
LAUNCH ACADEMY NATIONAL COHORT 6

(LA 6)



SCOPE AND GUIDANCE FOR APPLICATION

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1 Summary

1.1 Overview

Launch Academy is ORE Catapult's flagship accelerator for offshore wind innovation, designed to support a cohort of up to 10 high-growth UK SMEs developing innovative technologies that address challenges for offshore wind. Launch Academy National 6 (2026-27) will be the sixth national programme run by the ORE Catapult. SMEs with a base in any UK region can apply.

Technologies supported through Launch Academy should typically be between Technology Readiness Levels 4–6. The programme connects innovators directly with offshore wind developers (Scottish Power Renewables, JERA Nex bp and EDF Power Solutions) to address real industry challenges, de-risk investment, and accelerate technologies towards commercial deployment.

Over 12 months, participating companies receive tailored technical and commercial support, including innovation management, technology development, market and cost-benefit analysis, and offshore wind market insight, alongside specialist business support covering investor readiness, branding support, IP strategy, legal and financial foundations. Complementary to this programme of content, cohort companies will benefit from one-to-one support from delivery partners, direct feedback from industry sponsors, access to relevant experts at ORE Catapult, and sector showcasing and networking opportunities.

1.2 Why Apply?

Opportunities to Engage with Industry

The programme provides structured opportunities to engage with key industry stakeholders including ORE Catapult, Offshore wind Developers (EDF Power Solutions, SPR and JERA Nex bp) and other SMEs developing innovative solutions; supporting partnerships, collaboration and future growth.

High level of Growth

Launch Academy has supported 74 businesses to progress 54 innovations to market, secure a total of £11.7m grant funding and £27.5m in private investment. It has progressed TRL level by +1 on average and created 68 new high quality jobs since 2020.

Specialised in Offshore Wind

Delivered by ORE Catapult and supported by offshore wind developers, Launch Academy is embedded at the heart of offshore wind R&D, offering sector-specific expertise and facilities.

2 Eligibility

Before starting your application, please ensure you meet the following criteria:

- Must be a UK-registered company with a valid Companies House registration number
- Technology developed should be between TRLs 4-6, we may consider other TRLs
- Must be considered an SME
- Must not be considered an 'ailing' organisation
- Must be developing technology within the UK
- Must have sufficient resource to engage in core activities as outlined in the supporting letter of engagement
- Should be seeking to commercialise a new product or service into the offshore renewable energy sector
- Must not have previously participated in the programme
- Must be able to accept the MFA subsidy as outlined in section 10

If you do not meet all of the eligibility criteria and would still like to apply, please contact the team prior to submitting.

3 Innovation Challenges

Working alongside programme sponsors EDF Power Solutions, JERA Nex bp and Scottish Power Renewables the Launch Academy Programme has established key innovation challenges for applicants innovating in these areas, these are:

3.1 Innovative Sensing & Inspection Hardware for Long-Term Infrastructure Performance

Addressing the need for real-time monitoring of aging assets to reduce costly manual interventions. Areas of specific interest include:

- **Vibration Monitoring:** Compact, battery-powered units for use during turbine commissioning—specifically before grid connection and full data access—to validate potential damage and warranty claims.
- **Corrosion Assessment:** Remote, real-time assessment and monitoring of corrosion in structural elements like monopiles and submerged flanges within harsh marine environments.
- **Cable Health:** Advanced monitoring and early-fault detection technologies for subsea cables to prevent outages caused by fatigue, abrasion, or thermal hotspots.

3.2 Advanced Lifting, Transport & Component Handling (Including Portside Operations)

Improving the assembly and logistics for both bottom-fixed and floating wind projects. Areas of specific interest include:

- **UAV Heavy Lifting:** Structured solutions for planning and execution of heavy lifting operations using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for offshore transport and tool delivery.
- **Floating Wind Assembly:** Innovations for heavy-lift, assembly, and management of oversized components, covering both portside and offshore stages.
- **Major Component Exchange:** Technical innovation for construction and major component exchange within fixed-bottom offshore wind turbines.

