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## First sight of innovative collaborations

Rt Hon David Willetts MP has seen cutting-edge research and business collaborations at Northumbria University's Northern Design Centre (NDC).

Northumbria University has made a significant investment in the NDC to establish a world-class centre for Open Innovation and Growth. It will create a focal point for high-value university and industry collaborations on a regional, national and international scale, building a global reputation for expertise and providing research solutions to a range of industry sectors.

The Gateshead-based Centre will bring together businesses and community research users with leading academic staff to better understand the

challenges these groups face. It will also be the home for start-up businesses of students on the BA Business Entrepreneurs programme – an innovative way of developing entrepreneurial and business skills in the region.

David Willetts MP, Government Minister for Universities and Science, spoke with Northumbria researchers and students during his visit to the NDC. He said: “Northumbria University is a good example of how collaboration between universities and businesses is vital for growth.

“These students are developing innovative new products and getting valuable industry experience that will set them up for the world of work.”

During the NDC tour, David Willetts was shown product prototypes and a range of examples of the type of collaborative activities the University is engaged in with regional and national businesses, council's and organisations.

Professor Andrew Wathey, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University, said: “Combining high-quality research expertise with business innovation is an important part of Northumbria University’s mission as a research engaged, business-focussed, professional university. Our values and aims are directly reflected in the Northern Design Centre and the work that will be undertaken there.

“The collaborations presented at the NDC are testament to the world-changing inventions and technological advancement that our academics are already playing a key role in.”

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Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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