

Digital Skills



Digital Skills – Workforce for the Future

Information Pack

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1. About Digital Skills – Workforce for the Future

Enhance the digital capabilities of your business with support and training from UWE Bristol.

Digital Skills - Workforce for the Future is a skills analysis and development programme for SMEs in the West of England. The programme is designed to improve business productivity and sustainability through enhancing the digital capabilities of your business and the skills of your workforce.

You'll get in-depth support to analyse and identify digital needs, alongside action plans to enable your business to deliver its strategic ambitions. We'll give you access to specific training and resources to develop a strong, resilient, and adaptable workforce that is fit for the future. Where additional staffing requirements are identified we will also support with recruitment of the best digital talent.

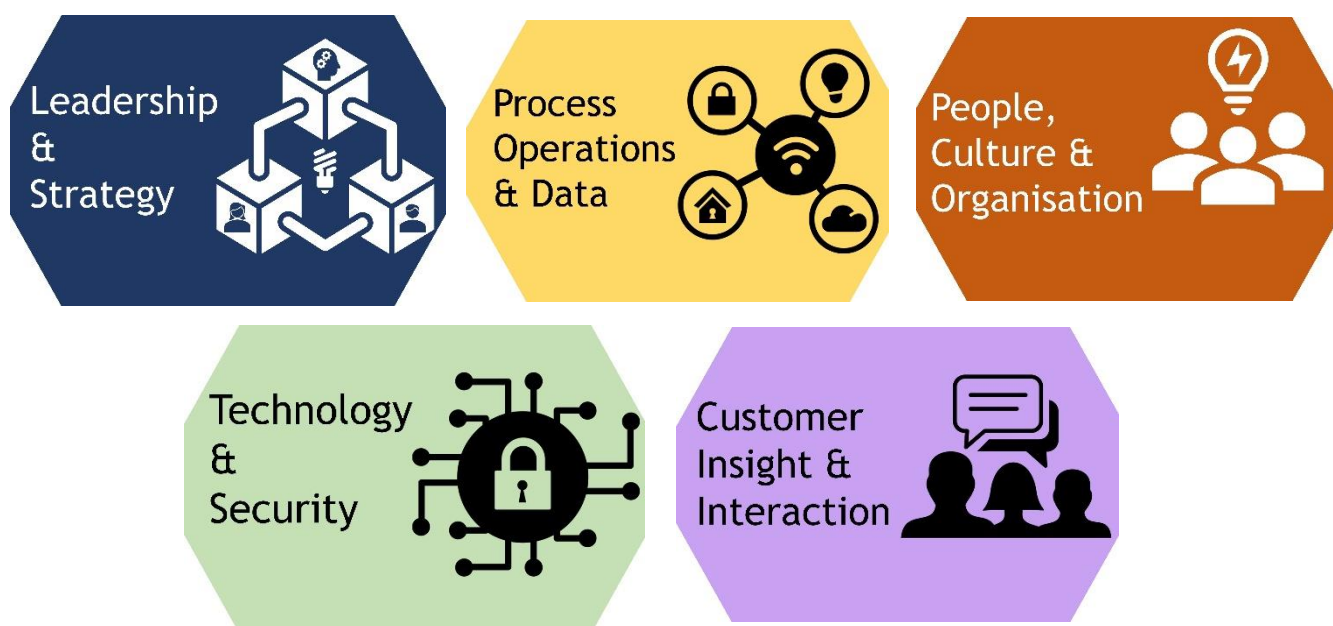
The Workforce for the Future programme is free to access for SMEs based in the West of England.

Support available

As part of our diverse offer, we'll show you how to harness the power of digital with in-depth 1:1 support with expert advisors throughout your growth journey. Across the programme, your business and your employees will be able to access a combination of support via the below strands.

A. Digital Health Check

Your initial conversations with our experts will provide us with information around your business and your strategic aims so that we can ensure the support you receive complements your goals. In line with this we will work with you to analyse the organisation's digital health across these 5 areas:



Beyond this analysis, we will also conduct Employee Skills assessments where necessary.

This will enable us to create an action plan for your business and identify suitable learning and development that will have the most significant impact and contribute to your operational requirements.

B. Digital Skills Training

Using your Digital Health Check results and the results of all the other SMEs registered with the Digital Skills programme, we will develop and deliver bespoke training courses that meet the needs of the workforce and the region.

All of the courses will fall into one of the 5 areas that the Digital Health Check assesses, and in each area, training will follow the below structure:

- Introductory bitesize courses (individual skills and learning)
- In depth workforce training for specific skill-sets, tools or technology
 - o Both building on introductory courses and for those with a base understanding of the topic matter
- Senior Management Training solutions for adaptive organisational culture
- Access to accredited learning and qualifications if appropriate

C. Digital Consultancy Projects

SMEs with a specific and more complex digital need will be able to request consultancy support to help you improve, develop and embed enhanced digital processes and workforce skillsets into your business.

