Request for Proposal: Training services for UK early-stage engineering and technology entrepreneurs

www.raeng.org.uk

Summary of invitation

The Royal Academy of Engineering is looking to engage a company to design and deliver content for entrepreneurs leading early-stage technology startups based in north west England. Training modules should be practical and practitioner-led, focusing on equipping participants with the appropriate skills, tools and techniques to establish and lead a technology startup from inception all the way through to launch, and provide a sound basis from which to scale according to their ambitions.

We look forward to receiving your solutions, as we seek to launch a new regional entrepreneurship acceleration initiative.

About our organisation

The Royal Academy of Engineering (Academy) harnesses the power of engineering to build a sustainable society and an inclusive economy that works for everyone.

In collaboration with our Fellows and partners, we're growing talent and developing skills for the future, driving innovation and building global partnerships, and influencing policy and engaging the public.

- As a charity, we deliver public benefit from engineering excellence and technology innovation.
- As a national academy, we provide progressive leadership for engineering and technology, and independent expert advice to government in the UK and beyond.
- As a Fellowship, we bring together an unrivalled community of leading business people, entrepreneurs, innovators and academics from every part of engineering and technology.

In everything we do, we are guided by our five values: progressive leadership, diversity and inclusion, excellence everywhere, collaboration first and creativity and innovation.

The Academy's strategy can be viewed here.

About the Enterprise Hub

The Royal Academy of Engineering Enterprise Hub supports the UK's brightest technology and engineering entrepreneurs to realise their potential.

We run three programmes for entrepreneurial engineers at different career stages. We offer equity-free funding, an extended programme of mentorship and coaching, and a lifetime of support through connection to an exceptional community of engineers and innovators.

The Enterprise Hub focuses on supporting individuals and fostering their potential in the long term, taking nothing in return. This sets us apart from the usual 'accelerator' model: the Enterprise Hub's programmes last between 6 and 12 months, and all programmes give entrepreneurs lifelong access to an unrivalled community of mentors and alumni.

Our goal is to encourage creativity and innovation in engineering for the benefit of all. By fostering lasting, exceptional connections between talent and expertise, we aim to create a virtuous cycle of innovation that can deliver on this ambition.

The Enterprise Hub was formally launched in April 2013. Since then, we have supported over 200 researchers, recent graduates and SME leaders awardees to start and scale up businesses that can give practical application to their inventions. We've awarded over £4 million in grant funding, and our Hub Members have gone on to raise over £400 million in additional funding.

Further information can be found here: www.enterprisehub.raeng.org.uk

Summary of the Regional Talent Engines programme

The programme is a new initiative for the Enterprise Hub, and aims to deliver a support programme for aspiring entrepreneurs based in four regions of the UK: Northern Ireland, north west England, north east England and Yorkshire and Humber. The short-term aims are to upskill talented and ambitious individuals who want to start up a new company in the engineering or technology sector in their own region, and the longer-term aims are to support new business, job and sustainable wealth creation across the UK.

The programme will be delivered locally in each region, connecting entrepreneurs with expert support, funding, training, mentoring, and connections to their regional ecosystem to continue their progress as well as to the Academy's vast network.

We will deliver the programme in two stages, with more individuals supported in phase one and then the best candidates selected to proceed to phase two.

Phase one

This will be a three-week part-time 'bootcamp' programme for up to 15 individuals designed to help refine the candidate's idea and business plan, giving them the skills to test and validate ideas, and develop a basic prototype for a product or service that is led by design for end users. The phase will culminate in a short pitch to a panel of judges for selection to the next phase, detailing their ideas, what they've learnt and what their next steps are to progress their innovation and business.

Phase two

This will be a longer 5-month programme to support the top 10 candidates, who will need to commit the vast majority of their time to pursuing the project. They will be provided with grant funding, business training and workshops, mentoring and coaching, and a variety of events, roundtables and clinics. They will be expected to carry

out ongoing customer discovery and validation as they prepare to launch a new business.

The profiles of candidates eligible for this programme are as follows:

- Recent leavers from Further Education colleges (graduated since September 2016) who have achieved a technical qualification – engineering or related subject – at level 3-5 (must be at least 18 to apply)
- Mid-/later- career engineers or technologists who have been working in skilled jobs and are seeking a career change

Applicants should have essential technical/engineering know-how and an aptitude for creativity, problem solving and design. They should already have an idea and practical application identified or early prototype for an identified problem/market need. The business idea should have the potential to scale and reach international markets. The innovation can be from any sector of engineering.

We anticipate there will be a variety of candidates participating in the programme with differing levels of experience and at different stages of idea and technology development, and encourage any training provider to maximise the opportunities for cohort interaction and peer learning.

