

Wazoku and Jisc partner to harness the collective brainpower of two million students

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Series of challenges provide students with the chance to work with global business, gain valuable experience and win cash prizes

10 March 2022 – Innovation scale-up Wazoku (<http://www.wazoku.com/>) is partnering with Jisc (<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/>) to launch a series of open innovation challenges that seek to harness the collective brainpower of the two million students in UK higher education.

The exclusive challenges (<https://www.staging4.innocentive.com/pavilions/student-pavilion/>) allow students to gain experience, win cash, and even get hired by the participating companies by submitting their ideas in response to each challenge. Open innovation – the crowdsourcing of ideas from a wider community – is highly effective and growing rapidly in usage as organisations look for innovative solutions to the world's greatest challenges.

“Open innovation is a way for organisations to look beyond their own boundaries for ideas and inspiration and to access a much broader skill set, experience and expertise,” said Simon Hill, CEO, Wazoku. “It’s already commonly used in many areas of industry, and this is a unique opportunity for the companies involved to tap into the brainpower of UK students. There is huge value in the collective crowd, and I can’t wait to see what the UK student body comes up with.”

Wazoku manages the world's largest and most powerful open innovation platform and community, InnoCentive (<https://www.innocentive.com/>). It operates a 500,000+ strong network of ‘solvers’ - entrepreneurs, engineers, scientists, technologists, CEOs, start-ups and more - has a success rate of 78%+ in solving challenges for organisations such as Enel, NASA, AstraZeneca, Shell and Dow Chemical.

The organisations and challenges involved in the Jisc competition are as follows:

- National Nuclear Laboratory (<https://www.nnl.co.uk/>) – the NNL is looking for student perspectives on the barriers that inhibit and/or deter students away from trades-based careers and how it can overcome those and entice young talent to enter trades-based career paths.
- Thales (<https://www.thalesgroup.com/en>) – global technology firm Thales is looking for actionable solutions that will help increase its efforts in maintaining rich biodiversity on its sites, six key ones of which are in the UK.
- Thales - seeking to recruit student talent to understand better how AI can be used as part of the modern military defence equation.
- Thales – in a world drowning in data, we must do more with the information we all generate. Thales is looking for student ideas around how humans engage with AI and use it to find specific data in an instant.
- New Zealand Defence Force (<https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/nzdf/>) – NZDF is looking to promote safety and productivity of their ship bearing arrangement by sourcing new ways to minimize hands-on activity and accurately measure the wear of the bearing arrangement while the ship remains in operation.

“This initiative is designed to help students improve their employability. It’s a great opportunity for UK students in further and higher education to enhance their CV and make valuable contacts at major employers. At the same time, they can make a difference by trying to solve important problems that could have a real impact on the future of work,” said Andy McGregor, Director of EdTech at Jisc.

It's a simple process for students interested in participating, starting with registering and completing their solver profile (<https://innocentive.wazoku.com/register/9396a088f8614c2eac89aacf2ae1c624>), before submitting their response to the appropriate challenge. Students can enter individually or as part of a team of four. The top student solutions will be invited to compete in the final pitch event in front of an evaluation panel with the chance to win a cash prize.

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For further information about Wazoku, visit <https://www.wazoku.com>

For further information about Jisc, visit <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/>

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