# Heriot-Watt launches Global Research Institute to transform health and care technologies



A new initiative spearheaded by Heriot-Watt University aims to revolutionise health and care engineering, significantly impacting medical breakthroughs and addressing vital global health challenges. The Global Research Institute (GRI) in Health and Care Technologies recently held its inaugural showcase at the National Robotarium, featuring insights from Professor Sir Chris Whitty, the UK’s Chief Medical Officer. He highlighted both the promising opportunities and the potential challenges that technological innovation presents for the National Health Service (NHS).

The GRI is a collaborative endeavour that unites Heriot-Watt’s diverse research capabilities across engineering, digital technologies, data science, psychology, and design. This multidisciplinary synergy focuses on five pressing health challenges: employing engineering to combat cancer, advancing technologies for healthy ageing, digital management of chronic diseases, global innovations in One Health, and fostering digital approaches to mental health. These areas are crucial not only for the UK but resonate globally, as they address prevalent health issues.

According to Professor Robert Thomson, the institute's academic co-lead, “This institute is a significant step in translating our research into real-world impact.” He emphasised the importance of integrating the university's campuses in Scotland, Dubai, and Malaysia under a unified vision, solidifying Heriot-Watt and the UK’s position at the cutting edge of health innovation. His sentiment was echoed by Professor Maiwenn Kersaudy-Kerhoas, who articulated the institute's commitment to fostering an interdisciplinary ecosystem. “We are creating a truly interdisciplinary ecosystem where clinicians, engineers, designers, and patients work side by side to co-design solutions,” she said. The innovations that arise from this collaboration are expected to enhance health outcomes and respond dynamically to health challenges.

The GRI also aims to support entrepreneurship and the transition of research into practical applications through its strategic alliances, including close ties with the Medical Device Manufacturing Centre (MDMC) and NHS Scotland. This collaborative framework is essential for nurturing clinical adoption and regulatory readiness. Furthermore, recent discussions surrounding a Memorandum of Understanding between Heriot-Watt and the Association of British HealthTech Industries (ABHI) underscore the institute's intent to accelerate medical research and development, addressing regulatory complexities and enhancing access for innovators to global markets.

Heriot-Watt's commitment to addressing urgent healthcare challenges is further exemplified by the GRI’s engagement with over 100 academics across various disciplines. This sizeable collective effort aims to develop cutting-edge solutions in vital areas such as healthy ageing, mental health, precision surgery, and diagnostics. The institute is poised to emerge as a global leader in medical technology engineering, supporting the transition of pioneering innovations into commercially viable products.