3.3 Technologies to Speed Up Offshore Wind Construction and Reduce Environmental Impact

Hardware-based innovations to accelerate deployment timelines while upholding high environmental standards. Areas of specific interest include:

- **Rapid-Change Tech:** Quick-connect interfaces and modular assemblies designed to speed up the installation and change-out of offshore wind components.
- **Subsea Environmental Protection:** Hardware solutions that limit underwater noise, minimize seabed disturbance, and reduce sediment plumes during piling and installation.
- **Floating Wind Deployment Optimisation:** Space-efficient wet-storage and reliable tow-out solutions for floating foundations and assembled turbine units.

- **Deep-Water Installation:** Novel installation solutions specifically tailored for deep-water fixed-bottom offshore wind projects.

3.4 Open Call

Launch Academy also welcomes applications from exceptional companies addressing industry challenges beyond the defined focus areas. Applicants are encouraged to articulate the challenge they are addressing and its relevance to the offshore wind sector within the application questions.

Further challenge details for specific challenges can be found in the supporting documentation.

If you are not sure your project fits within thematic technology demonstration criteria, please contact the team prior to submitting.

4 Application Process

4.1 Stage 1: Applications

Companies are invited to apply to the Launch Academy 6 programme by completing an online written application (questions detailed below in section 6). This initial application will be reviewed by the ORE Catapult programme team and assessed against application guidance, companies are encouraged to read the questions, guidance and programme details thoroughly and ensure that they cover all bullet points provided.

Following initial assessment of applications by the programme team, companies will be shortlisted and if successful will be invited to pitch. Unsuccessful companies will be notified and provided feedback.

4.2 Stage 2: Pitches

Successful companies from stage 1 will be invited to pitch in-person to the ORE Catapult programme team as well as technical and programme representatives from industry sponsors JERA Nex bp, Scottish Power Renewables and EDF Power Solutions. Companies will be provided pitch guidance, it is highly encouraged that companies read the guidance thoroughly before the pitch sessions. Following this, the selected 10 companies will be notified of success, with the unsuccessful companies provided detailed feedback.

4.3 Stage 3: Contracting

The selected 10 companies will be required to contract with the ORE Catapult and the Launch Academy programme, the below documents will need to be completed:

- Launch Academy 6 – Letter of Engagement (LoE) – Available to view in supporting documentation
- Launch Academy 6 – Subsidy Control Declaration – Available to view in supporting documentation

Upon successful completion of all documentation, companies will be onboarded to the programme.

5 Launch Academy 6 Programme Content

The Launch Academy programme is delivered over the course of 12 months through a mixture of in person and virtual workshops and modules by a variety of delivery partners and ORE Catapult internal industry experts.

5.1 Modules

- **Offshore Wind 101, ORE Catapult** – An introduction to offshore wind providing a market overview, detailing the market opportunity, market structure and forecasts. The session will also offer an overview of key technology trends and the innovation roadmaps taking the industry to 2050, focusing on key areas for cost reduction, improving safety and improving efficiency. The key players in the market will be highlighted and how they do business.
- **IP Support and 1-1 Health Checks, Murgitroyd** – This module discusses IP, why it is important, what the pitfalls are, typical finances and time frames and how to budget for patent applications. More holistically, Murgitroyd very much focuses on supporting companies to develop coherent strategies associated with IP. A group workshop will be delivered, followed by up to 1 hour of 1-1 support for each cohort company to engage with relevant Murgitroyd experts.
- **Legal Support, Shepherd and Wedderburn** – Flexible legal support offered to each company in the cohort to help them prepare for the next step in their commercialisation journey, delivered by Shepherd and Wedderburn. Access to high-quality UK legal advice and experienced commercial lawyers. Also provides access and introductions to Shepherd and Wedderburn's 'Start to Scale Hub' providing expert guidance, documents and templates for all participants.
- **Innovation Management Support, ORE Catapult** – Each company is paired with an ORE Catapult Innovation Manager who brings experience from supporting more than 100 SMEs across offshore wind, helping guide the journey toward commercialisation. Companies benefit from targeted R&D guidance, funding signposting, and introductions to relevant Catapult experts, external specialists and programme sponsors. Support also includes structured onboarding, regular check-ins against an agreed innovation pathway, and access to a small pot of funding to enable test and demonstration activity at ORE Catapult facilities where needed.
- **Technology Development Support, ORE Catapult** – Direct support from the ORE Catapults Engineering teams, companies will engage with an assigned engineer with knowledge of the beneficiaries specific innovation. Through a half-day workshop, the engineering team and beneficiary company will establish a 10 day scope of work for the assigned engineer to deliver; this can cover things like technology roadmaps, regulation reviews, modelling amongst others.

