



# Innovation Support

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**THINK  
BEYOND  
DATA**

<http://thinkbeyonddata.com/>



**Hyperscale**  
Group Limited



**ready to digital?**

<https://innovationwm.co.uk/our-activity/digit-ally/>

# The Offer

- **Geography covered**
  - Greater Birmingham & Solihull / The Marches
- **Funding / Consultancy**
  - Free AI consultancy
- **Main features & benefits**
  - Using some of the most advanced algorithms in the world and the latest academic thinking, Aston's team of experts can help you turn your data and analytics into new products, new job opportunities, business growth and better, more efficient ways of working.

# The Offer



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## **Automating and scaling your business processes**

Does your company have time-consuming, repetitive tasks that a computer could complete for you in a fraction of the time?



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## **Providing better, more efficient solutions**

What does 'better' look like in your SME? Is it reducing your costs, minimising waste, improving efficiency or streamlining processes?



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## **Gaining new insights and a deeper understanding**

Do you feel overwhelmed by how many spreadsheets, charts and graphs your business generates?

# The Process

- One- or two-day fact-finding session
- Recommendations on how to grow your business and streamline processes
- Academic experts will use the latest research in areas such as AI, machine learning, data visualisation, optimisation and analytics to help you work with your data in a way you never thought possible
- If you need more assistance the team can work with you to create a more tailored package of support from three to six months as needed to help your company grow



# Enabling Technologies

& Innovation Competences Challenge Project

<http://enablingtechnologies.uk/>



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# The Offer

- **Geography covered**
  - Greater Birmingham & Solihull / Black Country
- **Funding / Consultancy**
  - Consultancy and support finding grants
- **Main features & benefits**
  - Provides specialist early stage /new product development services to help small businesses overcome technical and resource barriers. This includes access to the specialists, capabilities and state of the art analysis facilities

# The Offer

The project can also assist businesses with:

- Finding grant funding and preparing grant applications
- Referrals to specialists in relevant external organisations, such as Intellectual Property Office and the Department for International Trade
- Identify opportunities for collaboration across Aston University and wider, across the region.



# The Process

- 26 companies will be chosen through a competitive process
- Companies are offered a minimum 12 hours of free-of-charge support through one-on-one consultancy with academics
- Support may also include use of relevant university facilities – laboratories and equipment (within limitations imposed by Aston University due to COVID19)
- Deadline: 30 October 2020
- Specialised support for digital technology development for business service organisations



<https://www.innovation-vouchers.com/>



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# The Offer

- **Geography covered**
  - Greater Birmingham & Solihull
- **Funding / Consultancy**
  - Funding and business growth workshops
- **Main features & benefits**
  - An Innovation Voucher is up to **£2,500**, of part-funding to spend on business innovation and business growth activities. The Innovation Vouchers scheme targets SMART specialisation sectors and aims to develop new processes and systems to improve efficiency of SMEs and to bring new products and services to market.

# The Offer

## Eligible Activities

- 💡 **New Product / Service Development & New Service Delivery**
- 💡 **Customer Interface**
- 💡 **Process Improvement**
- 💡 **Market Research**
- 💡 **Innovation Planning & Business Model Development**
- 💡 **Quality Improvement**
- 💡 **Supply Chain Management & Logistics**
- 💡 **Exploiting Advanced Information Technologies**



# The Process

- Online application
- Each business is eligible to receive one voucher only
- Each Innovation Voucher is offered as match-funding only. To receive this funding you will need to match the value of the Innovation Voucher, with a £1 contribution for every £1 received in the voucher. With the typical value of a voucher being £2,500, you would need to contribute £2,500, creating a total business innovation fund of £5,000



Research and  
Knowledge  
Exchange

<https://www2.aston.ac.uk/business/develop-your-business/funding/knowledge-transfer-partnerships/business>



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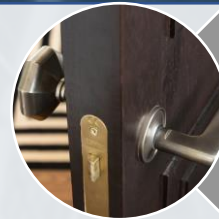
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# KTP's: The Offer

- Nationwide – Aston University's is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest in the UK
- Improves business competitiveness and productivity through funded partnerships with academics and researchers.
- The academic or research organisation partner helps recruit a suitable graduate, known as an Associate. They will act as the employer of the graduate, who then works at the company for the duration on the agreed project.
- The scheme can last between 12 and 36 months.

# KTP's: Costs & Examples



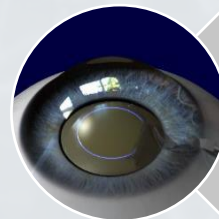
Allgood – Application of advanced design and manufacturing techniques to architectural ironmongery



Mechatherm - Knowledge Engineering approach to the design of large scale smelting furnaces



Wickens – Application of advanced design, automation and information technologies to storage solutions



Sarissa – Development of flexible manufacturing technology for the In Vitro Diagnostic Devices



# Mentoring for Growth

Matching British SME leaders  
with an experienced senior  
corporate mentor to help them  
through expansion and  
improvement challenges



<https://www2.aston.ac.uk/aston-business-school/business/centre-for-growth/mentoring-for-growth>



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# The Offer

- Facilitates collaboration between high-level mentors from corporate partners including GSK, KPMG and Siemens among others, and SMEs.
- Mentors provide SMEs with expertise, shared experiences and strategies that they can implement into their business to overcome challenges inhibiting their business growth.
- Mentors also benefit from this process, as they too have the opportunity to learn new techniques and ideas that can be scaled-up and implemented into their own companies.
- SMEs must be located in Greater Birmingham/Solihull.
- SME leaders must be in a position to make and implement decisions
- Aimed at SMEs with £2 million turnover + and 20+ employees
- SMEs with £1 million turnover & 8+ employees, trading in high growth sector (advanced manufacturing, aerospace, rail/HS2, automotive), or professional services, life sciences, digital/ IT, cultural & creative



<https://beautifulcanoe.com/>

# The Offer

- The team work on a variety of projects including long term academic research projects as well as working with local **SMEs on paid projects**.
- The focus is on delivering business value based upon business priorities.
- The team uses the Agile framework therefore charging for time rather than a fixed price contract, with the customer getting what they want first then adding new features and adjusting as the business need changes.
- Beautiful Canoe is unique among HEI's as being one of the few student led enterprises that engages in commercial bespoke software development.
- It provides students the opportunity to work in a professional software environment and also allows them to benefit from personal development coaching.
- Beautiful Canoe provides learning experiences that cannot be offered in the classroom.

THE  
**ADVANCED  
SERVICES  
GROUP**



<https://www.advancedservicesgroup.co.uk/>



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# The Offer

- Support to explore and implement advanced services in manufacturing businesses.
- The opportunity to build sustainable revenue streams, re-design your customer value proposition and build collaborative long term relationships with your customers.
- Four online workshops plus one to one support.
- Access to all ASG's tools and templates to support implementation, all designed and piloted with global manufacturers through our industrial partners.
- Membership of the SME Partnership.
- Priority access to quarterly round table events and networking opportunities.
- Available in the Black Country and Birmingham and Solihull.