

Start School

Call for Content Delivery 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 content delivery 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 focused programme of support, including workshops, training, peer learning, guest speakers, and specialist sessions.
- **Incubator places** for the most promising ventures completing the 'Start School', granting them access to additional business incubation and support with consortia members.
- **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 content delivery partner

We are looking to bring in a content delivery partner to deliver the four core modules across the programme. 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.

The content

A pilot cohort has taken place, following a similar delivery structure to the programme outline below:

Session One: The Founder & Founder Mindset

Duration: 2-3 hours

Learning outcomes: We will cover the nature of entrepreneurship, founder mindset, and entrepreneurial personality types. This will lead into an understanding of team roles, leadership and management and group working. A SWOT will enable participants to better understand the opportunities and threats that could shape their founder journey. We will look at the importance of time management, networking, and communication.

Outputs/decision point: Understanding of self, SWOT analysis. Understanding of what it means to lead a business.

Session Two: The Idea

Duration: 2-3 hours

Learning outcomes: Session two looks at the difference between good ideas and strong business ideas. We take a first look at design thinking and customer centric approaches. The participants will begin working on a value proposition canvas.

Outputs/decision point: Value proposition canvas in progress.

Session Three: The Solution

Duration: 2-3 hours

Learning outcomes: Building on session two, we will continue to build the value proposition canvas, looking at connecting the solution with customers. As well as looking at market opportunity and customer segments, we will look at how to put this into practice.

Outputs/decision point: Progression of value proposition canvas.

Session Four: The Plan

Duration: 2-3 hours.

Learning outcomes: In the final session, we will consolidate all the previous sessions with the completion of the Value Proposition Canvas. We explore the next steps with an introduction to frameworks such as the business model canvas and Simon Sinek's "start with the why". Finally, we will look at developing skills to explain and present business to external audiences in preparation for bursary pitching/applications.

Outputs/decision point: Completion of the value proposition canvas.

The initial contract is for **five cohorts**, with up to 30 attendees per cohort, and there may be an opportunity for additional cohorts in the future. Delivery will continue until at least project closure on 31 March 2025.

Each cohort will run flexibly, according to the needs of the cohort. Delivery may be required to take place during mornings, afternoons and evenings, and the timeframe of the programme for each cohort may vary in length. We will work with you to plan for this.

We anticipate, for example, an intensive cohort will require the content delivery partner to deliver up to 12 hours in one week, and longer programme would require the content delivery partner to deliver up to two hours per week across six weeks. Delivery will take place across the West of England region (Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset).

The successful partner will be required to participate in regular progress meetings, and report on progress to UWE Bristol throughout the duration of the programme.

Budget

The budget for this work is £15,000 including VAT. We will pay reasonable expenses, where agreed up front with UWE Bristol and in line with our expenses policy.

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 and has significant experience working with community groups.

Applicants must demonstrate:

- Examples of working closely with community groups in the region
- 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
- Experience of delivering to diverse groups and of supporting inclusivity

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.

Please send applications to uwebusiness@uwe.ac.uk no later than 11.59pm on 11 June 2023.