

New EPSRC National Centre for Power Electronics opens

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The UK's capacity in power electronics, a technology that underpins and is vital to many of the country's industries and its economy, received an £18 million boost today from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) with the opening of the first EPSRC National Centre of Excellence for Power Electronics.

While many people may not have even heard of Power Electronics, it is at the heart of everyday life. If they use electronic devices like laptops and mobile phones or something that contains electrical circuitry, such as cars, trains, planes, energy networks and power stations they can be certain that Power Electronics engineers have played a part in its development and operation.

Welcoming the opening of the Centre, Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts, said: "We have a leading power electronics industry in the UK, but we need to keep investing in research to ensure it remains globally competitive. This National Centre will bring together our excellent universities and businesses to ensure industry has access to the latest science and technology, as well as helping to maintain a supply of skilled people."

The investment in the new EPSRC Centre will be spread as a series of grants, each of which involves multiple universities. These consist of a central coordinating Hub - led by Professor Mark Johnson at the University of Nottingham, and involving the universities of Manchester, Newcastle, Greenwich, Bristol, Warwick, Nottingham and Imperial College London - and a series of four technical programmes.

Devices: Led by Professor Phil Mawby at the University of Warwick and involving the universities of Bristol, Cambridge, and Newcastle.

Components: Led by Professor Philip Mellor at the University of Bristol and involving the universities of Greenwich, Nottingham, Manchester, Warwick and Imperial College London.

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Convertors: Led by Professor Andrew Forsyth at the University of Manchester and involving the universities of Strathclyde, Nottingham, Bristol and Imperial College London.

Drives: Led by Professor Barrie Mecrow at the University of Newcastle and involving the universities of Manchester, Nottingham, Sheffield and Bristol.

EPSRC's Chief Executive, Professor David Delpy said: "This £18 million investment in a six-year research initiative is part of EPSRC's response to the Government's 2011 BIS Strategy for Power Electronics in the UK. We will invest an initial tranche of £12 million with a further £6 million being released subject to a future review of progress. Power Electronics was also a priority area in our recent call for new Centres for Doctoral Training."

The opening of the new Centre comes two months after the launch of the PowerelectronicsUK Forum [<http://power-electronics.org.uk/#>] which is a network backed by industry, academia and the government that aims to boost the number of people within the Power Electronics industry.

Steve Burgin, Chairman of PowerelectronicsUK and UK President of Alstom said:

"The new EPSRC Centre for Power Electronics will be key to the future success of UK Power Electronics. It will help to keep UK industry and academia at the forefront of next generation Power Electronics technologies."