



Start-up visa scheme

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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. 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. Remember if you want to set up an innovative business in the UK – it must be something that's different from anything else on the market.

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?

If you are applying in the UK, and you have been living in the UK for 12 months or more with valid permission, you meet the maintenance requirement and there is no requirement to show any evidence of your money. This is also for any dependants who are applying with you.

Otherwise, you must show evidence that you have held £1,270 in your own name in an account that is acceptable to the Home Office for a period of 28 consecutive days. The closing balance, letter or statement must be dated no more than 31 days before you apply. Unlike a Student route application, you cannot use an account in the name of your parent or legal guardian.

The equivalent amounts for a dependant who needs to show maintenance are £285 for a partner, £315 for the first child and £200 for each further child. Money can be held in their name, in the Start-up scheme participant's name or, for a child only, the name of the other parent.

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 and refer to i3 Virtual Incubator: <https://www.i3uws.co.uk/>

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, available on <https://www.i3uws.co.uk/>

What is required

A genuine, innovative and credible idea which has high growth potential.
You must demonstrate that your idea has commercial viability and potential.

You must show you are genuinely interested in progressing with your business idea and that your idea is achievable with the opportunity to develop.

How to work on this

Utilise the UWS Start-Up Guide and Business Plan template.

Once you have created a draft business plan, email it to studententerprise@uws.ac.uk where it will be reviewed by Enterprise Services.

Engage with start-up support opportunities such as workshops and events at UWS.

Get support from start-up organisations such as Business Gateway and Scottish Institute for Enterprise.

How this is assessed

By submitting your business plan for feedback to Enterprise Services.

By providing a viable case for why you are applying for a Start-up visa and what makes you suitable in your application.



What is required

Serious intent to establish the business in the UK.

Demonstrating that you intend to dedicate the majority of your time developing your business idea in the UK.

How to work on this

Your business plan must demonstrate why and how your business will operate in the UK.

You must have researched the market and its competitors and established unique selling points for the business.

Outline your forecast for the business and the time and resources you need for your business to grow.

How this is assessed

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.

Prioritise any training and support events that you are required to attend.



What is required

Genuine engagement and commitment to the programme.

If successful, it is part of the conditions of the Start-up visa scheme that you complete the progress report every 6 months.

It is important you keep engaged with Enterprise Services and that you actively engage with the programme of support including any workshops and events.

How to work on this

You must keep in contact with Enterprise Services.

Complete the progress report every 6 months to reflect on your progress and identify any skills gaps that you feel you need support with.

Actively engage with the university's start-up support workshops and events.

Get support from external organisations for networking and broadening your knowledge and expertise.

How this is assessed

Keep in regular contact with Enterprise Services.

Complete any relevant tasks on time.

Participate in workshops, networking opportunities and events and tell us about how these have helped you in your progress report.

Regularly revisit your business plan to make changes and ongoing developments.



Application Process

1. 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. An overview of the Start up visa application process can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa>
2. 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 i3 Virtual Incubator <https://www.i3uws.co.uk/> 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.
3. Approval of the Business Plan is authorised by Alan Murray, Senior Lecturer in Enterprise 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.
4. 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.
5. References may be required to support the visa application from a relevant academic within the student's school.
6. 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 (alan.murray@uws.ac.uk) to allow UWS to monitor their progress in establishing a business, and to request information from them as required.
7. 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. Students can also apply from their home country.
8. Documents required for Start-up visa application:
 - Funds in bank account for 28 consecutive days (currently £1270) if you've been in the UK for less than a year or applying from overseas.
 - Passport with valid immigration status
 - Endorsement letter (no need to submit evidence of academic qualifications).
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. As soon as the documents are returned, ISA (or student) informs Enterprise Services, the School and Alison Devlin of the new Start-up visa expiry date.
12. 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 6 monthly basis. You are required to have contact with UWS twice a year and UWS as the endorsing body is obliged to report you to the Home Office if you miss a contact without permission.
13. 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.

Additional websites

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

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

<https://www.i3uws.co.uk/>



Student
Services



International Student Support