

Start School

Call for Delivery and Communications Partner

Introduction

Start School is a new and exciting pilot programme for the West of England region and will be delivered by a consortium of four universities: The University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE Bristol), The University of Bristol, The University of Bath, and Bath Spa University.

The programme, funded by the [West of England Combined Authority](#), will provide a package of support and development for 150 pre-start and early formation tech/digital businesses across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset.

We will support founders at the very earliest stages of their journey to give them a better chance of success, and through inclusive and equitable recruitment processes and programme design, we will seek to address the underrepresentation of tech founders who are women, disabled, and/or from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

UWE Bristol is leading the programme consortium of universities, and we are seeking a delivery and communications partner to work with us for the duration of the project.

About UWE Bristol

UWE Bristol is recognised for its **strength and leadership through our wide-ranging economic activity and support for innovation and growth**. The University has successfully run a large number of economic development programmes across the South West, including [Scale Up 4 Growth](#) in the West of England and Gloucestershire and the [Digital Innovation Fund](#). We are passionate about supporting local economies and has awarded over £7m of grants to the region's businesses, generating £15m of local investment.

UWE Bristol's **University Enterprise Zone (UEZ)** - one of four UEZs originally commissioned by UK government - is based at our Frenchay Campus. The facility brings together the whole innovation pipeline, creating unique opportunities to drive forward enterprise, supporting the region's local economy. It includes

- [Future Space](#) - an innovation centre for around 50 fast-growth businesses
- [Launch Space](#) - an incubator for graduate and high-growth start-ups
- [HealthTech Hub](#) - tailored SME support for product testing and prototyping, advancing technology for independent living, health and well-being
- [Robotics Innovation Facility](#) - providing training, research and consultancy services to entrepreneurs, businesses, and public sector clients

About the programme

Start School has three key streams of activity, supporting 150 entrepreneurial ventures over the period:

- **Foundational training**, via a 28-hour focused programme of support, including workshops, training, peer learning, guest speakers, and specialist sessions.

- **Bursaries** for the 40 most promising ventures completing the 'Start School', granting them access to additional business incubation and support with consortia members. For instance, through [Launch Space](#), [SETsquared Bristol](#), and [the Studio](#).
- **Access to shared networks**, resources, and investor activation with follow on support for programme alumni, embedding them in the start-up community.

The role of the delivery and communications partner

We are looking to bring in a partner to work across the consortium to deliver key communication and marketing activities, as well as managing core elements of the 28-hour focused Start Schools, starting from November 2022. Delivery will continue until at least the pilot project closure on 31 March 2025. The successful partner will be required to participate in regular consortium meetings, and report on progress to UWE Bristol throughout the duration of the programme. The budget for this work is up to £50,000 inc. VAT. There may be additional funding available for marketing activities.

Communications and Marketing activity includes:

- **Development of an online content/learning hub** (website) for the programme - including web hosting, keeping this up to date, and enabling post-programme access.
- **Joint development and creation of marketing collateral**, including an “always-on” campaign.
- Working with the programme team to **create an accessible application process**, including early enquiries, enquiry sheets and coordination with consortium partners of the application process.
- **Reviewing applicant suitability** with the consortium.
- **Responsibility for marketing budgets and events**, including:
 - Putting together plans for and delivering marketing
 - Coordination, strategy, and delivery of budget, and bidding in for budget where required to spend cash on relevant sponsorship, event venues, etc (note: external budget is separate from this tender)

Quarterly Start Schools include:

- Working with the programme team to **coordinate and organise the core elements of quarterly 28-hr Start Schools**. Ensuring learners are supported by a relevant cohort mentor/manager for onboarding through to completion.
- **Delivery of teaching provision for start schools**, and co-ordinating other agreed elements, such as video content, ensuring each Start School meets the needs of that specific cohort of early-stage ventures (e.g., timings, location, access, and content)
- Acting as a **point of contact and regular meetings with cohort members**, ensuring at the end of the 28-hr Start School that there is a robust handover of cohort participants to the programme team for coordination of referrals and ongoing support.

Note: elements may be outsourced with consortium agreement, and the partner will be expected to manage this work and outputs.

The exact content of the Start Schools will be agreed with the consortium and will be determined based on discussions with the applicants, as well as the broader understanding of gaps in early-stage venture support.

Activities will specifically work with and support people from a range of backgrounds, who are underrepresented in the sector, to enable them to access benefits from the programme.

Commitment

The appointed partner will work with UWE Bristol staff across the duration of the project to determine timescales and schedules for delivery.

- The timings and locations of quarterly cohorts will be determined by the appointed partner, in conjunction with the UWE Bristol programme team.
- Outsourced elements of the 28-hr Start Schools will be established by the appointed partner, in negotiation with the UWE Bristol programme team.
- Quarterly cohorts will take place across the West of England region.

Payment

Payments will be made quarterly in Pounds (£), in arrears against expenditure incurred and evidenced during that quarter. The partner will need to be set up as a supplier to UWE Bristol and will be required to provide invoices for their services.

Applications

We are seeking a partner that has a broad and in-depth knowledge across early-stage tech/digital start-up support, has significant experience working with community groups, and can demonstrate extensive networks and reach in the West of England region.

Applicants must demonstrate:

- Examples of working closely with community groups in the region
- Significant experience delivering marketing budgets and events
- Experience of delivering/managing in-person start-up and early-stage venture support
- Extensive knowledge of the tech/digital start-up landscape in the West of England, including understanding of gaps in support for early-stage ventures
- Extensive networks and reach in the region

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Relevant experience (as above)
2. Delivery plan
3. Value for money
4. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
5. Environmental Sustainability

To apply, please provide a document explaining how you meet the above criteria and listing your areas of expertise. There is a budget of up to £50,000 including VAT for this work.

Please send applications to uwebusiness@uwe.ac.uk no later than 11.59pm on 30 October 2022.