

Services to business

Support and funding information

University of Birmingham opportunities for SMEs

The University of Birmingham works with businesses of all sizes to help boost, not only the company's knowledge, but also that of the individual employees; with the overall aim of improving long term profitability. Our services to SMEs in particular are designed around support packages for the short, medium and long term utilising funding and support from both external and internal sources.

Contact Kate Jermey, Business Development Manager, for a discussion on how the University of Birmingham can support you E: k.jermey@bham.ac.uk T: 0121 414 5070

Summary

Type of support needed	Scheme	Comments
Financial support for investigatory or feasibility projects	Innovation Vouchers Provider: TSB and University of Birmingham	100% funding up to £5000 Theme specific, and call specific
Short term support for specific projects which are restricted by budget	Student internships and placements	Student schemes cover a wide range of disciplines - technology, processing, finance and admin, marketing - enable the company to access students over the summer or during term time as part of a curriculum based project
Short term support	Academic consultancy, Post-Graduate consultancy	Objective expert consultancy, based on commercial contracts with day rates applied
Short term support with specific thematic requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University schemes, SCRA and CASiM2 Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs) Knowledge Transfer Secondments (KTS) Intermediary Support 	Funding support varies from short term (2 days, 100% funding) to the longer term (1 year) depending on requirements and availability
Funding for larger, longer term, collaborative projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TSB (Collaborative R&D calls) EU Funding (FP7/Horizon 2020) Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) 	Contract Research & Development - These encourage partnerships based on common interests where up to 75% funding is available for SME's
Intellectual Property (IP) Licences	Alta Innovations Ltd (University of Birmingham)	A varied portfolio of medical, biomedical, engineering and environmental patents are available for licensing.
Business accommodation	Birmingham Research Park	Facilities on campus offers purpose built accommodation for companies with funding available for start-ups.
Venture Capital	Investment opportunities	Larger scale private investment funds from £100k

University of Birmingham support

Innovation Vouchers

In addition to the TSB's voucher scheme, in November 2012 the University of Birmingham offered companies the opportunity to apply to its own Innovation Voucher scheme. £50k was allocated from HEFCE and via an application process, 16 SMEs and not-for-profit organisations were successful. The projects included providing advice and support on product or process innovation; addressing technical challenges within the business, training or accessing the research facilities at the University.

New round of Vouchers to be announced late 2013.

Science City Research Alliance (SCRA)

The Science City Research Alliance (SCRA) is a strategic union between the University of Birmingham and the University of Warwick in the technology areas of Advanced Materials, Energy Futures and Translational Medicine, in which both universities have a critical mass of expertise and facilities to help businesses, specifically SMEs.

Since the start of the projects in 2008 the SCRA programme has worked with over 300 companies and run over 20 sector specific events attracting over 1000 delegates.

Testing Services & Facilities Access

A number of areas of the University offer testing services e.g. [Centre for Electron Microscopy](#) or the Science City Research Alliance (see above). Rates charged for access to equipment ensure that working with us is affordable. Collaborative research projects, contract research work and ad hoc analytical services to provide data generation and interpretation are all possible.

Alta Innovations Ltd

The University of Birmingham's technology transfer company, Alta Innovations, manages the University's portfolio of IP and patents and looks after the management of spinout companies, invention disclosure, and the academic consultancy process.

Climate-KIC

Innovation Birmingham leads the work for Climate KIC in the Midlands' Regional Innovation Implementation Community (RIC). Climate-KIC is a major initiative of the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#) designated to drive innovation in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation through an integrated European network of global and regional partners from the private, public and academic worlds.

Student and Academic Engagement

The University of Birmingham offers **Work Experience, Placements, Knowledge Transfer Secondments** and **Consultancy Opportunities** for students (and academics) of all levels to develop generic and subject specific work experience opportunities, greatly enhancing student skill development and employability. Duration of placements can vary depending on project and funding is also available to support some of these schemes.

European Grants (FP7)

The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), and its successor **Horizon 2020**, is designed to support research and innovation by encouraging SMEs, European companies and research institutions to work together, encouraging economic growth and job creation. The University's dedicated EU team helps companies through the application process – and provides pre and post award support.

(University of Birmingham support cont....)

Business Accommodation

The University of Birmingham jointly owns [Birmingham Research Park](#) with Birmingham City Council, on the edge of the Edgbaston campus. This space offers unique links to the University, to the Queen Elizabeth hospital and the City itself.

- High quality office space on competitive and flexible terms for both start ups and high growth companies
- 24 access, CCTV, ample car parking
- New to 2013 – **Business Incubation** space ([‘BizzInn’](#)) is a hub providing free business space, network opportunities and business support to those seeking to commercialise or identify new ideas or concepts, and to innovative early stage small and micro businesses who are focused on development and growth.
- New to 2014 – the links between the research base of the University and the QE hospital make Birmingham Research Park an ideal location for a new purpose built **Biomedical Innovation Hub**, which will include wet lab space.

Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub

Working with four of the region's key heritage organisations; the new [Library of Birmingham](#), [The Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery](#), [Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust](#) and [The Worcester Hive](#), the project aims to demonstrate how exploring the use of digital technology with the Cultural and Heritage sector can develop new markets and increase profits for business. The project offers tailored support in the field of digital technology and provides access to a suite of innovative multi-user, 3D multi-touch technologies, mobile devices and tablets, advanced user-testing facilities and augmented reality tools.

