Aspect

Aspect Membership 2025

Welcome

Becoming an
Aspect Member

Great! You've just become an Aspect member or you're considering joining – welcome!

Aspect is a dynamic network that brings together professionals and academics who are passionate about unlocking the potential of research in the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts (SHAPE) disciplines. As a member, you gain access to a wealth of opportunities, resources, and collaborations designed to help you navigate SHAPE commercialisation, build meaningful connections, and amplify the impact of your work.

The following pages will guide you through the key benefits of Aspect membership, structured around our four core pillars: Community, Training, Testbed, and Advocacy. Whether you're looking to connect with like-minded professionals, develop new skills, experiment with innovative projects, or champion SHAPE research on a wider stage, Aspect provides the platform and support to help you succeed.

Pillar 1: Community

At the heart of Aspect is a vibrant community of professional services staff and academics who share a belief in the boundless creativity and impact of research in the Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SHAPE) disciplines.

As one member put it, "I feel like I've finally found my tribe." No matter the size of your internal team or where you are in your SHAPE commercialisation journey, Aspect ensures that all members feel connected and supported.

SHARE Meetings

The SHAPE Research Exchange (SHARE) is a monthly online meeting where members discuss best practice on a variety of themes. With tailored sessions for both academics and professional support staff, SHARE meetings showcase work and opportunities across the SHAPE ecosystem, typically drawing 30–40 attendees from across the network.

2024 SHARE MEETINGS AND KEY THEMES:

SHARE RESEARCH EXCHANGE

- Monthly SHAPE Research Exchange (SHARE) meetings covered topics including:
  - ESRC's Commercialisation Plans (April)
  - Evidence to Impact, The Journey of a SHAPE Spinout (May)
  - Humanities Engagement with Commercialisation (June)
  - Arts & Humanities Knowledge Exchange, Translation & Commercialisation Fund (July)
  - University-Business Cooperation for SHAPE Disciplines (September)
  - Arts and Humanities Partnership Catalyst (October)
  - Horizon Europe Opportunities (November)
- Each meeting attracted **30-40** participants from across the membership

2024 MEMBERSHIP GROWTH:

15,000

A significant rise in engagement across platforms, with **15,000 new visitors** to the Aspect website and **13,721 content engagements** on the Aspect members Platform (up from 2,433 in 2023).

4

Four new Network Members: Edinburgh Napier University, University of St Andrews, Ghent University, and University of Birmingham, bringing the total membership to **35** institutions.

2

Two new Hub Members: The University of Liverpool and Coventry University, taking the Hub Member count to **16**.

453

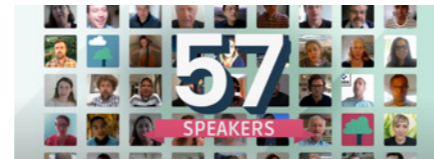members on the **Aspect Member platform**

76% increase from 2023

The Aspect Members Platform

The Aspect Members Platform is an online hub where members can access over 450 resources generated from shared expertise, including case studies, sector deep-dives, cheat sheets and customisable presentations. The platform also offers self-learning courses on topics such as collaboration-building, networking, app development, social venture creation, and intellectual property protection.

More than just a resource bank, the Members Platform is where members can connect, match based on shared interests, build teams, network and collaborate. It's also where events and opportunities are listed, with the option for members to post their own.

Aspect Forums

Held twice a year, the Aspect Forum provides a platform for members to stay up to date with the latest initiatives, including developments in Aspect Testbed projects and new opportunities to get involved. It also serves as an introduction for new members joining the network.

57 SPEAKERS

2024 FORUMS | TWO FORUMS WERE HELD IN FEBRUARY AND JULY, ADDRESSING KEY THEMES SUCH AS:

Transition to Aspect 3.0: Outlined the network's new structure and introduced the Testbed initiative.

Testbed Launch: Encouraged members to brainstorm and collaborate on project ideas.

Training Development Feedback: Shared strategies for improving skills development programmes.

Rebranded SHARE Meetings: Launched SHARE (SHAPE Research Exchange) to foster inclusive dialogue and knowledge sharing.

reSHAPE

Aspect is a proud partner of reSHAPE, a flagship event in collaboration with ESRC and the British Academy. Celebrating SHAPE ventures from across the UK and beyond, this in-person event is a highlight of the SHAPE calendar, showcasing ventures that inspire researcher entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers and the wider network. It's an event not to be missed!

