



## Call for speakers and sponsors

# PlusEquals5

Future Software Engineering

One-day conference gathering industry leaders, academics and commentators to share their predictions for the future.

Through presentations and discussion sessions, attendees will consider important questions for the future of the industry over the next five years.

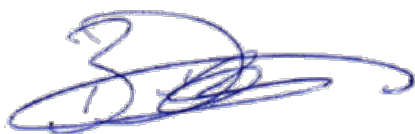
## Introduction

I am delighted to invite you to participate in our upcoming conference, PlusEquals5, taking place in Edinburgh on 17th April 2025. The tech industry has always been a rapidly evolving landscape, with established trends like cloud computing, blockchain, and cybersecurity driving innovation for years. The recent emergence of large language models has added an exciting new dimension, accelerating progress and unlocking unprecedented possibilities across industries.

As a teaching-focused university, Edinburgh Napier's priority is to ensure that our graduates possess the skills that industry demands. To achieve this, we must look five years ahead to anticipate future trends and prepare our students for the evolving job market. PlusEquals5 has been designed to stimulate discussions around these technological trends and how they might shape the software engineering landscape over the next half-decade. By hearing directly from industry leaders, we aim to stay ahead of these changes, ensuring our programmes remain relevant while also fostering a flow of skilled graduates into the workforce. However, this conference is not solely about the University – it's an opportunity for all participants to gain insights, share predictions, and discuss challenges across a broad spectrum of industry sectors.

In addition to a compelling formal agenda, the conference programme includes valuable networking opportunities. Whether you're interested in collaborating with Edinburgh Napier on research and development initiatives or building relationships across sectors, there will be plenty of opportunities to connect. Our ambition is for PlusEquals5 to become an annual event, complementing established highlights like ScotSoft and DIGITExpo in the Scottish tech calendar.

Please **contact me directly** once you have reviewed the call for speakers and sponsors in the rest of this document. I look forward to discussing ways that we can work together to make the event as successful as possible.



Dr Brian Davison

Event organiser

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## About the event

PlusEquals5 is designed to explore the future of software engineering and address the key trends, challenges, and opportunities the industry will face over the next five years. Hosted at Edinburgh Napier University's Craiglockhart Campus, this event brings together industry leaders, academics, and innovators to share insights, exchange ideas, and shape the direction of the field. Located in the vibrant city of Edinburgh, Craiglockhart Campus offers a modern, accessible venue with state-of-the-art facilities, free on-campus parking, and an inspiring setting for meaningful discussions and networking.

The day will feature plenary sessions delivered by recognised speakers, offering visionary perspectives on topics such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and the evolving skillsets required for software engineers. These sessions will lead into themed breakout discussions, where attendees can delve deeper into specialised topics, engage with experts, and collaborate with peers on critical issues shaping the industry.

Throughout the day, attendees will enjoy lunch and refreshments, provided as part of the conference experience, ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere for learning and networking. The event will conclude with a social drinks reception, offering a relaxed setting to reflect on the day's discussions and forge valuable connections with fellow attendees.



## Invitation to present

We are delighted to invite thought leaders from a diverse range of industry sectors to contribute as speakers or panellists. We are particularly eager to hear from professionals in **financial services, energy and utilities, public sector, telecommunications, and manufacturing**, whose perspectives will enrich our discussions and provide valuable cross-sectoral insights. Speaking opportunities are available in both **themed breakout sessions** and **general-interest plenary talks**, allowing contributors to engage with an audience of industry peers, academics, and students while showcasing their expertise and vision for the future. Possible themes are outlined below as a jumping-off point, but we are also open to other suggestions that align with the conference's goals.

### Friend or Foe? The Role of AI in Software Engineering

- How AI tools like generative coding assistants (e.g. GitHub Copilot) are changing the development lifecycle.
- The potential for AI to automate repetitive coding tasks and improve developer productivity.
- Balancing reliance on AI with maintaining robust coding standards and quality.

### Future-Ready Engineers: What Skills Will Matter Most?

- Emerging skills that software engineers will need in future.
- The balance between technical skills (e.g. AI/ML, cloud) and soft skills (e.g., communication, problem-solving).
- Strategies for continuous learning and career resilience in a rapidly evolving industry.

### Empowering Citizen Developers: Threat or Opportunity?

- Implications of low-code/no-code platforms for developers.
- Balancing streamlined workflows with new challenges (e.g. integration, scalability).
- Best practices for collaboration between citizen and professional developers.

