Royal Academy of Engineering | Enterprise Hub

Regional Talent Engines

Essential Guidance Notes
September 2023

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Applications open: **18 September 2023**
Application submission deadline: **30 October 2023**
Programme starts: **March 2024**

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Who are we?

The Enterprise Hub

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The Royal Academy of Engineering Enterprise Hub supports talented entrepreneurs and decision makers to transform breakthrough engineering innovations into disruptive spinouts, startups and scaleups.

We look for bold, IP-rich innovations from all areas of engineering and technology that can solve the world's most complex environmental, economic, and societal challenges.

Why are we different?

Our entrepreneurs benefit from the unique, prestigious national and global network of the Royal Academy of Engineering that brings together expert Academy Fellows, industry pioneers, like-minded innovators, funders, business leaders, researchers, and policy makers.

We have delivered 10 years of success, enabling our members to form a powerful, thriving, and supportive community. We run four programmes at multiple stages, from ideation to scaleup, with support for entrepreneurial engineers at different career points. We don't take equity, fees or IP. Thanks to our charitable status, we can focus on supporting excellence in engineering by helping innovators to fulfil their potential, founding and leading enterprises.

What do we offer?

We offer smart and flexible training, and access to the unique mentoring capability of the highly talented engineers and business leaders that make up the Fellowship of the Academy, and the Hub's network of experts. The Enterprise Hub provides a dedicated presence across the UK, with hubs located in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, that embed training and opportunities into the local ecosystem. Hub Members gain long-lasting benefit and support from the Academy's global network and unmatched convening ability. Once you're part of the community, you're a Hub Member for life.

Background

The Enterprise Hub was formally launched in April 2013. Since then, we have supported over 350 researchers, recent graduates, and leaders of SMEs to start and scale up businesses that can give practical application to innovative engineering solutions. We've awarded over £11 million in grant funding, and our Hub Members have gone on to create almost 6000 jobs and raise over £1.3 billion in additional funding.

Further information about the Enterprise Hub can be found here: https://enterprisehub.raeng.org.uk

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Introduction
Regional Talent Engines

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The Regional Talent Engines programme aims to support the retention and circulation of engineering talent within local ecosystems, and help ambitious and technically minded individuals to upskill, gain confidence and launch new careers as entrepreneurs.

In the long term, the programme aims to support new business and job creation in regions across the UK and develop a community of successful engineering entrepreneurs from each region to inspire the next generation.

In September 2023, applications will launch for the programme in **Northern Ireland, Wales** and **Northern England** with training delivered in: **Belfast, Cardiff, Leeds, Liverpool** and **Newcastle**. The programme will support those at the early stage of their journey and help transform great ideas into new engineering solutions, getting businesses off the ground and ready to pursue further support.

Our support includes:

· Equity-free funding of up to **£20,000**

· A **tailored training** programme with workshops, roundtables and speaker events

· One-to-one **mentoring** and **personal development coaching**

· Workshops, roundtables and speaker events

· A cohort of **entrepreneurs to learn from** and share best practice with

· Access to our unrivalled network of investors, experts and advisors

The programme is funded by the UK Government. It is completely free to join – we do not charge fees or take an equity stake.

All we ask is that you participate fully to make the most of the support on offer.

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Who should apply?

We're looking for aspiring entrepreneurs who have an innovative engineering idea and the technical skills to make it a reality. You should be committed to pursuing your project as a new startup, ready to be established in the region.

We will be supporting experienced engineers through this programme:

· Experienced engineers and skilled tech professionals who have worked in a technical environment for at least 5 years and are seeking a career change as an entrepreneur.

· No age limit

· No qualification requirement

· No sector preference

Please note you cannot be a recent University graduate or a university academic employee (see Enterprise Fellowships programme). Technical employees with sufficient experience are eligible.

The Academy defines engineering in a broad sense, covering AI, robotics, space, medical, agriculture, clean energy and more. Software innovations must exhibit engineering as their core component and should be innovative and protectable.

We cannot accept ideas for mobile apps, websites or pure software-based creations unless they are underpinned by an innovative technology, such as AI, blockchain or machine learning.