RESHAPE 2024

IN COLLABORATION
Aspect · The British Academy · ARC Accelerator · Economic and Social Research Council · Mishcon de Reya

194 ATTENDEES

The flagship event of the year, reSHAPE, attracted **194** attendees including **67** Aspect members from **28** member institutions, with sessions including:

- Advocacy and Academia
- Digital Humanities and AI
- Scaling SHAPE Ventures
- Public Health Innovation
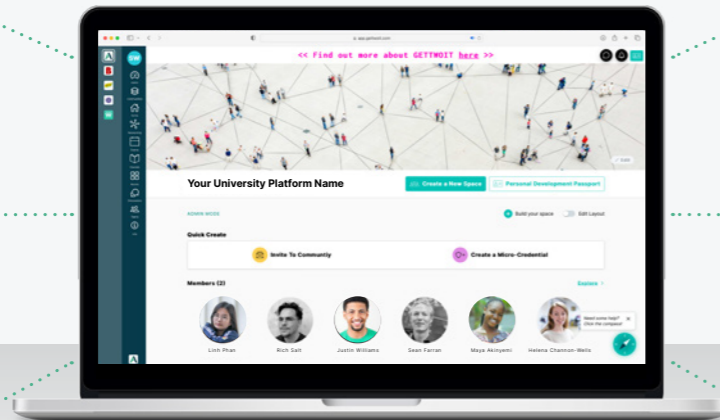
Start Small, Grow Your Own Community

Joining a large network with hundreds of resources can feel overwhelming. That's why Aspect offers the ability to create internal **Aspect Member Platforms**. These personalised spaces allow institutions to build their own communities, gradually integrating selected Aspect content. They can be **fully branded** with your institution's identity and populated with your own training, events and updates. Members can switch between their internal platform and the wider Aspect network, allowing for a tailored, comfortable onboarding experience.

INTERNAL ASPECT MEMBER PLATFORMS

- Populated with Aspect resources
- Grow your internal communities
- Facilitate connections and networking
- Automatic connection to the main Aspect platform
- Award your own SHAPE skills micro-credentials
- Monitor your engagement and impact

Pillar 2: Training

Aspect's **Training** pillar equips members with the essential skills to navigate SHAPE commercialisation and engagement.

Live Online Workshops

Our interactive workshops cover a range of topics, including:

- **Engaging with Business Partners**
  Learn about pathways such as licensing, consultancy and contract research, and how they can help scale research impact. Gain insights into stakeholder engagement strategies, with real-life case studies.

- **Engaging with Governments and NGOs**
  A practical course for both academics and professional staff, offering best practices for public sector engagement.

- **LinkedIn for SHAPE Academics**
  Master LinkedIn as a tool for promoting research, identifying collaborators and expanding professional networks.

- **Creative Tools Workshop Series**
  Explore strategies to maximise the impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses, using case studies and best practice examples.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

Delivered **three** **core courses:**

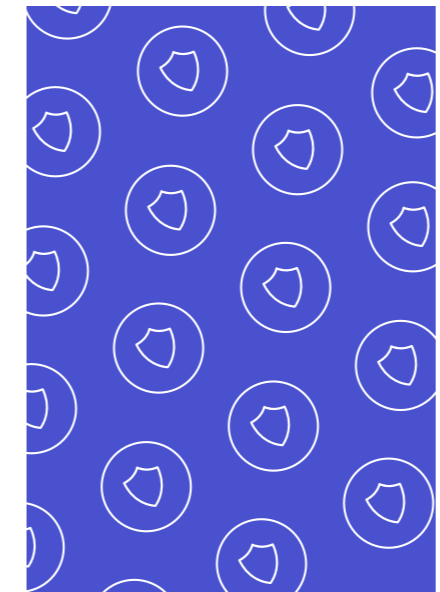**Engaging with External Partners:**
Tailored for academics new to business engagement.

LinkedIn for SHAPE Academics:
Focused on building professional networks.

Creative Tools Workshop Series:
Expanded to include advanced topics & practical tutorials.

