

# ACE-CSE NEWSLETTER

Q1 2026

## WELCOME

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Queen's ACE-CSE Newsletter! We're pleased to share the latest updates, achievements, and events from across the cyber security community at Queen's University Belfast. Together, we continue to advance Queen's cyber strategy - building skills, awareness, and innovation through education, research, and collaboration, while strengthening cyber resilience across the University and beyond.


## CYBERFIRST EMPOWER GIRLS



EEecs and CSIT supported the 2026 CyberFirst Empower Girls event in Belfast, held in the Waterfront ICC on 19<sup>th</sup> March. Over 700 Year 8 girls (ages 11-12) participated on the day from 23 different schools across Northern Ireland, alongside more than 60 companies, organisations, and many volunteers from across the tech ecosystem. Our fantastic volunteers were kept busy with keen pupils trying out VR headsets with Dr. Ciara Rafferty, and AR games with Dr. Matthew Collins. Aimee Keatch, Student Recruitment Officer, along with QSEC members hosted an inspiring demo session for the pupils to create a password pet using the BBC Microbit and encouraging the girls to be aware of good password security practices.


### TRUSTWORTHY AI CHRONICLES PODCAST

With 14 episodes released so far and new episodes coming soon, tune in to hear from industry, government and academic experts about trustworthy and secure AI systems.

 Listen now on Spotify and YouTube.

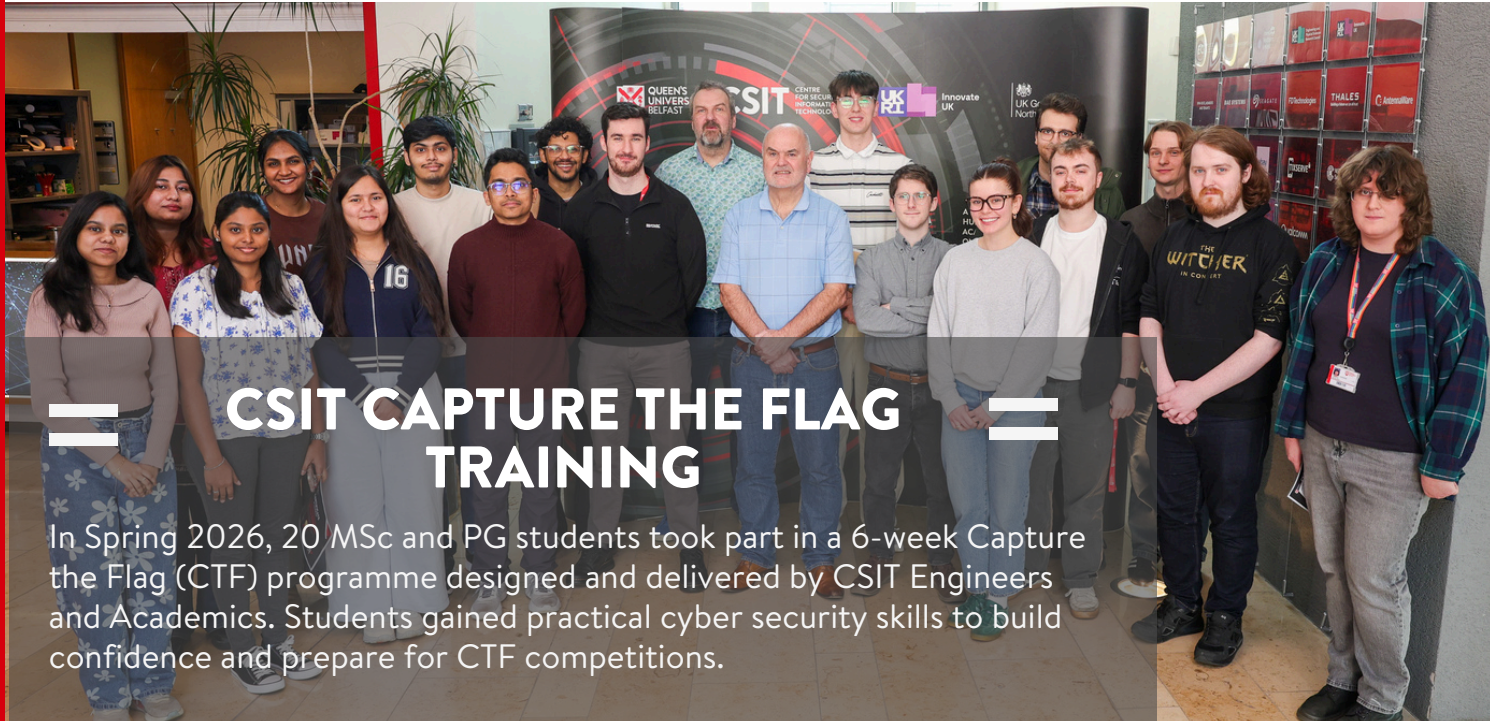
### EXCITE IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

Since the roll-out of the web-browser version of the EXCITE immersive cyber security experiences student training in Autumn 2024, over 1850 students have tried the experiences.

 Best performing School in Spring 2026: School of MDBS (Centre for Biomedical Sciences Education).

### CYBERFIRST ADVANCED COURSE

In February, QUB joined the CyberFirst Advanced Course hosted at Belfast Met to discuss QUB and CSIT study and career opportunities with A-Level students from across NI and to demo the EXCITE VR cyber security experiences.



## CSIT CAPTURE THE FLAG TRAINING

In Spring 2026, 20 MSc and PG students took part in a 6-week Capture the Flag (CTF) programme designed and delivered by CSIT Engineers and Academics. Students gained practical cyber security skills to build confidence and prepare for CTF competitions.

## QSEC PHISHERMEN PLACE 3<sup>RD</sup> IN UK CYBER LEADERS CHALLENGE

In March 2026, a team of four Queen's students were awarded third place in the UK Cyber Leaders Challenge. The competition, held at the BT Tower in London, aims to support higher-education students to explore a career in cyber strategy & policy. The students were tasked with creating a series of briefings to help the UK government understand and respond to a fictional cyber incident.



## DECEMBER SCHOOLS EVENT

In December 2025, CyberFirst NI and the ACE-CSE team, along with student volunteers from Queen's Cyber Security Society (QSEC) delivered a festive, hands-on cyber event for KS4 pupils in the Queen's Computer Science Building. Over 120 School pupils and their teachers came along to learn about Cyber Security and AI studies, careers, and opportunities across multiple disciplines through interactive sessions.



## CYBER NI WEEK

CyberNI Week (2–8 March) featured a range of events, including the CyberNI Conference at the La Mon Hotel on 3rd March.

Judith Millar delivered a talk on future directions in cyber security, while Dr Ihsen Alouani led a session on the Cyber-AI Hub and its role in advancing AI-driven security.

**QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST** **CSIT** CENTRE FOR SECURE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

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