The programme is intended for individuals who do not have the support structure to establish a startup. and need support to become business-ready. All awardees accepted onto the programme will be **expected to commit the vast majority of their time to the project** and cannot be in full time employment.

Individuals should have essential engineering or technical know-how and an aptitude for creativity, problem solving and design. They should be passionate about the problem they are aiming to solve.

We're committed to improving diversity and inclusion in engineering and we especially welcome applications from women and those currently underrepresented within the sector.

Eligibility criteria

You

- You must be 18 or over to apply
- You must be resident in the region that you are applying to take part in the programme or based in a nearby 'levelling up' region and able to attend training sessions in one of the stated locations
- You must have technical understanding in the area of your innovation
- You must have the right to live and work in the UK and be based in the UK full time
- You should normally be an experienced engineer or tech professional
- You must be able to commit time to taking part in the programme full time from March 2024
- You cannot be in full-time study, employment or taking part in another accelerator if accepted onto the programme
- Previous experience of commercialisation or enterprise is not required.

The application

- One person per application
- Only one application can be submitted by each individual
- Only individuals can apply

Your innovation

- You must have an innovative engineering or technology-based solution to an identified problem or market need that you have been involved in the development of
- Your innovation should be beyond invention stage (TRL2 or above) with a practical application identified, the concept formulated and the desire to develop a business proposition. If you already have an MVP (minimum viable product) then you are likely too advanced for this programme.
- Your startup should have the potential to be self-sustaining and scalable
- If you have already registered a new business, the innovation should not currently be available to the market other than as a prototype with limited sales
- The innovation must be your own and you must have the rights to use it
- You must be committed to establishing your new startup in the region where you are applying to take part in the programme or your nearby 'levelling up' region
- You should not normally have raised substantial amounts of funding for your innovation, as you will be too advanced for this programme
- We cannot accept applications from individuals wishing to start a consultancy business.

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NB. Recent university degree graduates (received their first degree in the last 5 years) or university spinouts are not eligible for this programme and should apply instead to the Enterprise Fellowships programme.

Programme details

The programme will be slightly different in each region. The general outline on this page is an overview of what can be expected.
This will be a six month programme to include training, mentoring and wider support.

Application stage

1. We will perform eligibilty checks, including an initial innovation and technical appraisal of your idea.

2. If you pass the eligibility stage, your application will be reviewed by expert reviewers.

3. If selected, you will be invited to prepare for a formal interview where you will be expected to present your project proposal in some detail to an interview panel and take part in a Q&A session. The panel will assess your proposal against programme criteria, and also the feasibility of next steps and your project plan.

Note: a short series of online training and 1-to-1 coaching will be offered to all candidates in the 2 weeks leading up to interviews to help with pitch preparation.

4. Each panel will select the top candidates to progress onto the programme, with up to 10 candidates per region offered a place.

Programme

The programme is designed to accelerate your startup journey and provide you with the confidence, skills and support to enable you to progress your innovation. Training, mentoring and wider support will be delivered over a six month period. Topics covered will include:

· Leadership, operations and building a team
· Marketing, sales and customers
· Communication and pitching
· Finance and funding sources
· Understanding the innovation landscape
· Design thinking process and methodology
· Methods to test and validate ideas
· Design workshop and prototyping
· Business modelling, value proposition and strategy.

Programme details

The programme training sessions will be delivered at a venue in each of the regions. Some sessions may be delivered online. Our delivery will take place in the cities below:

Northern Ireland
Belfast

Northern England
Leeds, Liverpool and Newcastle

Wales
Cardiff

Funding details
Candidates who receive an award will be provided with funding of up to £20,000. This is to support the awardee's living costs for the duration of the programme.

Eligible costs
Personal award: This should be spent to support your living costs and your growth as an entrepreneur while working on the programme. There are no restrictions on the way you use the money however, we will ask you for reports on your expenditure.