2024 PARTICIPATION METRIC:

701
Total of 701 participants **across the network**.

Micro-Credentials: Building Future-Ready Skills

Upon completion of training, participants receive **micro-credentials**, which serve as **secure digital certificates** detailing the specific skills gained. These can be added to LinkedIn profiles and stored in a **Personal Development Passport**, helping both individuals and institutions track and communicate skills development.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

980
MICRO-CREDENTIALS AWARDED
reflecting the growing emphasis on skill validation.

The Social Venture Pathway
Aspect

Micro-credential

Problem Solving	55%
Communication	10%
Working with others	0%
Adaptability & creativity	5%
Decision making	10%
Analysing	10%
Independence	5%
Designing Research & Collecting	5%

Development of a comprehensive **Skills Development Matrix** to align training outcomes with career progression.

Skills Development Distribution

Self-Learning Courses

Members also have access to a growing library of **on-demand courses**, including:

- SHAPE Intellectual Property (IP) Protection

- Stimulating Entrepreneurial and Intrapreneurial Thinking

- Social Venture Pathways

- The Language of Entrepreneurship

- Games Development Commercialisation

- Developing and Growing Networks

2024 PARTICIPATION METRIC:

230 participants in **further self-learning courses** on the Members Platform.

Communication
(20%)

Analysing
(20%)

Decision Making
(15%)

Designing Research &
Collecting Evidence
(10%)

MICRO-CREDENTIAL
SHAPE COMMERCIALISATION
YOUR UNIVERSITY LOGO

Working
With Others
(15%)

Independence
(5%)

Adaptability & Creativity
(10%)

Problem Solving
(5%)

Integrating Aspect Training into Your Institution

We recognise that **commercialisation** can still be a sensitive term. However, the skills gained from SHAPE commercialisation training are valuable **whether or not** members choose to commercialise their research.

As an **Aspect Member**, you can issue our **micro-credentials** for your own internal training programmes, including bootcamps, workshops and roundtables, and **designed in your own university or department branding** all on us. This enables institutions to map **training impact, reduce duplication and optimise budgets** for skills development whilst increasing SHAPE commercialisation skills literacy.

Pillar 3: Testbed

The **Aspect Testbed** provides a platform for experimentation and innovation, supporting members to pilot projects that **advance knowledge exchange** in SHAPE commercialisation.

Each year, members can apply for **Testbed funding**, pitching collaborative projects that involve at least two Aspect Member institutions. These projects are designed to push boundaries, develop **new models of commercialisation**, and generate resources that benefit the wider network.

With a focus on **community connection and collaboration**, Testbed projects provide invaluable insights that help shape best practices for SHAPE commercialisation across the sector.

2024 PROJECTS:

£30,000 ALLOCATED ACROSS SIX PROJECTS:

1. **Understanding Barriers to Arts-Based Ventures:** Led by Exeter with Cardiff and QMUL.

2. **SHAPE Ventures Directory:** Led by Bristol with Exeter, Edinburgh, and Surrey.

3. **Laying the Foundations for a SHAPE Spinout Guide:** Led by LSE with Edinburgh, Leicester, ARU, and York.

4. **Strengthening Games Development and Distribution:** Led by Edinburgh with Bristol, QUB, and Southampton.

5. **SHAPE CEOs in the Aspect Network (SCAN):** Led by Cardiff with Bristol.

6. **Microsite Maintenance for Course Promotion:** Led by Edinburgh with QUB.

Watch this video for further details of the 2024 Testbed projects!

Pillar 4: Advocacy

Aspect advocates for SHAPE commercialisation at both national and international levels, engaging key stakeholders across public and private sectors.

However, we know that **internal advocacy** is just as important. That's why we support members in **engaging academics and securing senior leadership buy-in** through:

- **Custom communication materials** highlighting the benefits of Aspect membership

- **Media packs** to promote training and Testbed initiatives

- **Annual reports** detailing each institution's engagement & achievements

- **Attendance at important meetings** where you want us to share the benefits of Aspect membership

- **Guidance and Training** on how to make the most out of your Aspect Membership

We believe that advocacy is a collective effort. If you have ideas for how we can better support your institution, we want to hear them. Chances are, others in the network have similar challenges or questions.

2024 KEY ACTIVITIES:

50+
Supported the British Council Innovation for African Universities initiative, **impacting 50+ institutions** by disseminating Aspect learnings.

Contributed insights to Danish SHAPE Ecosystem Reports, highlighting the activities and achievements of Aspect Members.

Created **customised communications** for Aspect Members to use for internal advocacy, including personalised websites, presentation materials, newsletters and micro-credentials.

