

Start-up visa scheme

The Start-up scheme is for early-stage but high potential entrepreneurs who are starting a business in the UK for the first time and who have a business plan endorsed by a Home Office-approved endorsing body. Students with immigration permission in the Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES), will now be permitted to apply for immigration permission in the Start-up category despite having previously set up a business. This concession only applies to students with DES permission. It has replaced Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur. You must meet the formal eligibility requirements to apply for the Start-up visa. This has 2 elements; firstly this relates to your business idea, and secondly to the Immigration Rules and therefore your visa application.

Who can apply?

You do not need to be endorsed by the university or college where you studied. However, in order to establish your business with the support of the University's Enterprise Services Team, UWS will only consider supporting UWS recent graduates (who have graduated within a 12 month period) or applicants who can demonstrate a strong connection to UWS. Applicants must not have previously established a business in the UK. If more than one student is applying with a joint business plan, each student needs to demonstrate how they will be integral to the business plan and how they will have a shared role in the direction of the business.

When to apply?

Applications to the scheme are ongoing with the year running from April to April to ensure a strong business proposal and for administration purposes. Applicants must allow 3 months prior to their visa expiring in order to apply from within the UK. To be endorsed for the Start-up visa, your business idea must be a genuine



and credible idea (demonstrating innovation, viability and scalability) with high growth potential. You must also show that you can demonstrate the necessary entrepreneurial skill-set.

What funds do I need?

You must have relevant funds in your bank account of £945 and £630 for each dependant applying with you. This is to prove you can support yourself and you must have had this in your bank account for 90 days before you apply.

How long you can stay?

You can stay in the UK for 2 years on a Start-up visa. You cannot apply to extend this visa.

Entrepreneurial Skills

It is important you demonstrate an enterprising skill-set that enables you to think creatively, be innovative, take initiative and identify opportunities. Along with your passion and drive to succeed, these are integral to becoming a successful entrepreneur. Use the UWS Start-Up Guide to help you.

Business Plan

Follow the criteria below to help you consider your business idea and its potential. This will help you to assess your business idea and what to consider when writing your business plan. Use the UWS Business Plan template to help you.

What is required	How to work on this	How this is assessed
<p>A genuine, innovative and credible idea which has high growth potential.</p> <p>You must demonstrate that your idea has commercial viability and potential.</p> <p>You must show you are genuinely interested in progressing with your business idea and that your idea is achievable with the opportunity to develop.</p>	<p>Utilise the UWS Start-Up Guide and Business Plan template.</p> <p>Once you have created a draft business plan, email it to studententerprise@uws.ac.uk where it will be reviewed by Enterprise Services.</p> <p>Engage with start-up support opportunities such as workshops and events at UWS.</p> <p>Get support from start-up organisations such as Business Gateway and Scottish Institute for Enterprise.</p>	<p>By submitting your business plan for feedback to Enterprise Services</p> <p>By providing a viable case for why you are applying for a Start-up visa and what makes you suitable in your application.</p>

What is required	How to work on this	How this is assessed
<p>Serious intent to establish the business in the UK.</p> <p>Demonstrating that you intend to dedicate the majority of your time developing your business idea in the UK.</p>	<p>Your business plan must demonstrate why and how your business will operate in the UK.</p> <p>You must have researched the market and its competitors and established unique selling points for the business.</p> <p>Outline your forecast for the business and the time and resources you need for your business to grow.</p>	<p>Although we recognise that you may need to work part-time to support yourself, you will need to dedicate the majority of your time to your business.</p> <p>Prioritise any training and support events that you are required to attend.</p>

What is required	How to work on this	How this is assessed
<p>Genuine engagement and commitment to the programme.</p> <p>If successful, it is part of the conditions of the Start-up visa scheme that you complete the quarterly progress report.</p> <p>It is important you keep engaged with Enterprise Services and the International Student Support Team and that you actively engage with the programme of support including any workshops and events.</p>	<p>You must keep in contact with Enterprise Services and the International Student Support Team.</p> <p>Complete the quarterly progress report every 3 months to reflect on your progress and identify any skills gaps that you feel you need support with.</p> <p>Actively engage with the university's start-up support workshops and events.</p> <p>Get support from external organisations for networking and broadening your knowledge and expertise.</p>	<p>Keep in regular contact with Enterprise Services and International Student Support.</p> <p>Complete any relevant tasks on time.</p> <p>Participate in workshops, networking opportunities and events and tell us about how these have helped you in your progress report.</p> <p>Regularly revisit your business plan to make changes and ongoing developments.</p>

Application Process

- To find out more about applying for the Start-up visa, students must contact the International Student Support Team (Student Services) to check if they are eligible to apply for this visa (internationaladvice@uws.ac.uk). A note of interest will then be forwarded to the Enterprise Services Team if the student meets the conditions to apply.
- Once a student has a genuine and credible business idea that they would like to take forward as part of their visa application they should initially access the online careers and skills portal and use the resources provided to create a draft business plan. Completed business plans can be emailed to studententerprise@uws.ac.uk and will be reviewed by Enterprise Services.
- Approval of the Business Plan is authorised by Johnny Mone, Head of Enterprise Services and may go through a panel review process. Please allow 3 months for the business plan validation and approval process to ensure maximum potential success rate.
- If the business plan is approved by Enterprise Services or an independent panel organised by the team, then it will be signed off by the Head of Enterprise Services.
- References may be required to support the visa application from a relevant academic within the student's school. As applicants are expected to spend the majority of their time working on their business, students endorsed by UWS should either have completed or be nearing completion of their studies.
- When the business plan is approved, and the student has been awarded their degree or received approval from the school to apply in advance of completing their studies, the endorsement letter can be signed by the Head of Enterprise Services. At this stage the student is required to give written consent to Enterprise Services (Johnny.Mone@uws.ac.uk) to allow UWS to monitor their progress in establishing a business, and to request information from them as required.
- The student is able to make their visa application once they have their endorsement letter. The student is then advised to make an appointment with an International Student Adviser (ISA) in order to get their visa application form and documents checked.
- Documents required for Start-up visa application:
 - Funds in bank account for 90 days (currently £945 not more than 1 month old)
 - Passport with valid immigration status
 - Endorsement letter (no need to submit evidence of academic qualifications).
- Once the Start-up visa application and supporting documents are checked you should pay the required immigration health surcharge <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/pay> and then complete your online visa application.
- Once the application is submitted the student must check with an International Student Adviser (ISA) when they can start working on a self-employed basis.
- As soon as the documents are returned, ISA (or student) informs Enterprise Services, the School and Student Records of the new Start-up visa expiry date.
- The student is required to engage with Enterprise Services as part of their endorsement with UWS under the Start-up visa scheme. You are required to complete a short progress report on your business indicating developments on a 3 monthly basis and submitted at quarterly intervals agreed with Enterprise Services.
- Although the student is expected to spend most of their time setting up the business, they will be able to work outside of the business in order to support themselves financially.

<https://ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies#layer-6610>

<https://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa>