



# Case Study: Skills Bootcamps at Bath Spa University

## Introduction

In September 2020, the Department for Education launched Skills Bootcamps. These are intense 12 to 16 week courses designed to support people to develop sector-specific skills, advance in their current field, retrain or springboard to a new career in skills shortage areas, such as digital and green technology. These are designed to go some way to addressing the national challenge of 800,000 young people not in school, work, or training, and the digital upskilling needs of 30 million workers.

## Context

Successful bootcamp provision identifies local industrial and inclusive growth strategies, collaborates with companies to supply innovative demand-led content, provides welcoming and inclusive spaces that foster peer support and connects learners with businesses to generate interviews and jobs.

Bath Spa University has trained over 1,060 individuals in distinctive offers including web development, digital marketing, cyber security, net zero leadership, data analysis, data science, digital skills for primary and secondary school teachers, AI and creative computing.

## Key challenges

- The pace of the national funding opportunity and turnaround time did not always allow for the level of industry-led involvement that we know drives good co-creation
- Ample resources are required for partnership and administration development
- Confidence coaching and one-on-one support are essential

## Key features ensuring success

- Flexible provision to fit around family life, work, and responsibilities, such as caring
- An interactive approach combining technical material with customised learning pathways that offer high-quality career information and ongoing guidance
- Excellent partnerships with the third sector that support marketing and referral mechanisms, ensuring wider reach
- Digital badging, accreditation and partnerships with Microsoft and BCS
- Final presentations and ongoing collisions offer learners the opportunity to meet experts from Further Education, Higher Education and local companies, widening supporters, employers, investors and networks

## What comes next?

- Continuing to identify subjects with demand for upskilling or reskilling, regionally and nationally
- Exploring more ways to support Skills Bootcamp learners into work beyond the traditional job market, such as freelance work
- Encouraging more businesses to provide live practical projects and mentorship
- Exploring family learning/pedagogy potential
- Greater focus on social impact metrics

## Evaluation and reflection

As more people turn to self-employment, and mental wellbeing is paramount, success indicators could be more encompassing. Bath Spa University will continuously improve long-term mechanisms for capturing outcomes in higher quality of life indicators such as better jobs with more stability and higher salaries (and how this influences social impact), and how businesses perceive they have benefited from a competitive edge, staff retention and recruitment.

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