



Professor John Woodward, Northumbria University, receiving the Education Champion Award presented by Andy Dunn, CG Professional, at the Northern Leaders Awards.

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## Education Champion Award for Northumbria academic with stellar vision

**Professor John Woodward has been named Education Champion at the Northern Leaders Awards for his work to develop Northumbria's new £50 million North East Space Skills and Technology Centre.**

The inaugural [BusinessCloud Northern Leaders Awards](#), honoured individuals who have – and continue to make – the biggest positive difference to the North.

A total of 19 winners across 15 categories were revealed at the event, with [Professor Woodward](#), Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), being awarded the Education Champion title.

Professor Woodward has worked with local and national government; regional, national and international industry leaders and colleagues across the University to drive the development of the North East Space Skills and Technology Centre (NESST), which will be instrumental in positioning the North East as a hub for space research and education.

Described as a “game-changer” for the UK space economy, NESST will bring together industry and academia to collaborate on internationally significant space research and technological developments from its base on Northumbria’s city campus in Newcastle.

NESST is one of the prime examples of the University’s transformation over more than a decade into a research-intensive institution with social mobility at its heart.

The centre, which is being delivered in partnership with the [UK Space Agency](#) and [Lockheed Martin UK Space](#), is expected to directly support the creation of over 350 jobs and inject over £260 million into the North East economy over the next 30 years, immediately becoming a catalyst for the wider development of the UK space sector in the North East region.

As well as putting the UK at the forefront of research and innovation in areas including [optical satellite communications](#), [space weather](#) and [space-based energy](#), NESST will also provide the specialist education and training required to ensure the UK space sector has the highly skilled workers it needs in the future.

The judges highlighted Northumbria’s transformation to a “research-intensive, business-focussed institution” and praised Professor Woodward’s leadership and work with industry partners to create the £50 million space innovation centre.

Professor Woodward said: “NESST is the perfect example of how Northumbria’s research excellence is enriching our taught programmes and supporting skills development. The centre will allow us to foster a talent

pipeline for the rapidly growing North East space sector.

“NESST is a huge collaborative effort which will play an essential role in launching the UK as a space superpower, and I am delighted to accept the award on behalf of everyone involved in NESST.”

In the North East alone, it is estimated that around 7,000 additional space experts in a variety of emerging fields will be needed in the next decade.

From undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses and T-Levels, NESST will enable Northumbria to support more students to access training and education in the space industry.

Professor Woodward continued: “We will embed experiential learning into programmes to boost graduate employability. By attracting businesses into the University, NESST will provide live projects and placement opportunities for students while offering resources and talent to our partners. This vision for transformative education ensures that graduates are not only academically prepared but also industry-ready for the world of work.”

Find out more about NESST and how Northumbria is powering the next generation of space innovation on the [University's website](#), or watch the video below.

[View embedded content here](#)

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UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

--- Please contact [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

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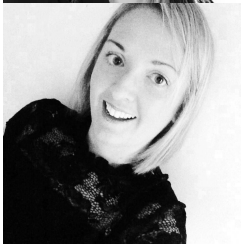


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