CENTRE FOR
DIGITAL INNOVATION
& TECHNOLOGY

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

belfast met

STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

UKRI Innovate UK



CDIT Industry Projects

2026

What is CDIT

The Centre for Digital Innovation and Technology (CDIT) is a collaborative framework between Further and Higher Education Institutions and industry partners to create a shared centre to advance digital innovation and technology through a skills-based approach. The centre aims to develop industry relevant skills through a shared multi-disciplinary environment that enables Industry and academia to co-create an educational experience for students based upon project based learning.

Belfast Metropolitan College, Stranmillis University College, and Queen's University Belfast are collaborating to offer their students the opportunity to complete Industry specific projects.

- **Why do we need projects?**

We want students to learn through doing. We employ a project-based learning approach so that students learn through addressing challenges from the outside world. It is important that we provide students with the opportunity to interact with industry professionals on a regular basis throughout their degree and that, as far as possible, we mimic the workplace environment with the work delivered in iterations and increments by teams of students.

- **The CDIT Industry Project Portal**

The CDIT Industry Project Portal is a central portal to allow local industry to submit project ideas that can be incorporated into the curriculum delivery in Belfast Metropolitan College, Stranmillis University College, and Queen's University Belfast. Note, that in some instances students might attempt part of the scenario due to time constraints and other factors.

AI PROJECT OPPORTUNITY: Funding has been secured for several projects through the UKRI TechLocal AI: AI Pathways NI project. We are therefore particularly keen to receive AI-focused project proposals at this time.

The initiative is especially beneficial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that may not have the resources to support traditional long-term placements but wish to harness AI to address business challenges, enhance productivity, and drive innovation.

At this time, we particularly encourage industry partners to submit project ideas though the Industry Project Portal.

See the following examples for guidance:

AI / Innovative ideas (UKRI funded)

- Receive AI based research, recommendations, prototype solutions, proof-of-concepts, AI agents or AI use-cases tailored to your challenge.
- Identify areas where AI could automate repetitive tasks, improve efficiency, enhance customer engagement, or unlock value from existing data.

General Computing/ Development

- Website
- Database
- Application Development (Prototyping)

- **What could your business submit?**

AI Sales and Stock Analysis

An example of using AI to find useful patterns in business data

HOW THIS WOULD APPEAR IN THE PORTAL

Project Title: Using AI to Analyse Sales Trends and Improve Stock Planning

Brief project description: We would like students to explore how AI could help our business analyse historical sales and stock information to identify trends and support future purchasing decisions. Students would investigate suitable AI tools and develop a simple prototype or dashboard showing how sales patterns, popular products and potential stock shortages could be identified. The project would help us understand how AI could support better business decisions using information we already collect.

What business challenge or opportunity would you like students to explore? Our business currently relies on spreadsheets and manual reviews of sales figures to help determine stock requirements. This can be time-consuming and makes it difficult to identify trends or anticipate changes in customer demand. We would like to explore whether AI could help us understand sales patterns, highlight potential stock issues and make more informed purchasing decisions.

Do you expect AI to be used in the development of the project? Yes

Project Duration: 6–8 weeks

Data, Confidentiality and AI Use. Will students need access to business data? Yes. Students would be provided with a limited, anonymised sample of historical sales and stock information, subject to appropriate data-sharing arrangements. Sensitive business and customer information would be excluded.

A realistic student project: *The expected result is a prototype, proof of concept or recommendations, not fully finished commercial software.*

This is not a full list of examples, if you have a good idea that students could use as a project and it is not listed here you can still complete the form or contact the team on the emails listed below.

Project Timeframe

We have three submission windows throughout the Academic year, August to January, January to April, and April to August.

Ideas can be returned using this CDIT Industry Project Portal form or the contacts below. We aim to get back to organisations on the outcome of your submission within 8 weeks.

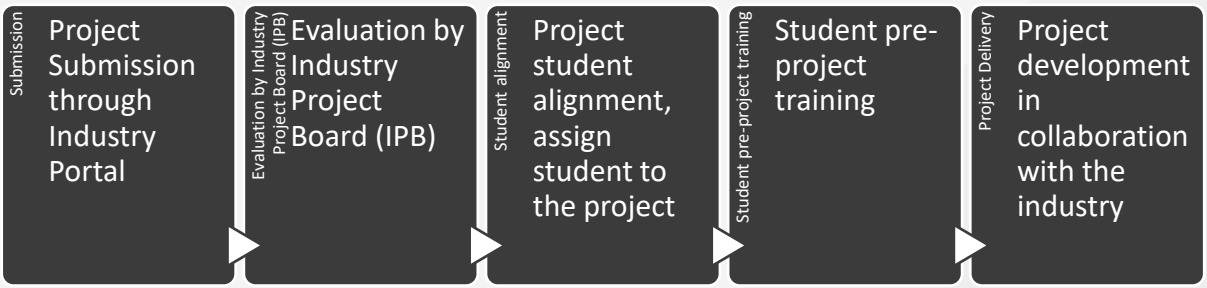
Projects need to:

- Fit within the curriculum and be delivered at the appropriate time.
- Allow students to meet the academic aims of a particular module by being consistent with the expected module level.
- Be typically **4-8 weeks** depending on the module to which a project is aligned to.
- Be realistic about what the students can produce in the time available to them. It should be noted that the learning opportunity for the students is the key output, and the shorter projects could perhaps be seen as small industry challenges. Students may produce a prototype or proof of concept but will not deliver fully finished software.

- **Project Timeframe**

We have three submission windows throughout the Academic year, August to January, January to April, and April to August.

- **Project Stages**



Ideas can be returned using this CDIT Industry Project Portal online form or the contacts below.

- **Intellectual Property & Confidentiality**

We understand that intellectual property (IP) and confidentiality are important considerations when proposing projects. We have established template agreements to address these matters, ensuring clarity and protection for all parties. These agreements cover ownership of IP, confidentiality obligations, and any necessary rights for project outcomes. If a project requires a specific agreement beyond our standard templates, we are happy to discuss this further. For more information, please use the contact details below

Contacts

Belfast Metropolitan College: cdit@belfastmet.ac.uk

Queen's University Belfast: cdit@qub.ac.uk

Stranmillis: cdit@stran.ac.uk