Travel costs for attending programme activities will be eligible for reimbursement in line with the Academy's expenses policy.
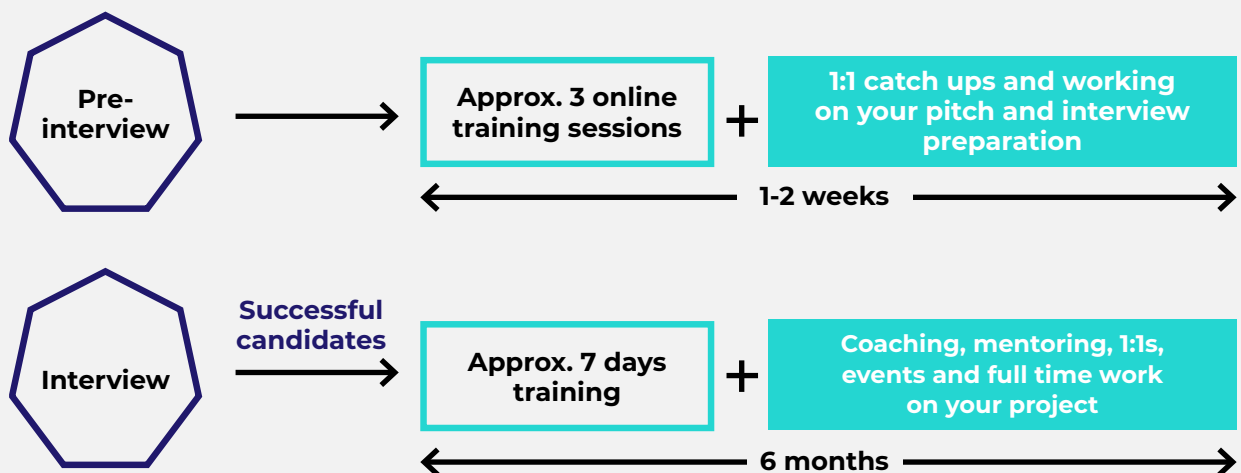
Reporting
If successful, you will be expected to provide progress reports and regular updates to the programme team. You will be required to provide an expenditure statement at the end of the award detailing how you used the grant funding.

Time commitment and key dates

The programme will be begin in **March 2024** and applicants must be able to commit for 6 months if successful.

Pre-interview → **Approx. 3 online training sessions** + **1:1 catch ups and working on your pitch and interview preparation**
← **1-2 weeks** →

Interview → **Successful candidates** → **Approx. 7 days training** + **Coaching, mentoring, 1:1s, events and full time work on your project**
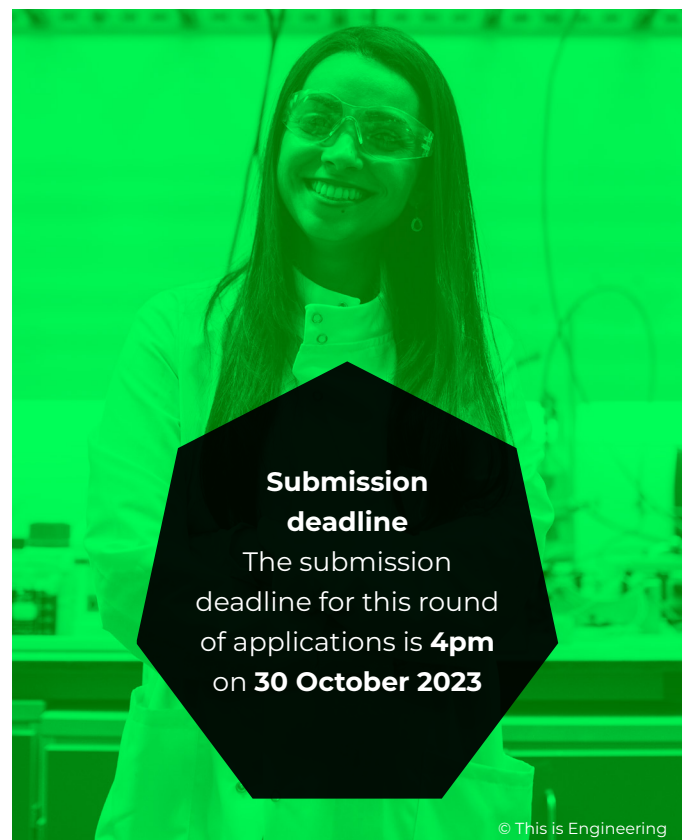← **6 months** →

On the first day of the programme, there will be a welcome session for all cohort members.