Statement of requirements

1. **Summary:** the Academy is seeking a training provider to design and deliver content for entrepreneurs leading early-stage technology startups based in north west England. Training modules should be practical and practitioner-led, focusing on equipping participants with the appropriate skills, tools and techniques to establish and lead a technology startup from inception all the way through to launch, and provide a sound basis from which to scale according to their ambitions.
2. **Timing:** the services should be prepared in advance and ready to be delivered starting January 2022 to July 2022.
3. **Content:** the training should be tailored to the participants and should enable them to transform their innovation idea into a successful startup. It should provide them with a good level of understanding and awareness of the broad range of skills and knowledge required to run a startup. Following the training they may not be able to perform all actions themselves but should have enough knowledge to know what is important, why, and where to begin. Some aspects of how to startup, while essential, could be covered in written or video form so that training sessions can be focused on more practical learning. We have detailed below what we expect to be covered, and we are open to suggestions as to content, focus and delivery method. We expect some cross-cutting themes to run throughout all the modules: designing for scalability, value proposition, 30 second pitch, importance of data, cash is king, lean, team, validate all assumptions, 'kill pivot persevere'. All content and delivery should be of high quality and to the standard of comparative programmes delivered by the Enterprise Hub.

Phase one

Design thinking process and methodology	• How it can be applied to the problem, the solution, and business models throughout the startup journey, and in response to market or business challenges.
Methods to test and validate ideas	• How to talk to customers and stakeholders about your technology • How to conduct business experiments to validate assumptions
Design workshop and prototyping	• Embedding user experience throughout: product, digital and service design • Testing and iterating with users • Designing for sustainability and profitability • Options for rapid prototyping to test ideas
Business modelling, value proposition and strategy	• Common business models, how to assess market fit and evaluate different business models • Understanding value of ecosystem and value chain, and how positioning affects profit and ability to scale • How to give a 30 second pitch on their startup
121 enterprise clinic	• Appraisal of idea and first iteration of business plan and next steps ahead of pitch to judges
Phase two	
Building a team, leadership skills and company operations	• Personal leadership skills, culture and setting goals • Founding team, hiring staff, recruitment and building a winning team • The board, reporting and governance requirements • Equity, shareholders, term sheets, exits
Developing a marketing plan, sales skills and securing customers	• Digital and content marketing • Branding and positioning • Pricing strategies, sales funnel and forecasting • SPIN framework, productive conversations and networking
Communication, storytelling and pitch training	• Storytelling technique and constructing a narrative for your business • What to include in a 3 minute pitch • How to connect with and engage audiences, and project confidence to make an impact
Understanding finance and funding sources	• Day to day finances, cashflow, P&L, burn rate, break even, profit margin, pricing • Sources/types of finance, financial projections, startup valuation, what are investors looking for

Understanding the national and local innovation landscape	• Identifying future avenues for support • Types of support available

A diagnostic questionnaire should be run for each participant before the training begins so that the provider can assess current knowledge, stage and intentions and the training can be tailored to their needs.

4. Location: Training will take place both in-person at a venue in Liverpool (TBC) and also online if needed. The Academy will cover costs for venue, refreshments and meals for in-person training days.
5. Delivery: phase one training is expected to be delivered over five days during the course of three weeks. Phase two training is expected to be delivered over 6-7 days during the course of 5 months. Participants are likely to be based locally so we would envisage training days to be delivered between 10 – 5pm. The nature and interaction with any other activities is for the trainer to determine.
6. Method: Training should focus on skills, tools and techniques, rather than theory/knowledge as they can easily access such information elsewhere. Sessions should involve active, practical learning, the use of relevant case studies, or where participants can use their own new businesses as examples to work through exercises or situations, either individually or with peers.
7. Customisation: Each participant will have a different innovation, sector, background and experience, so we expect provision for each participant to also include 121s with trainers to enable tailored support and address any issues or concerns.
8. Peer support: Training should be delivered on a group basis in a lively and engaging manner to encourage the development of a collegiate atmosphere
9. Materials: Materials for training sessions should be made available to participants electronically. A list of additional resources for pre-session work or for further reading should also be provided for more straightforward aspects of training (available in read/listen/watch formats).
10. Experience: We expect the trainers to have direct experience of starting up or developing new businesses, preferably in the technology sector, as well as direct experience of coaching technology entrepreneurs. Knowledge and experience of the regional innovation landscape would be welcomed.
11. Provider expenses: All other training related costs should be factored into the proposal.
12. Feedback: Participants should be requested to submit feedback on each aspect of the training programme, and the results provided to the Academy for discussion at project review meetings so that any learnings can be implemented.
13. KPIs:
    o Deliver training on time, to budget and in line with agreed parameters (to be agreed at the inception meeting with the successful provider)
    o A proactive approach to delivery and customisation
    o High degree of customisation, ensuring the training course is designed in line with the cohort requirements, as indicated in the diagnostic
    o Achieve participant satisfaction of >90% with the learning outcomes of the training course
    o Produce a self-evaluation report at the end of the programme

- o Implement ongoing improvements, considering feedback from participants, the Academy and its partners
- o Lead regular contact with the Academy's programme management team via monthly teleconferences

Preference will be given to suppliers based in the region they are bidding for, however proposals for more than one region are also welcomed. We are currently requesting proposals for the north west and north east England regions.

