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STEAMhouse Phase 1.5 Info pack

Version#1 20/04/20



Welcome to STEAMhouse

STEAMhouse is a centre for innovation, creative thinking, prototyping and business development. Based in the heart of Digbeth, STEAMhouse supports entrepreneurs, sole traders, companies and citizens to build their businesses and develop new ideas, products and services.

STEAMhouse is a space to experiment, test and develop new knowledge. At the project's heart are five key principles **conversation, exploration, collaboration, openness** and **newness**.

The Production Space - our well-equipped makerspace - provides facilities and staff to support prototyping in a wide range of digital and physical media and materials. Our STEAMlab programmes help focus new ideas and create space for open innovation and collaborative product development. Our co-working spaces offer an inspiring, informal working environment. Our public events bring inspiration and new thinking into the city.

Powered by Birmingham City University in partnership with Eastside Projects and funded by the European Regional Development Fund, STEAMhouse Phase 1.5 is open to sole traders and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises with a focus on four growth sectors – Creative & Digital, Advanced Manufacturing, Health & Life Sciences and Low Carbon.

STEAMhouse is a catalyst for change on many scales, providing fresh perspectives by connecting the analytical approaches of science, technology, engineering and maths with the creativity of the arts. We invite you to join us and look forward to working together.

Where is it?

STEAMhouse is located at 108 Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DT, opposite the coach station, a short walk from New Street and Moor Street Stations.

What's on Offer

By becoming a member of STEAMhouse you can benefit from access to our facilities and expertise including:

- **Free access to well-equipped makerspace with workshops in print and materials, digital design, digital manufacture, resistant materials (wood,**

metal, plastics) and virtual/augmented reality, with skilled technicians on hand to provide support and training and help to translate ideas into prototypes and products.

- **Free, tailored business support** - Business Planning, Action Planning and Design Thinking workshops; skills development sessions; masterclasses led by industry experts; intellectual property advice; and access to funding and finance.
- **Free access to co-working space**, which is open five days a week, 10am–5pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 10am–8pm on Wednesday. New opening hours will be announced soon which will include late night and weekend extended hours.
- Regular **opportunities to take part** in innovation labs, collaborative workshops and networking events.
- **Workshops** which help you develop the knowledge needed to prototype using digital software, hardware and production processes.
- **Programmes** of inspirational public talks and members only workshops.
- **Grants** of up to £2500 to support prototyping and IP advice and access to other **investors**.
- **Research collaborations** with STEAMhouse experts, Academics, and University Researchers.

STEAMhouse is also an open door to a wide range of other support provided by Birmingham City University, including knowledge exchange programmes, access to graduate talent, and other business support services.

Who is STEAMhouse for?

- To be eligible for our programmes 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 sole-trader, partnership or limited company - you need to provide either a UTR number (for self-employed sole traders) or a Company Registration number when you apply.

- STEAMhouse is a place where businesses can develop knowledge, products and services, gain new perspectives on their ideas and think differently. We welcome enterprises with ideas at all stages of development, from research and concept phase onwards.
- 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. We do not support businesses who 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; digital technologies might be used as a design tool (for example) or might be something you explore as one element of an expansive R&D process.
- All enterprises must commit to at least 12 hours of business support and provide simple end-of-project reports outlining the product or business development that has taken place with our support.
- We primarily work with enterprises who are registered within the GBSLEP region which covers the following locations:
 - Birmingham
 - Bromsgrove
 - Cannock Chase
 - East Staffordshire
 - Lichfield
 - Redditch
 - Solihull
 - Tamworth
 - Wyre Forest

And have a focus on four growth sectors:

- Creative and Digital - includes businesses and sole traders involved with art, theatre, music, dance, graphic design, architecture, gaming, web design, virtual reality, fashion, textile and surface design, craft, art fabrication, product design, industrial design and similar activities.
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Health and Life Sciences

- Low Carbon
- If you work in another sector or are based elsewhere, but think you have a project, product or service which could benefit from STEAMhouse's support, you are still welcome to make an application. We recommend you come along to an Open House Tour or an online 'Making an Application' workshop to find out more.