- **Market and Cost Benefit Analysis, ORE Catapult** – Direct support from the ORE Catapults Analysis and Insights teams, companies will engage with an assigned analyst with knowledge of the beneficiaries specific innovation. Through a half-day workshop, the A&I team and beneficiary company will establish a 10 day scope of work for the assigned analyst to deliver; this can cover things such as Local and Global Market reviews/analysis, Cost Modelling amongst others.
- **Grant Funding 101, ORE Catapult + Others** – This module will provide an overview of the non-dilutive funding landscape, including explainers on the various types of funding available domestically and internationally. Support and advice will be provided in conceptualizing and shaping funding applications, with a focus on “what good looks like”.
- **Investor Readiness and Value Proposition, Sustainable Ventures** – The module will cover the core headings required for investor readiness, which are essentially a direct reflection of the headings covered when the investors undertake due diligence. A company is only investor-ready if it knows it will satisfy the scrutiny of a rigorous due diligence process. This module will challenge innovators to examine the state of their own business and its plans and test them against the criteria of a DD process.
- **Branding and Marketing, Sustainable Ventures** – The Marketing, Messaging, and Brand Development module will help participants define their brand identity, craft clear messaging, and create strategies to effectively reach their target audience. By focusing on storytelling and positioning, this module supports businesses in building stronger connections with stakeholders and driving growth.
- **High Growth Accounting, BDO** – This module covers what qualifies for R&D tax credits and how the process works to claim tax relief expenditure. In addition, an introduction to Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) and Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme’s (SEIS) is provided along with company structure and liquidity event readiness, enterprise management incentive (EMI), quality management information, data automation & how to futureproof your finance team/processes.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, ORE Catapult** – Inclusion, diversity and culture for start-ups: what are the challenges and opportunities? A workshop looking at the opportunities, challenges and considerations for inclusion, diversity and culture for start-ups. We will look at:
 - The opportunities inclusion, diversity and culture bring for start-ups
 - The challenges of the above in the start-up phase & opportunities associated with addressing these
- **Technology Qualification Guidance, DNV** – Empowers innovators by guiding them through a structured technology qualification (TQ) process aiming to strengthen the credibility, reducing risk & uncertainty, and fast track market readiness of their solutions. An introductory workshop

on the TQ process will be provided to discuss its key steps and demonstrate the value each step brings to innovators and their technologies.

- **Launch Event, ORE Catapult** – The Launch Event is the formal kick-off of the Launch Academy programme, this event allows all participants to present to and meet all programme sponsors, other cohort members and delivery partners . There is also an opportunity to meet with sponsors on a 1-1 basis to discuss innovations and developer requirements. The event covers two days and also encompasses the delivery of the Offshore Wind 101, IP Support and the Introduction to the S&W start to scale hub.
- **Mid Term Event, ORE Catapult** – The Mid-Term event marks the mid-point of the Launch Academy programme delivered over 2 days, this is another opportunity to present to the rest of the cohort and sponsors on the progress of your innovations and next steps. There will also be the opportunity for 1-1 engagement with sponsors for a second time. This will also encompass the delivery of the ED&I module.
- **Graduation Event, ORE Catapult** – The Graduation event is the formal end of the programme, there will be a final opportunity to engage with other cohort members, delivery partners and sponsors and update the group on the progress of your innovations and projects. From here, ORE Catapult will continue to engage and support cohort members through the SME team.

