



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## COMPETITION LAUNCHES FOR NEW MODEL UNIVERSITY IN MILTON KEYNES

# MK:U

### International Design Competition



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- Two-stage competition for first phase of new model university in UK's fastest-growing city
- Prominent 10-hectare site — the last major undeveloped site in the city centre
- Shortlist to create an overall masterplan for the site as well as concept designs
- Stage Two honorarium of £30,000 for each of five teams
- Deadline for first-stage responses is **14:00 GMT Wednesday 6 March 2019**



Milton Keynes Council (MKC) together with Cranfield University and Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) today [30 January 2019] launched the MK:U International Design Competition for a new model university in the Oxford to Cambridge innovation arc.

Beloved by architects as the most original and successful of the mid-twentieth century's wave of 'New Towns', and famously 'different by design', Milton Keynes (MK) has successfully reinvented itself as a 'Smart City' and is a key contributor to the United Kingdom's knowledge economy.

This success has highlighted the need for a university — MK is the largest urban area in the UK without its own university — and to resolve this, MKC and Cranfield University, a global leader for postgraduate education and transformational research in technology and management, joined forces last year.

Their intention is to transform thinking about higher education and create a new exemplar that is open, accessible, dynamic, technologically-focused, innovative, diverse, business-oriented and entrepreneurial.

Through its ambitious curriculum focused on digital economy skills, MK:U will honour the innovative spirit of nearby Bletchley Park, the birthplace of modern computing, and further MK's pioneering work in 'Big Data', transport innovation and urban design.

Headline subjects include robotics and artificial intelligence; digital and cyber; smart cities; business and entrepreneurship; and design thinking. MK:U will go beyond the scope of a traditional university, using its own University Quarter and the wider city as a 'living lab' to test out new concepts and ideas, and inspire MK's students and citizens.

MK:U is one of the flagship projects of the MK Futures 2050 programme, which supports MKC's ambition to create a city of opportunity for all. It is expected to open to its first students — undergraduates, returners and mature learners — by 2023. All three phases are due to complete within 15 years, when the university will serve 15,000 students.

Full details of the competition, including the Search Statement and how to enter, can be found online at [competitions.malcolmreading.com/mku](https://competitions.malcolmreading.com/mku).



30 JAN 2019



**Professor Lynette Ryals OBE, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Cranfield University and Chief Executive, MK:U,** said:

“We live in a world where new technologies are emerging and work is changing.

“MK:U is responding to this profound challenge with a radical new approach to higher education: MK:U will create an environment where innovation is a given and where students can learn alongside business mentors and apply their knowledge in business situations.

“The headline theme both for MK:U, and the wider UK, is digital innovation. We want to commission architecture that is a call to action: drawing out human talent and equipping people from all backgrounds for the life-long challenges and opportunities of the digital economy.

“We’re ambitious to set a new standard in university architecture, to create a memorable destination for citizens, and ultimately, a university with an exemplary and iconic physical presence.”

**Councillor Pete Marland, Leader of Milton Keynes Council,** said:

“MK:U will have an exceptionally strong relationship to MK because the city’s long-term future – and ambition to grow to half a million residents by 2050 – depends on retaining and attracting talent.

“The city will be the university and the university the city. The welcoming University Quarter – the last major undeveloped site in the city centre – will mix university facilities with public spaces, invigorating the public realm with new energy both day and night.

“Through the ‘living lab’ approach, MK’s citizens and businesses will all have the opportunity to participate in the university’s research, education and social activities and contribute to its students’ learning.”

**Competition Director, Malcolm Reading,** said:

“There is a global conversation underway about how our cities respond to new technologies and circumstances, and the vital contribution that the best architecture can make in shaping places where people want to be. The MK:U competition has these themes at its heart.

“MK has led the way on Smart Cities. The competition seeks to embed this sense of purpose and innovation in the city’s transformational University Quarter.”

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MK has a reputation for openness and innovation and is recognised for its concentration of high-tech and digital industries. It is at the forefront of the 'Smart City' movement and was the first UK city to launch a complete 'Internet of Things' infrastructure in 2014, as well as the first to road-test driverless vehicles.

Located at the heart of the Oxford to Cambridge innovation arc and just 30 minutes from London by train, the city has excellent connectivity; its proximity to the M1 motorway and rail network means twenty million people can reach it within 60 minutes.

The MK:U International Design Competition is a two-stage competition comprised of an open Expression of Interest followed by a design period for a shortlist of five teams.

Collaboration between established and emerging talent, and between UK and international talent, is strongly encouraged by the university.

