Entrepreneurial Academy 2025

Join us in boosting entrepreneurship and education for a strong digital Europe.

Contents

NOTE: The retention of proposals received will be conditional on funding being made available by EIT

1   Introduction

The EIT Digital Entrepreneurial Academy is looking for digital deep-tech education providers to support for development and deployment of programmes and courses with business-oriented components.

To this end, the EIT Entrepreneurial Academy launches on 20 December 2024 an open call with submission deadline on 20 February 2025. The process is guided the five focus areas of the EIT Digital's SIA (Strategic Innovation Agenda): Digital Tech, Digital Industry, Digital Cities, Digital Wellbeing and Digital Finance. An overview is available on page 13 of the SIA. As a result, entrepreneurial education proposals are expected to be aligned with these areas.

2   EIT Digital Entrepreneurial Academy

Entrepreneurial education is a cornerstone in creating a Europe where industry and key public sectors are populated, on all levels, with knowledgeable, innovative and entrepreneurial people that drive the innovation economy and create open and effective public organisations.

The **EIT Digital Entrepreneurial Academy** supports the development and deployment of programmes and courses with business development-oriented components. The education paradigm is that learning must emulate the speed of business to meet disruptive technology and business model changes. EIT Digital does this by the EIT Label programs below:

- **Master School** educational programmes breeding talents with an entrepreneurial mindset,
- EIT Digital **Summer School** based on innovation and business education through real cases studies,
- EIT Digital **Professional Education** at the technology and innovation front.

Partners are invited to co-invest with us and benefit from the impact of improved Education contributing to the digital transformation of Europe and the creation of a European talent pool and a digitally skilled workforce.

The partners will run the Summer School in 2025 under the Funding Condition, i.e. this collaboration is contingent upon receiving funding from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). If the necessary funding is not secured, EIT Digital reserves the right to delay, modify, or cancel any collaboration agreements.

EIT Digital reserves the right to modify, delay, or cancel agreements based on changes in circumstances or the availability of funding.

3   Summer School

The EIT Digital Summer School organises programmes that combine state-of-the-art excellence in key digital technologies and societal and industrial applications with expertise in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E). EIT Digital aims at building a portfolio of two-week summer schools.

The two-week Summer Schools welcome students from the EIT Digital Master School with the primary goal of fostering creativity and critical thinking to help them identify innovative business opportunities. In the first week, students explore emerging technologies through focused lectures, keynotes from academics and industry experts, and discussions with professionals. During the second week, they work in teams under the guidance of coaches to gain the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience needed to conceptualize, develop, and potentially launch their own entrepreneurial ventures. A final pitch competition at the end of the program provides students with an opportunity to present their ideas and receive valuable feedback from a selected jury.

The programs are **mandatory** scheduled between July and mid-August 2025, designed for a minimum of 45 participants. Each program includes accommodation (shared room option), meals (breakfast, lunches, and select dinners during social events), and weekend social activities. Travel expenses for Master School students are not included.
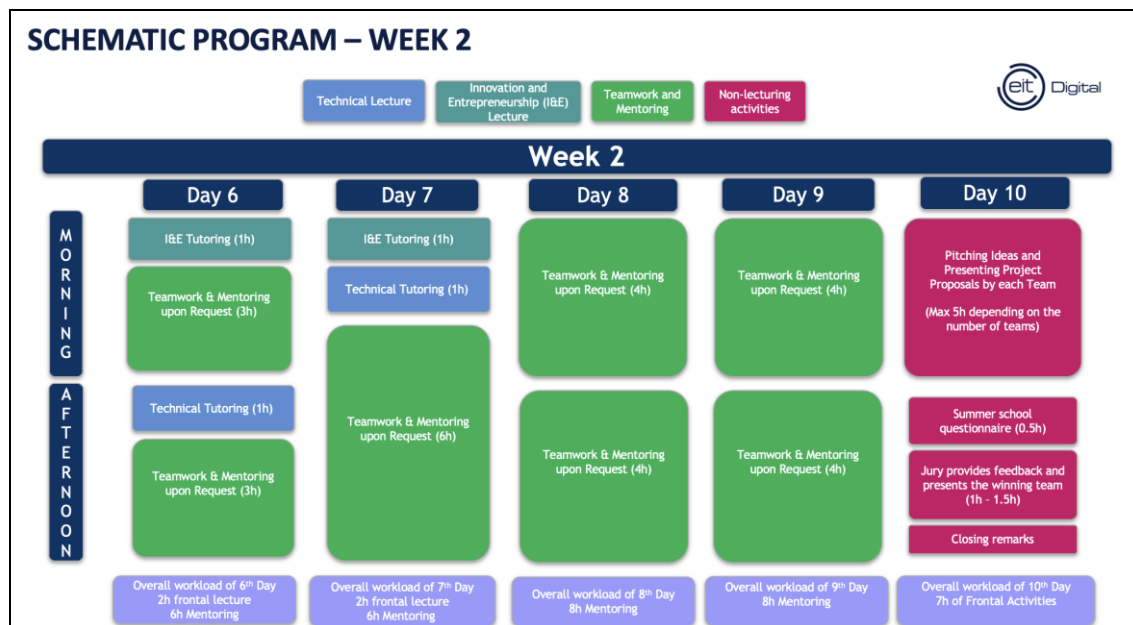
Key Ingredients for a Strong and Impactful Proposal:

