

## **Fashion and Retail Innovation Lab**

Exploring real-world business and societal challenges and innovation opportunities that could be delivered/informed through collaborative projects that bring together a range of academic disciplines working directly with non-academic partners.

### **Aim of the Event**

The event will bring together 3-5 businesses working within the sectors who are seeking to overcome a specific challenge or to develop innovative products and services, that could be informed by new knowledge, technology, or methodology stemming from academic projects. The University will curate individual groups of academic experts from a range of complementary disciplines to support each business and over the course of this facilitated workshop we will develop tangible project plans to pitch for seed funding to cover academic time to develop the project.

### **Manchester Innovation Labs**

#### **How does it work?**

- The Innovation Labs follow a facilitated process led by a creative consultancy.
- At each Lab we host 3-5 industry partners, working in teams of 4-6, with cross-discipline academic groups.
- We work through a dynamic, creative process - defining the problem and generating a range of solutions, before concluding with the optimal project which will be pitched to our expert panel for seed funding. There is a strong emphasis on jointly developing projects which have the potential to grow into larger collaborations.

#### **What are the benefits?**

- To engage in a trusted model for business-academic collaboration generation.
- The opportunity to secure seed funding to pay for academic expertise to help overcome your business challenge.
- University support will be available to develop seed funded projects into larger collaborative research funding proposals.
- Develop new relationships with university researchers with cross-cutting areas of expertise.

#### **What do we need from business partners?**

- We need you to share a high-level overview of the challenge you wish to overcome with the help of academic experts in the field.
- Identify in advance, a challenge for exploration in the area of Fashion and Retail: this could be a business challenge/question/opportunity where academic input could add value.
- Commit 2-3 representatives to attend the half-day workshop (5 hours), (to get the most out of the session we recommend you bring representatives who will be involved in overcoming the challenge if your project is funded e.g. technical staff if your problem is technical in nature).

- Be able to consider an element of match-funding (cash) for researcher time to conduct projects as designed at the workshop, this will enhance the scope of the project.
- Consider challenges with potential to develop into a larger research collaboration down the line.

### Our Expertise

Areas of strength include:

- Supply Chain Sustainability
- Fashion Business
- Human Rights, social inequalities, affordability of clothing
- Sustainability in Fashion
- Digital Fashion Marketing
- Criminology, modern slavery in supply chains

### Interested? Here's What You Need to Do Next.

Please complete the form below and return it to [rachel.kenyon@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.kenyon@manchester.ac.uk). We will assess your submitted challenge matching it with our academic expertise and should the challenge be shortlisted we will invite you to the Innovation Lab.

The event will take place face-to-face on the University of Manchester campus on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 from 12 noon-17:30pm. Details will be confirmed with the official invitation.

**Expressions of Interest Form**

Return to [rachel.kenyon@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.kenyon@manchester.ac.uk).

<b>Company Name:</b>			
<b>Are you an SME?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES  <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<b>Are you based in Greater Manchester?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES  <input type="checkbox"/> NO
<b>Have you previously collaborated with academia for business R&amp;D?</b>			
If yes, please provide further details on the collaboration			
<b>Your business challenge area(s)</b>			
Please provide an overview of the problem, issue, challenge, or opportunity that the project team would seek to explore and resolve through a collaborative project, if possible, describe the potential short and longer-term business impacts: (max 500-word count)			
<b>Is there an R&amp;D budget to support this work?</b>			
If yes, please provide details on the level of investment your company is making in this area			
<b>Do you have a fixed timescale for your objectives?</b>			
<b>Primary contact details and position, plus names of other potential participants on the day (if known):</b>			