### Greening Software Development: The Path to Sustainability

- Strategies for reducing the carbon footprint of software.
- The role of software in driving sustainability across industries (e.g. energy management, resource tracking).
- Educating software engineers on sustainable development principles.



### Cybersecurity in 2030: Challenges and Innovations

- Countering evolving threats like quantum computing and AI-powered cyberattacks.
- Building inherently secure applications through DevSecOps practices.
- The role of AI in identifying vulnerabilities and strengthening software defences.

### From Coder to Strategist: Rethinking the Engineer's Role

- The shift from technical to higher-level problem-solving and strategic roles.
- Navigating the increasing collaboration between engineering and other disciplines.
- Preparing software engineers for leadership and cross-functional collaboration.

### Designing for Everyone: Ethics and Inclusion in Tech

- Addressing bias in AI algorithms and software products.
- Designing applications that are accessible to all users, regardless of abilities or backgrounds.
- Building a culture of inclusivity within development teams.

### Quantum Disruption: The Next Frontier in Computing

- Understanding quantum computing and its impact on software engineering.
- Use cases for quantum computing in problem-solving and optimisation.
- Preparing today's software engineers for the quantum revolution.

### The Edge of Innovation: Cloud and Beyond

- Trends shaping the future of cloud computing and edge technologies.
- Opportunities and challenges in edge computing for real-time applications.
- Skills and tools developers need to succeed in a cloud-native world.

### The Next Wave of Open Source: Innovation Through Community

- Evolution of open-source and its role in driving innovation.
- Challenges around security, funding, and maintaining open-source projects.
- Building effective collaborations between corporations and the open-source community.

### Code for Good: How Software is Shaping Tomorrow

- The societal impact of software engineering, from healthcare to education.
- Balancing commercial goals with ethical responsibilities.
- Leveraging software for solving global challenges like climate change and inequality.

### The Software Curriculum of 2025: Are We Ready?

- Updating academic programmes to meet future industry needs.
- Bridging the gap between academia and industry expectations.
- Collaborating with universities to prepare future-ready engineers.

### The Rise of Intelligent Machines: Software's Role in Automation

- Software for autonomous systems – robotics, drones, and industrial automation.
- Opportunities and challenges of AI-driven robotics in industries like manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics.
- Convergence of hardware and software in robotics applications.

### Disrupt or Be Disrupted: Navigating Technological Change

- How current and emerging technologies are reshaping your industry.
- Challenges and opportunities with disruptive trends such as AI, blockchain, IoT, and 5G.
- Strategies for innovation and competitiveness.
- Case studies.

## Sponsorship opportunities

We offer a range of sponsorship packages designed to provide targeted visibility and engagement opportunities for our partners. Sponsorship is an excellent way to position your brand as a leader in the software engineering field while connecting with industry professionals, academics, and decision-makers from diverse sectors.

Each package has been carefully curated to deliver value through tailored benefits such as branding prominence, speaking opportunities, exhibition space, and access to networking sessions. All sponsorship packages include your logo on conference materials, acknowledgement of support during plenary sessions and access to attendee demographics and insights after the event.

## Pricing schedule

|                 |   |                         |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|
| <b>Platinum</b> | Stand out as the sole Platinum Sponsor with premium branding, keynote opportunities, and unparalleled visibility.                                     | £5000                   |
| <b>Gold</b>     | One of an exclusive group of up to nine sponsors, gain breakout session branding, thought leadership, and targeted audience engagement opportunities. | £2000                   |
| <b>Silver</b>   | Logo placement, brand visibility, and alignment with innovation.  | £500 or in-kind support |
| <b>Social</b>   | Exclusive branding, speaking opportunity, and direct engagement at the closing drinks and networking session.   | Food and drink costs    |

## Platinum sponsor

As the Platinum Sponsor, you would benefit from maximum exposure and exclusive privileges to position your brand as a leader in software engineering innovation. This premium package ensures your company's visibility before, during, and after the event, allowing you to engage meaningfully with delegates and industry leaders.