- **Topic**: The proposal should align with one of the five strategic focus areas in the EIT Digital Strategic Innovation Agenda: Digital Tech, Digital Industry, Digital Cities, Digital Wellbeing, or Digital Finance.

- **Location**: An easily accessible European location to facilitate travel logistics.

- **Focus on Entrepreneurship**: Proposals should clearly define how they will emphasize entrepreneurship. This can be achieved in one or more of the following ways:

    1. *(Preferred)* Students engage with local TTOs, researchers and scientists to develop business concepts around patented innovations.

    2. Students are encouraged to submit preliminary business ideas before the program begins. The best ideas are selected, and students are then grouped to collaboratively develop these concepts into viable ventures throughout the Summer School.

    3. Students engage with companies that can provide them with business concepts for development of innovative products and services.

- **Experience**: Proposals should demonstrate a solid track record in the venture creation process and provide evidence of the ability to effectively mentor and guide participants.

Partners submitting a proposal for a Summer School commit to delivering Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E) Education in accordance with current EIT Digital Summer School guidelines.

4 How to participate

EIT Digital is a partnership-based organization. Therefore, proposers are expected to be or become Partner of EIT Digital once the proposal is selected.

A recommendation to Partners, especially to new Partners, is to be in contact with EIT Digital before the submission date to ensure a clear understanding of the requirements.

Please refer to Annexes for more details on the proposal submission and evaluation processes.

Eligible countries are the Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU) including their outermost regions and countries which associated to Horizon Europe[1].

For partners from Hungary: the Council Implementing Decision 2022/2506 might directly impact the implementation of summer School grant. This Decision stipulates that legal commitments must not be entered into with any public interest trusts established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity maintained by such a public interest trust. This applies as of 16 December 2022 for as long as the measures are in place.

We advise partners from these countries to connect with the relevant Regional Directors to confirm under which conditions they can participate in the Entrepreneurial Academy 2025.

The Summer School website contains information about the Info Session and the FAQs for this call.

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

5   Annexes

Annex A.   Proposal submission

All proposals need to be filled and submitted via the EIT Digital submission system that can be reached via the <u>EIT Digital intranet page.</u> Proposals need to be formally submitted via the EIT Digital submission system before the hard **deadline on** 20 December 2024**, 5 pm CEST (Brussels time).**

Information events will take place in January 2025 to provide additional information to the applicants to improve their chances of successful applications.

Should the quality of proposals be insufficient based on the evaluation criteria listed in Annex C, EIT Digital reserves the right to open a second submission to collect and assess new Education Activity proposals.

The detailed process, including requirements, criteria and evaluation methodology for Entrepreneurial Academy Activity proposals, is presented in Annex B and Annex C and .

Annex B.   Process overview

B.1. Requirements

The **maximum EIT funding** amount is **85,000 €** per two-week **Summer School[1]** programme designed for minimum of 45 participants. Applicants are not limited to participate with only one proposal[2].

The **co-funding requirement** for the Partner at the Activity level is **minimally 30%** of the total budget of the KIC Added Value Activity (KAVA). The total budget for the call is 425,000 € EUR of EIT-funding.

The following are examples of potential setups of an activity budget:

- Total EIT funding amount requested: 70,000 €. Partner must provide minimally 30% in co-funding of the total budget, i.e., at least 30,000 €.
- Total EIT funding amount requested: 85,000 €. Partner must provide minimally 30% in co-funding of the total budget, i.e., at least 36,400 €.

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[1] A financial support above EUR 60,000 applies to the HE cost eligibility rules. The grant can be awarded in line with the conditions for selecting the recipients of financial support to third parties, as defined in the original Call for proposals and in line with the eligibility requirements from the Grant Agreement Art. 6.2.D.1. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf

2 The submissions shall consider there is no double funding for the submitted budget of all proposals.

B.2. Review process

B.2.1. Evaluation Gates

Each Education Activity proposal will be reviewed in three Evaluation Gates. Each Gate decision supersedes the previous one.