Creative teams, led by an architect, should, as a minimum, include: urban designer/masterplanner, landscape architect, structural engineer, civil/utilities engineer, and MEP (services) engineer. Internationally-based teams will be required to propose a UK-based executive architect as part of their team.

Stage one criteria include a demonstration of qualifications: company information; details of your proposed team; and your relevant experience.

Shortlisted teams will create an overall masterplan for the site as well as concept designs for 61,120sqm of built area in phase one; this phase has a construction budget of approximately £188m.

An honorarium of £30,000 will be paid to each shortlisted team that submits a compliant tender. A technical panel will review the entries and produce a report for the jury, who will conduct interviews and select a winner.

The international jury (full details to be announced later) will be chaired by Sir Peter Gregson, Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor of Cranfield University and chair of the MK Futures 2050 Commission.

There will be a public exhibition, physical and online, of all the second-stage designs before the jury meets.

The winner announcement is expected in summer 2019.



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#### COMPETITION MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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#### IMAGES

Images can be downloaded here:

[dropbox.com/sh/wo6rovg4wu8pyva/](https://dropbox.com/sh/wo6rovg4wu8pyva/AACUbFGUi0eKQjK5xCieu0xqa?dl=0)

[AACUbFGUi0eKQjK5xCieu0xqa?dl=0](https://dropbox.com/sh/wo6rovg4wu8pyva/AACUbFGUi0eKQjK5xCieu0xqa?dl=0)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About MK:U

MK:U will be a 'new model' university, designed to meet urgent technological and societal challenges head on.

It represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop a university with business, for business, equipping students for future careers in emerging fields. Subjects such as robotics, artificial intelligence, cyber and analytics will ensure that students at MK:U are equipped for the 21st century workplace. Its learning model will focus on the practical knowledge and skills needed by business to solve problems and generate new growth in a digital age.

MK:U's ambition is to transform how we think about higher education.

[cranfield.ac.uk/mku](https://cranfield.ac.uk/mku)

### About Milton Keynes Council

Established in 1967 as the most successful product of the new towns movement and a cultural artefact in its own right, Milton Keynes (MK) has been the fastest growing city and economy in the UK for the past 30 years. Milton Keynes Council is its unitary authority, delivering more than 250 services to 270,000 diverse citizens.

The MK Futures 2050 Commission was initiated by the council in 2015 as a project to explore the long-term futures for MK as it emerges as a UK city and economy of increasing significance. Big projects for the city's future include the creation of MK:U, improving the city centre, and leading the way on smart, shared, sustainable mobility.

[milton-keynes.gov.uk](https://milton-keynes.gov.uk)



30 JAN 2019



## About Cranfield University

Cranfield is a specialist postgraduate university that is a global leader for education and transformational research in technology and management.

We are focused on the specialist themes of aerospace, defence and security, energy and power, environment and agrifood, manufacturing, transport systems, and water. Cranfield School of Management is a world leader in management education and research.

We are home to many world-class, large-scale facilities which enhance our teaching and research. We are the only university in Europe to own and run an airport and to have airline status.

Cranfield teaches over 4,500 postgraduate students each year and employs 1,500 academic and support staff. We have the largest number of engineering master's students in the UK. Our staff-to-student ratio is one of the best for any university in the UK (one member of academic staff to every seven students).

We work closely with business, industry and government across the world. Through our industry partnerships, applied research projects and our executive education and professional development programmes, we currently work with over 1,500 companies and organisations.

We are ranked number one in the UK for research income from industry per academic, with 81% of our research classed as world-leading or internationally excellent by REF (Research Excellence Framework, 2014).

[cranfield.ac.uk](http://cranfield.ac.uk)

## About Malcolm Reading Consultants

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC) is a strategic consultancy that helps clients to imagine and define contemporary environments, both built and natural. MRC is the leading specialist in devising and managing design competitions internationally. MRC believes in the power of design to create new perceptions and act as an inspiration.

Recent work includes competitions for the Cambridge to Oxford Connection (UK); University College Dublin (Ireland); Gallaudet University (Washington, D.C., US); Kaunas M.K. Čiurlionis Concert Centre (Lithuania); the Royal College of Art (UK); the V&A (UK); the Mumbai City Museum (India); and new buildings for the UK's New College, Oxford and Homerton College, Cambridge.

Malcolm Reading currently advises the Royal Household; the British Library; the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art; Exeter College, Oxford; and Transport for London.

[malcolmreading.com](http://malcolmreading.com)