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University

STEAMhouse Create Programme Info Pack

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Welcome to STEAMhouse Create

STEAMhouse is a space to experiment, test and develop new knowledge. At the project's heart are five key principles:

- Conversation
- Exploration
- Collaboration
- Openness
- Newness

STEAMhouse is a collective; a living, breathing community of innovators, disrupters, artists, design practitioners, engineers, makers, scientists, technologists, coders, business experts, academics, researchers, students, sole traders, enterprises, and corporate firms. By working together we generate serendipitous collisions, unexpected conversations, creative solutions, and new opportunities to collaborate.

The STEAMhouse Create Programme's big mission is to support entrepreneurs, sole traders and companies to develop new ideas and prototype products and services.

The STEAMhouse Create Programme is a free ERDF funded programme that supports resource-poor businesses to make their new product, project, or service ideas a reality. The programme runs until March 2023.

It is powered by Birmingham City University in partnership with Eastside Projects with additional funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

How we can help

Are you unsure about what steps to take to develop your ideas?

When you become a STEAMhouse Create member, our experienced team are always on hand to advise you on what to do next. If you need advanced expertise on a specific topic, you can also apply for our Academic Advisory service. Designed to advance projects already in development, Academic Advisory will challenge and push your thinking in new directions. Check out our cohort of STEAMhouse Academics here.

Are you unsure about how to produce your ideas?

Our technical specialists will advise you on appropriate production processes and manufacturing techniques across a range of materials and processes, from digital to handmade. Develop your knowledge and skillset, reduce risk by testing small scale prototypes, then work with our team to ready your ideas for scale-up.

Do you work alone and find it difficult to extend your network?

STEAMhouse Create is first and foremost a community. We support you to make new connections and access new perspectives to help your ideas flourish. Experiment with others in our collaborative STEAM Labs or discuss your work with peers at our events and

workshops. Collaboration is at the heart of all STEAMhouse activities.

Are you struggling to keep up with advances in your industry?

Learn new digital skills in our workshops and short courses. Connect with our technical specialists to find out how AR, VR, digital fabrication and 3D printing can advance your ideas.

Do you need to better understand customers or audiences?

Our business support specialists will advise you on how to research potential markets and create products, services, or projects that meet real-world needs.

Do you need support in finding and accessing funding to move your ideas forward?

STEAMhouse Create members are eligible to apply for grants of up to £2,500 to help make their ideas a reality. Our business development specialists have vast experience in business administration, funding, bid writing and evaluation. Schedule 1-2-1's with us and attend workshops led by industry practitioners to increase your financial confidence.

What's on offer?

1. **LEARN** - Get inspired and learn new skills in our interactive online and IRL short courses and workshops. Get to grips with the latest creative software, join our Materials Club, attend our wide-ranging business support events, or get making with our courses in a box, delivered to your door.
2. **PLAN** - Access regular 1-2-1's and collaborative workshops with our team of specialists. We have extensive real-world experience in all aspects of idea and business development. We'll guide and advise you on idea generation, design, development, funding, manufacturing, materials, marketing, administration, and more! Check out our team profiles to find a skills match for your project.
3. **CONNECT** - Join STEAMhouse Create and become part of a community of practice. We'll get to know your business and facilitate introductions to other members, organisations, and partners to extend your network and uncover new opportunities. Attend regular STEAMhouse socials and make new connections by uploading your profile to our community website where you will be able to make contact with your fellow STEAMhouse members.
4. **WORK** – You'll have access to our co-working spaces, meeting rooms and the café so you can work at STEAMhouse and meet clients and collaborators in a professional environment.
5. **MAKE** – Prototype and develop physical products. Access the Production Space Workshops and equipment (including 3D printers, CNC machines, waterjet cutters, biomaterials lab, woodworking machinery, hot and cold metal fabrication, immersive reality lab and digital print). Our technical specialists will advise you how to make your ideas a reality or how to work with industry to scale up.

The Create Programme is based in the new state-of-the-art STEAMhouse building at 4, Belmont Row, Birmingham, B4 7RQ. You can book onto a tour [HERE](#).

What does it cost?

Nothing! The STEAMhouse Create programme is completely free to eligible businesses

Who we support

The STEAMhouse Create programme is open to self-employed sole traders and small to medium-sized enterprises who are based in England, with priority to those based in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Enterprise Partnership ([GBSLEP](#)) region, and a focus on four sectors:

1. Creative & Digital
2. Advanced Manufacturing
3. Health & Life Sciences
4. Low Carbon

Eligibility

To be eligible for the fully funded STEAMhouse Create programme you must:

- Be self-employed or a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) of between 1 to 250 employees. You can be a start-up or an established business, and can be a self-employed sole-trader, partnership or limited company.
- Be registered in England
- Provide either a UTR number (for self-employed sole traders) or a Company Registration number when you apply.

