

Manchester launches UK's largest nuclear institute

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A century after Ernest Rutherford embarked on his research at The University of Manchester leading to the eventual splitting of the atom, the University is set to take another pioneering step towards the advancement of nuclear technology, teaching and research.

On July 18th the University will launch The Dalton Nuclear Institute with the aim of it becoming one of the world's elite centres for nuclear teaching and research. The Institute will be the largest of its kind in the UK with plans more than 100 academics, research staff and students.

Professor Richard Clegg, who has come from industry as the Director of Science at British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL), has been appointed as the Director of the Institute and will be responsible for leading Dalton and helping it to achieve its vision.

"By 2015 if people want to do nuclear research they will have the choice to go to two or three leading Universities in the world and Manchester will be one of them," says Professor Clegg.

"Manchester has everything on its side including history, geography and expertise. Rutherford carried out his research here, the northwest has the UK's largest nuclear community and we have the expertise in the University that will make it happen."

The Institute will be based within the University's Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences but will also draw on expertise from faculties like

medicine and humanities across the University. It will consist of seven major research groups and will underpin the training and education of the UK's future graduates for the nuclear sector.

"Dalton will be the hub for all nuclear research and education at Manchester and will also act as a bridge to other world class research organisations around the world, accessing international know-how and technology for the benefit of industry and the UK," says Professor Clegg.

The Institute will boast some of the UK's most advanced university based nuclear research facilities including the recently refurbished and re-equipped Centre for Radiochemistry Research supported by Nexia Solutions and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). Through forming partnerships with industry, the Institute will also gain access to specialist facilities broadening the types of research it can undertake.

Dalton's research will encompass electricity generation, fuel cycles, waste treatment and disposal, decommissioning, policy and regulation. It will also tie its research into advancing areas such as nuclear medicine and fusion.

Dalton has been a leading player in the establishment of NTEC - a consortium of UK Higher Education Institutions offering a portfolio of postgraduate education in nuclear science and technology - and hosts its coordination centre.

Nationally, Dalton will link with the government, industry, sector groups and learned societies to address the nuclear skills shortfall, identified in a number of studies including the DTI's report on Radiological Skills and the HSE's Report on Higher Education in Nuclear Training.

Internationally, Dalton will support educational initiatives such as the

World Nuclear University and become involved in collaborative advanced reactor development programmes such as Generation IV - ensuring the UK maintains access to international know-how, technology advances and teaching material.

Professor Alan Gilbert, President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Manchester, said: "The launch of the Dalton Nuclear Institute is a major development in the University of Manchester's long and proud history. Nuclear power will undoubtedly play a significant role in addressing the needs of future energy production and it is vital that the University is at the forefront of the UK's nuclear research and education agenda.

"Given time, I strongly believe that Dalton will not only prove to be a flagship for research excellence in the UK, but will also provide the nuclear industry with a rich source of highly-trained graduates from a University with an exemplary reputation for pioneering research in this field stretching back more than a hundred years."

The Dalton Nuclear Institute will be launched at the Royal Academy of Engineering, London, on the evening of July 18th. If you would like to attend this event please contact Simon Hunter.

Source: University of Manchester

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