As public health concerns become increasingly complex, Heriot-Watt University's initiative encapsulates the urgent need for innovation in healthcare. By leveraging its interdisciplinary expertise and fostering partnerships, the GRI in Health and Care Technologies aims not only to create sustainable solutions but also to drive significant progress in global health policy and outcomes, positioning itself at the forefront of healthcare transformation.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://healthandcare.scot/stories/4174/robotics-heriot-watt-global-reserach-digitising-whitty-thomson-kersaudy-kerhoas), [[3]](https://www.hw.ac.uk/news/events/2024/the-global-research-institute-in-health-and-care-technologies-showcase)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://healthandcare.scot/stories/4174/robotics-heriot-watt-global-reserach-digitising-whitty-thomson-kersaudy-kerhoas), [[2]](https://www.hw.ac.uk/research-enterprise/global-research-institutes/health-and-care-technologies), [[5]](https://www.wattmag.hw.ac.uk/2023edition/pioneering-health-and-care-technologies)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.hw.ac.uk/news/2024/heriot-watt-signs-deal-with-leading-industry-body-to-accelerate-cutting-edge-medical-research), [[6]](https://www.hw.ac.uk/shaping-futures/transform-healthcare)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.wattmag.hw.ac.uk/2023edition/pioneering-health-and-care-technologies), [[4]](https://www.hw.ac.uk/news/2024/heriot-watt-signs-deal-with-leading-industry-body-to-accelerate-cutting-edge-medical-research)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://healthandcare.scot/stories/4174/robotics-heriot-watt-global-reserach-digitising-whitty-thomson-kersaudy-kerhoas), [[2]](https://www.hw.ac.uk/research-enterprise/global-research-institutes/health-and-care-technologies), [[7]](https://www.hw.ac.uk/research-enterprise/research/research-environment/resources-and-facilities)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://healthandcare.scot/stories/4174/robotics-heriot-watt-global-reserach-digitising-whitty-thomson-kersaudy-kerhoas> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.hw.ac.uk/research-enterprise/global-research-institutes/health-and-care-technologies> - Heriot-Watt University's Global Research Institute in Health and Care Technologies aims to expedite research advancements by collaborating with industry, stakeholders, academics, and charities. Operating across campuses in Scotland, Dubai, and Malaysia, the institute focuses on developing new diagnostic tools and treatments, leveraging expertise in engineering, digital technologies, data science, psychology, and design. Their mission is to address significant global health challenges, including cancer, chronic diseases, mental health, and global health threats, with a particular emphasis on improving patient care and health outcomes worldwide.
3. <https://www.hw.ac.uk/news/events/2024/the-global-research-institute-in-health-and-care-technologies-showcase> - Heriot-Watt University's Global Research Institute in Health and Care Technologies held its first showcase at the National Robotarium, featuring a keynote speech by Professor Sir Chris Whitty, the UK's Chief Medical Officer. The event highlighted the institute's focus on addressing five global and national 'grand challenges': using engineering to fight cancer, technologies for healthy ageing, digitising chronic disease management, global innovation in One Health, and digital approaches in mental health. The showcase underscored the institute's commitment to translating research into real-world impact.
4. <https://www.hw.ac.uk/news/2024/heriot-watt-signs-deal-with-leading-industry-body-to-accelerate-cutting-edge-medical-research> - Heriot-Watt University signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of British HealthTech Industries (ABHI) to advance medical research and development. The collaboration aims to co-develop research, address regulation, enhance data and insight, and support innovators in accessing global markets. The partnership exemplifies the institute's mission to deliver innovative, sustainable, and practical solutions to global health challenges by closely collaborating with industry and sector partners.
5. <https://www.wattmag.hw.ac.uk/2023edition/pioneering-health-and-care-technologies> - Heriot-Watt University's Health and Care Technologies Institute brings together over 100 academics across various disciplines to accelerate solutions to urgent healthcare challenges. The institute focuses on areas such as healthy ageing, mental health, chronic disease management, precision surgery, diagnostics, and global health concerns. Led by Professors Maïwenn Kersaudy-Kerhoas and Robert Thomson, the institute aims to become a global powerhouse of medical technology engineering, supporting the translation of pioneering new devices into practical and commercially viable products.
6. <https://www.hw.ac.uk/shaping-futures/transform-healthcare> - Heriot-Watt University's Transform Healthcare initiative aims to expand expertise across healthcare technologies to develop market-ready solutions addressing critical health challenges. The initiative focuses on shaping global healthcare policy and offering patient-focused solutions that are safe, sustainable, and affordable. The Global Research Institute in Health and Care Technologies works closely with industry and sector partners to develop innovative solutions to pressing health challenges, applying the university's world-leading research and engineering capabilities to tackle challenges in an ever-changing world.
7. <https://www.hw.ac.uk/research-enterprise/research/research-environment/resources-and-facilities> - Heriot-Watt University's research environment includes significant international collaborations and connectivity to business. The National Robotarium, the UK's centre for robotics and artificial intelligence, was established in 2022. The Medical Device Manufacturing Centre (MDMC) offers prototyping and manufacturing support to develop medical devices. The university's Edinburgh Business School is internationally renowned for its MBAs and research, which is intrinsically linked throughout the Global Research Institutes and in Panmure House, the birthplace of Adam Smith.