1. First Gate - Experts Review: Submitted proposals are assessed by independent external experts. Each expert individually evaluates each proposal following the evaluation criteria described in Annex C and provides comments to the Activity proposal supporting their assessment and feedback to the applicants, plus, recommendations to the Review Gate.

2. Second Gate - Review Gate: Experts come together and discuss each proposal based on their own individual assessments, following the requirements and guidelines of this document. The outcome is a consensus evaluation for each proposal that integrates and supersedes individual assessments as well as recommendations to MC Gate.

3. Third Gate – MC Gate: The Management Committee of EIT Digital analyses the Review Gate outcomes and recommendations to build a strong strategic education portfolio for the EIT Digital Business Plan. The outcome is the final go/no-go decision for each proposal and changes requests to the proposal, such as budget changes or changes in the Activity descriptions. A backup list of proposals may also be defined.

Submission ⇒ Expert Review ⇒ Review Gate ⇒ MC Gate ⇒ Feedback to proposers ⇒ Updated Activity descriptions

B.2.2. Feedback and following steps:

4. Applicants will find the feedback to their proposals, as "go/no-go", including any changes requests, in the feedback tab of the submission system approximately three weeks after the deadline date. Note that for proposals involving organisations applying for an EIT Digital partnership, proposal acceptance is dependent on the EIT Digital Supervisory Board's approval of the partnership application.

5. Applicants with "go" feedback may receive requests for changes to the Activity proposal and must implement those, as presented on the feedback tab of the submission system. These may include adjustments to the content of the Activity (outputs, KPIs, descriptions, etc.) and budget changes (re-dress procedure). Once changes are made, the reviewed proposal needs to be resubmitted in the EIT

Digital submission system. If the required budget changes are not implemented within 5 business days from the communication of the results, then the financials will be automatically and linearly adjusted for all Activity Partners to meet the requested target values.

6. Proposals for the Summer School that receive positive feedback are expected to provide the course description by April 2025. Programmes are delivered onsite between the month of July and mid-August 2025. Communication activities funded by the grant (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media), dissemination activities and any, equipment, supplies or major result funded by EIT Digital must acknowledge the EU support and display the EIT Digital logo, the European flag (emblem) and funding statement: "EIT Digital is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union". The duration of the contract is indicated in the Grant Agreement.

7. EIT Digital includes the selected Activities in the EIT Digital Business Plan and sends it for internal approval to its governing bodies and the EIT. Once EIT Digital receives feedback from the EIT on the Business Plan, the Education Activity Leader may be required to implement additional changes to the Activity proposal on the request from the EIT.

B.3. Appeal procedure

EIT Digital will, in good faith, address any potential disputes on the outcome of the selection process described in this document in a timely manner. An appeal should be issued, by the proposers, to the attention of the relevant Node Director, by factually underpinning the alleged incorrections in the evaluation and feedback provided by EIT Digital.

Note that the External Experts evaluation cannot be appealed.

B.4. Review Process timeline

To respect the tight timeline, the following will apply:

1. Publication of the results: approximately three weeks after the submittal deadline.
2. Proposers should bring the appeal to the attention of the relevant Node Director within 5 business days from the publication of the results.
3. The Node Director examines the appeal, and if the grounds for the appeal are found with merit, then the appeal will be sent for a second review by the

Management Committee. The EIT Digital Management Committee will review the appeal and make a final decision.

Action	Date
Submission system opens	20 December 2024
Info Session	16 January 2025
Proposal Submission closes	20 February 2025
Feedback to selected/rejected activities	13 March 2025
Appeal window (5 business days)	20 March 2025
Proposal adjustments window (5 business days)	20 March 2025
Activities start	13 April 2025

Annex C.   External experts' evaluation criteria

In line with the submission requirements, Education Activity proposals will be reviewed based on their quality and impact, market relevance, and financial sustainability of EIT Digital following the evaluation process previously described.

The assessment by independent individual external experts will be based on the questions reported in the table below. Reviewers will be asked to provide a score and comments for each question, as well as an assessment of the whole proposal.

