari	Parulekar	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Kal	Patel	Said Business School
Sophie	Payne	DPAG IDRM
Kay	Penicud	Apollo Therapeutics
Ben	Petrazzini	NDWRH
Gareth	Purvis	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
John	Reader	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Andia	Redpath	DPAG IDRM
Charles	Redwood	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Jeremias	Reich	Monograph Capital
Svetlana	Reilly	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Leto Luana	Riebel	Computer Science
Blanca	Rodriguez	Computer Science
Maria	Rudnytska	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Gennaro	Ruggiero	DPAG IDRM
Angela	Russell	Chemistry and Pharmacology
Siim	Saare	Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Nathan	Samuel	BDI-NDPH
Navoneel	Sen	Chemistry
Charalampos	Sigalas	Pharmacology
Weronika	Slesak	Department of Biology, Biotech
Gintare	Smagurauskaite	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Katya	Smirnyagina	OSE
Alexander	Sparrow	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Molly	Stevens	DPAG
Campbell	Stewart	Novo Holdings - Venture Investments (Investor)
Dan	Swerdlow	GSK
Tanveer	Tabish	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Yi	Tang	Computer Science
Hongyan	Tao	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Harriet	Teare	Oxford Academic Health Partners
John	Todd	NDM Centre for Human Genetics
Christopher	Toepfer	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Tiffany	Truong	Oxford University Innovation
Julio	Tsimpos	Computer Science

Delegate List

Helena	Turton	BHF
Ellie	Tzima	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Callum	Usher-Dodd	Said Business School
Miguel	Varela	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Mayra	Vera-Aviles	DPAG
Aaliyah	Wallace	Oxford University Innovation
YINGJIE	WANG	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Jenny	Wang	Computer Science
Katherine	Ward	OSE
Simon	Warner	OUI
Peter	Weston Smith	OSE
Adam	Winnifrith	Botnar Institute for Musculoskeletal Sciences, NDORMS
Adam	Workman	OUI
Mohammadali	Yavari Ramsheh	Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology, NDORMS
Chi Him Kendrick	Yiu	RDM Cardiovascular Medicine
Manuela	Zaccolo	DPAG
Anna	Zerio	DPAG, UKE Hamburg
Xin	Zhou	Computer Science
Konstantin	Zouboulis	Chemistry

The BHF Oxford CRE CIA Scheme

Register your Expression of interest to the Cardiovascular Innovation Awards

Via JISC online:

Any questions, please contact:
tracey.marr@cardiov.ox.ac.uk

Contacts for the CIA scheme

Angela Russell

Co-Director and Drug Discovery and Delivery theme lead of the BHF Oxford Centre of Research Excellence, University of Oxford

Angela is Professor of Medicinal Chemistry in the Departments of Chemistry and Pharmacology at the University of Oxford. In 2007 she was awarded a Research Councils' UK Fellowship in Medicinal Chemistry jointly between the Department of Chemistry and Pharmacology. Her work lies at the interface of Chemistry, Biology and Medicine and aims to discover new small molecules and mechanisms to manipulate cell fate and translate them into therapeutic agents, particularly for degenerative diseases and cancer. Angela has realised several successful multidisciplinary research collaborations, including identifying small molecules to upregulate utrophin for the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, developing novel inhibitors and activators of developmental signaling pathways and new anti-cancer agents. In 2016, Angela was named as a 'Rising Star' in the 'BioBeat 50 Movers and Shakers in BioBusiness' report celebrating 50 outstanding women business leaders who are recognised for their contributions to global health innovation. In 2020 she was awarded a 2021 Harrington Rare Disease Scholar award in recognition of, and in support of, her work on developing a therapy for DMD and in 2024 received the Royal Society of Chemistry's Jeremy Knowles Award for outstanding work at the Chemistry-Life Sciences interface.

Blanca Rodriguez

Co-lead of the Big Data and Computational Science theme at the BHF Oxford Centre of Research Excellence, University of Oxford

Professor Blanca Rodriguez is Professor of Computational Medicine and Head of the Computational Biology and Health Informatics Theme at the Department of Computer Science, and co-chair of the Safety Pharmacology Society Biological Modelling working group. She aims to accelerate medical therapy development through augmenting clinical and experimental data with modelling and simulation, and machine learning. Her team has contributed pioneering case studies for the Digital Twin vision in precision medicine, and In Silico Trials for therapy testing. She actively collaborates with industry and leads the Computational Cardiovascular Science team at Oxford, an interdisciplinary, diverse and award-winning research team. Originally, she is from Valencia, Spain, where she trained in Engineering at the Universidad Politecnica de Valencia (MSc and PhD). She then worked as a postdoc at Tulane University in New Orleans, USA for two years. After this, she joined the University of Oxford, where she has held MRC and Wellcome fellowships from 2007 to 2025, and was awarded the professorship in Computational Medicine in 2014.

Tracey Marr

Operations Manager of the BHF Oxford Centre of Research Excellence, University of Oxford

Working closely with the BHF Oxford CRE programme manager, Philippa Major, Tracey supports the day-to-day management of the BHF Oxford CRE working with the Centre Directors (Lead director: Prof Keith Channon) and the steering committee. Previously Tracey was programme manager to the EPSRC redOx⇌KCL programme grant (PI: Prof. Stuart Conway), and the Wellcome Trust Chemistry in Cells DPhil programme (PI: Prof Angela Russell). Tracey joined the Department of Chemistry in 2013 as a project manager/administrator for the European-FP7-funded Innovative Doctoral Programme (IDP) entitled 'Oxford Innovative Organic Synthesis for Cancer Research (OxIOSCR)' with Professors Jeremy Robertson, Angela Russell, Tim Donohoe and David Hodgson. Before working at the University of Oxford, Tracey was a business planning consultant to new and young businesses and had established Communities in Business Ltd (not-for-profit social enterprise) to deliver business education and training support community enterprises. Tracey completed her PhD in 2003 under the supervision of Professor Susan Brooks at Oxford Brookes University to elucidate the mechanisms underlying the aberrant synthesis of glycoproteins in metastatic breast cancer cells.