



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

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BHF LEICESTER CENTRE OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

Inaugural scientific symposium

9 September 2025

Dear all,

I am delighted to welcome you to the inaugural BHF Leicester Centre of Research Excellence annual symposium 2025.

As many of you may know, the prestigious BHF Research Excellence Award was received in October 2024 to enhance our world-leading cardiovascular research here in Leicester and develop the next generation of world class researchers. At our scientific symposium today you will learn more about our plans for achieving this ambition, including the CRE and wider university support available to cardiovascular researchers to realise our goals. You will also have the opportunity to hear from some of our early career researchers themselves, who will be presenting about their exciting programmes of research.

This year has seen a good start for our BHF Centre of Research Excellence, with the appointment of three new Research Fellows – Dr Fiona Newberry and Dr David McVey (Discovery theme) and Joanne Miksza (Populations theme). Prior to this, Dr Elina Akalestou was appointed new open-tenure CVS lecturer as part of our CRE plans. Also, we have appointed three PhD students to work within the CRE on innovative interdisciplinary PhD projects using AI and machine learning - these candidates will join us in January 2026. The Centre will be recruiting more PhD students to interdisciplinary projects early next year and we encourage you to propose projects for consideration, as well as the new pump-priming call around the same time.

Our newly appointed Centre Manager, Natalie Matthewman started in April and in June, we held our first joint symposium with the Edinburgh Centre of Research Excellence. This was a science-packed day where we identified plenty of opportunities for new and enhanced collaborations.

To reciprocate, we look forward to welcoming the Edinburgh CRE team to Leicester in the near future.

The Centre is particularly pleased to welcome to our symposium our External Scientific Advisory Group members: Professor Garrett Fitzgerald (Chair), University of Pennsylvania; Professor Peter Liu, University of Ottawa, Professor Mirela Delibegovic, University of Aberdeen and Dr Joanna Howson, Novo Nordisk. The first meeting of our External Scientific Advisory Group is a key event for the Centre as we obtain valuable feedback and guidance on the Centre's ambitions and direction.

We are also grateful to welcome today distinguished staff from the British Heart Foundation, and staff from across the university who join us to kick-start new interdisciplinary collaborations.

Thank you for attending and we hope you enjoy our first annual symposium.

Professor André Ng
Director of the BHF Leicester
Centre of Research Excellence



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BHF Leicester Centre of Research Excellence



Symposium programme

9 September 2025, Sir Bob Burgess Building, Lecture Theatre 2

10.00 – 11.55	Poster exhibition and competition (ground floor foyer)
12.00 – 12.10	Event registration and coffee (0.02)
12.15 – 12.30	Professor André Ng Welcome and highlights of the CRE's first year
SESSION 1 - DISCOVERY THEME	
12.30 – 12.45	Professor Matt Bown and Dr Tom Webb Achievements of the last year and new developments within the Discovery theme
12.45 – 13.00	Dr Chris Nelson The value of genomic risk in cardiovascular disease prediction
13.00 – 13.15	Dr David McVey OMIC analysis of coronary artery disease risk in vascular cells
13.15 – 13.55	Lunch and networking (0.02)
SESSION 2 - INTERVENTIONS THEME	
14.00 – 14.15	Professor Gerry McCann Achievements of the last year and new developments within the Interventions theme
14.15 – 14.30	Professor Gavin Murphy Clinical trials in cardiac surgery
14.30 – 14.45	Dr Molly Whitfield Targeting KCa3.1 to reduce myofibroblast activity in aortic stenosis
SESSION 3 - POPULATIONS THEME	
14.50 – 15.05	Dr Claire Lawson Achievements of the last year and new developments within the Populations theme
15.05 – 15.20	Dr Francesco Zaccardi Trajectories of cardio-renal-metabolic diseases across levels of body mass index: a 20-year observational study in England
15.20 – 15.35	Mr Dan Han A comparative study of statistical and epidemiological methods to investigate intersectional inequalities in the trajectories of multimorbidity
15.35 – 15.50	Coffee break and networking
SESSION 4 - BHF CRE STRATEGY	
16.00 – 16.15	Professor Veryan Codd What can the CRE offer you, and what can you do for the CRE?
16.15 – 16.30	Professor Huiyu Zhou Successful Interdisciplinary collaborations: vision for the CRE
16.30 – 16.50	RED Team RED support: Commercialisation, translation and applications
16.50 – 17.00	Professor André Ng Closing remarks and announcement of poster presentation winners

Poster competition

Please visit our PhD student and ECR poster showcase in the ground floor foyer. We ask that you vote for your favourite poster using the QR code or by visiting:
forms.office.com/e/rekM0pyKPK



There will be prizes for the winner and runner up in each category. When voting, you should consider: how visually appealing the poster is, how clearly the research is presented, how easy it is to understand for a non-specialist, and how well the impact or potential impact is demonstrated. In the event of a tie, members of the CRE Steering Group will make the final decision. Voting closes at 1.30pm and the winners will be announced at the end of the symposium.

Networking

Interdisciplinary working is central to the BHF Leicester CRE plans. We encourage you to chat to colleagues from across the university during the networking sessions to further develop and kick-start new collaborations.

Evaluation

We value your input and would like to hear about your experience at the BHF Leicester CRE inaugural symposium. Please complete our short evaluation form here:
forms.office.com/e/bLJFSHczuz