## Pre-conference benefits

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Logo and branding prominence</b> | Prime placement of your company's logo on all conference promotional materials, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Event website with a direct link to your website.</li><li>• Email campaigns and newsletters sent to delegates and mailing lists.</li><li>• Social media promotion using hashtags like #PlusEquals5, #EdinburghNapier, and #SoftwareEngineering.</li></ul> |
| <b>2. Exclusive sponsor highlight</b>  | A dedicated feature in the pre-conference email to all delegates, showcasing your company and its contributions to software engineering.   |
| <b>3. Promotional material</b>         | Full-page advertisement in the conference program.<br>Quote from your company in press releases and other marketing communications.  |

## On-site benefits

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Keynote sponsor     | Opportunity for a senior representative to introduce the keynote session with brief opening remarks. |
| 2. Exhibition space    | Premium exhibition station in the central networking area for direct engagement with delegates.      |
| 3. Lunch sponsor       | Special thanks in the lunch announcement.  |
| 4. Branding visibility | Your logo featured prominently on conference stage projections, delegate badges and event signage.   |
| 5. Branded materials   | Placement of branded items (e.g., notebooks, pens) on delegate tables.                               |

## Post-conference benefits

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Thanks and recognition   | Dedicated thank-you post on social media platforms with your branding.  |
| 2. Content collaboration    | Opportunity to publish a thought leadership article on the conference website or post-event email, highlighting your organisation's expertise in software engineering and future-oriented approach. |
| 3. Continued brand presence | Your logo displayed on the conference website and recorded session materials for six months post-event.   |

## Gold sponsor

The Gold Sponsorship package provides a high-impact opportunity to position your organisation as a thought leader in the software engineering industry. As a Gold Sponsor, you will receive exclusive sponsorship of a themed breakout session, enabling you to align your brand with cutting-edge discussions on a key topic. These sessions, lasting one hour, are structured to provide in-depth exploration through a combination of expert presentations and interactive dialogue. Each session includes three separate speakers or a mix of two speakers and a discussion panel, giving attendees diverse perspectives and actionable insights. The Gold Package is ideal for organisations looking to influence the industry narrative and connect with a highly engaged and professional audience.



## Benefits

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Exclusive breakout session sponsorship | Showcase your organisation as a leader driving forward key conversations within the software engineering community.   |
| 2. Thought leadership opportunities       | Position your organisation as a key innovator by introducing or moderating the breakout session.<br><br>Share your insights and expertise by aligning your brand with a specific topic relevant to the evolving software industry.  |
| 3. Premium branding and visibility        | Prominent placement of your company's logo in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Session materials, including slides and programs.</li><li>• Digital and physical conference materials.</li><li>• On-site signage for the breakout room.</li></ul> Reinforce your brand's presence and visibility to attendees before, during, and after the event. |
| 4. Audience engagement                    | Establish meaningful connections with an engaged audience of software engineers, industry leaders, academics, and decision-makers.  |
| 5. Long-term brand association            | Your sponsorship ensures your brand is remembered as a proactive supporter of innovation and professional development in the software engineering field.<br><br>Continued brand exposure via conference recordings and post-event communications.   |

This sponsorship places your organisation at the forefront of the conversation, ensuring your brand is associated with innovation, expertise, and thought leadership. Additionally, your company's logo and branding will feature prominently in the session materials, on signage, and in the official program, reinforcing your visibility to attendees before, during, and after the event. You also have the opportunity to introduce the session or moderate the discussion, further enhancing your engagement with the audience.

## Silver sponsor

The Silver Sponsorship package offers an accessible opportunity to showcase your brand to a highly engaged audience of software engineering professionals, academics, and industry leaders. For a modest financial or in-kind contribution to the conference, your organisation can align itself with a forward-thinking initiative that explores the future of software engineering connecting your brand with key players across industries and demonstrating your commitment to advancing the field of software engineering.

## Benefits

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Logo placement        | Your logo will feature prominently in the event's digital and physical materials, ensuring visibility to all attendees.                       |
| 2. Brand association     | Position your organisation as a supporter of innovation and professional development in the software engineering field.                       |
| 3. Affordable engagement | Gain exposure without a large financial commitment, making this package ideal for organisations looking to enhance their profile efficiently. |

## Social sponsor

Join us as the exclusive sponsor of the PlusEquals5 closing reception, a relaxed and engaging drinks and nibbles session that concludes the conference. This informal gathering provides attendees with an invaluable opportunity to network, reflect on the day's insights, and forge connections in a friendly and casual atmosphere. Sponsoring the closing reception positions is a great opportunity to leave a lasting impression at the culmination of an impactful event.

