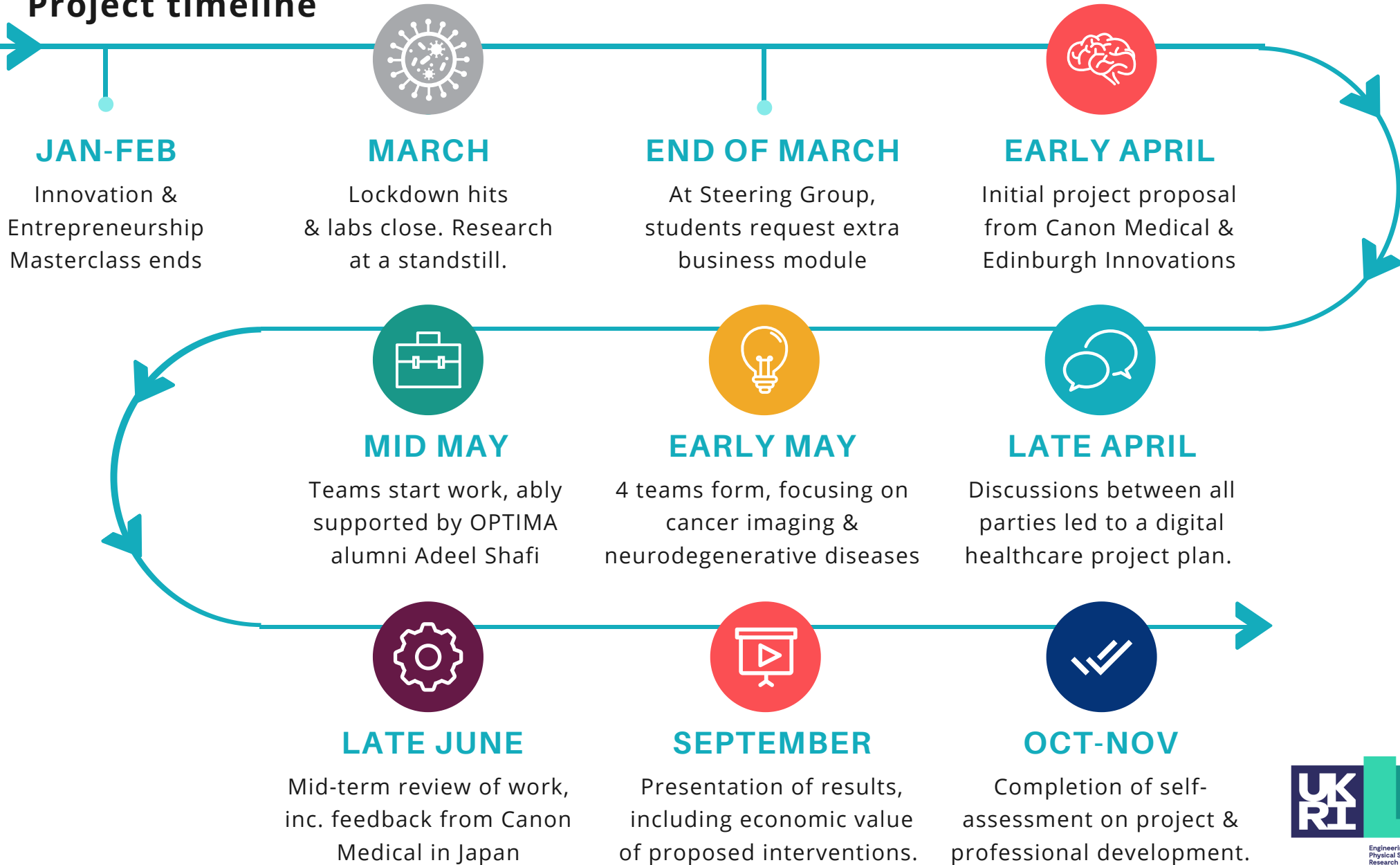


L. Mathieson (OPTIMA, 3rd year student), K. Ross (OPTIMA, Outreach Officer), K. Sutherland (Canon Medical Research Europe, President) & F. Kitagawa (University of Edinburgh Business School, Senior Lecturer)

## Project timeline





**Fumi  
Kitagawa**

“ OPTIMA PhD students’ learning experiences are transformative in nature, individually and collectively. 2020 has been particularly dramatic! The energy of the students, combined with their passion to tackle real-world health problems using novel technologies, led to a fantastic collaboration between academia and industry.

Driven by the students’ initiative and ideas, a new course (Business School Postgraduate Student-led Individually Created Course (SLICC)) was established quickly. Eight students worked in pairs to co-develop their projects with Canon Medical. The four projects focused on clinical pathways including; lung cancer, women’s cancers, Parkinson’s disease, and Multiple Sclerosis. The students drew on their learning from their 2nd year core course “Translational Studies – Innovation & Entrepreneurship Masterclass”. The new course was co-designed with Kirsty Ross (OPTIMA’s Outreach & Placement Coordinator) who integrated the Researcher Development Framework as a method for self-assessment of their skills, personal and professional development during their projects. These experiences will be further enhanced during their upcoming placements outwith academia.”

“ Throughout this project, we enhanced our knowledge of the medical technology field in addition to developing communication skills in working with an industrial partner. Feedback from Canon Medical staff at the half way point was incredibly valuable. The realisation that we, and the work that we do, has value and is of interest to others has had a profound impact. It is often easy to forget when working on your own PhD project that there is a bigger picture out there, a fact impossible to ignore during this collaboration.

As PhD students, we rely heavily on reading the work of other researchers in academic journals. However, in this project, the most important lessons we learnt on how to improve things for patients was by reading the experiences of patients themselves, frequently found on the websites of charities supporting patients with specific diseases. Were this project to take place outside the Covid-19 pandemic, we would have been able to speak to patient groups directly to find out their experiences.”

“ The limitations of the pandemic was itself a learning curve. This project helped to improve our student experience by encouraging communication as we worked collaboratively together, albeit in an online format. Overall, this project provided a fantastic opportunity as we developed a wide range of communication and collaborative working skills, all within the confines of our own homes.”



**Ken  
Sutherland**

“ As a technology company working in Healthcare, Canon Medical are always thinking about how technological innovation can have a positive impact on future healthcare delivery. Unfortunately we rarely get the time to delve into the detail of individual patient workflows to understand the potential of disruptive innovation.

Working with the PhD students has been great and through this collaboration we’ve been able to explore some clinical areas that we’ve not previously considered. The students brought their own knowledge and perspectives to each of the projects and provided us with some really useful ideas that we’ve now shared with our parent company in Japan. We’d be very keen to repeat this style of project in the future & to maintain links with this current group of students in the future.”



**Layla  
Mathieson**