

# Case-study: Digital Business Academy – Tech City UK

## 1) Description of initiative(s)

A national programme of online learning that gives people the commercial know-how to start, run or join a digital business.

Course content provided by leading universities and more grass roots digital skills schools, covering a mix of entrepreneurship and digital skills relevant for all start-ups or scale-ups, and those who want to join these businesses. Topics will cover digital marketing, digital product development, how to create marketing plans, how to set up a business and how to raise finance.

Programme will be supported by a host of industry partners who will endorse it, drive registrations for it, or reward students of the programme with work experience/internships/training.

## 2) What need does this solve for scale-ups?

### (1) Coordination, connectivity and promotion

DBA is a partner-led programme with content providers, platform provider, and a host of partners to endorse it and reward students who complete courses, giving them support to start their own digital business, or opportunities to join on.

### (2) Access to Skills

Growing digital businesses lack talent with the right commercial skills for digital business; people with ideas for digital business lack the commercial know-how to start one; DBA addresses both of these issues.

### (3) Leadership Capacity Building

Partnerships with organisations such as Smarta, Launchpadlabs, and accelerators will ensure that some students completing the programme would be able to access mentors for starting businesses.

### (4) Customers (Domestic & Export)

Programme addresses lack of digital skills gap from the commercial aspect, and tries to upskill the workforce to help them join digital businesses, or start or grow their own.

### (5) Financing

Partnerships with Start-Up loan providers (Smarta, Princes Trust) and with angel networks & accelerators will give some students the opportunity to apply for finance if they have a strong business plan.

### (6) Infrastructure

Partnerships with LaunchpadLabs, Microsoft Ventures, etc, are in progress to give some of the students co-working space if they want to start a business and build a team.

## 3) Which stakeholders in the ecosystem are involved with running this?

### Entrepreneurs

Lead members among content providers are entrepreneurs themselves.

### Ecosystem umbrella organisations

Tech City UK (Owner)

### Government (national/ local)

BIS  
Cabinet Office

### Private sector

FounderCentric  
Twitter, Google, Amazon  
Web Services, Unruly Media,  
Ogilvy and many others

### Investors/financers

Smarta & Business Accelerators, including Microsoft Ventures, Wayra, Tech Stars, Level 39 and others.

### Education providers

Cambridge University UCL

## Example activities

Developing course content

Tech City UK develops and runs programme  
BBC is a partner; providing supporting content;

Provides funding and support

Provides course content or supporting content, internships, free training to students completing courses, or start-up support

Start-up loans  
Financing new business ideas

Provides course content; UCL provides platform

## 4) What does success look like? What impact/outcomes are expected?

- 20,000 registrations within first year of launch and 1,000 course completions
- Successful application for rewards by students who complete the programme – such as free training days at Decoded, work placements in start-ups, or start-up loans for the students who are ready to start their own digital businesses
- Net Promoter Score showing satisfaction with courses.