If you successfully complete the programme you will be invited to become a Hub Member, and you will continue to receive an exceptional package of lifetime support, including:
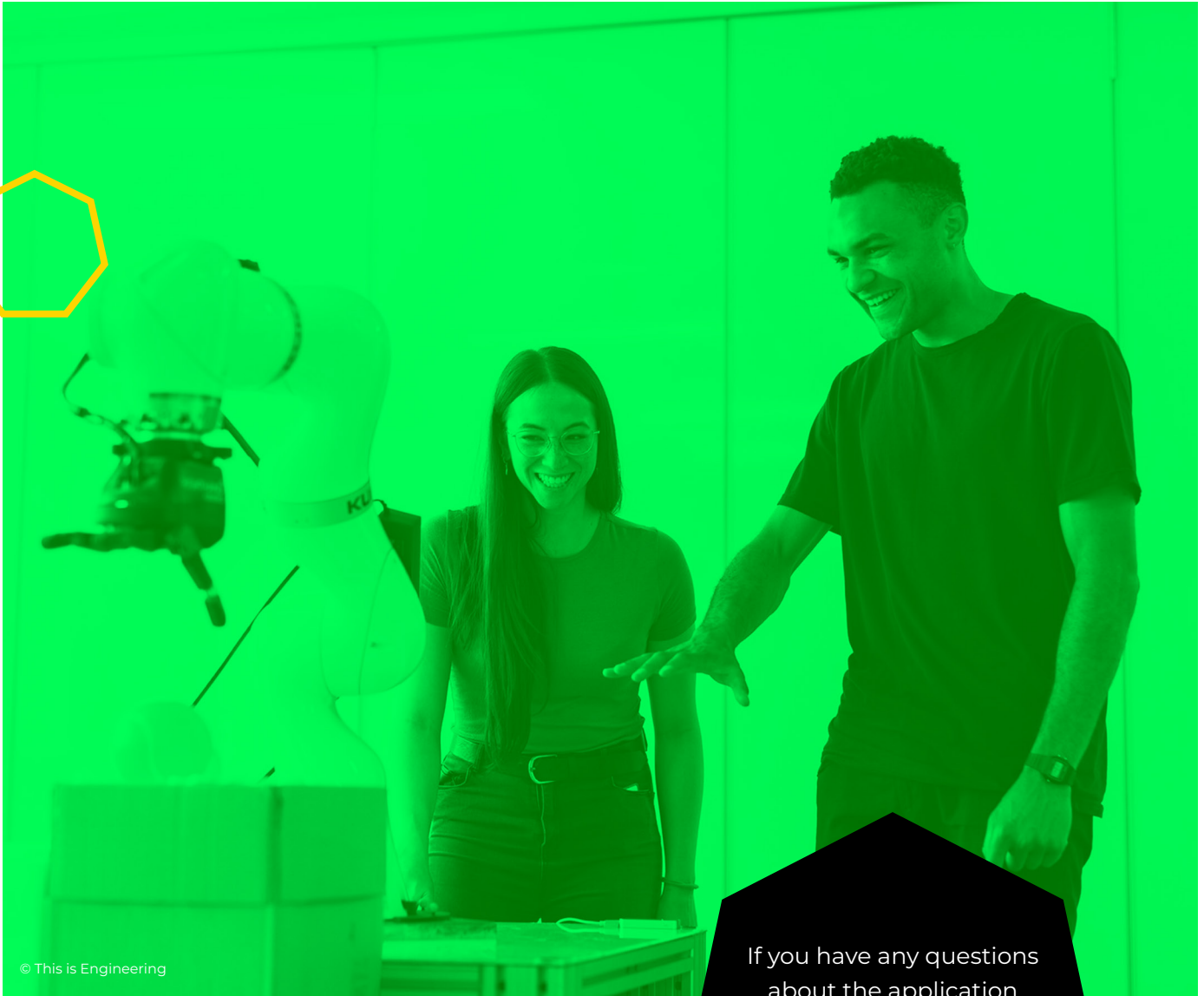
· Lifelong access to our co-working spaces in the Taylor Centre in London and the Ormeau Baths in Belfast
· Networking opportunities with investors, experts and Academy Fellows
· Further training, PR and media support.