6 Application Questions and Guidance

| Question | Guidance |
|---|---|
| <p>Need or Challenge (20%) <i>The applicant should demonstrate that their innovative solution is clearly addressing a challenge area as well as offering unique approaches not widely used in the industry.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific business need, technological challenge, or market opportunity in offshore wind is your innovation addressing? • What is your proposed solution and which technologies does it use to improve performance, efficiency, reliability, or decision-making? • What differentiates your solution from existing alternatives used in offshore wind and what is your IP position? |
| <p>Feasibility & Scalability (20%) <i>The applicant should demonstrate that their solution is technically feasible for real-world deployment in offshore wind as well as its potential to scale.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence demonstrates that your solution is technically and economically feasible for offshore wind applications? This may include early performance data, modelling, test results, industry engagement, or comparable use cases. • What key steps are required to reach commercial deployment in offshore wind? • How would your solution integrate with existing offshore wind system and be adopted in practice? It is not expected for companies to have a detailed knowledge of integration requirements in an offshore wind context. |
| <p>Potential Impact (20%) <i>The applicant should demonstrate the potential of its solution to drive significant impact in offshore wind activities</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact could your solution deliver at an asset, project, or operational level in offshore wind (e.g. cost, efficiency, emissions, health and safety)? • If adopted at scale, what wider benefits could your solution deliver to the offshore wind sector, and can these impacts be quantified? |
| <p>Team and Resources (20%) <i>The company and its employees should have the necessary experience, skill and resource to consistently develop & deliver their solution.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What relevant experience and technical skills does your team have in developing and delivering similar solutions? • If there are skill or resource gaps in your team, how do you plan to address them through partnerships or other means? • Private investment and grant funding secured to date. |
| <p>Programme Fit (20%) <i>The applicant should demonstrate how they would benefit from being selected for this programme.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you wish to participate in Launch Academy & what do you want to achieve through it? • What is your company's long-term interest in the offshore wind sector? |

6.1 Mistakes to avoid

AI usage – AI is a powerful tool and can support in application writing, however it should not be used to write the application. All applications are human reviewed, overuse of AI reduces application authenticity.

Overstating capability — Be honest about your current TRL, limitations, and what support you need (e.g., testing access, industry insights, validation). Whilst the programme is looking for good quality companies, it is also looking for companies that can benefit from the support.

Focusing solely on networking — While industry connections are valuable, applications that present networking as the only objective will not be considered. Show how the programme will support the development and deployment of your solution beyond relationship-building.

Vague or generic responses — Be specific, evidence-based, and clearly show how your solution addresses real programme challenges or if in the open challenge category clearly explain the challenge.

Not using the full word allocation — We have limited word limits to 350 per question, make sure you use at least 80%. Reviewers expect concise but complete answers.

Insufficient evidence — Strengthen your answers with concrete material: pilot results, modelling outputs, test data, customer feedback, comparable applications, or quantifiable benefits where possible.

Not tailoring answers to the programme — Avoid generic submissions. Demonstrate an understanding of offshore wind industry needs, how your solution fits the ecosystem, and why the programme is the right platform for your development.

7 Key Dates

The following table provides a list of key dates for this Call (subject to change);

| Event | Date |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Application Window | 29 th January – 25 th March 2026 |
| Application Guidance Webinar | 18 th February 2026 |
| Successful Companies Invited to Pitch | 13 th April 2026 |
| Pitch Sessions (In Person) | 28 th and 29 th April 2026 |
| Successful Cohort Notified | 5 th May 2026 |
| Contracting Window | 6 th – 22 nd May 2026 |
| Launch Day Information Webinar | 11 th May 2026 |
| Launch Days | 3 rd and 4 th June 2026 |