## Sponsorship Benefits

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Prominent branding       | Your company logo displayed on the drinks and food tables, and in the event program.  |
| 2. Acknowledgment           | Recognition as the session sponsor during the closing remarks and on all conference materials promoting the social session.             |
| 3. Engagement opportunities | Option to include branded items (e.g., cocktail napkins, glassware, or giveaways) and distribute company literature during the session. |
| 4. Speaking opportunity     | A short welcome or closing speech to address attendees, highlighting your organisation's role in supporting the conference.             |
| 5. Customisable hospitality | Food and drink can be provided by the conference host or tailored to reflect your organisation's unique style and preferences.          |

## Exhibition

We are inviting organisations to exhibit at PlusEquals5, offering the opportunity to showcase your products, services, or innovations to a highly engaged audience of software engineering professionals, academics, and industry leaders. Exhibitor stations will be strategically located near the refreshment areas during breaks, lunch, and the final drinks reception, ensuring maximum visibility and interaction with delegates throughout the day.

This is a prime opportunity to connect directly with key decision-makers, build brand recognition, and generate meaningful leads in an informal, high-energy networking environment. Space is limited due to venue capacity, so early applications are encouraged to secure your place at this impactful event. Join us and make your organisation a visible part of the conversation shaping the future of software engineering.

### Exhibition cost

**Single station**     Including desk, chairs, power and poster display space     £250

## Marketing and promotion plan

The success of PlusEquals5 is built on a comprehensive and strategic marketing and promotion plan designed to maximise visibility and engagement for the conference and its sponsors. Through a combination of digital campaigns, media outreach, and community engagement, we will ensure widespread awareness among software engineering professionals, industry leaders, academics, and decision-makers. Our targeted efforts will highlight the event's innovative themes, respected speakers, and valuable networking opportunities, creating a buzz that resonates across multiple platforms. In particular, we will be taking advantage of our membership of ScotlandIS to attract participation from leading tech companies in Scotland as well as the University's extensive network of alumni.

### Marketing schedule

**Nov – Dec 2024**     Establishment of conference identity and online presence including website and associated hashtags such as #plusequals5.  
Programme development and speaker recruitment.  
Early awareness email campaign through using University lists and direct messages to selected industry contacts.

**Jan – Feb 2025**

Announcement of confirmed keynote speakers and breakout themes on the website and social media.

Press releases issued to traditional and digital media outlets.

Publication of speaker interviews or short videos introducing their session topics.

Publication of blog posts and/or thought leadership pieces related to the conference themes.

Partnership with professional associations, universities, and relevant organisations to share the event with their networks.

Promotion on social media with countdown posts and event highlights.

**Mar – Apr 2025**

Regular email updates sent to registrants about event highlights, speaker announcements, and logistics.

Word-of-mouth campaign where registrants are encouraged to share their participation on social media.

Work with tech journalists and influencers to promote the event.

Press kits and detailed event information shared with media outlets.

Final agenda shared on social media.

Last call for participation communicated via all channels.

**During the event**

Video capture of plenary talks for later public release.

Real-time updates, photos, and quotes from sessions posted on social media.

Engagement with attendees online by responding to comments and sharing their posts.

Ad-hoc interviews with attendees for use on social media after the event.

**Post-event (May 2025)**

Publication of session recordings.

Post-event wrap-up blog, summarising highlights and including photos and links to video recordings of sessions.

Thank-you email to attendees, speakers, and sponsors with links to event resources (e.g., session slides, recordings).

Attendees encouraged to complete feedback survey.

Attendee testimonials shared on social media to build momentum for future events.

## About us

Founded in 1964, [Edinburgh Napier University](#) is deeply connected to the world around it, offering personalised learning and research opportunities that nurture talent, create knowledge, and shape global communities. As one of Scotland's largest universities, we host over 20,000 students from 150 countries studying in Edinburgh, online, and with international partners. We are renowned for our student diversity, graduate employability, global reach, and strong business engagement.

Our achievements are globally recognised, including **five-star ratings** for teaching, employability, and internationalisation in the **2019 QS Stars rankings**, and two **Queen's Anniversary Prizes** for impactful research. With a global alumni network of 150,000 graduates in 180 countries, our reach continues to grow.

Ranked the **top Scottish modern university** in the [Times Higher Education University Rankings 2025](#) and number one in Edinburgh for student satisfaction ([NSS 2020](#)), we deliver an excellent student experience. Nine subjects also achieved **100% satisfaction** in the National Student Survey.

Through extensive industry connections, our courses are co-designed with businesses, providing students with work placements, accredited qualifications, and graduate job opportunities. With **95% graduate employability** ([HESA 2017/18](#)) and support for over 500 start-ups through our business incubator, we remain committed to shaping future leaders and innovators.