See our website for profiles of mentors and Hub members.

We ask all Hub Members to help support UK engineering by passing on the skills they have learnt during the programme and taking part in events or other activities to help communicate the importance of engineering and entrepreneurship to wider audiences.

Submission deadline
The submission deadline for this round of applications is **4pm** on **30 October 2023**

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How to apply
Online application system

All applications must be submitted via the online system, available here: https://grants.raeng.org.uk.

All applicants must first register with the system and provide some basic log-in details to create a profile.

Once logged in, select **My Applications** in the top-left corner, and choose an application from the list of currently open programmes.

At any stage in the application process you can save your work, log-off and return to it later. The application has two main sections.

The questions in the application form are listed in the following pages. Many of the questions have prescribed word limits that are designed to keep your answers focused and to give you an indication of the level of detail we require.

You will have the option to download a pdf of your application after submission, which may be useful for future reference.

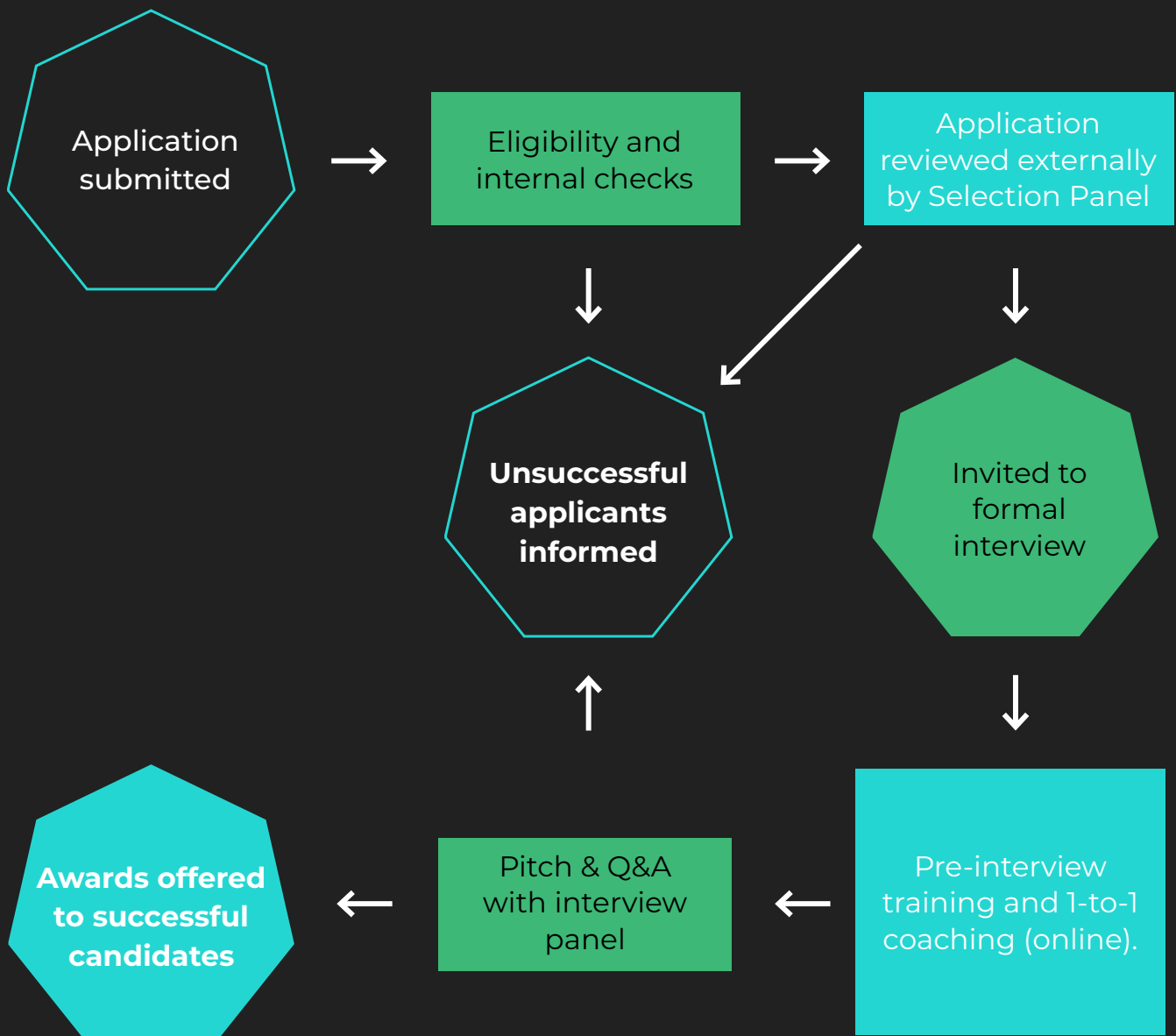The Academy will retain personal information as per our Data Retention Policy'.