8 Sponsors & Delivery Partners

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Scottish Power Renewables | Programme Sponsor |  |
| JERA NEX BP | Programme Sponsor |  |
| EDF Power Solutions | Programme Sponsor |  |
| BDO | Delivery Partner |  |
| Murgitroyd | Delivery Partner |  |
| Sustainable Ventures | Delivery Partner |  |
| DNV | Delivery Partner |  |
| Shepherd and Wedderburn | Delivery Partner |  SHEPHERD+ WEDDERBURN |
| Pelergy | Delivery Partner |  |
| Innovate UK Business Connect | Delivery Partner |  Innovate UK Business Connect |

9 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I)

At ORE Catapult, we believe that diverse teams drive stronger innovation and better outcomes for the offshore renewable energy sector. Launch Academy is committed to creating an inclusive programme where founders and innovators from all backgrounds have equal opportunity to succeed.

We actively encourage applications from underrepresented groups within innovation and engineering, including women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, neurodiverse individuals and founders from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are not formal selection criteria; however, by fostering a culture of openness, collaboration and respect, Launch Academy aims to create an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and innovative ideas can thrive.

10 Subsidy Control

As part of your participation in the Launch Academy Programme, we consider that you shall receive a form of subsidy, since the Programme is partially funded using public funds. "Subsidy" for the purposes of this declaration is defined in the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

In accordance with the 2022 Act, there are exemptions from the subsidy control rules where the total amount of public funding granted to a single economic actor does not exceed a Minimum Financial Assistance threshold of £315,000 over any period of three fiscal years (the "MFA Threshold").

The MFA Threshold is calculated by reference to any subsidies you have received in the current financial year and the previous two financial years, which shall include any State Aid that you received under the UK's previous State Aid regime when the UK was a member of the EU (for example *de minimis* aid).

In order to participate in the programme, successful companies will be required to confirm that they are able to receive up to £19,933.22 through MFA without exceeding their 3 year MFA threshold.

11 Confidential Information and Intellectual Property

The business information you provide in your online Application will be kept strictly confidential and will be used solely by ORE Catapult and independent technical assessors for the purpose of this Innovation Call.

It is the intention of the ORE Catapult programme team that a confidential and intellectually safe environment be created by the Innovation Call where Applicants will feel free to share their ideas and concepts without fear of plagiarism or impact on their secrecy. As a result, ORE Catapult will ensure that the Intellectual Property (IP) included in submissions to the Innovation Call and IP that will be developed during any subsequent phase is and will remain property of the provider, will be treated in confidence and exclusively for the purpose of assessing and evaluating the Application. If the Applicant does not want to share the outputs of its work with ORE Catapult, then in the Application process there should be a clear statement on which information will be redacted.

All personal information or personal data supplied in relation to this Application will be treated as confidential. It will also be subject to all relevant data protection legislation and requirements, including the Data Protection Act 2018. ORE Catapult will request personal information or personal data for the purposes of this application where we have a legitimate interest in doing so in order to assess whether the applicant meets the requirements.

12 Contact Details

Where applicants have specific questions they can contact the Launch Academy Programme team - enquiries can be sent to:

- *Peter Kinsley – Innovation Manager* (Peter.Kinsley@ore.catapult.org.uk)

13 Definitions

The following terms shall have the meaning as described in the Definitions shown below:

| Term | Definition |
|-----------------------|--|
| Launch Academy | ORE Catapults flagship supply chain acceleration programme |
| LA | 'Launch Academy' |
| TDS | 'Technology Development Support' Module |
| MCA | 'Market and Cost Benefit Analysis' Module |
| MFA | Minimal Financial Assistance |
| IP | Intellectual Property |
| Skipso | Online platform used to Apply |
| SCA | Supply Chain Acceleration |
| SME | Small, Medium Enterprise |
| LoE | Letter of Engagement |
| ORE Catapult | Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult |
| TRL | Technology Readiness Level |
| A&I | Analysis and Insights |
| S&W | Shepherd and Wedderburn |

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