With our extensive range of sector-specific knowledge and expertise, we will work with you to understand your challenge or opportunity, to find the best approach for your business by matching your needs to one of our *'Digital Consultants'* drawn from our academic, student and external consultant networks.

Digital Consultancy projects will be managed on an application basis and all SMEs registered with Digital Skills will be told when the application windows open. Due to limited funding, we will not be able to offer all applicants access to this support.

If a full consultancy project is not suitable, we have two 'lighter touch' support mechanisms.

- **Digital Mentors** – These will work on a 1-2-1 basis with an employee or with a small group (max 3 employees) to support them in developing confidence in their fundamental digital skills. The employee will identify a task(s) they find challenging or want to improve their confidence in and the mentor will then work with them over a series of online sessions to develop their confidence and skills, and translate the knowledge gained from formal training into real life work situations.
- The software and technology our digital mentors can provide support in, will be mainly based around Microsoft Office, however we will look to support other products where possible.

- **Cyber Hygiene Check** – The cyber hygiene check will review your current processes and systems to help you understand possible security risks and vulnerabilities and assess the resilience of your organisation.
- From this, we will work with you to look at how you can build your capabilities in this area across the organisation to become more resilient.

D. Digital Futureproofing

The final strand of our offer will ensure SME development is sustainable and long-term. These opportunities will consolidate the learning that has taken part as part of Digital Skills. Registered SMEs will have access to:

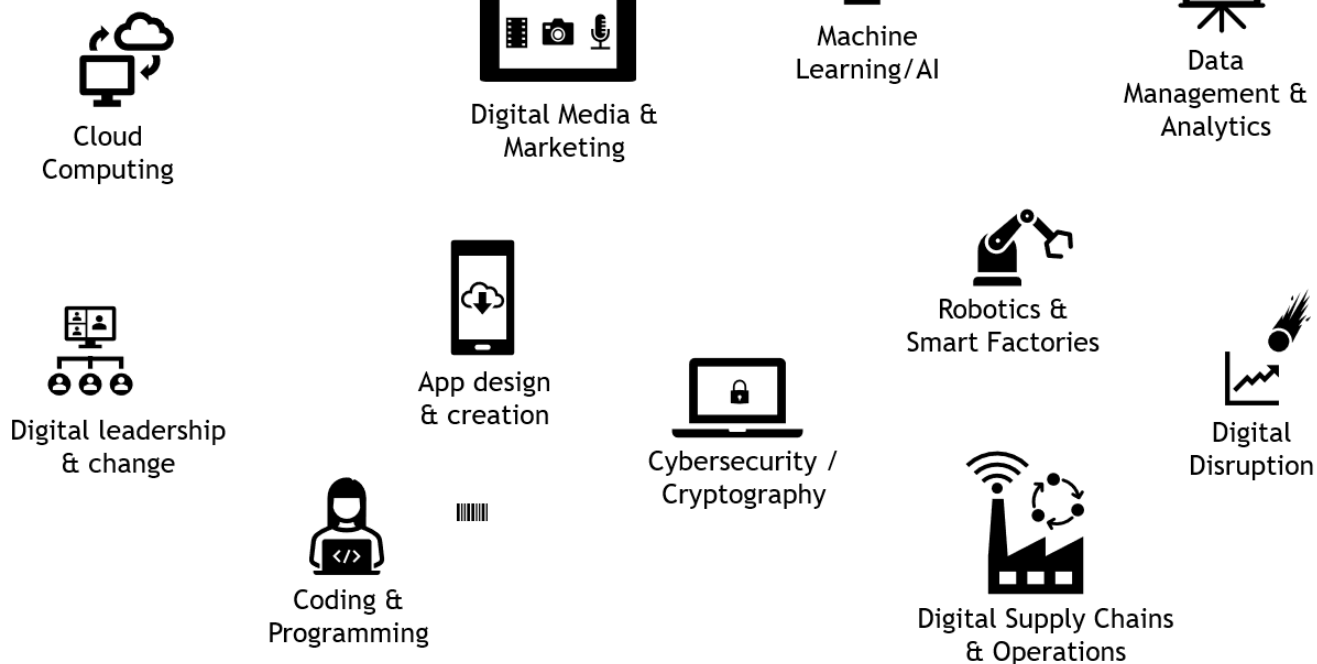
- Targeted skills libraries
- Digital talent recruitment pool
- Digital Business Network

2. What areas can we support?

You don't have to be from a digital industry, if you require digital support we can help. Some of the areas that we can provide support, learning and qualifications are:

What areas can we support?