If you have any questions about the application process or online system, please contact the Enterprise Hub team at **enterprise@raeng.org.uk**

Applicant journey

Application form
Your application is designed for you to tell us about yourself and your innovation, so we can assess your suitability and potential for the programme.

Interview
 You will be invited to share your proposal and the actions you plan to take in order to reach your milestones during a presentation and Q&A interview.

Application submitted → Eligibility and internal checks → Application reviewed externally by Selection Panel

↓ Unsuccessful applicants informed

Invited to formal interview

↓ Pre-interview training and 1-to-1 coaching (online).

← Pitch & Q&A with interview panel

← Awards offered to successful candidates

Assessment criteria

Each application will be reviewed by the Selection Panel, which includes Fellows of the Academy and representatives from the entrepreneurship and engineering community. Each application will be reviewed by at least two panel members, who will each give a score out of five, and then discuss the merits of the application. All panel members will have access to all applications and can contribute to the discussion, before an overall score is agreed upon. Candidates with the highest scores will then be invited to interview. Panel scores do not count at the interview stage, but review comments will be made available to the interview panel. Each application will be assessed against the criteria below:

1 – The applicant

· Their ambition and commitment
· Fit with the aims of the programme
· Nature and level of past achievements
· Evidence of their entrepreneurial motivation, desire to learn, business awareness, potential to act as a role model
· Commitment and passion to solving the identified problem
· Their potential to be coached and mentored, awareness of weaknesses
· Expertise that is noticeably absent, and plans to address this
· Expected benefits of the programme to the applicant.

2 – The innovation

· Technological credibility of the idea
· Quality and potential of the innovation
· Likelihood of the innovation being effective against competing technologies
· Potential to be delivered at scale
· The potential for benefits to the region, the UK economy and to the wider public.

3 – Commercial credibility

· Potential for a self-sustaining and scalable business
· Evidence of market need and scale of the problem
· Identification of a suitable target market
· Access to/identification of necessary facilities and expertise
· Potential to secure any necessary additional funding (grants/investment/boot-strap)
· Expected benefits to the region, the UK economy and to the wider public.
· The overall likelihood of success

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Completing the application form

The questions on the application form are listed below.

Section 1 – The applicant

Lead applicant details
The form should auto complete your details once you have registered with the system, but it is worth checking the details are correct and up to date.

Business details
If you have already registered a business, you will need to add the business address. (Note, you do not need to have registered a business at this stage).

Eligibility: you must meet eligibility criteria to apply and confirm by checking the box.
· Are you an experienced engineer or tech worker with more than 5 years experience working in a skilled engineering/technology job?

In which region are you applying to participate in the Regional Talent Engines programme?
Select one of the regions in the dropdown. You should be a resident in or near the region where you are applying to participate.

