

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

**[www.raeng.org.uk](http://www.raeng.org.uk)**

**Summary of invitation**

The Royal Academy of Engineering is looking to engage a company to design and deliver training modules and 1-2-1 coaching for new entrepreneurs leading early-stage technology startups based in northern England, Northern Ireland and Wales. 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. Coaching sessions should focus on helping participants understand their own strengths and weaknesses as leaders, improve their leadership skills to enable them to reach their full potential, and to be able to establish and lead their new startup.

We look forward to receiving your solutions, as we seek to launch our next regional entrepreneurship initiative.

Please note that this document has been updated on 8 September to include Wales as part of programme delivery. The Wales programme will be a pilot for the first cohort of 2024.

**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](#).

As an Academy we proactively seek to procure services from diverse teams and diverse suppliers. We expect the project to be delivered in line with our values of inclusion and diversity and to the highest ethical standards. Diverse perspectives should be considered in the development of proposals and outputs should be inclusive.

## **About the Enterprise Hub**

### **Who are we?**

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.

## **Summary of the Regional Talent Engines programme**

The Regional Talent Engines programme was first launched in 2021. It aims to encourage the retention, development and circulation of engineering talent within local ecosystems, by:

- enabling talented and ambitious individuals to venture successful and scalable new engineering or technology businesses.
- developing and supporting enterprise initiatives that strengthen and enhance existing capability within UK regional ecosystems.
- facilitating development and delivery of more and better engineering solutions that materially benefit the environment and regional communities.

The programme has been running in four regions to date: Northern Ireland, north east England, north west England and Yorkshire and Humber and is delivered locally over the course of six months, connecting entrepreneurs with expert support, funding, training, mentoring in their regional ecosystem as well as to the Academy's vast network.

The profiles of candidates who are eligible to join the programme are as follows:

- normally a mid/late-career engineer or technologist who has been working in skilled jobs for at least five years
- has an idea for a new product or service which can be developed into a business proposition and is at TRL 2 or above, with the potential to scale
- has the intention to establish their new business in one of the four geographies where the programme is being delivered

In addition to the training programme, participants receive an equity-free grant of £20,000.

The services will be required in two stages:

- pre-interview 'bootcamp' sessions for all applicants who pass the first round of the selection process, to help them prepare for their interview 'pitch'
- training and coaching sessions for all awardees who successfully gain a place on the programme

Providers are not required to be part of the candidate selection process, which will be managed by the Academy.

## Statement of requirements

1. **Summary:** Royal Academy of Engineering is looking to procure a training provider (or consortium of providers) to deliver a training and coaching programme over the next 3 years. The programme will run on a rolling six-monthly basis, with two cohorts a year. The trainees will be founders and co-founders of technology startups (referred to as 'Hub Awardees'). Each cohort of trainees will comprise approximately 7-10 entrepreneurs in each region the programme operates with a broad range of backgrounds, sectors and experience.
2. **Timing:** the services should be prepared in advance and ready to be delivered starting January 2024 for the pre-interview sessions. The programme will then begin March 2024 for the first cohort under this tender
1. **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.

Desired content or similar:

<b>Pre-interview training sessions (approximately 45 participants)</b>	
Aim:	To prepare applicants who have passed the first round of selection for their interview with a panel of Academy Fellows and reviewers. Applicants will be required to deliver a 5 minute pitch presentation during their interview.
Desired content:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What to include in the content of their presentation and how (eg problem statement, USPs, value proposition, market opportunity)</li> <li>• Skills for the delivery of the presentation (eg communication, storytelling, narrative, engaging with audiences)</li> </ul> Plus some 1-2-1 time with applicants, for practise or coaching

<b>Programme training sessions (7-10 awardees in each region)</b>	
Design thinking process and methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
I Methods to test and validate ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to talk to customers and stakeholders about your technology</li> <li>• How to conduct business experiments to validate assumptions</li> </ul>
Design workshop and prototyping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding user experience throughout: product, digital and service design</li> <li>• Testing and iterating with users</li> <li>• Designing for sustainability and profitability</li> <li>• Options for rapid prototyping to test ideas</li> </ul>
Business modelling, value proposition and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common business models, how to assess market fit and evaluate different business models</li> <li>• Understanding value of ecosystem and value chain, and how positioning affects profit and ability to scale</li> <li>• How to give a 30 second pitch on their startup</li> </ul>

Building a team, leadership skills and company operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal leadership skills, culture and setting goals</li> <li>• Founding team, hiring staff, recruitment and building a diverse and winning team</li> <li>• The board, reporting and governance requirements</li> <li>• Equity, shareholders, term sheets, exits</li> </ul>
Developing a marketing plan, sales skills and securing customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital and content marketing</li> <li>• Branding and positioning</li> <li>• Pricing strategies, sales funnel and forecasting</li> <li>• SPIN framework, productive conversations and networking</li> </ul>
Communication, storytelling and pitch training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storytelling technique and constructing a narrative for your business</li> <li>• What to include in a 3 minute pitch</li> <li>• How to connect with and engage audiences, and project confidence to make an impact</li> </ul>
Understanding finance and funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day to day finances, cashflow, P&amp;L, burn rate, break even, profit margin, pricing</li> <li>• Sources/types of finance, financial projections, startup valuation, what are investors looking for</li> </ul>
Understanding the national and local innovation landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying future avenues for support</li> <li>• Types of support available</li> </ul>

Topics and content for coaching are flexible and should be focused on leadership skills.

We are open to additional suggestions from providers.

