QIL Quantum Innovation Summit 2026

Unlocking the Northwest's Quantum Potential

9 December 2026 | Lancaster University

Connecting capability, industry, skills, investment and national opportunity

Purpose: To identify where the Northwest can create nationally significant quantum capability, economic value and investable propositions by connecting industry demand, facilities, skills, research, policy and capital.

Time	Session	Proposed contributors / format	Purpose / output
09:00–09:30	Registration, coffee and networking	—	Arrival, cross-sector networking and introductions.
09:30–09:40	Welcome: Unlocking the Northwest's Quantum Potential	**Prof Jo Ryecroft-Malone** *Lancaster University PVC Research and Innovation*	Set the challenge for the day and focus discussion on practical outcomes.
09:40–10:05	Opening keynote – From Quantum Science to Economic Advantage	**Professor Julia Sutcliffe** *Chief Scientific Adviser, Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade*	Set the national industrial, innovation and policy context.
10:05–10:20	One year on for QIL	**Prof Ziad Melhem** *Lancaster University Professor in Practice the School of Physics and Astronomy*	How are we delivering against the ambition one year on.
10:20–10:35	Coffee and networking	—	—
10:35–11:05	1. Defence, Security and Sovereign Capability	15 min – External speaker: **Tomasz Ciuksza**, *Academic Relationship Principal in Dstl* 15 min – QIL speaker: [QIL Defence & Security Lead – TBC]	External speaker frames the defence/security challenge and demand. QIL speaker responds with relevant Lancaster capability, expertise, facilities and collaboration opportunities.
11:05–11:35	2. Testing, Characterisation and Scale-up	15 min – External speaker: **Tobias Lindstrom** *Principal Scientist NPL* 15 min – QIL speaker: [QIL Testing & Characterisation Lead – TBC]	External speaker outlines testing, validation, standards and scale-up requirements. QIL speaker presents relevant Lancaster facilities, cryogenic/QPU testing, characterisation capability and routes for external access.

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11:35–12:15	Workshop 1 – Capability to Opportunity	40-minute facilitated workshop	Bring defence/security and testing/characterisation together to identify distinctive Northwest capability, gaps and potential collaborative propositions.
12:15–12:25	Workshop 1 feedback and transition	Facilitated plenary	Capture key propositions, priority gaps and actions before lunch.
12:25–13:15	Lunch, demonstrations and networking	Exhibitors and regional partners	Brokerage, demonstrations and informal collaboration discussions.
13:15–13:45	3. Skills, Talent and Workforce	15 min – External speaker: **Kerry Harrison** *Lancashire Skills Partnership* [15 min – QIL speaker: [QIL Skills & Training Lead – TBC]	External speaker defines emerging workforce needs. QIL speaker responds with Lancaster's training, CPD, research skills and potential industry-facing skills provision.
13:45–14:15	4. Building a Northwest Quantum Economy	15 min – **Andy Hulme** *Northwest Business Leadership Team* 15 min – QIL speaker: [QIL Regional Innovation / Partnerships Lead – TBC]	External speaker frames the wider market and ecosystem opportunity. QIL speaker sets out how Lancaster and QIL could contribute through capability, partnerships, translation and investment.
14:15–14:30	Coffee and networking	—	—
14:30–15:10	Workshop 2 – Building the Northwest Quantum Proposition	40-minute facilitated workshop	Identify the skills, partnerships, investment and ecosystem interventions needed to convert capability into economic value.
15:10–15:20	Workshop 2 feedback and transition	Facilitated plenary	Capture the strongest regional propositions, prospective leads and immediate next steps.
15:20–15:40	Funding and investment response – what could we actually fund and invest in?	Senior funder or investor representative – TBC	Test emerging propositions against public funding and private investment requirements.
15:40–16:00	From discussion to action: priorities, commitments and next steps	QIL	Agree priority actions, prospective leads and immediate follow-up.