In which local authority area are you based?
Select the relevant local authority area where you have your permanent residence. You can select 'other' if your area is not listed.

What is your current employment status?
If accepted onto the programme you will not be able to be in full time employment. Depending on your answer, you may be asked further questions about whether the innovation you are applying with is a spinout from the company you are currently working for.

What is your current education status?
Please indicate if you are currently studying and if it is full or part time. You will also need to indicate if you have graduated with a first undergraduate degree in the last five years.

CV
Upload a copy of your CV (two pages maximum) that details your experience and qualifications.

Tell us about yourself and why you want to be an entrepreneur
What is it that appeals to you about being an entrepreneur, and why do you want to pursue this career path now?

Tell us about any previous entrepreneurship experience
Previous experience in commercialisation is not essential. If you do have any previous experience, please tell us here. If not, tell us what you might expect and why you are interested in it.

Why are you applying to the Regional Talent Engines programme?
What do you want to get out of this programme? How do you think it can help you to achieve your business goals?

Section 2 – the innovation

Project title
Enter the name of your project or business.

'Elevator pitch video'
Upload your 3 minute video using a video sharing platform link (eg vimeo, youtube, dropbox – you can make the video private but please make sure we will have access). The video should include what problem you're solving, what your idea is, your target market, and why you are the best person to take it forward. It can be filmed using any equipment, eg mobile phone.

Project start and end date
These should auto-fill for you, to 4 March and 30 September.

Completing the application form

What problem are you solving?
Tell us more about the problem – who experiences it, why it's a problem, how big it is, why it's important.

What is your engineering or technology solution?
Describe your innovation, whether it's a product or service, how it works, who it's for, why it's important.

Sector theme and engineering discipline
Choose one of the themes and one of the disciplines which best aligns with your technology solution.

Why is your solution better than what's currently available?
How is your innovation better than the competition? Will it be more effective, more efficient, more accurate? What are the USPs?

Tell us about the market opportunity you've identified and the practical application of your innovation
What market are you addressing and why? Who are the competitors? What do you know about your customers and any other key players?

How well developed is the technology
Select an option to describe the stage you are at with the development of your innovation. If you are further than prototype stage than it is likely you are too advanced to benefit from this programme.

Do you own the Intellectual Property of this innovation?
Tell us if you have the rights to the innovation and if the idea is your own, or if you have permission to use it from someone else.

Have you already registered a new company?
If you select 'yes' you will be asked if the company is already trading or has received investment. If you have already set up a company, the innovation should not currently be available to the market other than as a prototype with limited sales. You should not have raised significant investment, as the programme aims to help early stage companies get business-ready and you will be too late-stage.

Why are you committed to starting up a new company in your region in particular?
Tell us why you want to establish your new company in the region. What support can you access, and what difference can your startup make in the longer term (e.g. new jobs, new products).

Project plan
What goals are you working towards and what tasks do you need to complete to achieve them?

What do you feel you most need help with to progress your idea?
What support do you most need from the programme? What barriers are you facing to moving things forward?

Marketing – where did you first hear about the scheme?
Please tick one of the options.

Applicant declaration
Please read and confirm that you agree with the text in the declaration.

The Royal Academy of Engineering is a charity. Our overarching goal for 2025 is *"to harness the power of engineering to build a sustainable society and an inclusive economy that works for everyone."*

Information

Key dates

The submission deadline is 4.00pm (GMT) **Monday 30 October 2023.**

Applicants will be notified in December whether or not they have been selected to attend the pre-interview sessions which will take place in **January 2024**

Interviews will take place in **January 2024**, where you will be required to present to a regional interview panel.

Successful candidates will commence formal training in **March 2024** and finish in **September 2024.**

Guidance and FAQs

More information is available in our [FAQS.](#)

Visa requirements

The Academy cannot take any responsibility for applying for the visas/work permits required and cannot provide advice. There is no restriction on applicant nationality, but Applicants must be able to remain and work legally in the UK for the duration of the programme.

Contact

If you have any questions about your eligibility, the programme, or problems with your application, please contact the team on **enterprise@raeng.org.uk**