Including, but not limited to...



3. Benefits to applicants

Now, more than ever, businesses need to be adaptable and responsive to change. This programme will equip employees with new skills and knowledge to enable your business to evolve and thrive in the digital environment.



- Research shows the cost of hiring a new employee is about £3000, and nearly 30 days of existing employees' time. Utilising this programme will not have a financial cost and can enable you to retain staff or train them for redeployment.
- The support delivered by this programme will be co-designed with the participating SMEs – to ensure it meets the West of England's digital business needs.
- Participating SMEs will be able to engage with each other to share best practice and utilise existing expertise in the region.

4. Am I Eligible?

To be eligible for support, applicants must have a business presence in the West of England (Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset) and be a small or medium sized enterprise (SME) according to the [European Commission's SME definition](#). This includes pre-start-ups, start-ups, micro enterprises, social enterprises and sole traders as well as established companies. We use the EU SME definition, which takes into account headcount and turnover, but also relationships with other enterprises.

You will need to provide evidence of your eligibility through the submission of accounts details and staff numbers.

5. How do I get involved?

Complete the [Registration of Interest](#) form now!

- You will be contacted within 3 working days by a member of the UWE team to arrange a call to discuss the programme in detail, alongside your business aims and support requirements.
- We at UWE Bristol, along with the West of England Combined Authority will check your eligibility, and then the analysis and action planning stage will commence.
- We will endeavour to identify suitable learning and development opportunities that are available within a short timescale. However we may identify that your organisation would benefit from a bespoke course, in-house training, or digital consultant placements in-situ, which we will continually engage with you to develop and cater to your business needs.
- We will continue to deliver learning opportunities for participating SMEs until early 2023, and you will be able to access suitable development throughout the course of the programme.

6. Workforce for the Future – Funding and Partners

UWE Bristol is delivering Workforce for the Future on behalf of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA).

Workforce for the Future provides tailored, in-depth support to help businesses plan and adapt for the future by identifying current and future skills needs. The programme helps businesses implement workforce development plans, upskill or retrain employees, and bring in apprenticeships or work placements to drive the business forwards. We can also connect businesses with training and education providers to help shape the West of England's future talent pool.

For more information on Workforce for the Future and the business support available in the West of England, please contact the West of England Growth Hub. The Growth Hub is the West of England's dedicated business support service which offers free, one-to-one advice and guidance for SMEs.

European Social Fund

The project has received £4m of funding from the European Social Fund as part of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme in England. The Department for Work and Pensions (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for the England European Social Fund programme. Established by the European Union, the European Social Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support skills development, employment and job creation, social inclusion and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>.

Other Workforce for the Future Providers

If it is determined that your development needs do not fit with the digital enhancement opportunities available at UWE Bristol, you will be referred to the West of England Combined Authority Growth Hub, who will refer you to a more suitable partner.

Please visit <https://www.wearegrowth.co.uk/covid-19/workforce-for-the-future/> to find out more about other partners delivering Workforce for the Future.

Workforce for the Future service providers are:



The Western Training Provider Network enables training and education providers in the West of England to meet regularly to share opportunities, best practice, collaborate and build relationships



The University of the West of England Bristol is focused on solving future global challenges through outstanding learning, world-leading research and a culture of enterprise.



Adviza is a charity inspiring people to make better decisions that help them progress in learning and work.



Bath College's training and courses are closely matched to the needs of the West of England economy and the College is proud to be the talent pipeline for a number of high-profile businesses.



Business West is a not-for-profit business support organisation, rooted in the business community. Annually they help 24,000 businesses survive, thrive, export and innovate through contracts with the Department for International Trade and Innovate UK.



The City of Bristol College provides education and vocational training to over 12,000 learners in and around Bristol. They offer courses /apprenticeships from entry to degree level across a range of specialist subjects.



South Gloucestershire and Stroud College is the new college formed by the merger between Stroud College and Filton College offering an even wider range of vocational and academic courses in an even greater range of subjects.



Weston College is an Ofsted outstanding training provider, regional apprenticeship provider of the year, delivering apprenticeships and bespoke training for business across the West of England.

7. Data Protection

Data Protection Legislation – This information will only be shared where the law allows it. It may be shared with other organisations and the Department for Work & Pensions for administrative, statistical and research purposes, to inform careers and other guidance and to monitor progress. For more detailed information on how we handle your personal information see the [WECA Privacy Policy](#) and [Data Protection Policy](#).

Where you provide personal data to us, it is essential that you have the right to give us that personal data, and to allow us to use it as anticipated by the arrangements between us. This includes where the personal data that you are providing relates to people other than yourself. We will rely on you to make sure that you do have those rights. Both we and you will comply with our obligations under all relevant laws and rules on data protection and privacy.