A diagnostic questionnaire should be run for each participant before the training and coaching begins so that the participant can have access to a personal report which can be used as a benchmark to discuss with the coach in sessions, and so that training can be tailored to their needs. We expect the provider to be able to demonstrate how participants have met agreed learning outcomes through the training and coaching programme.

2. **Location:** The programme training sessions will take place in-person at venues in Belfast, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle and Cardiff. The Academy will source and cover costs for venue, refreshments and meals for in-person training days. Pre-interview training sessions will take place online via Zoom or similar. Coaching sessions can take place either in-person or online, though we encourage face to face interactions.
3. **Delivery:** For the cohort starting in early 2024, pre-interview training will be held during January 2024 and should be up to three shorter-length sessions. It is expected this training will be delivered online to the whole group of applicants

(approximately 45) rather than separate regional groups. Once the programme begins, training is expected to be delivered over 6-8 days during the course of 6 months, from end of March 2024 up until end of September, preferably with most training happening during the first four months. We would envisage in-person training days to be delivered between 10am – 4pm. This training will be delivered to each regional group (therefore five days of training for each module), so the provider should take this into account when allocating resource. The nature and interaction with other activities such as coaching is for the provider to determine. We would welcome suggestions for cross-regional activities or sessions to enable all participants to get to know each other and learn from their peers. Coaching sessions will be held on a 1-2-1 basis, with each participant being given five coaching sessions over the course of the programme.

4. **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. Relevant external speakers from local ecosystems are welcomed to provide insight and experiential learning. The Academy team will also work with the selected provider to incorporate speakers from its own networks as required, such as Enterprise Hub alumni or Fellows. For coaching, the participants will discuss their needs and set out a development plan with their coach during their first session.
5. **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.
6. **Peer support:** Training should be delivered on a group basis in a lively and engaging manner to encourage the development of a collegiate atmosphere. Trainers should involve participants throughout the sessions, encouraging them to speak, to make learning tangible and relatable.
7. **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).
8. **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.
9. **Provider expenses:** All other training and coaching related costs should be factored into the proposal.
10. **Feedback:** Participants should be requested to submit feedback on each aspect of the training and coaching programme, and the results provided to the Academy for discussion at project review meetings so that any learnings can be implemented.
11. **KPIs and deliverables:**
  - o Deliver training and coaching on time, to budget and in line with agreed parameters (to be agreed at the inception meeting with the successful provider)

- High degree of customisation, ensuring the training course is designed in line with the cohort requirements, as indicated in the diagnostic
- Achieve participant satisfaction of >90% with the learning outcomes of the training course
- Support the attainment of the individual goals set at the start of the programme as part of each participant's personal development plan
- Support the skills development of participants based on a before and after survey that the coach will provide, which should provide measurements of strategy, skills and mindset (or similar)
- Action-led progress measurement in each session to ensure participants are following through with commitments
- Produce a self-evaluation report at the end of the programme, providing evidence of participants' progress
- Implement ongoing improvements, considering feedback from participants, the Academy and its partners
- Maintain regular contact with the Academy's programme management team via monthly online meetings

Providers may bid to deliver services for one or more region. We are open to proposals from consortiums.

## **Deadline for proposals: 11 October 2023**

### **Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity Number</b>	<b>Activity</b>
30 August	1	Issue of RFP (this document) to potential suppliers
29 September	3	Deadline for submission of RFP clarification questions to RAE
4 October	4	Deadline for RAE to respond to all clarification questions
11 October	5	Deadline for return of RFP
27 October	6	Deadline for initial evaluation of RFP
w/c 6 November	7	Presentations and interviews
w/c 13 November	8	Notification of preferred supplier
w/c 27 November	9	Inception meeting with successful bidder

### **Please send your clarification questions and submissions to:**

Sarah Gummer, Senior Manager, Regional Entrepreneurship Programmes  
[Sarah.gummer@raeng.org.uk](mailto:Sarah.gummer@raeng.org.uk)

Please also copy your email to our team mailbox: [enterprise@raeng.org.uk](mailto:enterprise@raeng.org.uk)

All questions raised will be collated and answers forwarded on to all parties who have registered an interest in submitting a proposal.

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 and how they will be achieved and monitored.
- **Customisation:** Cover your approach to customisation, both to individual participants and to the Enterprise Hub as a whole
- **Schedule:** Proposed schedule of training modules and coaching sessions.
- **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 and coaches who will be working with entrepreneurs. Providers should have a diverse group of trainers and coaches who can be deployed on the programme.
- **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 if your proposal relates to one or more regions in the email subject line and in the proposal document. Please also indicate the possibility to provide services for the potential addition of other regions over the course of the contract, including resource requirement and cost.

## Budget

We anticipate spending £262,500 - £350,000 in total for each cohort, inclusive of VAT, for all services pertaining to all five regions for one cohort of 45 awardees.

## Scoring matrix

0	<b>No Answer/Unacceptable Response</b>
1	<b>Very Poor Response</b>
2	<b>Poor Response</b>



3	<b>Acceptable Response</b>
4	<b>Good Response</b>
5	<b>Excellent Response</b>

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 three highest scoring proposals will be invited 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

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

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

<b>Section:</b> Track Record			
Description of criteria	Score	Weighting	Max Points
Expertise of the trainers and coaches	0-5	1	5
Experience of successful delivery of similar programmes	0-5	1	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	

**Award criteria**

In awarding the provider, we will take into account the following criteria:

<b>Section:</b> 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
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	

<b>Section:</b> 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
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	

<b>Section:</b> 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	
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	

*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.*