Questions for Education Activity external experts (first gate)

Dimension	Question		Score Range	Min Required Score
Excellence	Question 1	How well the proposal aligns with EIT Digital Focus Areas and Strategic Innovation Agenda?	0-5	2
	Question 2	How strong and disruptive is the proposal in the digital deep-tech domain?	0-5	2
Impact	Question 3	To which extent is the proposal contributing to entrepreneurial education?	0-5	2
	Question 4	How does the proposal help	0-5	2

Dimension	Question		Score Range	Min Required Score
		bridge the digital skill gap for participants?		
Implementation	Question 5	How well is the proposal aligned with the requirements (workplan, KPIs, topic, financials, sustainability, format, responsibilities)?	0-5	2
	Question 6	How precisely has the market been analysed?	0-5	2
	Question 7	How does the profile of the team members and previous experience in successfully implementing education activities ensure the proposal's successful implementation?	0-5	2
Minimum Required Score*				**14/35**

*Minimum Required Score' should be achieved in all the above categories for a proposal to proceed.

The assessment by independent individual external experts will be based on the questions reported in the table above. Reviewers are asked to score each proposal with respect to each question (scale of 0 to 5 with 5 being the best assessment) and provide a textual comment for each question, as well as an assessment for the whole proposal.

After the individual review by the external experts, EIT Digital runs a Review Gate meeting (second gate) in which these experts come together and evaluate each proposal based on their own individual assessments. The goal is to reach a consensus evaluation of each proposal that integrates and supersedes individual assessments.

Afterwards, during the third and final gate, the EIT Digital Management Committee (MC) analyses the Review Gate outcome and recommendations and makes a final selection in order to build a strong strategic portfolio.

Annex D: Costs Reporting and KPIs

This Annex includes important additional information related to formal requirements on KPIs, financial costs and partnership for funded activities that will be included in the EIT Digital Business Plan. **It is therefore important that applicants read this section carefully.** All Business Plan Activities need to comply with the Horizon Europe and EIT requirements, which may be subject to changes. A dedicated EIT Digital intranet page (requiring a valid EIT Digital intranet account to be accessed) contains further essential information for proposal authors and will be kept up to date with the latest information. Please get in contact with EIT Digital staff to make sure you can access the EIT Digital intranet. This is especially relevant for activity partners that are not EIT Digital Partners yet.

Type of Financial Support: The financial support offered by EIT Digital is structured in the form of reimbursement of actual costs declared in the activity proposal budget. The funds are released in several tranches during a time frame of 9-12 months. For more details on the disbursement of the EIT Digital financial support, please refer to the Cut-off specific document.

D.1. Cost Reporting

The financial justification of the activity is detailed in the EIT Digital submission system (tab "5. Tasks and Costs", tab "6. Cost justification" and in tab "7. Funding"). The budget information needs to be precise and concrete, considering the requirements from the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement (MGA) and the EIT Digital Financial Support Agreement (FSA). These are key documents defining the general framework under which Activities need to operate. These are shared with EIT Digital Partners via the EIT Digital intranet page. It is highly recommended for activity partners that are not EIT Digital Partners yet, to get in contact with EIT Digital staff early on to gain access to the intranet, where both the Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) and the Model Grant Agreement (MGA) documents, as well as the submission system, can be found.

It is very important that the activity proposal assigns its budget to the correct cost categories, amongst the following:

A. Personnel costs
B. Sub-contracting costs
C. Purchase costs
D. Other cost categories

E. Indirect costs. This is a flat rate of 25% calculated on the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteer's costs, subcontracting costs, financial support to third parties and exempted specific cost categories, if any).

Please note the following about the content in the <u>Model Grant Agreement</u> and EIT Digital submission system:

- The "action" refers to the EIT Digital Business Plan including its Annexes.
- Costs need to be allocated to one or more tasks. Tasks define how the work is broken down between partners and how much each part of the work costs. It is possible to model the budget of a Task based on planning assumptions, while the reporting will have to be based on actual costs, which cannot exceed the approved budget.
- Financial Support to Third Parties (or sub-granting) can be used to allocate budget to third parties outside of the EIT Digital partnership requirement. The sub-grantee selection process should be open, transparent and follow all applicable rules (as defined in the Model Grant Agreement). It is recommended to make a limited use of this cost category.
- Sub-contracting needs to be explicitly defined in the proposal that will be included in the Business Plan and follow all applicable rules, especially regarding the value for money and avoidance of conflict of interest.
- Full Time Equivalents (FTE): We strongly recommend a commitment of at least 0.2 FTEs per partner and Task Leader/Contributor to ensure a meaningful involvement and the allocation of enough capacity to the specific task.

As set out in Art. 20 of the HE MGA, each beneficiary must keep appropriate and sufficient evidence to prove the eligibility of all the costs declared, proper implementation of the action and compliance with all the other obligations under the Grant Agreement. The evidence must be verifiable, auditable and available. It must be correctly archived for the duration of the project indicated in the Grant Agreement. In general, the evidence must be kept for at least 5 years after final payment or longer if there are ongoing procedures (audits, investigations, litigation, etc.).