Centre for Advanced Simulation & Modelling for Manufacturing (CASiM2)

CASiM² is a world leading centre for applied research and development in computational engineering, supporting innovation and transforming manufacturing in WM SMEs, ensuring a competitive edge. The project will operate through three closely integrated activities:

- A validated technology demonstrator programme
- Stimulation of demand within the SME manufacturing supply chain
- A dedicated knowledge transfer programme

Project partners are University of Birmingham, the Manufacturing Technology Centre, Rolls Royce and Airbus in the UK.

Accessing External Funding

The University of Birmingham works closely with the [Technology Strategy Board](#) to help drive innovation and stimulate technology-enabled innovation in the areas which offer the greatest scope for boosting UK growth and productivity.

The following are an overview of the tools and programmes available:

- The TSB manages R&D [funding competition programmes](#) for innovation across a range of areas, designed to assist the industrial and research communities to work together on R&D projects in strategically important areas of science, engineering and technology.
- [Catapult centres](#) – in seven theme areas – High Value Manufacturing, Cell Therapy, Offshore Renewable Energy, Satellite Applications, Connected Digital Economy, Future Cities and Transport Systems – the Catapult centres will allow businesses to access equipment and expertise that would otherwise be out of reach, as well as conducting their own in-house R&D.
- [Smart](#) – is a scheme offering funding to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage in R&D projects. 3 different levels of funding are available, Proof of Concept, Proof of Market and Proof of Prototype.

(External Funding support cont...)

- **SBRI** – develop innovative products to meet government needs. SBRI enables the public sector to engage with industry during the early stages of development, supporting projects through the stages of feasibility and prototyping.
- **Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP)** are a UK-wide programme enabling businesses to improve their competitiveness, productivity and performance. A KTP achieves this by forming of a Partnership between business and an academic institution (e.g., HEI, further education college or research and technology organisation), enabling the company to access skills and expertise to help your business develop. Project length can vary between 6 months to 3 years.
- **Innovation Vouchers** – grant of up to £5000 are available for SMEs to engage with new suppliers and knowledge providers eg Universities. Not all sectors are supported. Check the website for details.
- **Biomedical Catalyst** – The £180 million Biomedical Catalyst is an integrated translational funding programme jointly operated by the Medical Research Council and the TSB providing responsive and effective support for the best life science opportunities arising in the UK. Available to UK businesses (SMEs) and academics looking to develop innovative solutions to healthcare challenges either individually or in collaboration.
- **The Knowledge Transfer Networks** run by the TSB are divided into sector specific networks, all with their own events and funding opportunities. Visit the TSB's website for the complete list of Networks, which include Environmental Sustainability, HealthTech and Medicines, Materials, Transport, etc.

General Support

The following organisations provide funding and partnership opportunities:

- **Research Councils** – there are 7 thematic Research Councils.
- **Local Enterprise Partnerships** (LEPs) are privately-led organisations which work to secure and channel investment into their area to create new opportunities for increased employment and financial growth. Every region has its own LEP.
- Strategic partnerships with other Universities, highlighting opportunities for collaborative working:
 - Coventry University have grant funding support of up to £30,000 to support both Electric Vehicle Technology and Intelligent Vehicle Systems. Contact the team at electric_intelligent@cad.coventry.ac.uk.
- **Research and Development (R&D) Relief** is a Corporation Tax relief that may reduce a tax bill by more than the actual expenditure on allowable R&D costs. A KTP project, for example, is an allowable cost.
- **UK Trade & Investment (UKTI)** staff are experts in helping your business grow internationally. They provide expert trade advice and practical support to UK-based companies wishing to grow their business overseas. With a presence in over 100 countries, the UKTI offer a range of services, including participation at selected trade fairs, outward missions and providing bespoke market intelligence. To speak to an international Trade Adviser from UKTI in the West Midlands call 0845 074 3515 or email info@uktiwm.co.uk.
- **Venture Capital** – providing private investment to help develop and grow companies. There are various VC funds available, eg
 - **The Angel CoFund** which invests amounts of £100,000 to £1m into SMEs with high growth potential.

Sector Specific

There are many intermediaries that we work with in the West Midlands region in particular, through joint events and referral mechanisms.

- **The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)** are designed to help manufacturers streamline processes, reduce waste, become more energy efficient and generally improve and grow businesses.
- **Midlands Aerospace Alliance (MAA)** a membership organisation that supports and represents the aerospace industry across the Midlands region. Also provides occasional funding opportunities for businesses.
- **International Synergies (NISP)**: a programme that delivers environmental, social and economic benefits encouraging businesses to think differently about waste and resource management.
- **Medilink UK** and their comprehensive industry knowledge will help develop business and maximise commercial opportunities within the medical company network. Provides support and advice on relevant funding and grant opportunities.
- **Niche Vehicle Network** an independent association of over 100 niche vehicle manufacturers, specialist technology companies and the supply chain. Occasional funding calls, including Motorsport.
- **Digital R&D Fund for the Arts** – The £7 million Digital R&D Fund for the Arts is a partnership between the Arts Council England, the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and NESTA. The Fund is supporting arts projects that use digital technologies along with academic research to enhance audience reach and/or develop new business models for the wider arts sector.
- **The Design Council** - Promoting design and architecture as at the heart of everything.
- **The Carbon Trust** - boost business returns by cutting carbon emissions, saving energy and commercialising low carbon technologies.

We know that the financial cost of generating new ideas, technologies and processes to help you achieve competitive advantage can be high. The University of Birmingham can help you to navigate your way through the funding opportunities that may be available for your organisation and find you a suitable academic partner.

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