Press release: UK universities recognised for excellence in cyber security research

- Three new Academic Centres of Excellence in Cyber Security Research recognised, including the first in Wales.
- Total number of Centres in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland boosted to 17.

Three UK universities have been recognised as Academic Centres of Excellence in Cyber Security Research (ACE-CSR), highlighting the country is leading the way in cyber security skills.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (ESPRC) have identified the University of Kent, King's College London, and Cardiff University as having first-rate research with scale and impact.

The universities will now join 14 other institutions in a scheme forming part of the Government's National Cyber Security Strategy, which is making the UK the safest place to be online and helping to support the country's thriving digital economy.

The universities will now have the opportunity to bid for funding to develop cutting-edge research in cyber security, including at Doctoral level, as well as attend annual conferences and workshops.

The scheme aims to create a better understanding of the strength of the UK's academic capability in cyber security and identify areas where there are research opportunities or technical gaps. It makes collaboration between academia, business and government easier, and helps make sure cutting-edge research is turned into practical products and services. This includes developing tools to tackle mass marketing fraud online and better understand cyber criminals.

Minister for Digital Margot James said:

> These universities are doing fantastic research in cyber security and they are rightly being recognised for their pioneering work.
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> We have some of the best minds in the world working in the field and thanks to this scheme they can now help shape our National Cyber Security Strategy and develop the talent and services of tomorrow.

Chris Ensor, Deputy Director for Cyber Security Skills and Growth at the NCSC, said:

> The UK has world-class universities carrying out cutting edge research into all areas of cyber security.
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> It’s fantastic to see three more universities recognised as Academic Centres of Excellence and I’m especially pleased that we now have centres in all home nations.
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> The NCSC looks forward to collaborating with these institutions to make the UK the safest place to live and work online.

Professor Pete Burnap, Professor of Data Science & Cybersecurity, and Director of the Airbus Centre of Excellence in Cybersecurity Analytics at Cardiff University said:

> We are delighted to receive this recognition as it evidences our long track-record of research excellence in cyber security.
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> Our core identity is the interdisciplinary fusion of artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, a concept we call Cyber Security Analytics. AI is at the heart of the UK government’s industrial strategy and our aim is to innovate with AI to improve automated cyber threat intelligence and support decision making and policy responses to make the UK more secure for individuals, business and the government.
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> We are proud to be the first Welsh university to be recognised by NCSC for our cyber research capability, and we hope to build on the impressive expertise that already exists across the region between academia, government and business.

Dr Jose M. Such, Director of the Centre, and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Informatics at King’s College London said:

> We are thrilled to be recognised for the high-quality socio-technical cyber security research we conduct at King’s College London. This recognition acknowledges the critical and diverse mass of researchers working on this area at King’s from different but complementary angles and points of view.
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> Our research focuses on three main research themes and their interrelationship: the use of AI for cyber security together with the cyber security of AI itself, the theoretical aspects of cyber security like verification and testing, and the socio-political and strategic aspects of cyber security.

Shujun Li, Professor of Cyber Security and Director of the Kent Interdisciplinary Research Centre in Cyber Security (KirCCS) at the University of Kent, said:

> We are excited to be given the ACE-CSR status as an acknowledgement of the excellent research in cyber security at the University of Kent. Our research is truly interdisciplinary drawing on the expertise of colleagues from computer science and engineering as well as wider disciplines such as psychology, law, business and sociology. Our ambition is to have one of the largest and most productive cyber security research centres in the UK by 2022 as well as helping to grow the next-generation cyber security researchers.

The ACE-CSR programme is supported by Government's £1.9 billion National Cyber Security Strategy (NCSS) 2016-2021.

Notes to editors

List of institutions that are recognised as Academic Centres of Excellence in Cyber Security Research are:

- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- Cardiff University
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Kent
- Imperial College London
- King's College London
- Lancaster University
- Newcastle University
- University of Oxford
- Queen's University Belfast
- Royal Holloway, University of London
- University of Southampton
- University of Surrey
- University of Warwick

- University College London

- The universities will be recognised as Academic Centres of Excellence in Cyber Security Research until June 2022.

- Our consultation on developing the UK cyber security profession closes at 5pm on 31 August 2018.

- The National Cyber Security Strategy includes a commitment to develop the cyber security profession in the UK. As part of this work the Government is consulting on how to develop the right skills, capabilities and professionalism for the industry. It includes a clear definition of objectives and proposes the creation of a new UK Cyber Security Council to coordinate delivery.