D.2. Prefinancing tranches

Action	Prefinancing percentage	Liked deliverable
April 2025	20%	Detail description of the program with draft schedule
June 2025	30%	Implementation plan
September/October 2025	30%	Evaluation Report
February/August 2026	20%	-

D.3. Conflict of Interest

Beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation that could compromise the impartial and objective implementation of the Agreement for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect interest ("conflict of interest").

Beneficiaries must formally notify the granting authority without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

The granting authority may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

D.2.1. Consequences of non-compliance

If a beneficiary breaches any of its obligations under this Article, the grant may be reduced.

D.3 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Each Activity needs to define its target values for a set of relevant KPIs, consisting of:

- EIT-Level KPIs (EIT KPIs): defined by the EIT for the entire EIT community (KICs). These are the most important KPIs and require supporting formal evidence of achievement. For example:
  - **EITHE07-09**: Students-Graduates from EIT-labelled programmes
- KIC-Internal KPIs (INT KPIs): defined by EIT Digital as additional monitoring parameters. For example:
  - **INT10**: Number of Women part of the Activity Team
  - **INT11**: Number of Industry Partners engaged in Education Activities
- Activity Specific Quantifiable Targets (ASQTs): defined by individual Activity proposers and requested to define additional, measurable, Activity-specific targets that can demonstrate the impact of its implementation. These may include, for example, the number of students/learners that after the training are participating to one of our standup/startup innovation instruments (DeepHack, Innovation Factory, RIS Venture Program)

To define their KPI targets, proposal authors need to be aware of the acceptance requirements of KPIs. Without the required evidence documentation, KPIs may not be accepted by EIT in the formal Activity review process. Please note that financial penalties

may be applied by the EIT and EIT Digital in case of under-delivery, including under-achievements in any of the 3 above categories of targets and KPIs.

As valuable KPI achievements may also materialise during subsequent years, Partners will be asked to support the reporting of KPI results related to their Activity even after its official end.

Furthermore, EIT Digital follow-up the selected activities up to 5 years after activity completion to track long-term impact and to ensure the achievement of KPIs after the activity end.

D.4 Activity Monitoring

All activities selected for funding undergo continuous monitoring by EIT Digital to ensure effective progress and implementation and to trigger payments according to the achievement of milestone, deliverables and KPIs. The mid-term monitoring in May will cover several aspects relating to the activity implementation including, but not limited to: achievement of outputs, milestones, deliverables and KPIs; risk management; financial management; quality assurance; progress against KPI achievement and impact delivery; communication and dissemination; co-branding. EIT Digital will request a Deliverable.

In the case of under-performance, significant delay of implementation, or any other reason jeopardizing the timely implementation of the activity identified during the monitoring process, EIT Digital reserves the right to discontinue or restructure the funding of the activity at any point during its implementation.

Annex E: Communication, Dissemination and Visibility

E.1. Communication, Dissemination and Promotion

Unless otherwise agreed with EIT Digital, the partners of the selected Activities must promote the activity among the EIT Digital Master School students.

Before engaging in a communication or dissemination activity expected to have a major media impact, the partners must inform EIT Digital.

E.2. Visibility: the European Flag and Funding Statement

Unless otherwise agreed with EIT Digital, communication activities of the partners related to the Activity (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information

material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by EIT Digital must acknowledge the EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages where appropriate). Other allowed layouts/backgrounds can be found in the EIT Digital Intranet.

The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text.

Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EU support.

When displayed in association with other logos (e.g. logos of partners), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos.

For the purposes of their obligations under this Article, the partners may use the emblem without first obtaining approval from EIT Digital. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

E.3. Quality of Information: Disclaimer

Any communication or dissemination must indicate the following disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate):

"Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EIT Digital. Neither the European Union nor EIT Digital can be held responsible for them."

E.4. Specific Communication, Dissemination and Visibility Rules

If a beneficiary breaches any of its obligations under this Article, the grant may be reduced.

E.5.   Dissemination, communication, and exploitation of the results of the activities

Applicants need to respect the provisions of Article 16 regarding the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) — Background And Results — Access Rights And Rights and Article 17 regarding Communication, dissemination and visibility of the (Model) Grant Agreement . Applicants should engage in dissemination, communication and exploitation of the results of the activities.

E.6. Intellectual property

Participating entities agree to respect IPR Rules (Article 16) of the (Model) Grant Agreement.