Met with **key stakeholders** and **politicians** in **The Netherlands** to highlight Aspect Member activities.
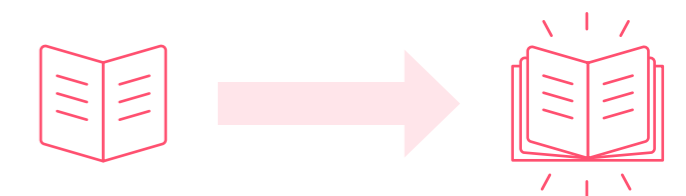
Showcased **19 SHAPE ventures** from across the Membership at reSHAPE to a diverse audience of stakeholders.

19 RE SHAPE

Presented Aspect Member activities to the **UK Foreign Office** to inform foreign policy.

Advanced the **SHAPE Spinout Guide**, set to launch in 2025.

International Network Membership

Aspect warmly welcomes both **emerging and established networks** from around the world to join our growing community. We recognise that **SHAPE commercialisation is a global endeavour**, and by working together, we can **amplify impact, share best practices, and create new opportunities for collaboration** across borders.

As an International Network Member, you will have the opportunity to:

✅ **Create Your Own Membership Platform** Aspect collaborates with networks to develop tailored online membership platforms for their communities, fully branded with your own identity and populated with curated Aspect resources that you can expand upon. These platforms serve as dedicated spaces where your members can engage, learn, and grow at their own pace and access the wider Aspect Network.

✅ **Receive Strategic Guidance & Support** Benefit from Aspect's seven years of experience in developing a SHAPE commercialisation ecosystem. We offer guidance on governance structures, engagement models, communication strategies, and ecosystem development — helping your network build a strong and sustainable foundation.

✅ **Access Aspect's Exclusive Resources** Gain entry to a wealth of over 450 curated resources, including case studies, toolkits, sector insights, and customisable presentations—all designed to support SHAPE commercialisation, engagement, and knowledge exchange.

✅ **Issue Micro-Credentials for Your Training** International Network Members can award micro-credentials for their own SHAPE commercialisation training. These digital certificates, branded to your institution or network in collaboration with Aspect, recognise and showcase the skills members develop through workshops, bootcamps, and training initiatives.

✅ **Join Aspect's Meetings & Events** International Network Members are invited to participate in Aspect's SHARE meetings, Forums, and flagship events such as reSHAPE, providing valuable opportunities to connect with the wider SHAPE ecosystem, learn from best practices, and engage in cross-network collaborations.

A Collaborative Exchange of Knowledge

As an Aspect International Network Member, we ask for just one thing in return: that, alongside accessing **Aspect's resources and activities**, your network also **shares its own insights, resources, and opportunities with the wider Aspect community**.

This exchange is **seamlessly facilitated** through the **deployment of members platforms**, enabling **cross-network collaboration, content sharing, and networking** between international SHAPE commercialisation initiatives. By creating an **ecosystem of mutual benefit**, we **increase global knowledge exchange, enhance collaboration opportunities, and strengthen SHAPE commercialisation efforts worldwide**.

Join the Global Movement

By becoming an **Aspect International Network Member**, you're not just gaining access to resources — you're becoming part of a **global movement to drive innovation, impact, and engagement in SHAPE commercialisation**.

Aspect Membership Options

Aspect offers three membership tiers: **Network Member**, **Hub Member**, and **International Network Member**. Each tier provides a unique set of benefits, outlined in the table below.

One of the key advantages of Aspect membership is that it applies to your entire institution. This means that all staff — whether in professional services or academic roles — can access and benefit from the opportunities and resources available through Aspect.

Benefits	Network Member	Hub Member	International Network Member
Access to resources for academic & PS staff across the institution(s)	✓	✓	✓
Personalised Membership Platforms		✓	✓
Free access to self-learning training	✓	✓	✓
Free live training		✓	
Subsidised live training	✓		✓
Customised SHAPE Skills micro-credentials	✓	✓	✓
Membership of the Aspect Steering Group		✓	
Free places at events		✓	✓
Subsidised places at events	✓		
Qualifies for Aspect Testbed funding	✓	✓	
Opportunity to participate in Aspect Testbed projects	✓	✓	✓
Activities featured in SHARE meetings		✓	✓
Tailored communications		✓	✓
Customised Annual Reports	✓	✓	✓
Bespoke offering (including network governance consultation)			✓
	£2,000	**£10,000**	**£12,000**