What we need from you

- You need to commit to at least 12 hours of STEAMhouse support, and complete simple end-of-project reports outlining the product or business development that has taken place with our support.
- We welcome enterprises with projects at all stages of development, from research and concept phase onwards, but you do need to come to STEAMhouse with an idea.
- Your proposal to STEAMhouse must develop your business in some way, whether by creating a new product or service or acquiring new skills or technical knowledge which you can apply to product development. We are not able to support businesses who simply want to carry on doing 'business as usual'.

- We are particularly interested in businesses who want their product or service development to be enabled by digital technologies. This does not mean you have to develop a wholly digital product – for example digital technologies might be used as a design tool or might be something you explore as one element of a more expansive R&D process.

How to get involved

We strongly recommend you attend a **Pre-Application Workshop** before applying. We run them every month - you can sign up on our events page [HERE](#)

To apply you need to complete an online **Registration Form**. You will find it on the STEAMhouse website at the bottom of the STEAMhouse Create Programme page [HERE](#)

The form asks for:

- Basic information about your business
- A short proposal (500 words max) which explains what you want to do at STEAMhouse, why you want to do it, and how you think the STEAMhouse Create programme will enable you to develop your project, product or service and your business.

When making a decision we assess your proposal using the following questions. We understand that you may be stronger in some areas and weaker in others, but please bear these criteria in mind when writing.

- **Creative Potential:** How strong is the creative thinking? How creative is the idea? Is it underpinned by research? Is there evidence of track record and/or prior creative development?
- **Innovation Potential:** How innovative is the proposal? How likely is the business to innovate? Will new thinking or work emerge?
- **Concept Validity:** Is there evidence that users, customers or clients want the proposed product or service? Is there any market knowledge or analysis?
- **Digital Development:** What could the use of digital technologies enable? Has the business identified how digital processes could unlock new knowledge or innovation potential?
- **Business Development:** Is there a business vision? Has the applicant identified any business development needs?
- **Impact:** What is the potential impact of STEAMhouse's support on the business? Are there wider potential impacts on the sector/ across sectors/ society? Will the business contribute to STEAMhouse and its community?

Our selection panel meets each month to assess applications. Each month we recruit up to 20 new members across the Open, Product and Research strands.

The Strands

The STEAMhouse Create Programme is built around three strands which have been designed to support a range of sole traders and enterprises.

Business support underpins all routes and members are encouraged to take a holistic approach to their business and project, product or service development.

On the application form you will be asked to identify the strand you think best fits your proposal and business.

Product Strand – for businesses who want to prototype and develop new products or services. Membership lasts until the end of March 2023. This route splits into two pathways:

- Production Space Pathway – for those who want to produce a physical prototype or product - members benefit from the entire suite of STEAMhouse support including access to the Production Space.
- Business Pathway – This is a flexible, bespoke support programme for businesses that already have an early or defined idea and are looking to take a service or product to market that does not require physical prototyping.

Open Strand – for artists, designer makers and other cultural producers who want to develop their business by producing new creative work or services. Membership lasts until the end of March 2023

- Open Strand members benefit from the entire suite of STEAMhouse support, including access to the Production Space (if appropriate) alongside specialist support led by [Eastside Projects](#).

Research Strand – for businesses seeking expertise and knowledge exchange support from STEAMacademics and other specialists to enable the advancement of innovative new projects, products and services. Membership lasts until the end of March 2023.

- Exclusively available to STEAMhouse members, our Academic Advisory service gives you access to one-to-one advice and expertise from our current cohort of STEAMhouse Academics.

Challenge Strand

- Challenge Strand members are supported through 12 hour long collaborative, creative or skills based workshops. These include short courses designed to develop a range of skills and digital expertise and workshops that help give businesses new

perspectives on problems they want to tackle and uncover opportunities to create new projects, products or services that tackle the challenge. Workshops on offer include [STEAM Sprints](#), [STEAM Labs](#) and [STEAM Challenge Events](#).

- After the initial 12 hours of Challenge Route support businesses can apply to join the Product or Open strands to continue to develop their ideas.

If you have any further questions, drop us a line on steamhouse@bcu.ac.uk or bring them to a [Pre-Application workshop](#).

We look forward to hearing from you!