Costs

- STEAMhouse programmes are free to eligible enterprises as they are generously supported by ERDF, Birmingham City University, and Eastside Projects.

How to get involved

- We strongly recommend you come along to an Open House Tour or attend an online 'Making an Application' workshop before applying. Dates and booking information can be found on the Events page on the STEAMhouse website.
- To apply you need to complete a registration form. In the form you will be asked to write a short proposal which explains what you want to do at STEAMhouse and how it will enable you to develop your business.

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

When making a decision we assess your proposal against the following areas:

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?

The Strands

The STEAMhouse programmes are built around **three strands** which have been designed to support a range of sole traders and enterprises who, in all cases are supported to build a bespoke programme from the suite of workshops, 1-2-1 and group support on offer.

Business support underpins all routes and members are encouraged to take a holistic approach, considering all aspects of their business as they prototype and develop their new product or service and take to market, whatever that product or market might be.

1. **Product Strand** – for businesses who want to prototype and develop new products or services. This route splits into two pathways:
 - i. **Production Space Pathway** – for those who want to produce a physical prototype or product, or develop new skills using the Production Space workshops, this pathway offers a mix of practical workshop time, 1-2-1 technical advice and business support sessions.
 - ii. **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 product or service to market but who do not need to use the Production Space facilities.
2. **Open Strand** – for artists, designer makers and other cultural producers who want to develop their business by producing new creative work or services. Open Strand members benefit from a mix of access to the Production Space, technical support, specialist business advice, 1-2-1 and group coaching and a programme of workshops, masterclasses and talks. This route is led by Eastside Projects.
3. **Challenge Strand** - delivered through our programme of Interactive Innovation Workshops. These include STEAMlabs which are highly experimental collaborative workshops where participants work through a STEAM innovation process that impels them to think about their products and services in completely new ways. Designed for small businesses with an

early-stage product or service idea who are looking for ways to push their thinking or innovation process further, STEAMlabs provide the space to do this in a highly collaborative way with peers from across the creative and commercial sectors.

The Production Space

The Production Space is our in-house makerspace where you can prototype, make and fabricate. Production Space members can access both equipment and expert technical staff to assist in taking ideas forward. Equipment includes:

- A fully equipped wood workshop with table saw, planer-thicknesser, bandsaw, pillar drill, sanders, vacuum bag and a range of power and hand tools.
- Facilities for digital design and prototyping including a 2.5 axis CNC router, 3D scanner, vinyl cutter, digital modelling mill, Arduino, laser cutter and 3D printers as well as access to industry-standard software.
- A metal workshop with fabrication equipment for rolling, folding, cutting, sanding, polishing, joining and machining metals including MIG and TIG welding and plasma cutting.
- A print room with silkscreen beds, exposure unit and washout booth to allow printing onto paper, textiles and other materials. Sublimation and UV printers, heat presses, industrial sewing machines and overlockers, a bullet steamer and facilities for textile processes including dyeing and discharge. Equipment biomaterial development.
- Space for fabrication and assembly

Businesses who are Production Space members have free access to the facilities for 12 months to develop their project or product idea.

The Production Space opens Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 10am-1pm and 2-5pm, and Wednesday 2-5pm and 5.30-8pm. Members must have their own Public Liability Insurance.

Additional Support

Businesses on all strands also have the opportunity to use STEAMhouse to develop research collaborations with academics - primarily within Birmingham City University, but it is also possible to work with researchers from other institutions.

STEAMhouse can also connect you with BCU's wider support available through: www.bcuadvantage.co.uk

Grants

Businesses on all strands can apply for grants worth £2500 once they have completed a minimum of 12 hours support time with STEAMhouse. These grants support prototyping costs, including buying materials and include specialist IP and commercialisation support.