Deadline for proposals: 25 October 2021

Schedule

Date	Activity Number	Activity
20 September	1	Issue of RFP (this document) to potential suppliers
18 October	2	Deadline for expressions of interest to receive further updates
18 October	3	Deadline for submission of RFP clarification questions to RAE
20 October	4	Deadline for RAE to respond to all clarification questions
25 October	5	Deadline for return of RFP
w/c 1 November	6	Deadline for initial evaluation of RFP
w/c 8 November	7	Presentations and interviews
w/c 15 November	8	Notification of preferred supplier
w/c 22 November	9	Meet with successful bidder

Please send your clarification questions and submissions to:

Sarah Gummer, Senior Manager Regional Entrepreneurship Programmes

Sarah.gummer@raeng.org.uk and please copy enterprise@raeng.org.uk

Note our mailbox size limit is 25Mb so for documents over this limit submitting a download link will be required.

Your response

You must include the following in your proposal:
- Content: outline of what will be delivered, by whom, and the method of delivery. Include learning outcomes.
- Customisation: Cover your approach to customisation, both to individual participants and to the Enterprise hub as a whole
- Schedule: Proposed schedule of training courses.
- Track record: Track record to date (including consortium partners where applicable) in delivering similar training programmes in technology entrepreneurship and innovation leadership please include short bios of individual trainers where appropriate

- **Cost:** overall cost for the delivery of the programme, including design, delivery, materials, travel, accommodation, and VAT. Please indicate if the number of participants will affect costs.
- **Organisation (e.g. consortium):** details of the consortium lead organisation, including company registration details, the latest set of annual accounts, an appropriate level of professional risk indemnity insurance. Where appropriate, memorandum of understanding (MoU) or similar to demonstrate commitment from all consortium members.
- **References:** please provide the contact details of two referees. We will only contact them should your proposal still be in consideration post-interview.

Please state clearly which region(s) your proposal relates to in the email subject line and in the proposal document.

Budget

We anticipate spending £45,000 - £60,000 in total, inclusive of VAT.

Contract terms

The Academy's standard contract terms can be found here.

Scoring matrix

0	No Answer/Unacceptable Response
1	Very Poor Response
2	Poor Response
3	Acceptable Response
4	Good Response
5	Excellent Response

To score well (i.e. 3 and above) the evaluation panel will look for clear evidence. The scores will be weighted to give an overall score. The tables below indicate the weightings which will be applied to each section. The two highest scoring proposals will be invited to the Academy to present their proposal.

At interview, we will consider all criteria. The scores given before the interview may be amended following new information provided at interview.

The interview will be used as a principal means of scrutinising the proposals of shortlisted providers, based on their tenders. A fundamentally important requirement of

all providers is a capability to engage, collaborate and co-ordinate across all aspects of the project. Such matters may only effectively be judged by personal discussion with the key individuals who will be responsible for a provider's delivery.

For reasons described above, the assessment tenders will utilise the marking scheme set out below as one part of the assessment and the ultimate decisions will be taken as a result of:
1. consideration of the outcomes of the marking scheme;
2. the application of a wider mediating, reasonable professional judgement, in relation to criteria to which a marking system does not apply, or which does not provide a full and proper basis, absolutely, or relatively, of assessing all relevant aspects and factors; and
3. the reasonable professional judgement made in respect of the interview.

Selection criteria

Your response will be evaluated using the following

Section:	Programme Content			
Description of criteria		Score	Weighting	Max Points
Quality, appropriateness and novelty		0–5	5	25
All key training areas covered		Yes / No	Pass / Fail	
		Total	25	

Section:	Customisation			
Description of criteria		Score	Weighting	Max Points
Approach to Customisation		0-5	3	15
Additional services and technical assistance		0–5	1	5
		Total	20	

Section:	Track Record			
Description of criteria		Score	Weighting	Max Points
Expertise of the trainers		0-5	1	5
Experience of successful delivery of similar programmes		0-5	2	10
		Total	15	

Section:	Schedule			
Description of criteria		Score	Weighting	Max Points
The timescale to successfully deliver is realistic		0-5	1	5
Delivery process is clear and realistic		0-5	1	5
		Total	10	

Section:	Cost			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points	
Is competitively priced	Yes / No	Pass / Fail		
Has accounted for all cost to deliver proposal	0-5	1	5	
Expenditure broken down and pricing clear	0-5	1	5	
Appropriateness of the budget / expenditure	0-5	1	5	
	Total		15	

Section:	Organisation			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points	
Suitability of the organisation	0-5	2	10	
Suitability of the selection process for trainers	0-5	1	5	
Client References - suitability of nominated references	Yes / No	Pass / Fail		
Client References - quality of reference received back	Yes / No	Pass / Fail		
Numbers of staff proportionate to services tendered	Yes / No	Pass / Fail		
Appropriate processes and procedures for appointing trainers	Yes / No	Pass / Fail		
	Total		15	

If you wish to receive any additional or updated information, please ensure that you register interest prior to submitting the proposal. All proposals must remain valid for a period of **90 days** from the date of submission by the vendor. This RFP and the information contained within it are deemed to be confidential information. Proposals must include information about costs and state whether these do or do not include VAT or any other levies. By submission of a proposal, the vendor warrants that the prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation or agreement with any other potential vendor.*