

IoP joint APP & HEPP annual conference

Welcome Talk, 8th April 2026

Prof. Philip Best, Head of School of Physics & Astronomy



Welcome to Edinburgh!

A fantastic city – I hope you'll have time to explore it!



Welcome to the University

One of Scotland's four Ancient Universities

- founded in 1583
- 45,000 students
- 24 'Schools' including Physics & Astronomy



School of Physics & Astronomy

Our School has around 120 academic staff.

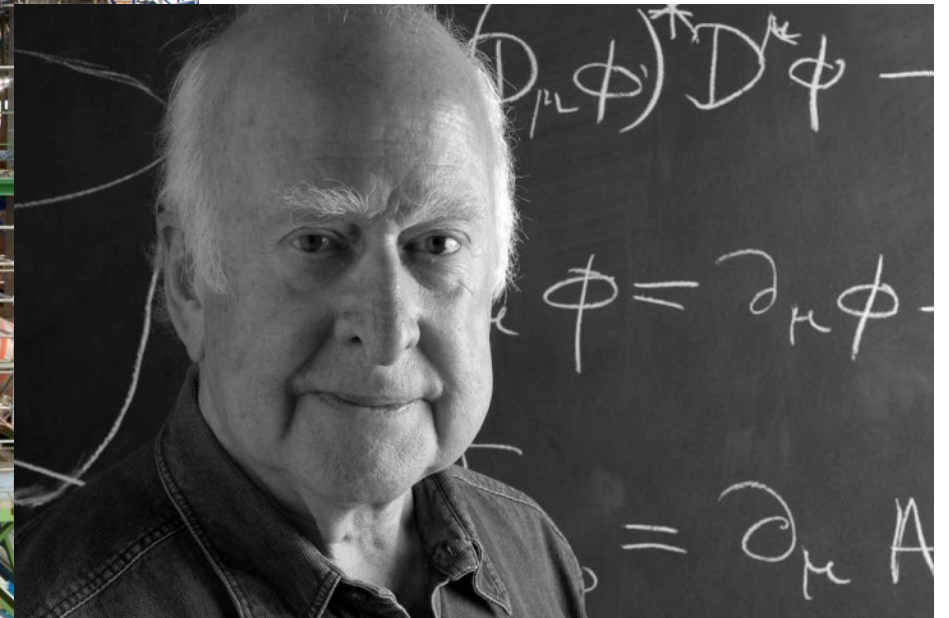
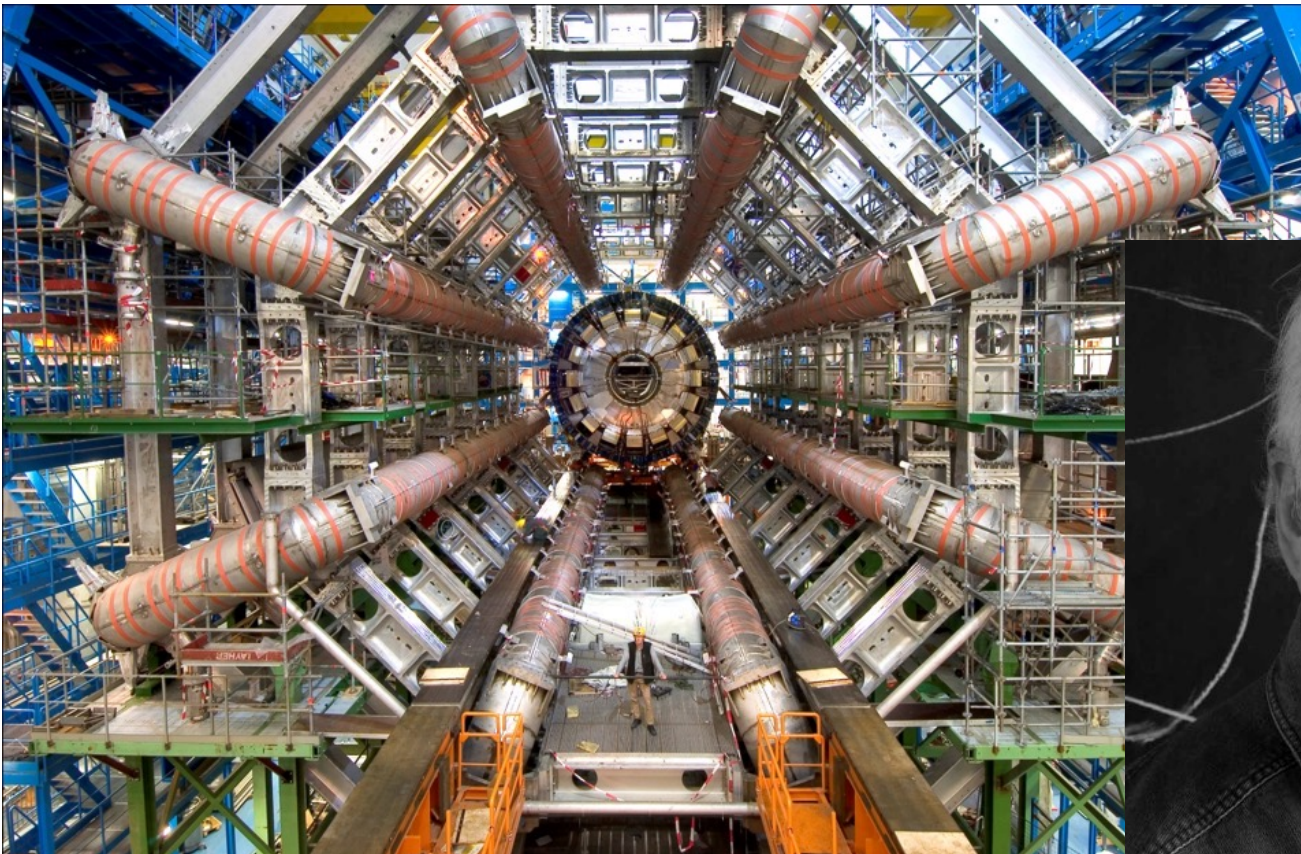
Split across three research institutes:

- Institute for Astronomy
- Institute for Condensed Matter & Complex Systems
- Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics



Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics

- particle physics theory, particle physics experiment, nuclear physics
- building on strong legacy from Peter Higgs' Nobel Prize
 - triumph for powerful combination of theoretical prediction & experimental confirmation!



Challenging times

- University funding crisis
 - Many Universities struggling with rising costs and decreasing overseas student numbers
- STFC's funding crisis
 - Cuts to grant-funding levels
 - Infrastructure projects de-prioritised, including LHCb upgrade
 - Considerable work ongoing at many different levels to make the case for the importance of PPAN science

But there are also opportunities

- We need to act as a community to make the case for funding from UKRI's so-called 'bucket 2' of strategic priorities
 - Digital technology, creative technology, advanced manufacturing

Exciting times

It's a time where there are fundamental questions to answer

- What is the nature of dark matter and dark energy?
- What is beyond the standard model?

And there are huge prospects of being able to answer them!

- Huge advances in detector technology
- New facilities and facility upgrades
 - high-luminosity LHC
 - XLZD (Boulby?)
 - DUNE, Hyper-Kam, IceCube-Gen2, etc
 - Future circular collider?
- Multi-messenger approaches
- AI and quantum technologies for data processing

Wishing you a successful meeting!

I hope you have a great week

- Enjoy Edinburgh
 - Make new collaborations
 - Have productive discussions
 - Have fun!
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- And thanks to the organizing team and to the IoP!